

June 2011 Advocacy Newsletter

Information gathered by the Education and Family Engagement Coordinators and the Health and Special Education Specialists to assist you in your advocacy efforts.



Education

- **For a full Report of the May Regents meeting go to:**
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2011Meetings/May2011/511monthmat.html#BOR>.
- **Regents Adopt Rules For Evaluating Teacher and Principal Effectiveness.** The New York State Board of Regents adopted regulations that will implement a statewide teacher and principal performance evaluation system that includes multiple measures of educator effectiveness. The regulations, which will take effect during the 2011-2012 school year, are required by legislation enacted last year:
<http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/EvaluatingTeacherPrincipalEffectiveness.BORAdoptRules.html>.
- **“Bringing the Common Core to Life”.** On April 28, participants engaged with a leading author and architect of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), David Coleman, to understand how the Core Standards for College and Career Readiness build on the work New York State has done in developing a standards-based system and their specific implications for teachers and instructional leaders state-wide. To view the presentation, go to: <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/resources/bringing-the-common-core-to-life.html>.
- **VITAL New York,** <http://vital.thirteen.org/vital2td.html>, is an online library of more than 5,000 K-12 media resources inspired by the best in public television. Resources are available to New York State educators for **FREE** with registration. The Regents Review 2.0 collection includes 60 videos to help students prepare for the Regents examinations. Test-prep content includes chemistry, earth science, living environment, physics, integrated algebra, global history and geography, U.S. history and government, and foreign language: <http://www.teachersdomain.org/special/rr10/>.
- **NYSED Surveys for Pre-K-3:** NYSED’s Office of Early Learning (OEL) is administrating surveys on the assessment of students in preschool to Grade 3. There are three surveys: one for teachers, one for administrators, and one for teacher preparation programs. OEL is asking for people to take the survey and then pass it along to colleagues in the field.
 - Teacher Survey Link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2H57KX2>
 - Administrator Survey Link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2H7V53G>
 - Higher Education/Teacher Preparation Program Survey Link:
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2BZJ5RX>



Environment

- **Asthma Rates Rise Sharply in U.S.** Nearly one in 10 children and almost one in 12 Americans of all ages now has asthma, government researchers said. Read about it at: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/04/health/research/04asthma.html?_r=1.
- **Department of Education Starts Award for 'Green' Schools.** The U.S. Department of Education announced the creation of the **Green Ribbon Schools program** to recognize schools that are creating healthy and sustainable learning environments and teaching environmental literacy. The new awards program will be run by the Education Department with the support of the White House Council on Environmental Quality and the U.S. Department of Energy: <http://www.ed.gov/category/keyword/green-ribbon-schools-program>.
The program: <http://www.educationnews.org/earth/154902.html>.



Family Engagement

- **Update on FEE.** On May 10, The Family Engagement in Education Act of 2011 (S 941/HR 1821) was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Congressman Todd Platts (R-PA) and Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY) and in the Senate by Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Christopher Coons (D-DE).
These Congressional champions need our help! Join the Action network at <http://www.pta.org/takesaction> and ask your member of Congress to show their support by becoming a cosponsor of this important legislation.
- **Families and Schools Connecting - Conexiones entre familias y escuelas.** A monthly series of free bilingual webinars on parent engagement in education are available through the Texas Parent Information Resource Centers (PIRC). These webinars will consist of one-hour conversations, presentations and collaborative work, held through the Internet and are of special interest to those schools not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). At each session, there also will be information updates on current critical issues in public education and on early childhood home visitation services. You will receive a certificate of participation. These sessions also can be part of meeting professional development and parent involvement requisites. Go to: <http://www.idra.org>.
- **How to Stop Literacy Loss over the Summer:** As children's first and most important teachers, families have a major role to play in motivating children to read during the summer months. According to the nonprofit organization Reading is Fundamental, there are many strategies families might employ to encourage summertime reading. For more information: <http://www.pta.org/4607.htm>.
- A **new anti-bullying bill** was introduced on Capitol Hill last week by Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY). The Successful, Safe and Healthy Students Act addresses school climate by awarding grants to school districts to promote physical activity, education, fitness and nutrition and mental health; and preventing violence, harassment and substance abuse among students. Read the press release at: <http://harkin.senate.gov/press/release.cfm?i=332824>.



Health and Wellness

- **Healthy Fundraisers for the Upcoming School Year.** Many school districts are changing their policies regarding bringing outside food into classrooms and allowing food fundraisers. It's time to start planning and brainstorming for the upcoming year by incorporating alternatives to food fundraisers. The National PTA has some suggestions at: <http://www.pta.org/Healthy-Fundraisers.pdf>.
Other websites include:
 - The New York State Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Alliance at: <http://www.nyshepa.org>.
 - Healthy Kids, Healthy New York, After-School Initiative Toolkit at: http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/obesity/healthy_kids_healthy_ny/healthy_kids_healthy_ny_afterschool_toolkit.pdf.
- **Healthcare Reform.** In March 2010, President Obama signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act, which together make up the federal health care reform legislation. To see how health care reform will impact New York State, go to: <http://www.healthcarereform.ny.gov>.
- **Be Tick Free for a Healthy Summer.** State Health Commissioner Nirav R. Shah, M.D., M.P.H., is reminding people that Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases can cause serious health conditions, and people should take precautions during warmer months to protect themselves from being bitten by disease-carrying ticks: http://www.health.state.ny.us/press/releases/2011/2011-05-17_be_tick_free_prevent_lyme_disease.htm.



Special Education

- The **National Center for Disabilities** has a checklist about learning disabilities on their website that can help you identify specific areas of concerns. For further information: <http://www.nclld.org/images/stories/Publications/Forms-Checklists-Flyers-Handouts/ldchecklistbw.pdf>.
- The **National Center for the Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities** has information specific for families that may need basic information about disabilities. This page can be found at: <http://nichcy.org/families-community/new-to-disability>.
- Many times we spend a lot of time addressing our children's educational needs but sometimes don't focus on the **importance of positive social and emotional development**. For more mental health resources visit: https://www.disability.gov/health/disabilities_%26_chronic_health_conditions/mental_health_%26_substance_abuse_disorders.
- **Casey Family Programs** is an organization that works for children in the child welfare system. They have an excellent guide for parents to help teach youth some of the skills that are needed to enable youth to live successfully on their own. To access this guide: <http://www.caseylifeskills.org/pages/res/rsf/RSE.pdf>.
- As many of our students graduate high school and move on to bigger things, they become responsible for getting their needs met and must become their own advocates. **Pacer.org has a guide to assist parents**. For further information: <http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/php-c165.pdf>.