

October 2007 Advocacy Newsletter

Information gathered by the Education, Environment, Health and Wellness, Parent Involvement, Parenting and Family Life and Special Education Chairs to assist you in your advocacy efforts



Education

- **Reading Rockets** offers activities and ideas for building your child's reading skills at www.readingrockets.org/families
- **Web-based Resources Now Available on General Education & Diploma Requirements:** The new Web page provides users with access to charts highlighting diploma requirements for students, including a new chart that reflects changes in regulations enacted within the recent past, such as the phasing out of some local diploma options and the phasing in of new mathematics examinations and courses. Each column of the chart is linked to a page that provides more detailed information in html format. These resources are available by selecting "Diploma/ Graduation Requirements" on the Office of Curriculum, Instruction & Instructional Technology's Web page at: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/home.html>.
- **A new publication, *Engaging Parents in Education*, at the 2007 National Parental Information and Resource Center:** Informs parents and students of their education options under NCLB and engaging parents in decisions about their children's education. <http://www.ed.gov/admins/comm/parents/parentinvolve/index.html>
- The **US Department of Education** has recently clarified that it is **not** a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) for SES providers to contact parents and guardians of students served in SES programs in previous years. <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/library/ses081007.html>
- **Give Kids Good Schools Week**, October 15-21, is a campaign to improve public schools. This year, America will be talking about education all week long through a variety of community conversations and activities. Interested in participating? Check out: <http://www.givekidsgoodschools.org>



Special Education

- **Free** bilingual booklet available on ADHD – www.help4adhd.org
- The **NYS Procedural Safeguards Notice** has been revised and updated effective September 1, 2007. These safeguards include the revisions required by the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in implementing federal regulations (Part 300 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations). For a copy of the safeguards, go to this website: <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/psgncover.htm>
- **Fall 2007 Issue of Mental Health News** "Understanding and Treating Bipolar Disorder" is available online at: www.mhnews.org
- **A new acronym – IESP – comes with new law:** Applies to special education students who attend a nonpublic school in your district but are not residents of your district.

These students will be served under an individualized education services plan (IESP), which is developed by the school district where the private school is located. SED created the IESP to distinguish it from an individualized education plan (IEP), which applies to students with special needs who reside in your district and attend either public or private schools.

- **NYS AGATE (Advocacy for Gifted and Talented Education) Statewide Conference**, co-sponsored by Capital Region BOCES and Siena College on October 26 and 27. This year's conference is titled, "Teaching Outside the Box: Developing Talents Beyond the Benchmarks". For more information: www.agateny.org.



Environment

- The Syracuse school district now has 100% participation in the **Go Green Initiative** (www.gogreeninitiative.org). It's a new school year and creating a healthy environment is always on the list of the "to-do's" for any PTA. So if your PTA has any interest in participating in this recycling, environment rejuvenating program or you are a district that is already part of this program, we'd like to hear from you: environment@nyspta.org. If you would like to see or receive Go Green newsletters, email greenupny@yahoo.com



Health and Wellness

- **Catalyst Center Provides New Resources for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs:** These publications highlight best practices to improve health care financing for this population: <http://www.hdwg.org/catalyst/Chartbook Main.php>
- **Healthier School lunches:** Suggestions for making healthier school lunches can be found: <http://www.iparentingfitness.com/articles/904.php>



Parent Involvement

- The **Washington Learning Center** has developed activities materials addressing language development, phonological awareness and print awareness skills that parents can use to enhance their children's skills. To download materials go to www.wlearning.com and click on the purple button that says "Free Parent Education Handouts" on the home page.



Parenting and Family Life

- **Parenting for Tolerance** A new parent's guide to preventing and responding to prejudice is available from: <http://www.tolerance.org/parents/index.jsp?ttnewsletter=ttnewsgen-052207>
- California joins the District of Columbia and 15 other states in **banning cell phone and other electronic devices from being used by teen drivers**. 12 other states are considering similar legislation.