

A few rays of fiscal hope come from the state controller's report that California exceeded its tax revenue projections for November by nearly \$500 million. On the income inequality front, another report says the heirs to the Walmart fortune, in 2007, had the same net worth as the bottom 30% of all American earners. And the rosy opinion column by the Alameda Unified superintendent needs our local responses – she left out that the district has many millions in reserves and that Alameda teachers are at a bargaining impasse showdown over salaries and other issues after she received a big salary increase herself...

### **THE HEAR AND NOW: Quotes From The Clips**

“As the revelations of 2011 prove, students aren't helped by billionaire-executives-turned-education-dilettantes who leverage their riches to force their faith-based theories into schools. Likewise, kids don't benefit from politicians pretending that union-busting, teacher-bashing and standardized testing represent successful school ‘reforms.’ Instead, America's youth need the painfully obvious: a national commitment to combatting poverty and more funds spent on schools in the poorest areas than on schools in the richest areas -- not the other way around.”

--- *Author David Sirota, calling for a restructuring of education financing (see story #2)*

“Tom Fallo and your administration, we know what you're up to. No longer will you continue to operate in the shadows.”

--- *The bullhorn-blared comments of El Camino Community College student Robert DeWitz, organizer of a campus protest Thursday against cuts and the policies of President Tom Fallo (#4)*

“I have said it before, and I'll say it again: There are no silver bullets in education. There are no magic feathers that enable elephants like Dumbo to fly. It's hard work to improve schools. It takes dedication, resources, and time. And the work is never done, the magic number of 100 percent is always out of reach.”

--- *Education historian Diane Ravitch in her debunking of certain examples of “miraculous” schools (#16)*

**[1/ California revenues beat projections in November by nearly \\$500 million](#)**

(Sacramento Bee © 12/09/2011)

SACRAMENTO -- Some good budget news, for once. California beat its November revenue projections by \$497.7 million, or 8.9 percent, state Controller John Chiang reported today. That comes just days before the Department of Finance is slated to announce how much money it believes California will receive for the 2011-12 fiscal year, which will ultimately decide how much the state has to cut starting...

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## **2/ Opinion column: Money proves best tool for improving schools**

(San Francisco Chronicle © 12/09/2011)

As 2011 draws to a close, we can confidently declare that one of the biggest debates over education is - mercifully - resolved. We may not have addressed all the huge challenges facing our schools, but we finally have empirical data ruling out apocryphal theories and exposing the fundamental problem. We've learned, for instance, that our entire education system is not "in crisis." On the contrar...

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## **3/ Walmart Heirs Worth Same Amount As Bottom 30 Percent Of Americans In 2007: Analysis**

(Huffington Post © 12/09/2011)

The Occupy Wall Street movement has brought increased focus on the disparity between the top one percent of earners and everyone else in the United States. But one American family paints a particularly stark picture of the country's wealth gap. The six children of Walmart's founders, Sam and James "Bud" Walton, had the same net worth in 2007 as the entire bottom 30 percent of American earners, ...

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## **4/ El Camino College students stage walkout, rally over cuts**

(Torrance Daily Breeze © 12/09/2011)

TORRANCE -- A group of about 70 students on Thursday staged a noisy protest at El Camino College to decry, among other things, cuts to course offerings and the college board's recent reduction of counselors' work year.

The rally, organized by a group calling itself "Occupy El Camino," comes in the wake of a Nov. 28 decision by the board of trustees at the Torrance-area campus to impose a contract on the faculty union, effectively putting a unilateral end to nine months of deadlocked bargaining.

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### **5/ School superintendents in San Jose fear state triggers will kick in next year**

(San Jose Mercury News © 12/09/2011)

At a time when most people are eagerly awaiting the holidays, three local school superintendents are worrying about the future. Recent news reports say the state's 2012-13 budget deficit could be as high as \$13 billion. The superintendents worry the Legislature will end up cutting more state funds from educators' budgets--a worry that's proved true in a number of recent years. None of the three t...

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### **6/ Blog: NEA stakes a claim in teacher effectiveness debate**

(Education Week Teaching Now Blog © 12/08/2011)

A National Education Association commission issued a report today with specific recommendations for upping pre-service requirements, establishing career paths for teachers, and developing new evaluation systems. The commission, assembled last summer by NEA President Dennis Van Roekel, was charged with examining options and making recommendations about how to help the union promote effective teach...

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### **7/ Monterey County educators mull threats to migrant education from ESEA reauthorization**

(Monterey County Herald © 12/09/2011)

MONTEREY -- With pending reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, there are two things that worry Monterey County migrant education representatives the most. One is the proposed re-definition of who is considered a migrant child. The other thing is suggested

changes to spending formulas intended to give more flexibility to states and school districts. The spending cha...

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### **8/Riverside schools point to potential power of technology in the classroom**

([www.EdSource.org](http://www.EdSource.org) © 12/09/2011)

RIVERSIDE -- As the effectiveness of technology in the classroom comes under increasing scrutiny, one California district encourages extensive use of iPads and other such digital readers, and says the benefits are clear and compelling. A series of recent articles in the New York Times said research on the academic payoff of technological innovation in the class is slim to nonexistent. But Riversid...

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### **9/ John Fensterwald: Facing some inconvenient truths about reforming teacher evaluations**

(Educated Guess © 12/09/2011)

Good teaching matters. Yet most teacher evaluations are compliance-driven checklists that have little or no impact on teaching and learning. The question is not whether teacher evaluation should be improved, but what the goals of the new processes we seek should be. The received wisdom is that better evaluations would provide teachers with useful feedback and also improve decision making ...

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### **10/ Summer break delayed for Pajaro Valley students: End of furloughs means five more school days in June**

(Santa Cruz County Sentinel © 12/09/2011)

WATSONVILLE -- Surprise! For Pajaro Valley students, the wait for summer vacation just got a little longer. The school year will end June 8 instead of June 1, according to a revised calendar unanimously approved by the school board Wednesday. "I do hope the students are as happy as

we are," said trustee Sandra Nichols. The change comes after teachers and administration reached a deal to en...

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### **11/ Sac Unified trustees shelve plan to combine schools**

(Sacramento Bee © 12/09/2011)

SACRAMENTO -- Following community backlash, Sacramento City Unified School District trustees decided to shelve a controversial proposal involving Sacramento Charter and West Campus high schools, as well as halt the closure and consolidation of five elementary schools. The move stunned the 350 people who came to Thursday night's school board meeting to advocate for their schools. In deciding to change direction...

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### **12/ Sloppy oversight increases risk of unsafe school buildings, audit confirms**

(San Diego Union Tribune © 12/09/2011)

State regulators charged with overseeing school construction have failed to ensure that the buildings children occupy are safe, according to a state audit released today. The California State Auditor's report found that the Division of the State Architect has limited authority to penalize school districts for not complying with the Field Act – California's landmark earthquake safety law for publ...

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### **13/ Alameda Superintendent Kirsten Vital: Measure A made 2011 a good year for Alameda schools**

(Argus Online © 12/09/2011)

ALAMEDA -- A year ago, our future was much darker. Due to unprecedented reductions in education funding by the state, at the end of 2010 our Board of Education had to approve a devastating Plan B for the Alameda Unified School District, with millions of dollars of cuts that would have harmed our students and changed the quality of life in Alameda. Instead of accepting that bleak future, hundreds of volunteer...

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#### **14/ Why Norquist's no-taxes pledge is different**

([Politico.com](http://Politico.com) © 12/09/2011)

Grover Norquist's pledge has conquered the Republican Party. Signers take an oath that they will never vote for a tax increase. All the Republican presidential candidates, except Jon Huntsman, have signed it. So have 238 members of the House and 41 senators, along with hundreds of state Republican officeholders and seekers. The Taxpayer Protection Pledge has reinforced political gridlock in...

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#### **15/ 90 percent of Wisconsin school unions OK certification**

(St. Paul Pioneer Press © 12/09/2011)

School employees approved state certification for about 90 percent of the unions seeking the limited collective bargaining rights allowed under Wisconsin's controversial new law governing public employees, officials said Thursday. Members of 213 local bargaining units for teachers and school support staff voted by telephone over the past two weeks, according to the Wisconsin Employment Relatio...

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#### **16/ Diane Ravitch: 'Miracle schools' not so miraculous after all**

(Washington Post © 12/09/2011)

We know that there is a strong and undeniable correlation between family income and test scores. This correlation appears on the [SAT](#), the ACT, the [NAEP](#), and every other standardized test. Corporate reformers claim that great teachers alone can close [achievement gaps](#), and recently it has been the vogue to make bold claims for "miracle schools," where dramatic gains supposedly happened either because the school was a charter without a union or because the school was "transformed" by using federal funds to fire the staff and start over. If only it were that simple!

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## [17/ West Coast port shutdown pledged for Monday despite union rejection](#)

(Austin American-Statesman © 12/09/2011)

Occupy Wall Street protesters want to shut down ports up and down the West Coast on Monday in a bid to gum up the engines of global commerce. But organizers who are partly billing this effort as a show of solidarity with longshoremen have not won the support of the powerful union representing thousands of dock workers. The tension between the century-old International Longshore and Warehouse Uni...

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