

## April 2011 Advocacy Newsletter

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Information gathered by the Education, Environment, Family Engagement, Health and Wellness and Special Education Chairs to assist you in your advocacy efforts.



### Education

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- To view who the current **Board of Regents members** are and to see who represents your area, go to: <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/members/>.
- The **Board of Regents has Webcasts** available each month. If you cannot attend in person, you can participate via webcast. You can participate live or view archival webcasts of previous meetings. Go to: <http://usny.nysed.gov/webcasts.html>.
- The Office of State Assessment has released the following resources that relate to the **Grades 3-8 Testing Program**:
  - [Memo: Update on Grades 3-8 Elementary and Intermediate Level Testing for the 2010–11 School Year](#) (PDF 61 KB)
  - [2011 Scoring Site Operations Manual \(SSOM\)](#) (PDF 1.34 MB)
  - [2011 ELA Scoring Leader Handbook, Grades 3-8](#) (PDF 272 KB)
  - [2011 English Language Arts Tests Teachers Directions, Grades 6, 7 and 8](#) (PDF 281 KB)
- **Financial Literacy Resources** – The current economic crisis highlights how essential it is that individuals and families have the information, education and tools that they need to make good financial decisions in an increasingly complex national and global financial system. The following is a selection of resources for families and educators:
  - Financial Literacy and 21st Century Skills programs: <http://commerceplaza.org>.
  - SEFCU – <https://www.sefcu.com/categoryIndex.aspx?id=731>. SEFCU is a credit union committed to helping members become financially literate. They conduct seminars, provide personalized financial coaching, and a wealth of online resources to help members and the communities we serve achieve their purpose.
  - Junior Achievement – <http://www.janeny.org>. Junior Achievement is a partnership between the business community, educators and volunteers – all working together to inspire young people to dream big and reach their potential. JA's hands-on, experiential programs teach the key concepts of work readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy to young people all over the world.
  - National Endowment for Financial Education – <http://www.nefe.org>. The mission of the National Endowment for Financial Education is to help individual Americans acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to take control of their financial destiny. NEFE's mission is grounded in the belief that regardless of background or income level, financially informed individuals are better able to:

- Take control of their circumstances,
  - Improve their quality of life, and
  - Ensure a stable future for themselves and their families.
- Federal Trade Commission – <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/consumer.shtm>. This section of the FTC website offers practical information on a variety of consumer topics. The information here can help you avoid rip-offs and exercise your consumer rights.
  - Internal Revenue Service – <http://www.irs.gov/app/understandingTaxes/index.jsp>. For Educators, every Understanding Taxes lesson includes the correlations to national and state educational standards. Each lesson plan includes a link to the applicable national and state standards, making it simple to integrate Understanding Taxes into your existing classroom curricula.



## Environment

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- Is your **cell phone's radiation level safe**? <http://www.aolnews.com/2011/03/14/is-your-cell-phones-radiation-level-safe-dont-call-the-fcc/>.
- Can't seem to **rid your life of plastics completely**? At least choose carefully: <http://www.ewg.org/healthyhometips/pickplasticcarefully>.
- **It's gardening season!** The National Gardening Association website is a great place to start! <http://www.garden.org/>.
- Wow! Here are **some great handouts** that you can print and distribute. Topics include (but aren't limited to) green schools, mercury and children's health: <http://chej.org/campaigns/besafe/resources/>.
- **Pass this terrific magazine on** to your favorite teacher or use many of the ideas at home: <http://www.greenteacher.com/>.
- For questions about starting **school-wide recycling programs**, here's a good resource: [http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials\\_minerals\\_pdf/schoolhb.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/schoolhb.pdf).
- **Cafeteria composting** also seems to be popular. Here's a comprehensive sight that features schools and universities that are composting their food wastes successfully: [http://www.ecoschools.com/Waste/Waste\\_wSidebar.html](http://www.ecoschools.com/Waste/Waste_wSidebar.html).
- It's time to starting thinking **summer camps** and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation has some across the state that might be of interest: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/29.html>.



## Family Engagement

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- National PTA has launched “**Connect for Respect**,” an initiative to prevent bullying in schools and communities across the country. PTA leaders and parents play a critical role in ensuring that children grow up in safe environments free from bullying. Tip sheets are available that show how parents can help prevent bullying and how PTAs can host a conversation on bullying in their communities. For more information or to download the tip sheets, visit [PTA.org/bullying](http://PTA.org/bullying).

- In New York State, the “[Dignity for All Students Act](#)” (effective July 1, 2012), requires school districts to provide staff training and designate one person in each school who will be specially trained to deal with bullying issues. Districts must also revise their codes of conduct and adopt policies “intended to create a school environment free from harassment and discrimination.” To ensure implementation success a 15-member Task Force and Advisory Work groups have been formed. NYS PTA will be represented. For information on the Act (DASA) go to: [http://www.nyclu.org/files/OnePager\\_DASA.pdf](http://www.nyclu.org/files/OnePager_DASA.pdf); for NYSED’s plan for implementation, go to: <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2011Meetings/January2011/111p12d1.pdf>.
- Family involvement in schools is key to improving student outcomes, but it cannot work without the effective training of teachers. **Explore the new skills and knowledge teachers need to effectively engage families** in the twenty-first century at: <http://www.hfrp.org/hfrp-news/news-announcements/fine-newsletter-preparing-teachers-for-family-engagement>.



## Health and Wellness

- **Nutrition and Literacy!** According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, this spring, more than 17,500 pediatrician offices across the United States will receive free copies of specially created *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* books, together with growth charts and parent handouts that encourage doctors and parents to have meaningful conversations about the importance of healthy eating, for information: <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/vhcaap.pdf>.
- A plethora of **free scholarly articles/studies** on topics like nutrition and obesity, tobacco control and prevention, etc., is available at the *Journal for Public Health Policy*. Explore at <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/jphp/index.html>.
- **State Department of Health Responds to Radiation Impact Posed by Japan’s Nuclear Plants.** In the wake of last month's major earthquake and ensuing tsunami that damaged several nuclear power plants in Japan, State Health Commissioner Nirav R. Shah, M.D., M.P.H., is reassuring New Yorkers that no U.S. states are expected to experience harmful levels of radiation. For information, go to: [http://www.health.state.ny.us/press/releases/2011/2011-03-17\\_qna\\_on\\_japanese\\_radiation\\_impact.htm](http://www.health.state.ny.us/press/releases/2011/2011-03-17_qna_on_japanese_radiation_impact.htm).
- **National School Safety Coalition** March alerts included:

Check your kitchen for foods that were recently recalled for the presence of foreign materials; or *Listeria monocytogenes*. Nestle Prepared Foods Company, is recalling over 10,000 pounds of frozen spaghetti and meatball entrees, “9.5-oz packages of **Lean Cuisine Simple Favorites, Spaghetti with Meatballs**” that may contain foreign materials; and Pierre Foods is recalling 320 cases of **Pierre™ pb jamwich**, crustless peanut butter and strawberry jam sandwiches, because they have the potential to be contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*, an organism which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections.

Palmyra Bologna Products is recalling over 23,000 pounds of **Lebanon Bologna Products** which may be contaminated with *E. coli* 0157-H7. To date, four cases of illness have been reported. *E. coli* is a potentially deadly bacterium that can cause bloody diarrhea, dehydration and, in the most severe cases, kidney failure. The very young, seniors and persons with weak immune systems are the most susceptible to foodborne illness.

For more information on these recalls and for additional recalls and safety information, go to: [www.clickcheckandprotect.org](http://www.clickcheckandprotect.org).



## Special Education

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- Revised regulations implementing the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** took effect on March 15, 2011. The regulations apply to the activities of more than 80,000 units of state and local government and more than seven million places of public accommodation, including stores, restaurants, museums, sporting arenas, movie theaters, doctors' and dentists' offices, hotels, jails and prisons, polling places and emergency preparedness shelters.  
<http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/ADAREgs2010.htm>.
- A joint memorandum from the Offices of Special Education and Curriculum, Instruction and Standards clarifies the **state policy regarding English as a Second Language** services for limited English proficient/English language learner students who are also identified as having disabilities. New York State Education Department has issued a memo regarding their policy about English as a Second Language (ESL) services for LEP/ELL students who are also identified as having disabilities. The information can be found at:  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/bilingualservices-311.pdf>.
- **Extended School Year Information** – Information and materials pertaining to summer 2011 Extended School Year Special Education Programs is now available:  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/finance/extendedschoolyearinfo.htm>.
- Many times **special education students are bullied**. The Federal government has created a website dealing with this important issue: <http://www.stopbullying.gov/index.html>.
- The United States Department of Education has a website that offers **scientific research about what works in education**: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>. Additional information can also be found <http://dww.ed.gov/index.cfm>.