

October 2009 Advocacy Newsletter

Information gathered by the Education, Environment, Health and Wellness, Family, School and Community Engagement, Parenting and Family Life, Media Safety, Special Education Chairs and Educator Vice President to assist you in your advocacy efforts



Education

- See the new **NYSED Commissioner, David M. Steiner's first news conference** on the web at: <http://pointers.audiovideoweb.com/stcasx/1c2win1721/regentspresseredit.wmv/play.asx>
- **New resource for teachers** looking to check certification requirements for various states: <http://www.certificationmap.com>
- **K-12 Education Should Include Engineering, Experts Say** (Science Daily, 09/10/09) <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/09/090908125129.htm>

The introduction of K-12 engineering education has the potential to improve student learning and achievement in science and mathematics, increase awareness about what engineers do and of engineering as a potential career, and boost students' technological literacy, according to a report from the National Academy of Engineering and the National Research Council. The report examines the status and nature of efforts to teach engineering in U.S. schools. Engineering might be called the missing letter in STEM, the report says.
- **ELL Graduation Rates Often a Mystery** (Education Week, 09/09/09) [http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/09/04/03ellgrads.h29.html?tkn=\[WBF4H7pi0JUz5q5PD A3HZ5Frs%2FSvjEQRD1q](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/09/04/03ellgrads.h29.html?tkn=[WBF4H7pi0JUz5q5PD A3HZ5Frs%2FSvjEQRD1q)

Many states and districts are doing a poor job of tracking graduation rates of English-language learners -- the fastest growing population of students. No Child Left Behind was supposed to rectify that. But 13 states and numerous districts still don't report that information to the Department of Education, or at least not accurately. But new rules require that schools and districts be judged on their graduation rates overall and by subgroup, including ELLs, to determine whether they've met NCLB goals.
- **Driving Education Innovation - Tricky Road Ahead for Innovation Fund** (*Education Week*, 09/09/09) http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/09/09/03stim-innovate_ep.h29.html?tkn=SNBFnJqUSup%2FI5rMpsdt76M8wmMc1ZvATN6r

Federal education officials will face a variety of obstacles in running the \$650 million. Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund, from an expected flood of applications and concern about favoritism in picking winners, to skepticism about the government's ability to drive innovative change in education. Meanwhile, the Department of Education is reaching out to private philanthropies in hopes of increasing the size and scope of the agency's innovation agenda. And the Obama administration is seeking another \$100 million for the program.
- **June 2010 Regents Examination in Algebra 2/Trigonometry.** The first administration of the new Regents Examination in Algebra 2/Trigonometry will take place in June 2010. Schools will have the option of requesting and administering both Algebra 2/Trigonometry and Mathematics B. This is the final step in the transition from Mathematics A and Mathematics B to Integrated Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra 2/Trigonometry. A chart detailing this transition is

- attached to the SED memorandum. Each student may take only the examination for which he or she has been prepared by coursework. For more information <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/sar/>; <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/new-math.htm>
- **NEW SENIOR DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:** On September 14, 2009, the State Board of Regents announced the appointment of Dr. John B. King, Jr. as Senior Deputy Commissioner for P-12 Education. In his position, King will lead the State's school reform efforts. He will begin State service on October 5, 2009. For more information...<http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/RegentsApptKing.html>



Environment

- **Lunch Packing Tips:** Back to school means we all have to start thinking about lunch, whether we pack it ourselves or buy it from the school cafeteria. One thing is for sure: NYS PTA members care about what kids are eating and the garbage that it generates. Interested in packing a lunchbox that is waste free? Try www.wastefreelunches.org or www.globalstewards.org/lunch.html
- Idea! Your PTA could initiate a **Trash Free Lunch Day!** Get ideas at www.epa.gov/osw/education/lunch/html
- **Styrofoam is Out!** Lots of units seem motivated to help rid their schools of those styrofoam lunch trays. Sources for alternatives include <http://wholeearthpackaging.com> Search for Chinnet Valise tray or www.foodbizsupply.com Search for bagasse tray
- **Composting is the Rage:** School-wide composting is all the rage. A great source for helping schools start their own composting (and more) program is The Go Green Initiative www.gogreeninitiative.org
- **Reduce, Reuse, Dispose:** Often, your town's Department of Solid Waste is a really good resource. For a good list of resources for schools, take a look at www.recycleompkins.org



Family, School, and Community Engagement

- **Mom Congress on Education and Learning:** National PTA is excited to partner with *Parenting* as the **official** media sponsor of the PTA Reflections ProgramSM. National PTA is also proud to support *Parenting* magazine's Mom Congress on Education and Learning, a prosocial initiative to celebrate and connect moms advocating for better schools. <http://www.pta.org/3452.htm><http://www.pta.org/3452.htm> "There's nothing like a group of fired up, crazy-passionate moms to get something done, and when it comes to our kids' education in particular, there's no shortage of work to be done." <http://www.parenting.com/momcongress>
- **49 States sign on to initiative to develop Common Core State Standards.** This initiative is considered an opportunity to drive education reform so that all children graduate from high school child prepared for college or the workplace. National PTA is an endorsing partner. To learn more about the common core standards initiative, please see the following website: <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

For more information on the New York State Standards Review Initiative please see <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/standardsreview/>.

- **Partners for Child Safety:** *Consumer Reports* has partnered with the National PTA and the National School Boards Association to form the School Safety Alert Program. The program will alert parents, school administrators, and educators to imminent dangers and allow them to remove potentially dangerous or even lethal products from their homes and schools. Share this information with every parent, family, educator, and school. To learn more go to www.consumerreports.org/schoolsafety



Health/Wellness

- **The Debate Over Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Taxes:** Chronic diseases related to poor diet cost the country billions of health care dollars each year and are complex problems which must be addressed with multifaceted strategies. Taxing certain classes of products to reduce consumption has been proposed as one such strategy. Explore this web site for an in depth look at the economics, science, law and public policy debate. http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/what_we_do.aspx?id=271http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/what_we_do.aspx?id=271
- **“The School Food Allergy Program”:** The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (FANN) has developed a site www.foodallergy.org to guide to educate school staff about the serious nature of food allergies and how school officials, classmates and families can provide the supportive environment and assistance needed to protect a child with food allergies.
- ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) has long recognized that student health and learning go hand in hand, and the H1N1 flu pandemic has made this connection even more apparent. A special Web page, www.ascd.org/flu, can be your source on the H1N1 virus as the school year begins.



Media Safety

- For information concerning video games and on teen sexting visit www.isafe.org and click on i-parents.



Parenting and Family Life

- The ***Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act***. Signed into law in 2007, this federal Act was created to secure the safety of all public swimming pools by requiring that these pools have anti-entrapment drains or devices installed by Dec. 19th 2008. Anti-entanglement drain covers or suction limiting devices underwater prevent swimmers from becoming entrapped. These devices shut off the pools motor in the case of pressure rising in the piping. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the agency in charge of enforcement of this law, strongly believes that the law applies to pools of all educational institutions. Read more: http://swimmingdiving.suite101.com/article.cfm/virginia_graeme_baker_act#ixzz0QkgIH4Hm
<http://www.nais.org/government/article.cfm?ItemNumber=151439>

➤ **Lets Get Ready to Read!**

- Back-to-school is the perfect time to introduce the ***Get Ready to Read!*** screening tool to preschoolers. This 20-question screen will show if a child's pre-reading skills are weak, strong, or somewhere in-between.

<http://nclid.convio.net/site/R?i=xTVsu25bRR8TeHZJYLdk7A>

- **The Transitioning to Kindergarten Toolkit** includes lots of information that is helpful at the start of a child's preschool or kindergarten year.

http://nclid.convio.net/site/R?i=IYk_tGfMLcxVIuv9MijVeg

Print out a PDF on how to use the Get Ready to Read! screening tool and share it with teachers, parents, and caregivers. The toolkit and screening tool are free online, and are invaluable resources during back-to-school time.

<http://nclid.convio.net/site/R?i=GeukCIKbgDpYqo3yhBP0Qw>

- **Develop your Back-to-School Game Plan** with GreatSchools. Find out how to stay engaged, prep for success, and shop smart. <http://nclid.convio.net/site/R?i=EnX6Yput4t0kf4aovFv2Wg>

- **Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics:** Response to Intervention for Elementary and Middle Schools. Go to <http://nclid.convio.net/site/R?i=co-ocO9mnwQ6IPnT-7A9aA> to locate this new guide from the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance within the Institute of Education Sciences!



Special Education

- Check out "***News You Can Use***": Great resources can be found at The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities. This site is chock full of information for parents and educators as we kick-off the school year! Topics include: It All Starts...in Families... and Communities; The Little Ones, Early Intervention/Early Education; Schools K-12; State and System Tools; Special Focus: AfterSchool. Go to: http://campaign.constantcontact.com/render?v=001KMq4TI4IOM8bLT8NSKWWBCEvHvyuZPDmZj_oKDI1KIHY_E1YOm2c6FsiFFDc1bERdkLygCV-Bb_4ITNCJMo_YH9xZ_tg8bj-oZGXA5M5kQw8%3D

- The ***Special Ed Connection***[®] delivers timely and important news, case law, statutes, regulations, and more. <http://www.specialedconnection.com>

- **IDEA Full Funding Bill Reintroduced.** US Senate Education Chair, Tom Harkin, and Senator Roberts reintroduced bipartisan legislation which would honor the Congress' commitment to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The IDEA Full Funding Act authorizes increasing amounts of mandatory funding in six year increments that, in addition to the discretionary funding allocated through the Appropriations Committee, will finally meet the federal government's commitment to educating children with disabilities in 2015. By increasing the federal investment in special education, the bill would also free up local and state funds that had previously been used to meet IDEA requirements. For information: www.cec.sped.org

The Disability Policy Collaboration, as part of the Education Task Force of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD), filed comments on proposed rules regarding the criteria to be used by the Department of Education to provide grants on a competitive basis to states via the Race to the Top funding authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Approximately \$5 billion is available to states to spur educational achievement in our nation's schools. Comments were made on issues such as the use of a student's Individual Education program (IEP) as a measure of student progress (CCD opposes this), charter school participation, effectiveness of school teachers and administrators and the use of universal design for learning (UDL). The comments will be posted on the CCD web site.

http://www.lifewithoutlimits.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=13941.0