

April 2010 Advocacy Newsletter

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



Education

- **New graduation results released for high schools statewide in New York -**
http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/2009_Grad_Rates03092010.html
- For all the **latest news** on what's happening in (New York) Curriculum, Instruction and Instructional Technology, go to: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/eblast/>
- In discussion at a recent Regents meeting, are the **costs of assessments, tests and Regents exams**. For more information and a listing of the costs, go to the New York State Education website (www.nysed.gov) or to this site directly -
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2010Meetings/March2010/0310monthmat.html#bor>
and scroll down to the Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education section to this article (Need to Reduce Costs of NYS Assessment Program) [HTML/Word](#)
- **Obama administration offers details of changes proposed for NCLB**
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/13/AR2010031301137.html>
Schools will be labeled as high-performing, needs improvement or chronically low-performing under President Barack Obama's proposed revisions to No Child Left Behind, and more of an emphasis would be placed on student progress in a wider range of subjects, rather than just student scores in reading and math. Obama released his full proposal to Congress on Saturday and encouraged lawmakers to overhaul the law this year. Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, was critical of the plan, which she said "appears to place 100 percent of responsibility on educators and gives them zero percent authority."
- **Administration Unveils ESEA Renewal Blueprint**
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/03/13/25esea.h29.html?tkn=RTZFCHpeJpX9PiHJ91OLbjRqxc4MvJ8ghLg&cmp=clp-edweek>
The plan aims to address complaints that the law's current version (NCLB) is inflexible and sets the bar too low on academic achievement.
- **Does NCLB promote monolingualism?**
http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/03/17/25salomone_ep.h29.html?tkn=WRLF8o%2BKtByb1FNQkbFR4RVwrhAyyMGR%2BDf8&cmp=clp-edweek
At a time when other nations are teaching their children multiple foreign languages, writes Rosemary Salomone, America remains English-dependent
- PBS has online teacher professional development information – For more information, go to <http://www.pbs.org/teacherline/services/>

- **Going from STEM to STEAM:**
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/03/10/24piro.h29.html?tkn=MNYFCCCuBqWyxTJNL0Nsyr%2BaEywGTvz8Pt5&cmp=clp-edweek>
For a greater global payoff, writes Joseph Piro, give the science, technology, engineering, and math acronym an A—for the arts.



Environment

- Ann Cooper, the **Renegade Lunch Lady**, sees school lunch as a social justice issue. Here's a link to the article and video <http://www.yesmagazine.org/happiness/school-lunch-is-a-social-justice-issue>
- A petition to support the **Kid Safe Chemicals Act** <http://www.ewg.org/kid-safe-chemicals-act-blog/sign-petition-b/>
- Need a new book to read? Thinking about making some changes toward a **more green lifestyle**? Here's a book you might consider http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/green/greenblog/2010/03/book_review_greening_your_fami.html
- **Do you know about No Impact Man?** He has a blog and now a book and soon a movie. He and his family live in NYC, and for one year it was their goal to live without making any net impact on the environment. Luckily, Colin Beavan has a sense of humor. His blog is a quick read that keeps going even past the end of their one year experiment. The book is a fun read about that year. <http://noimpactman.typepad.com>



Health and Wellness

- **Building Blocks for a Healthy Future** is where parents, caregivers, and teachers of children aged 3 to 6 can find lots of great tips, materials, and ideas for spending time with their children. When they learn together using the six action steps that Building Blocks are based on, it prevents young children from developing risky behaviors. This interactive web site helps lay the groundwork so that you can talk with your children later about underage drinking, tobacco and illicit drugs. The family section can be used to help your child learn the difference between healthy and unhealthy activities and practice making decisions, solving problems, and following rules. The educator section can be used to help with preschool curriculum development. You will find educational classroom games, school activities, and other useful teaching resources. These classroom tools are designed to help educators build a bridge between school and home, reach out to their communities. www.bblocks.samsha.gov
- **HealthyLearn** from The American Institute for Preventive Medicine is an up to date source of valuable information for people who want to make wise health care decision, live healthier life styles and learn about thousands of health topics. A medical self care guide is available that addresses over 300 conditions and learn 365 ways to live longer and feel better. A free printable calendar to keep up to date on National health Observances is also available. www.healthylearn.com.



Parenting and Family Life

➤ **New York State's Juvenile Justice System**

Two recent reports documenting the woeful conditions found in New York State's juvenile justice facilities provide a sense of urgency to implement long overdue reforms. The first, issued in August 2009 by the U.S. Department of Justice, details conditions at four upstate New York facilities. The second, released in December by the Governor's Task Force on Transforming Juvenile Justice, recommends twenty strategies for reform. In addition, the Legal Aid Society of New York City recently filed a class-action lawsuit on behalf of 500 youths in ten facilities, seeking limits on the use of force, treatment for mental health problems and monetary damages.

A snapshot of Juvenile Justice in New York State today:

- New York's statute defines the age of the juvenile justice system's jurisdiction from 7 to 15.
- Teens, 16 and older, automatically come under the jurisdiction of the adult criminal justice system.
- More than 1,600 youth enter juvenile justice facilities in New York yearly, most of them between the ages of 12 and 15. This represents a decline of one-third since 2000. Over that time period, several jurisdictions including New York City, Erie, Onondaga, and Suffolk Counties have made concerted efforts to increase access to community-based services and reduce placements into juvenile justice facilities.
- In 2007, there were 845 youths in 18 non-secure, limited secure and secure Office of Children and Family Services-operated facilities. Median length of stay was 10.5 months.

➤ **The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)** was designed to support the Casey Foundation's vision that all youth involved in the juvenile justice system have opportunities to develop into healthy, productive adults. www.aecf.org

➤ Since 2003, the Council on Children and Families has worked to integrate community justice principles in state and local policies and practices in an effort to promote safe and healthy communities and to enhance public confidence in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. The need for this work emerged from findings of a juvenile delinquency intake study that was conducted by the Council and the Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives. In part, this study identified barriers to providing services within the juvenile justice system to better meet the needs of troubled youth and their families.

www.nyscommunityjusticeforum.org

➤ **NYS Office of Children and Family Services** www.chcfinc.org

➤ **NYS Division of Criminal Services** <http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us/>



Special Education

➤ **April is Autism Awareness Month.** For more information, go to: <http://www.autism-society.org> and <http://kelbermancenter.org/content/page/id/53>

➤ **New and Free iPhone App Launched for Creating Individual Education Programs Checklist:** The Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) has launched an iPhone

App designed to help families and teachers plan for educational services for students with disabilities. The IEP Checklist iPhone App was developed in response to the rising need for families with children with disabilities to have on-the-spot intelligent assistance working with schools to develop Individual Education Programs (IEPs). The App can be downloaded from the PEATC website [_www.peatc.org_](http://www.peatc.org)

(<http://www.response-track.net/lnk/peatc/189mb/?15RGV06M6EL>)

Or, by entering "IEP Checklist" into the iTunes store search bar.

The App is free, and is compatible with the iPhone and iPod Touch.

- **National Academic Standards Call For Higher Bar In Special Education.** Michelle Diament (March 11, 2010): A sweeping new proposal outlining national education standards offers "a historic opportunity" for students with disabilities "to excel within the general curriculum," proponents say. The draft plan crafted by education experts convened by the nation's governors and state school chiefs outlines yearly curriculum recommendations in English and math for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade
<http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2010/03/11/national-academic-standards/7295/>