

Subject: Rare solar eclipse offers learning opportunity
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 **ASCD SmartBrief**

News for the Education Profession

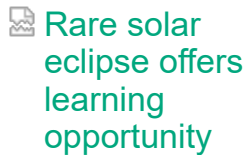
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Rare solar eclipse offers learning opportunity



(Chicago Tribune/Getty Images)

On April 8, if weather permits, a rare total solar eclipse will offer an unique opportunity for learning. In this article, Dennis Schatz, a senior fellow at the Institute of Learning Innovation and past president of the board of directors for the National Science Teaching Association, shares strategies to maximize student engagement and overcome obstacles to science education.

Full Story: [Education Week](#) (3/25)

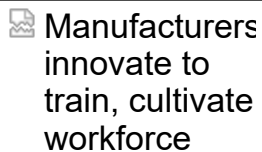


Minn. high school launches youth skills training program

Alexandria Area High School in Minnesota introduced the Youth Skills Training program, sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, to provide students with job placement opportunities in various industries such as advanced manufacturing, agriculture, automotive, health care and information technology. The initiative is aimed at fostering partnerships between education and industry, offering students valuable industry-related classes, safety training and paid work experiences to prepare them for successful careers. **Full Story:** [Echo Press \(Alexandria, Minn.\)](#) (3/24)



Manufacturers innovate to train, cultivate workforce



(Pixabay)

Facing a shortage of skilled workers, manufacturers like General Electric and Siemens are expanding their training programs to cultivate talent, including specialized roles in welding and machining. With innovative approaches such as on-site training schools and partnerships with educational institutions, these companies aim to fill critical positions and address persistent challenges in recruiting and retaining workers. **Full Story:** [Bloomberg](#) (3/22)





NEW! *Dynamite Decodables* from Wiley Blevins

Increase students' engagement in developing and improving phonics skills. The innovative *Dynamite Decodables* feature diverse characters and include riddles, puzzles, jokes, and mysteries, so these decodables make learning to read fiction and nonfiction more effective and fun, while also building knowledge and vocabulary.

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TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

School social worker shares inspiration behind her work

Michele Whaley was inspired to pursue school social work by the first such social worker she met, noting how caring she was to the school community, which led Whaley to complete her master's degree. Whaley shares what her typical day looks like, misunderstandings about social work and the best advice she has received.

Full Story: [Chalkbeat](#) (3/21)



■ Survey: Biases plague women leaders in education

Education Week (3/22)



GIS is STEM

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TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Ind. schools prepare for cellphone ban



School officials in Indiana anticipate a cellphone-free learning environment next year after lawmakers passed legislation prohibiting students from using wireless devices during class. The law aims to reduce distractions, promote face-to-face communication and enhance focus on learning -- though concerns linger over implementation challenges and potential racial disparities in enforcement.

Full Story: [National Public Radio](#) (3/24)



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SCIENCE OF READING RESOURCES

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Science of Reading Classroom Observation Checklist



The Science of Reading identifies best practices for reading instruction, but what do those practices look like in action? Use this **Classroom Observation Checklist** to help assess how well the curriculum and instruction in your school is aligned with the Science of Reading.

The Science of Reading Simplified

In this popular blog series, literacy expert Dr. Sharon Vaughn **explains what the Science of Reading is — and isn't — in simple, straightforward terms.** Each blog includes



actionable tips for teachers, families, and administrators to help young learners become successful readers.

THE WHOLE CHILD

Fla. elementary school students take part in Pizza Wars

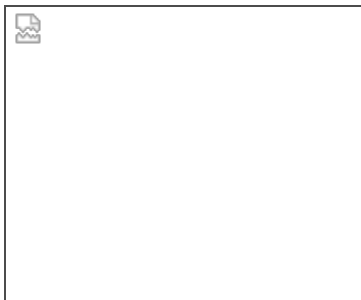
Pine Trail Elementary School students in Florida's Volusia County Schools are engaged in Pizza Wars, taste-testing various pizzas to influence next year's school lunch menus. With strong preferences and thoughtful evaluations, students want to ensure their favorite slices make the cut, highlighting the importance of student input in school menu selection.

Full Story: [The Daytona Beach News-Journal \(Fla.\)](#) (3/22)



■ N.C. district pursues free school meals for all students

WUNC-FM (Chapel Hill, N.C.) (3/22)



Inform MTSS with universal screening

Universal screening data help determine the effectiveness of Tier 1 instruction and identify students who need additional Tier 2 and 3 support. Use the resources in this toolkit to choose a reliable universal screener and analyze and act on data to support all students.

[Access the toolkit »](#)

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NEW FROM ASCD

The Vital Role of Joy for Educators

Joy is a powerful and profound emotion. Leveraging joy in the face of adversity, hardship, or oppressive circumstances is a way for educators to express their emotional resilience.

Read more in the new issue of Educational Leadership.

The Emotionally Intelligent School System

What's your standard operating procedure? Transparent expectations lead to better relationships up and down the hierarchical ladder. Read more from educator and author Jeffrey Benson in the March issue of Educational Leadership.

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POLICY WATCH

Coalition urges ban on school AI surveillance

A coalition of youth justice and civil rights organizations has called on the US Department of Education to prohibit schools from using federal grants for police surveillance technologies, citing concerns about the expansion of police presence in schools and the disproportionate impact on marginalized youth. The letter highlights growing opposition to the use of AI-driven surveillance tools. **Full Story:** [K-12 Dive](#) (3/21)



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FACULTY LOUNGE

Diploma program supports Okla. students with disabilities

Schools in Oklahoma now offer an alternate graduation path for students with disabilities, which educators say is a better fit for student needs while still offering a diploma. The Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Program, launched during the current school year, also helps connect students with the post-graduation supports they need to transition to life



Diploma
program
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Okla.
students with

(Pixabay)

after high school, says Austin Hula, director of special services at Stillwater Public Schools. **Full Story:** [Stillwater News Press \(Okla.\)](#) (3/21)



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*We're often silent. We don't yell and we don't complain.
We're patient, as always. Because we don't have the words
yet.*

Svetlana Alexievich,
writer, journalist, Nobel Prize in Literature recipient

March is Women's History Month



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