

PARENTS TALK BACK

Finding my daughter's doppelganger in Karachi

The newspaper editor seated next to me at a trendy Lahore restaurant spoke soberly about the pressures faced by the Pakistani media.

Despite the fact that Pakistan remains one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists, it has a vibrant press, explained Kamal Siddiqi. He is the editor-in-chief of the *Express Tribune*, one of the country's largest English-language dailies.

But his demeanor changed when we discovered we both have daughters roughly the same age. In that perplexed way that middle-aged parents talk about their children's musical tastes, he mentioned that his 13-year-old is a fan of Fall Out Boy, an American pop-punk band.

My daughter loves Fall Out Boy, I informed him.

His girl also follows British YouTube stars Dan and Phil, he said, unsure of who exactly they were.

Mine is similarly obsessed. (Neither Siddiqi nor I have watched an episode yet, although we agreed that we fully intend to monitor what has our children so enraptured.)

It wasn't just the girls' shared pop cultural interests that amused us. It was their boundary-testing attitudes; their verbal sparring with siblings and parents; their common language of Tumblr and Instagram posts.

"I thought this was somewhat unique to American kids," I said to him.

"No, this is what she and all her friends talk about," he said.

The West has long exported its culture to the rest of the world. But the proliferation of social media has given rise to a more fluid exchange that goes beyond singing the same song lyrics and watching the same movies. The hyper-connected, post-millennial generation is part of a pan-digital culture. Of course, a secular American teen might have little in common with one being educated in a Pakistani madrassa. But one of Lahore's most conservative madrassas broadcasts its lessons via YouTube and fields "Ask an imam" questions online. Their audience is global.

Meanwhile, a teen punk in Pakistan is no less emo than her American counterpart.

I rattled off the names of a few other bands that Siddiqi's daughter might appreciate, having been educated on several occasions by my own 12-year-old. He texted his daughter in Karachi about his new musical finds, and she began quizzing him about songs, suspicious in the way teenagers are when their parents profess to liking anything cool. She stopped texting after a short exchange.

I empathized. I had been away from home on a journalism seminar for more than two weeks at this point, and I had sent my daughter lengthy texts to which I received short replies, if they were acknowledged at all.

One of my traveling companions, a young *Huffington Post* reporter, nodded sympathetically when I showed her the one-sided text conversations.

"It's like you're in a relationship with a bad boyfriend," she said.

It did feel like trying a bit too hard to get someone's attention. I shared the analogy with Siddiqi, who agreed that it was apt.

I wondered why I felt so giddy at the thought of parents across the globe suffering the same teenager-related angst. The American culture of modern parenting lays so much blame at the feet of parents: We are too permissive; we are too hovering; we are overly involved; we are too self-involved.

Mostly, we are guilt-ridden and time-starved.

Every aspect of parenting is picked apart and diagnosed as a symptom of any number of societal ills, from consumerism to narcissism to attention deficits.

No wonder it was such a relief to hear a Pakistani parent describe an adolescent who sounded so familiar.

Siddiqi's daughter called me to ask if I had really taken my daughter to a Fall Out Boy concert this summer. Yes, I told her, it's true.

"She's so lucky!" she shrieked.

I could not resist texting my daughter afterwards and sharing that tidbit.

"I know I have cool parents," she texted back, adding a sly smiley face emoji.

She must be missing me after all, I thought.

Siddiqi and I pledged to keep in touch after our meeting, which was ostensibly about the ways in which our professional worlds overlapped and diverged.

He and I became Facebook friends. We virtually introduced our daughters, who connected through Instagram.

The distance between Karachi and St. Louis: now a bit shorter.

Aisha Sultan is a St. Louis-based journalist who studies parenting in the digital age while trying to keep up with her tech-savvy children. Find her on Twitter: @AishaS.



AISHA SULTAN
Parents talk back

Many children return to school without Common Core results

By JENNIFER C. KERR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With new backpacks, pens and pencils and clothes, millions of children are back in school. Many are excited, some are anxious — and still waiting for the results of the new tests they took last spring aligned to the Common Core academic standards.

Congress returns from its summer vacation after Labor Day and on its agenda is a rewrite to the No Child Left Behind education law that requires the annual academic testing. The House and Senate passed competing versions, and congressional negotiators need to reconcile them.

Some things to know as students, parents and teachers embark on a new school year.

Enrollment

About 50.1 million students will attend public elementary and secondary schools this fall. Enrollment is expected to be slightly higher than a year ago, when 50 million students were enrolled in public schools, according to the Department of Education.

An additional 4.9 million students are expected to attend private schools this fall.

The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that 3.3 million students will graduate from high schools, public and private, at the end of the school year.

Enrollment is also growing at the nation's colleges and universities, with 7 million students at two-year colleges and 13.2 million at four-year schools, according to the center.

It says colleges and universities are expected to award 952,000 associate's degrees, 1.8 million bachelor's degrees, 802,000 master's degrees and 179,000 doctor's degrees in 2015-16.



Students arrive for the first day of school at Stuyvesant High School, Wednesday in New York.

Common Core tests

This past spring saw the rollout of new tests based on the Common Core standards. The reading and math tests replace traditional spring standardized tests. About 12 million students in 29 states and the District of Columbia took the tests developed by two groups — the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

According to Smarter Balanced, only a few states have released scores from the spring — Connecticut, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Missouri, West Virginia, and Vermont. Most states have not been able to put out test scores before the start of classes. The delay was expected in the exam's first year.

Scores for the almost 5 million students who took the PARCC tests still have yet to be released. PAARC is still setting benchmarks for each performance level. The partnership says they're due for release this fall, and that the goal in future years of the tests is to release the results as close to the end of the school year as possible.

Standardized tests

Many in the country question the idea of rating a teacher based partly on how students perform on standardized tests — something supported and encouraged by the Education Department as part of the No Child Left Behind education law.

A recent Gallup Poll found 55 percent of those questioned opposed linking teacher evaluations to their students' test scores. Among those with children in public schools, opposition was stronger, at 63 percent.

More than 40 states are moving forward with plans to evaluate teachers and principals in part on how well their students perform on standardized tests, according to the department. It says other factors, such as student work and parent feedback, should be considered, too. Teachers, unions and others worry there's too much emphasis on test scores.

The survey was funded by Phi Delta Kappa International, an association for educators that supports teachers and educational research.

No Child Left Behind

Congressional negotiators will have to iron out differences between House and Senate bills rewriting the much-criticized and outdated No Child Left Behind education law from 2002.

Both bills would maintain the annual testing requirements in reading and math in third grade through eighth grade, and once in high school. But they would allow the states to determine whether and how to use those tests to assess the performance of schools, teachers and students. The bills would bar the Education Department from mandating or giving states incentives to adopt or maintain specific academic standards, such as Common Core.

The House measure would allow federal money to follow low-income children to public schools of their choice.

The Obama administration has made clear it won't back the House bill.

Sleepy teens

Most teenagers aren't getting the kind of sleep they need as they begin a new school year.

Fewer than 1 in 5 middle and high schools began the day at the recommended 8:30 a.m. start time or later during the 2011-2012 school year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

CDC and Education Department researchers looked at nearly 40,000 public middle and high schools, and found that the average start time for school was 8:03 a.m. Forty-two states reported that 75 percent to 100 percent of the public schools in their states started before 8:30 a.m.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start the day no earlier than 8:30 a.m., so teenagers get the sleep they need to be successful in school.

OUT OF THE VAULT

Legendary cowboy, actor earned name accidentally

Yakima Canutt is a legend. But he got his famous moniker by mistake, according to a 1977 interview with the *East Oregonian*.

The four-time all-around winner at the Pendleton Round-Up (1917, 1919, 1920 and 1923) was born Enos Edward Canutt on Nov. 29, 1896, in the Snake River Hills near Colfax, Wash. He rode his first bronc in 1912 at the age of 16, but only after he got his father's permission. "If he bucks you off, your riding is through — you're finished," his father told him. Canutt rode the bronc to a standstill, and his rodeo career was off like a rocket.

Canutt first attended the Pendleton Round-Up in 1914 with a group of cowboys from Yakima, Wash. The group was trying out bucking horses and Pendleton photographer Walter Bowman captured Canutt on one of his attempts. Not knowing the cowboy's name, he asked around and was told, "Oh, that's Canutt of Yakima." When Bowman labeled the picture for a newspaper article, Yakima Canutt was re-christened — a name that stuck with him for the



RENEE STRUTHERS
Out of the vault

Yakima Canutt competes in the 1918 Pendleton Round-Up in his sailor whites.

EO file photo

rest of his life.

Yak, as his friends called him, continued to compete in rodeos even while serving in the U.S. Navy. In 1918, while on a three-week furlough, he showed up at the Round-Up in his sailor's uniform "that just didn't seem to match his cowboy boots." As the first successful competitor in bulldogging that year, Canutt wrestled a longhorn steer halfway around the arena before subduing it, though he ran over the two-minute time

limit. He still received a standing ovation.

After winning his fourth all-around title in 1923, Canutt took his skills to Hollywood. He appeared in 48 silent movies, all westerns, but moved to stock and stunt work after "talkies" were introduced in 1928 (his voice had been damaged by the flu while in the Navy). And much of John Wayne's on-screen persona, including the drawling, hesitant speech and the hip-rolling walk, was copied from Canutt after

the two began working together in 1932. Canutt later became a director for action scenes, most notably the 20-minute chariot racing scene in the 1959 production of "Ben Hur."

Yak earned a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for his contributions to the motion picture industry, and an honorary Academy Award in 1967 for his achievements as a stunt man and for developing safety devices to protect stunt men. He was inducted into the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum Hall of Fame in 1959, and into the Round-Up and Happy Canyon Hall of Fame in 1969. And he played himself in the movie "Yak's Best Ride" in 1985.

Yakima Canutt, "... the most famous person NOT from Yakima, Washington," according to author Elizabeth Gibson, died May 24, 1986, at the age of 90 at his home in North Hollywood.

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ODDS & ENDS

NYC millionaire bequeaths \$100,000 to 32 cockatiels

NEW YORK (AP) — A New York City millionaire who died this summer has bequeathed a \$100,000 trust fund to care for her 32 pet cockatiels.

The *New York Post* reported Saturday that Leslie Ann Mandel's will asks that the small parrots continue living in an aviary at her \$4 million East Hampton home.

The will names each bird, from Margie and Nicki to Zara and Zack 12.

With Mandel's stepson as trustee, the fund also will care for a cat named Kiki and a rescue dog named Frosty.

Mandel ran a fundraising firm and amassed a \$5.3 million fortune. She died in June at age 69.

Other wills also have provided for pets. Hotel magnate Leona Helmsley left \$12 million to her dog, Trouble. A judge trimmed the bequest to \$2 million.

Missing comma means certain records are off-limits

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — In the end, the Tennessee Attorney General says the argument all comes down to the lack of a comma.

Attorney General Herbert Slatery issued an Aug. 25 opinion that says a city council cannot request the results of a Tennessee Bureau of Investigation report because of a law that says such records should be released "only in compliance with a subpoena or an order of a court of record," *The Tennessean* reports.

Slatery said the lack of a comma after the word "subpoena," means that either a subpoena or an order must come from a court. If there were a comma present, the opinion said, then "of a court of record" would only apply to "order."

State Rep. Antonio Parkinson, D-Memphis, said he asked the attorney general to weigh in because of ongoing discussions about how to balance transparency and investigative needs, especially in high-profile cases involving police officers that have occurred in Memphis and other cities around the nation.

"Especially in cases of officer shootings, people have the right to know what happened," Parkinson said. "I do also understand the need to make sure the investigations are not tainted, and that the information is not put out there too early."

Josh DeVine, spokesman for TBI, said according to the staff in the bureau's legal department, the agency has never received

a subpoena from a city council. Nashville Metro Council Jon Cooper said that action has been threatened by council members but never used.

Barbershop fined \$750 for refusing to cut woman's hair

WASHINGTON, Pa. (AP) — A Pennsylvania barbershop has been fined \$750 for refusing to cut a woman's hair.

Barbiere advertises itself as a high-end gentlemen's barbershop and offers complimentary beers and spirits. The Washington barbershop was recently fined by the state's Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs for gender discrimination.

Owner John Interval tells the (*Washington Observer-Reporter*) the fine "infringes" on his shop's environment. Interval says, "Guys come here as a kind of a little getaway, to be around other guys."

The female customer had booked hair appointments online for herself and her boyfriend. She asked for a short haircut known as a wave but was turned away.

Interval says his staff recommended other shops and even offered to pay for a haircut at someplace else to compensate for the inconvenience.