

# Standards for Education Reporters

SKILLS  
KNOWLEDGE  
ETHICS



Education Writers Association

# Standards for Education Reporters



Introduction .....	1
The <b>SKILLS</b> education reporters need .....	2
The <b>KNOWLEDGE</b> education reporters should strive for .....	5
The <b>ETHICS</b> of education reporting .....	12
Resources for education reporters .....	14
(Publications, web sites, data sources, training)	
About the Education Writers Association .....	17

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The Education Writers Association, founded in 1947, is the national professional association of education reporters and writers.

**Executive Director:** Lisa Walker

**Author:** Bill Graves, *The Oregonian*  
Former President and Member, EWA Board of Directors

**Project Coordinator:** Lori Crouch

**Marketing and Production:** Margaret Ritsch



**National Education Writers Association**

2122 P St. NW, Suite 201

Washington, D.C. 20037

(202) 452-9830

Fax (202) 452-9837

[www.ewa.org](http://www.ewa.org)

[ewa@ewa.org](mailto:ewa@ewa.org)

## Introduction

The idea came almost as a lark at an annual EWA Board of Directors retreat. Since education reporters are covering the standards movement, someone quipped, why not develop standards for the journalists themselves?

But the discussion quickly developed into something more serious. A perception exists in some newsrooms that education is not a hard news beat. And though an EWA survey conducted with Public Agenda in 1997 says education writers are experienced and have spent considerable time on the beat, the perception among too many educators is that reporters who cover education are neophytes who quickly switch to other positions. Wouldn't guidelines highlight the seriousness, the complexity of the beat?

The Joyce Foundation provided the dollars to explore this further. The project's seeds were sown at an EWA Fellows meeting in September 2001, when a group of journalists brainstormed over three categories: skills, knowledge and ethics. They examined their own shortcomings and strengths to suggest what education writers should know and be able to do.

From that vague beginning, *Oregonian* education writer and former EWA president Bill Graves launched the next, and more difficult, phase: writing the standards. He even retreated to a bungalow on the beach to hone the document. Graves has crafted a guideline that illustrates the complexity of the beat and the sophistication education reporters need to cover such a diffuse topic.

The purpose of this exercise is to document the skills and knowledge that reporters should (and do) bring to the beat. It also offers some advice on ethical situations endemic to covering education, such as interviewing children.

We hope you will find it useful in your newsroom. We encourage all education reporters and editors to refer to the standards as they refine their knowledge and skills on this challenging, important beat.

**Robin Farmer**

*EWA President*

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## EDUCATION WRITERS ASSOCIATION

## Standards for Education Reporters

By Bill Graves  
*The Oregonian*

Experienced school reporters know plenty about standards. The struggle to set standards that define what students should know and be able to do at various stages of their education has been at the heart of school reform since the late 1980s.

So if journalists are going to understand the value of standards, it will be those covering schools. It is appropriate, then, that the Education Writers Association, the professional organization for the nation's education reporters, would write standards for the school beat.

As schools use standards to define what students should learn, EWA is writing standards to define what education reporters should strive to know. The aim here, however, differs from that of education in that these standards are not for the purpose of evaluating reporters, but to help them do good work. Reporters new to the education beat should be able to use these standards to gauge what they need to learn. EWA's standards are organized in three broad areas: skills, knowledge and ethics.

## Skills

In most cases, journalists use the same skills to cover education that they use for any other beat or assignment, and we can assume anyone hired for professional work will have them. But there are some skills that are either peculiar to education or so essential to covering schools that they are worth singling out.

### Education reporters need to be able to:

#### ■ SIZE UP A SCHOOL

Reporters need to be able to assess the quality of schools quickly, but with care, much as a home inspector determines whether a house stands on a solid foundation and is free of dry rot. Reporters need to gauge whether students are orderly and engaged in their work, teachers are focused on teaching, and administrators articulate clear goals. They should know how to spot signs of school quality, such as the merits of student work posted on hallway and classroom walls. They also must know when, where and how to check their subjective judgments against more objective measures such as test scores, attendance, teacher turnover and other indicators that reflect school value. News reports on school quality can profoundly affect the reputation of schools, so it is of course crucial that reporters get it right. The stakes are high.

## ■ USE COMPUTER SPREADSHEET AND DATABASE PROGRAMS, SUCH AS EXCEL AND ACCESS

State department, school district and university and college data now typically are available on computer spreadsheets, often online. News organizations now routinely use spreadsheet and database programs to sort, summarize, analyze and publish test scores, dropout rates and other information on the morning after release day.

## ■ CULTIVATE EXTENSIVE SOURCES

Perhaps more than many beats, education writers need to have a wide variety of sources available to them to cover the broad range of topics and constituencies that fall within their beat's expansive borders. They should, for example, be able to quickly call on students, parents, teachers, professors, administrators, board members, business and political leaders and ordinary people in the community to comment on topics as diverse as making condoms available in school health clinics, methods of teaching math or the reasons college tuition outpaces inflation. Reporters also need to be able to find expert sources, often quickly, on a vast range of topics that affect schools and universities, such as school law, construction, finance, textbooks or governance. EWA offers two valuable aids here: *Covering the Education Beat*, a resource guide with sources on scores of topics, and the EWA listserv, which allows reporters to immediately tap the collective knowledge of more than 300 colleagues.

## ■ READ A BUDGET

At every level of education – the district, university or state – education writers must be able to read and decipher budgets, spotting trends, gaps or aberrations in the intake and outflow of money for schools. One useful way of analyzing a budget is to look at the relationship between money and quality. Classroom quality is surely affected, for example, when schools convert teacher posts into assistant principal jobs that they call “teachers on special assignment.” Questions of quality also arise when reporters show that only 50 cents of every dollar reaches the classroom. Higher education reporters must know how to probe the budgets of both private and public institutions.

## ■ INTERVIEW STUDENTS

This is a skill that comes with practice. Generally, reporters will find they will get nowhere with students, particularly young children, unless they take time to make them feel at ease and ask open-ended questions. We say more under ethics about how to interview students about sensitive issues.

## ■ ANALYZE STATISTICS, ESPECIALLY TEST SCORES

Education reporters will find themselves awash in numbers, and they must be comfortable with them. They need to know, for example, how to work percentages, grasp the difference between median, mean and mode and know when they see significant changes and trends in test scores. They need to be able to do basic statistical analyses of numbers on test scores

and a variety of other indicators such as attendance, dropout rates and racial and ethnic demographics. Ideally, they will also know how to do regression analysis, valuable in making adjustments for various social factors such as poverty when comparing students, schools, colleges, universities, school districts, states, even countries.

#### ■ UNDERSTAND SCHOOL POLITICS

Schools are political organizations as well as learning institutions. School board members, teacher unions and administrators all engage in political tugs and pulls for control and power. So reporters need to be skillful in detecting when school initiatives are launched more for political rather than educational ends.

## Knowledge

The knowledge that would benefit reporters in their work is nearly without limits, stretching over a breadth that ranges from methods of teaching to school law and encompassing the curricula of the nation's schools and universities. Professors spend their lives researching the best ways to teach children to read, yet that topic occupies only one small corner of the vast territory encompassed by the education beat. Education reporters may be called upon to write about topics as varied as a recall election on the school board, an analysis of high school dropouts, the economic implications of a university's attempts to expand bioscience research or the best methods to teach algebra.

Despite the broad landscape of topics on the education beat, Richard Clark, director of the Institute for Educational Inquiry at the University of Washington in Seattle, notes: "four general issues prevail across geographic locations, ethnic groupings, political persuasions and school grade levels. They are arguments about (1) purposes of schooling (which include debates over curriculum and instruction), (2) equity and access to schooling, (3) control and accountability, and (4) money and resources." With those issues in mind, there are some areas of knowledge that are essential to anyone covering education with authority.

Following is some of the terrain that education reporters can expect to travel. Though the scope of knowledge outlined below may seem daunting, education reporters can expect to learn much of this over time through their daily work, by reading *Education Week*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Phi Delta Kappan* and other education news and by attending regional and national seminars for education reporters.

### Education reporters should strive to know:

#### ■ THE BIG PICTURE

Good education reporters have a solid grasp of what has happened in U.S. education from the nation's earliest days. They know, for example, about apprenticeships and kitchen schools in the 1600s; Horace Mann and the common school movement of the early 1800s; the one-room school house and academies that developed into high schools later in the 19th century; the Committee of Ten that designed the modern high school in the 1890s; the emergence of IQ testing and sorting in the 1920s; the progressive school movement launched by John Dewey in the early 20th century; the consolidations pushed by former Harvard University president James Conant that led to the comprehensive high school after World War II; the struggles for desegregation marked by the U.S. Supreme Court 1954 decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka*; the civil rights movement that followed and the recent trend toward resegregating schools.

## ■ ACCOUNTABILITY AND REFORM

The nation's schools are in the middle of a reform movement that began in 1983 after a presidential commission released *A Nation at Risk*, a small report that jarred the nation out of complacency by declaring its schools were suffocating under a "rising tide of mediocrity" that threatened the nation's economy and security. Reform is an important part of the big picture. Most of the initiatives we see today – charter schools, vouchers, an end to social promotion, performance standards and so forth – all are part of the unfolding reform movement. This era may well mark one of the most dramatic shifts in public education in American history. Reporters need to understand that education is in the midst of this great change, which is one reason educators are so stressed. This is as much an economic movement as it is an educational one. The conventional wisdom argues that we need the world's top schools to sustain a prosperous economy in a knowledge-based global market. Reporters should understand that this effort to build a healthy economy with higher education standards is the larger narrative unfolding behind their educational stories much as the war on terrorism is the larger narrative behind many if not most international stories.

## ■ CHOICE AND PRIVATIZATION OF SCHOOLS

Reporters should understand that giving parents more choices in where their children learn is one of the most visible and political fallouts from the reform movement, yet still peripheral in terms of affecting student achievement. Fifteen years ago, home schooling was considered radical, charter schools were nonexistent and choice among public schools was rare. Today, conservative and libertarian groups want to use market forces to improve schools by giving parents more choices. Most of these groups support giving parents government vouchers, upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2002, so they can also shop among private and parochial schools, a proposal firmly resisted by teacher unions and the education establishment. Private companies, such as Edison Schools Inc., are emerging to run public schools for profit. Again, while new choices in schools are dramatic, so far they have had mixed results and affected only a fraction of the nation's 47 million public school students.

## ■ STANDARDS AND TESTING

At the core of reform since 1983 is the drive to set standards that define what students should know and be able to do at various levels of education and then measure whether they meet standards with tests or work samples. Reporters need to understand that implicit in the move to standards is a dramatic shift in school structure from a focus on credits, or the time students spend in school, to standards, or the results of their schooling. Most schools, however, are still holding on to credits, creating an incompatible dual system. Reporters should know how standards in their districts and states compare to those elsewhere. They will be writing in the coming years about whether standards or the old credit-based system prevail.

Because most states are using tests to measure whether students meet standards, testing has become a major issue in education. Many educators

complain there already is too much emphasis and time spent on testing at the expense of good instruction, and these debates will only get hotter as President George W. Bush's administration carries out federal mandates for testing. But tests vary widely in their quality and purposes and some are better and more sensible than others. Reporters should know, for example, the difference between norm-referenced and criterion-based tests. The fact is, reporters and the public can now much more quickly identify the proportion of students who are failing to meet standards in a given school, district or state, thanks to testing. This means schools can no longer hide behind school-wide test averages.

### ■ RACIAL AND ETHNIC DYNAMICS

Education reporters already know that most of the nation's social tensions are reflected in the schools. Nowhere is this more evident than in issues of race and ethnic diversity. Reporters need to have a good grasp of how schools served as the battleground for desegregation, beginning with the landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, followed by the civil rights movement, desegregation, busing, bilingual education and, most recently, resegregation and the achievement gap that still leaves many minority groups learning less than their white peers. At the university level, affirmative action to give minority groups more access to higher education has been challenged in Florida, Georgia, Michigan and Washington, though courts have supported the use of racial preferences in admission decisions. These are among the most complex and sensitive issues in education, and reporters must know them well.

### ■ POVERTY AND ACHIEVEMENT

American schools have never been very good at teaching poor children. Now, when they are under pressure to ensure that all children, not just some, reach high standards, educating the poor and giving them access to universities has become perhaps the single biggest challenge for American schools. There's a complex set of reasons why poor children as a group fare poorly in schools, such as low expectations, low-quality teachers, tracking, old textbooks and home problems. Educators often will say or act as though poor children cannot be expected to learn as much as their more affluent peers because of their difficult home lives. But this is like doctors saying they cannot help people who are too sick. Reporters need to understand why poor children often fall behind in schools, and they should become familiar with schools that successfully teach poor kids. The nation will never reach its education goals until all schools learn how to help disadvantaged children succeed.

### ■ CURRICULUM AND TEXTBOOK DEBATES

Ongoing battles over how best to teach reading, writing, science, history and other subjects ebb and flow in the nation's schools. They often reflect political divisions between conservative and liberal, traditional and progressive. Textbooks, being market-driven, try to find compromises, which often results in books that are dull and unfocused and that mention some topics to make sales but omit others to avoid controversy. Reporters need to cover these debates, but also remind readers how these battles distort educational content and undermine the quality of education.

## ■ THE TEACHING PROFESSION

As with everything else in education, the way teachers are trained, the way they work and the unions they belong to are all being questioned and changed. Education reporters are expected to keep on top of these changes and write about them as they unfold. Schools of education, under fire for being irrelevant and out of touch with modern reforms, are revamping the way they train teachers as states change the way they certify them. Unions are becoming more involved in reform and other professional issues to retain their credibility as political leaders look for ways to quickly fire bad teachers. A variety of groups, such as the National Center for Teacher Quality, have emerged to improve teaching. The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, still in its infancy, has developed a rigorous national certification process designed to identify top teachers and eventually raise the status of the profession. Researchers continue to debate whether there truly is a teacher shortage or just a problem with teacher turnover.

Higher education reporters need to follow ongoing debates at the university level about the second-class status of schools of education, the time professors should devote to research, the merits of tenure, the representation of women and minorities on faculty, the use of graduate assistants and faculty productivity.

## ■ SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

School board members and administrators at every level are feeling the heat of the accountability movement, which partly explains the high turnover of superintendents and a growing shortage of qualified principals or school board candidates. This is another volatile front that education reporters need to follow without becoming consumed or misled. While school leaders, for example, insist there is a principal shortage, the fact is there are plenty of trained principals. The question is whether they have been trained for today's schools. The shortage is in principals trained to be instructional leaders, which schools now demand, as opposed to managers of facilities, buses and order. At the university level, higher education reporters will need to follow college presidents, boards and faculties, which wield more power than public school teachers in creating curriculum and academic rules.

## ■ HIGH AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Education reporters should know the American high school has never worked very well for a large proportion of students. Before World War II, less than half of all students finished high school. But the world has changed, and students who drop out of high school can expect a life of poverty. So high schools must change if they are going to serve all students, and so far, most are resisting. For example, a growing body of research shows that smaller, more personal high schools work better for more teens, yet school leaders keep building large, impersonal high schools that are sure to fail, on average, one in four kids. Middle schools also tend to be too big and alienating for too many students. Education reporters need to understand these failures as well as the successes of the rare small, innovative middle and high schools, many of which make school more relevant by connecting learning to careers.

## ■ SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE AND SCHOOL LAW

Education reporters frequently are called upon to write about controversies over the role of religion in the schools. These will include, for example, debates about textbooks, school prayer, religious holidays, Boy Scout recruiting and religious classes. Reporters should be familiar with the basic First Amendment rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court that draw a clear line between talking about religion in school and promoting it. Reporters also will be called upon to write about other legal issues in schools, such as mandatory drug testing, school dress codes, school discipline and other Fourth Amendment privacy issues. They need to have legal sources, both conservative and liberal, to call upon when controversies erupt along the boundaries separating church and state or public institutions and private lives.

## ■ SCHOOL FINANCE

Reporters cannot write about public education without understanding how schools get and spend their money. Nearly all are supported by some combination of local property taxes, state taxes and federal grants. Reporters can expect to write about financial inequities among districts or even schools. Education writers need to know what studies show about the complex relationships between money and student achievement, the proportion of money spent on teacher salaries and administration, and other details on the flow of money through the complex corridors of education. They also need to know how to keep money issues in perspective. Budgets and spending stories can consume reporters and distract them from what is happening in the classroom. Money is a primary concern for administrators and teacher unions, but it usually is not as important as issues of quality to readers, parents and students. And reporters need to remember that most readers do not have children in public schools. Money takes on new dimensions at the university level, where the costs of tuition and fees and financial aid are major forces affecting student access and equity.

## ■ THE FEDERAL ROLE

Education historically has been a local issue, governed by local school boards and supported by local property taxes, and local reporters could largely ignore most of what happened at the federal level. But that began to change in the 1980s, when the U.S. Department of Education became a cabinet-level agency. By the end of that decade, the nation was showing more concern for national outcomes than local school control – a development the late Ernest L. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, called “an absolute, historic watershed in the history of American education.” The federal role has continued to grow since, most recently with the George W. Bush administration’s successful push for annual testing. The federal government is now spending more than \$44.4 billion a year, mostly on remedial programs for disadvantaged children and for special education. No more can local reporters ignore its influence. At the university level, the federal government plays important roles in sponsoring research and providing low-income students access to higher education through grants and loans.

## ■ SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education is probably the least reported or understood area of education by journalists, yet it is becoming increasingly hard to ignore. Special education, which receives heavy federal support, affects more than 10 percent of the nation's public school children and commands as much as 25 to 30 percent of some district budgets. New federal test requirements will require inclusion of special education students. Reporters need to know about special education, and they need to write about it.

## ■ TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION

Education reporters should know how the computer, the Internet and other technologies are shaping the curriculum and the way students learn. So far, technology has had a peripheral role in most public schools, with studies showing it has little effect on student achievement. Still, many educators see technology as a potentially powerful teaching tool that is still denied many poor children who often attend schools that are not wired for the Internet. What's more, the modern business world expects young people to graduate from our schools knowing how to use computers. Technology has become even more important at the university level, where courses are increasingly available online.

## ■ LEARNING THEORY AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Education writers should have some basic knowledge about major thinkers on learning, such as Swiss developmental psychologist Jean Piaget, who identified stages of the child's mental growth; Italian physician and educator Maria Montessori, who developed a teaching method that stresses child initiative and self reliance; and John Dewey, the American philosopher and psychologist who emphasized learning through activities rather than formal curricula, later called progressive education. Writers also should know how the teaching of these educators have influenced leading modern theorists. These include Theodore Sizer, who organized the Coalition of Essential Schools, with its emphasis on learning for understanding and cultivating habits of mind; E.D. Hirsch, the founder of the Core Knowledge curriculum, focused on the goal of ensuring all students learn a common body of knowledge; and Howard Gardner, the Harvard professor who argues that humans have multiple intelligences, such as mathematical, musical or interpersonal. Educators continue to debate the validity of all of these theories.

## ■ EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Education reporters must understand that much of what happens in schools begins before children ever reach school. They should know that studies show that children who show up for kindergarten ready – that is with adequate exposure at home to language and books – have much brighter prospects of thriving in school. They should also know about brain research, which increasingly shows that children have a heightened capacity to absorb knowledge in their early years. Preschool education remains a window of opportunity largely lost among American

children. Surveys show that most American kids continue to get poor to mediocre preschool care, if any care at all, an issue education writers need to keep in the public light.

## ■ HIGHER EDUCATION

While higher education is a beat unto itself at many newspapers, all education reporters should know what is happening in their colleges and universities. Increasingly, the lines are blurring between the final years of high school and the first years of college. A growing number of high school juniors and seniors are taking courses at community colleges for dual credit. Higher education reporters will need to become familiar with the rules of the NCAA, trends in campus life, the mysteries of college costs, debates over the curriculum, the complexities of financial aid, and the small, but rapidly growing for-profit higher education companies such as the University of Phoenix, which caters to working adults and is the largest private university in the nation. They also can expect to write about debates over the university's role in the transfer of its research findings into practical applications in industries such as biotechnology, and whether universities should, for example, get royalties.

## Ethics

As with skills, journalists are going to embrace the same body of ethics – such as fairness, accuracy and balance – whether they're covering education or any other beat. But again, there are some ethical circumstances that are peculiar to covering schools, most related to writing about children. Here's an example:

Deborah, a 16-year-old freshman at Marshall High School in Portland, Oregon, and her mother, Joanna, were unusually frank in telling a reporter about their problems. Deborah described how she was held back a year in kindergarten, had learning disabilities and was struggling to survive her first year of high school. Her mother talked about being a recovering alcoholic and drug addict who had married a tattoo artist. She revealed tattoos of roses climbing up her long legs. She also disclosed that Deborah was once raped. Both Deborah and her mother said they were comfortable having all of these details included in a profile of Deborah in *The Oregonian* as part of a series on the Class of 2000 at Marshall High. While the story did not mention the rape, most of the details were included in the profile as was a description of Deborah skipping classes and finally dropping out of school. The photos of Deborah also were unflattering, showing her in a tight, low-cut sleeveless blouse blowing a big bubble of gum. The reporter described to Deborah and her mother what they could expect in the story. Still, both were devastated when it appeared on the front page. Neither was prepared for the calls and comments from shocked friends and relatives.

It is hard to say how much harm Deborah suffered from this story, but it safe to say that she was hurt and embarrassed. How can we write about young people, particularly those in trouble, in vivid ways without hurting them?

Here are some guidelines on how to deal with children, particularly on sensitive topics such as violence, sex, drugs, crime, homosexuality, death, poverty school failure, profanity and pornography:

1. Young people, and sometimes their parents, are naïve about what it means to have personal details of their lives revealed in the newspaper or through broadcast. We need to ask if a child we are writing about will be targeted for discrimination, harassment or teasing if we reveal certain details. We need to consider keeping some personal details out of the media to protect children, even if they and their parents consent to having such details published. We should explain clearly to children we write about what they can expect to see in the newspaper or television before their stories are published or broadcasted. Deborah in the example above probably would have been more comfortable with the story if she knew in detail what was going to be in it and had a chance to voice her concerns.
2. We need to be respectful of children. We should deal with young people in interviews and stories as though they were our own children, siblings or members of our own family.
3. We should give children a way to opt out of an interview if they become

uncomfortable, even after they've agreed to be interviewed. One way to do this is to interview them in small groups. This proved a good technique during interviews of children after a school shooting in the spring of 1998 at Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon.

4. We should inform the parents of any child 16 and under that we are going to feature their child or his or her comments in a story on a controversial or sensitive topic. This is not necessary for quick-hit light and uncontroversial stories or features.
5. We should consider concealing the identity of a child or adolescent when we describe very personal, unflattering and negative details about their lives, such as sexual abuse or school failure. It is difficult to imagine, for example, how we could identify a teenager and write about his or her sexual activity without causing harm.

Reporters wield great power in the impact they can have on the lives of children and schools; that power demands responsibility. It is important to consider the possible unintended consequences of the stories we cover about the most vulnerable in our society.

## Conclusion

News organizations that have been reflective about the role of education in today's world know it ranks among their most important beats and requires skilled, knowledgeable reporters capable of covering it with the insight it demands. The days when education was a beginning beat for cub reporters and a stepping stone to more important news died in the early 1980s. That's when the world economy began to change and education was no longer optional for individual and national prosperity. Some news organizations still give education short shrift at their own peril. But most major newspapers and broadcasting networks recognize the need for change and devote far more resources to education than a decade ago.

Even after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, education has remained at the top of local and national political and economic agendas. Those values are reflected in the relentless pressure on schools to change and improve. Schools have adopted standards to adjust to this new world order, and news organizations should consider doing the same. What better place to start than the education beat.

# Resources for Education Reporters

## Publications, web sites, data sources

To help inspire and guide you on the education beat, we have put together a list of some of the most compelling and useful books, publications, web sites and data sources in the education field. (Excerpted from *Covering the Education Beat: a current guide for editors, writers and the public*, published in 2001 by the Education Writers Association).

First we would like to point you to *Covering the Education Beat*. Written by reporters for reporters, this comprehensive guidebook covers nearly 100 topics in education, from early childhood to charter schools, dropouts, testing, and the achievement gap. (see [www.ewa.org/offers/publications](http://www.ewa.org/offers/publications)). The book is essential for higher education reporters, too, with backgrounders on college costs, enrollment trends, privatization and more. Each easy-to-read backgrounder covers the latest research and current issues, expert sources, and pertinent organizations with web sites, e-mail and phone numbers.

For new reporters, a bonus section called "Getting Started on the Beat" features:

- Tips on Observing Classrooms
- How to Get Along (Well) with Your Editor
- How to Write About Testing
- The Freedom of Information Act
- How to Tackle a Winning Project

## Other Books

### From pre-K to high school

*A Hope in the Unseen*, Ron Suskind (poverty and achievement; racial dynamics)

*Among School Children*, Tracy Kidder (about teaching)

*Beyond the Classroom: Why School Reform Has Failed and What Parents Need to Do*, Laurence Steinberg, B. Bradford Brown, Sanford Dornbusch (accountability and reform)

*Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families*, J. Anthony Lukas (on school desegregation, civil rights)

*Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* and *The Schools We Need – Why We Don't Have Them*, E.D. Hirsch Jr. (on curriculum and content)

*Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School*; *Horace's School: Redesigning the American High School*; *Horace's Hope: What Works for the American High School*, all by Theodore Sizer (high schools)

*Left Back*, Diane Ravitch (history of reform)

*Making Change: Three Educators Join the Battle for Better Schools*, Holly Holland (Kentucky school reform)

*The Power of Their Ideas: Lessons for America from a Small School in Harlem*, Deborah Meier (small schools, personalization)

*Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, Jonathan Kozol (poverty, finance)

*Small Victories: The Real World of a Teacher, Her Students and Their High School*, Samuel G. G. Freedman (teaching)

*South of Heaven*, Thomas French (high schools)

*Standards for Our Schools*, Marc Tucker and Judy Coddling (standards)

*The Teaching Gap: Best Ideas from the World's Best Teachers for Improving Education*, James Stigler and James Hiebert, and *The Learning Gap: Why Our Schools Are Failing and What We Can Learn from Japanese and Chinese Education*, Harold Stevenson and James Stigler (on teaching and the curriculum)

## Higher Education

*The Big Test: The Secret History of the American Meritocracy*, Nicholas Lemann (on the S.A.T.)

*The Idea of a University (Rethinking the Western Tradition)*, John Henry Newman, Frank M. Turner (Ed.), Martha McMackin Garland (a defense of the liberal arts education)

*Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus*, Dinesh D'Souza (racial, ethnic dynamics)

*The Shape of the River: Long-term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions*, William G. Bowen and Derek Bok (affirmative action)

*Tuition Rising: Why College Costs So Much*, Ronald Ehrenberg (college costs)

*A University for the 21st Century*, James J. Duderstadt (on the future of higher education)

*Universities and their Leadership*, William G. Bowen (Ed.) Et al. (essays on faculty, research, accountability, etc.)

*When Hope and Fear Collide: A Portrait of Today's College Student*, Arthur Levine and Jeanette S. Cureton (student life)

## Magazines, Journals, Websites with Education News

### From pre-K to high school

*American School Board Journal* ([www.asbj.com](http://www.asbj.com))

*Education Daily* ([www.educationdaily.com](http://www.educationdaily.com))

[www.educationnews.org](http://www.educationnews.org)

*Education Next* ([www.educationnext.org](http://www.educationnext.org))

*Education Week* ([www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org))

Education World ([www.education-world.com](http://www.education-world.com))

*Educational Leadership* ([www.ascd.org](http://www.ascd.org))

Education Writers Association's web site ([www.ewa.org](http://www.ewa.org))

*Harvard Education Letter* ([www.edletter.org](http://www.edletter.org))

*Phi Delta Kappan* ([www.pdkintl.org/kappan](http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan))

*Rethinking Schools* ([www.rethinkingschools.org](http://www.rethinkingschools.org))

*The School Administrator* ([www.aasa.org/publications/sa](http://www.aasa.org/publications/sa))

[www.stateline.org/education](http://www.stateline.org/education)

[www.TCRecord.org](http://www.TCRecord.org)

### Higher Education

*Black Issues in Higher Education* ([www.blackissues.com](http://www.blackissues.com))

*Change Magazine* ([www.aahe.org/change](http://www.aahe.org/change))

*Chronicle of Higher Education* ([www.chronicle.com](http://www.chronicle.com))

*Community College Week* ([www.ccweek.com](http://www.ccweek.com))

*National CrossTalk* ([www.highereducation.org/crosstalk](http://www.highereducation.org/crosstalk))

*Postsecondary Education Opportunities* ([www.postsecondary.org](http://www.postsecondary.org))

[www.uwire.com](http://www.uwire.com)

*University Business* ([www.universitybusiness.com](http://www.universitybusiness.com))

## Data Sources

The Grapevine Survey, The Center for the Study of Education Policy -

[www.coe.ilstu.edu/grapevine](http://www.coe.ilstu.edu/grapevine)

309/438-2041

College Board - [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

212/713-8052

Education Commission of the States - [www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org)

303/830-3622

Educational Research Service - [www.ers.org](http://www.ers.org)

703/243-2100

ERIC - [www.askeric.org](http://www.askeric.org)

800/LET-ERIC

ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education - [www.eric.org](http://www.eric.org)

800/773-3742

National Assessment of Educational Progress - <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>

202/502-7476

National Center for Education Statistics - <http://nces.ed.gov>

202/502-7300

National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education - [www.highereducation.org](http://www.highereducation.org)

202/822-6720

TIMSS - Third International Math and Science Study - <http://nces.ed.gov/timss>

202/502-7346

U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement -

[www.ed.gov/offices/OERI](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI) and National Library of Education - [www.ed.gov/NLE](http://www.ed.gov/NLE)

800/424-1616

## Training for Education Reporters:

The Education Writers Association offers the National Fellowships in Educating Reporting and regional and national seminars on timely education topics, led by some of the nation's most respected researchers and education reporters. Regional seminars in 2002-03 covered such topics as the First Amendment and public schools, school leadership, college costs, and school reform in California (see [www.ewa/offers/seminars](http://www.ewa/offers/seminars) or [www.ewa/offers/fellowships](http://www.ewa/offers/fellowships)).

### Other training and fellowship opportunities:

The Hechinger Institute on Education & The Media, Teacher's College – Columbia University ([www.tc.columbia.edu/hechinger](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/hechinger))

Institute for Educational Inquiry, Seattle, Washington

(<http://depts.washington.edu/cedren/Initiatives/journalists.htm>)

Investigative Reporters and Editors ([www.ire.org](http://www.ire.org)) and the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting ([www.nicar.org](http://www.nicar.org))

John S. Knight Fellowships for Professional Journalists—Stanford University

(<http://knight.stanford.edu>)

Michigan Journalism Fellows ([www.mjfellows.org](http://www.mjfellows.org))

The Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University ([www.nieman.harvard.edu](http://www.nieman.harvard.edu))

The Poynter Institute ([www.poynter.org](http://www.poynter.org))

The Society for Professional Journalists ([www.spj.org](http://www.spj.org))

## About the Education Writers Association

The Education Writers Association, founded in 1947, is the professional association of education reporters and writers. Its 900 members include education reporters and writers in the print, broadcast and online media and associate members (school and college public information officers and people working in education policy or research organizations). Annual dues are \$65.

Members receive a bimonthly newsletter, *Education Reporter*, and other publications, including *Covering the Education Beat: a current guide for editors, writers and the public*, free of charge. Services include helpful listservs for both higher education and K-12 reporters, national and regional seminars on timely topics, an annual writing contest – the prestigious National Awards for Education Reporting and the Fred M. Hechinger Grand Prize for Distinguished Education Reporting, and the National Fellowships in Education Reporting. EWA's publications and online services include:

- *Covering the Education Beat: A Current Guide for Editors, Writers and the Public* (2001). \$60 each or free with membership. Online at [www.ewa.org](http://www.ewa.org) for members only.
- *Education Reporter*. The newsletter of the Education Writers Association. Free to members.
- *Education Reform*. Brief reports on critical topics in education with expert sources. Free to members. Online at [www.ewa.org](http://www.ewa.org) for members only.
- EWA's web site, [www.ewa.org](http://www.ewa.org). An excellent 24-hour resource for reporters and the public. Features new studies and research in education, breaking education news, and general information about EWA's seminars, contests, and fellowship program. Register online, learn about contest rules and deadlines, and search for jobs, announce new programs, or find other members in the "Members-Only" section.
- E-mail Listservs. Join your colleagues from national and local media online. The listservs for K-12 and higher education reporters are gold mines for story ideas, sources, and varying perspectives on the pressing issues faced by journalists every day.
- Special Reports include: *Searching for a Superhero: Can Principals Do It All?* (2002) \$10 or free to reporters; *New Networks – Old Problems: Technology in Urban Schools* (2001) \$12 or free to reporters; *Barriers and Breakthroughs: Technology in Urban Schools* (1999) \$10 or free to reporters; *Wolves at the School House Door: An Investigation of the Condition of Public School Buildings* (1989) \$10 or free to reporters.

## EWA Officers

**Robin Farmer**, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, President

**Steve Henderson**, *Baltimore Sun*, Vice President - Active Members

**Lesley Dahlkemper**, KSA-Plus Communications, Vice President - Associate Members

**Mary Jane Smetanka**, *Star Tribune*, Secretary

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**Yvonne Simons**, Michigan Journalism Fellow

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**National Education Writers Association**

2122 P St. NW, Suite 201

Washington, D.C. 20037

(202) 452-9830

Fax (202) 452-9837

[www.ewa.org](http://www.ewa.org)

[ewa@ewa.org](mailto:ewa@ewa.org)