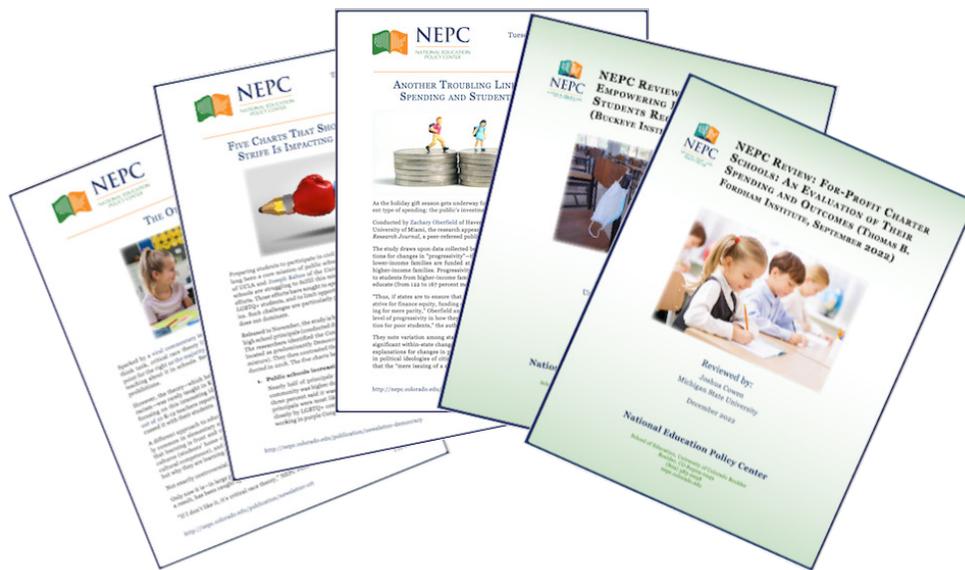




## ICYMI: NEPC’s TOP NEWSLETTERS OF 2022



2022 was an eventful year for education, as the nation’s schools continued to struggle with the coronavirus pandemic and maintaining adequate staffing amid the challenges of “the great resignation,” all while facing ongoing efforts to steer public funds to private schools and erase the experiences and perspectives of Black, Brown, female, and LGBTQI+ people from the curriculum.

Published on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the school year, NEPC’s newsletter aims to keep readers informed, with perspectives on contemporary challenges and events that are equity-focused and research-based. Newsletters contain announcements and summaries of the organization’s publications and events, as well as brief, standalone thought pieces related to the Center’s work. As 2022 recedes into the distance, we wanted to share the topics that resonated most with you, our readers—as measured by the share of subscribers who viewed each newsletter. We hope this list offers an opportunity for our subscribers to take stock of the past year while catching up on popular newsletters they may have missed.

In reverse order of popularity, here are the five installments that garnered the most attention in 2022:

### **5. NEPC Review: For-Profit Charter Schools: An Evaluation of Their Spending and Outcomes**

NEPC’s peer reviews of non-peer-reviewed publications (most of which are released by ad-

vocacy think tanks) are hallmarks of the Center's work. In this one, [Joshua Cowen](#) of Michigan State reviews a Thomas B. Fordham Institute report on academic outcomes in Ohio's nonprofit and for-profit charter schools. Like other reviews of Fordham publications, this one finds that the Foreword written by the think tank's staff is poorly aligned with the findings of the study contained in the body of the report. Specifically, the Foreword's contentions that regulating for-profit charters could harm disadvantaged students and that states should continue to expand high-quality charter schools are not supported by the more mixed and nuanced results of the research itself.

#### **4. *StudentsFirst: Empowering Parents to Help Students Regain Lost Learning***

Another NEPC review—this one focused on a report from Ohio's Buckeye Institute—was our fourth most-read newsletter of the year. In this review, [David S. Knight](#) of the University of Washington finds little to no evidence to support the publication's key conclusions: that the pandemic has led to a decline in confidence in public education, and that this decline should be addressed by expanding access to education savings accounts, public school choice, and tax credits for private school scholarship programs.

#### **3. *Another Troubling Link Between K-12 Spending and Student Demographics***

NEPC's newsletters often highlight the work of the Center's Fellows. This newsletter describes a study conducted by Fellow [Bruce Baker](#) of the University of Miami and co-author [Zachary Oberfield](#) of Haverford College. Published in the *American Educational Research Journal*, the study finds that, as the percentage of low-income students and students of color increases in a state, lawmakers seem to become less generous. Specifically, they are less likely to fund K-12 education in a progressive manner that accounts for the higher costs of educating children who live in poverty. They decline to fund the schools those children attend at higher levels than schools attended by their peers from more affluent families. The researchers found more support for the conclusion that demographics explain reductions in progressive funding, as opposed to other common explanations for these reductions, such as the presence or absence of court-ordered school finance reforms or shifts in the partisan makeup of state legislatures.

#### **2. *Five Charts That Show How Partisan Strife Is Impacting Public Schools***

In our hyper-partisan environment, a nationally representative survey of principals finds that the lack of civility that has become a mainstay of our nation's politics has spilled over into high schools, making it more difficult for them to fulfill longstanding objectives of preparing citizens to participate productively in our democratic society, according to a report co-authored by NEPC Fellow [John Rogers](#) of UCLA and [Joseph Kahne](#) of UC Riverside. Findings from the report, which are communicated in the newsletter through five charts, include reports that harassment of LGBTQI+ students is on the rise; that parents, district leaders, and school board members are clamping down on efforts to teach students about racism, diversity, and race; and that students are more frequently making demeaning or hateful remarks about those who disagree with them politically.

## 1. *The Other CRT*

NEPC’s most popular newsletter of 2022 examines how Culturally Relevant Teaching—a pedagogical practice that goes by the same initials as the academic framework, Critical Race Theory—has experienced political fallout from those incorrectly conflating the two. Unlike Critical Race Theory, which is almost never taught in K-12 schools and has been demonized and mischaracterized by politicians on the Right, Culturally Relevant Teaching had been a mainstay of public education for years. It has helped teachers address our nation’s changing student demographics by encouraging educators to incorporate at least two different cultures (students’ home cultures plus at least one additional culture in order to develop cultural competence), and by helping students understand not only what they are learning but why and how this content is relevant to their lives. “In the meantime, advocates for Criterion Referenced Tests are warily standing by, to say nothing of advocates for Charitable Remainder Trusts, Crisis Response Teams, and Cathode Ray Tubes,” the newsletter ponderingly concludes.

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### NEPC Resources on School Choice

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