

Advocacy Newsbriefs...

Legislative Brief: Waivers for No Child Left Behind

US Education Secretary Arne Duncan has announced that waivers are available for states that cannot achieve the level of student achievement required by 2014 in the No Child Left Behind legislation. According to Sec. Duncan, the waiver is a short-term fix to avoid the threat of large numbers of schools being classified as "failing" and therefore subject to inappropriate penalties. States seeking waivers may be required to demonstrate that they are meeting certain requirements that are Administration priorities, like using alternate means to raise levels of student achievement and preparation for college and careers.

One of the main provisions of No Child Left Behind, the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, was that students in all states would be proficient in ELA and math skills by 2014. Initially some states *lowered* their standards to ensure that more students could reach them, thus defeating the purpose of the law. More recent efforts to raise state standards (through initiatives like the Common Core State Standards) have created greater challenges for states to comply with the 2014 proficiency deadline, as they have struggled to help all students reach desired levels.

There was hope that this problem would have been solved through reforms in Congress's reauthorization of the ESEA, which is still pending. In June the Administration announced that it would offer waivers if Congress did not take action before the fall, 2011, as is the case. For more details on these waivers see <http://www.ed.gov> or :

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/08/education/08educ.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&emc=eta1

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everychild. onevoice: We Advocate for ALL children...




Environment Spotlight

Cleaning for Healthy Schools

The Cleaning for Healthy Schools Toolkit is a free "do-it-yourself" tool on how to find and phase in the use of certified green cleaning products that are proven to work and to save money. Follow this link for facts, reproducible handouts and workshop presentations on green cleaning in your schools at <http://cleaningforhealthyschools.org/>.



"Advocacy is at the heart of PTA's mission and vision. Taking action provides both parents and PTA leaders with the resources to become more involved with their community at home and their community across the nation."



Family Engagement

The NYS PTA Board of Directors adopted a **Family Engagement Position Paper** during the annual Summer Leadership Conference in July. This Position Paper calls for the NYS Board of Regents to adopt the National PTA Family-School Partnership Standards.

In addition, NYS PTA supports a state mandate that would incorporate meaningful, ongoing family engagement in teacher/administrator certification and evaluation programs. To access the Position Paper and our recommendations to the NYS Board of Regents click on Advocacy at www.nyspta.org.

Special Education Information

The current "Combating Autism Act of 2006" is due to expire on September 30. If not renewed, millions of Federal dollars earmarked for research and training will end. It was referred to committee back in June but the scheduled hearing has been postponed until the beginning of September. More information about this important legislation can be found at <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h112-2005>

Each September, FEMA (The Federal Emergency Management Agency) with other government agencies provide information about how Americans can prepare for emergencies, especially for people with disabilities. <http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/disabled.html>

The National Center for Learning Disabilities has released the 2011 edition of "State of Learning Disabilities." This report provides a lot of important information about advances that students have made as well as some of the challenges they still face. The entire report or highlights of it can be viewed at www.ld.org/stateofld

The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities provides parents and educators with resources that can be extremely helpful. The "Ten Basic Steps in Special Education" describes the Special Education process. It can be found at <http://nichcy.org/schoolage/steps>

Autism speaks has a community tool kit to assist parents and schools. <http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/school-community-tool-kit>

Did You Know.....



The NYS Board of Regents meets monthly, except for August. To access the 2011-2012 meeting schedule, agendas, materials, and webcast opportunities, go to:

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings>