

November 2009 Advocacy Newsletter

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



Education

- **October was Hispanic Heritage month.** Here's a web site for issues/topics gear for those of Hispanic Heritage. It is sponsored by Sears Holdings Corp. Each October, there is an application for the PRIMERO Hispanic Heritage Scholarship. <https://www.shcprimerobeca.com/en> - English
<https://www.shcprimerobeca.com/es> - Spanish
- The **Advocacy for Gifted and Talented Education** in New York State (AGATE) held its annual conference on Long Island last month and has a web site with many resources and programs. Visit the site at: <http://agateny.com/>
- **What's Happening at NYSED?** Don't forget for all the latest on what is happening within the New York State Education Department, go to <http://www.nysed.gov/>
- **House Bill Creates Billions for Early Childhood Education** Wednesday, October 14, 2009 (*Brian Washington*) The U.S. House of Representatives has voted to approve the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA), which makes a landmark investment in higher education to ensure that college loans are more affordable for families and more students graduate. But SAFRA also would invest \$1 billion each year—over the next eight years—to build what lawmakers call “comprehensive, high quality, early learning systems” for children from birth to age five, a notion supported by NEA. [Read](http://www.nea.org/home/36447.htm) more at <http://www.nea.org/home/36447.htm>
- **21st Century Learning:** It is important that we understand how to educate students in a changing world. For information on 21st Century Learning, go to http://www.ascd.org/research_a_topic/21stcenturylearning.aspx
- **Duncan reminds states to focus on reforms, student achievement** (San Jose Mercury News (Calif.)/The Associated Press 10/13). In an interview with The Associated Press, Education Secretary Arne Duncan reminded states that the goal of education stimulus funding is to make gains in student achievement. "We're going to invest in those states that aren't just talking the talk but that are walking the walk," Duncan said. "If folks are doing this to chase money, it's for the wrong reasons." Many states are changing their laws to compete for about \$5 billion in Race to the Top education grants.
http://www.mercurynews.com/california/ci_13552231?nclick_check=1



Environment

- **Learn More About Green Living:** It is so exciting that this year's NYS PTA Convention features several workshops as part of a Green Living Series! Here are some resources on the topics that will be discussed: For information on how “Energy Smart Students Create Energy Smart Families”, try these: www.getenergysmart.org; www.nyserda.org; www.energy.gov

- **“Protecting Our Children from Environmental Exposures at School”** is certainly on the minds of many parents and advocated for children. Here are some resources: www.healthyschools.org; www.womenandenvironment.org
- **How can I start a school garden at my school?** Can the produce that is grown be served in the cafeteria? Find out! Check out these great resources: www.farmtoschool.org; farmtoschool.cce.cornell.edu; www.kidsgardening.com; www.healthylunches.org



Health and Wellness

- **The Food- Safety Schools Action Guide Toolkit** provides access to an array of resources to inform and support the development of food safety in schools. You will find information for the school nurse, teachers, administrators, school foodservice, families and students to use. Exploring the resources and links to other sites is an important step toward preparing policies and planning their implementation. www.FoodSafeSchools.org
- **A Synergistic Approach to Nutrition and Health:** The Rudd Center at Yale University supports a multi-sector approach to achieve a sustainable and meaningful public health impact. Efforts to address obesity and other diet-related chronic diseases by academic institutions alone, governments, NGOs and for-profit organizations will not be sufficient unless they converge at certain points. Interaction between sectors such as the public health community and food and agriculture industries must be part of this picture. To check out this site, go to: http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/who_we_are.aspx?id=43



Parenting and Family Life

StepFamilies:

- **Stepfamily Problems | American Academy of Child & Adolescent ...**
While facing these issues may be difficult, most *stepfamilies* do work out their *problems*.
http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/stepfamily_problems
- **Blended Families: Stepparent Tips for Healthy Bonding and Avoiding ...**What plans can parents make for blending families / *stepfamilies*? Get tips for forming healthy blended families and advice about common mistakes and *problems*.
http://www.helpguide.org/mental/blended_families_stepfamilies.htm
- **Stepfamily Problems - FamilyEducation.com** Find tips on dealing effectively with *stepfamily problems* that may threaten your marriage and your relationship with the children.
<http://life.familyeducation.com/stepfamilies/parenting-problem-solving/47614.html?detoured=1>
- **Stepparents, stepchildren problems, conflicts.**Stepparents: Six common *problems* of *stepfamilies* and stepparents. Some conflicts of a *stepfamily* are almost inevitable.
www.cyberparent.com/step/6conflict.htm
- **Parenting: Parenting in Stepfamilies** Typical *stepfamily problems*. Although you want your new family to be just like everyone else's, *stepfamilies* are different.
www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1547C.pdf
- **Lessons from Stepfamilies | Psychology Today**
A detailed understanding of the specific *problems stepfamilies* encounter now exists, courtesy of longitudinal research--not studies that tap just the ...
<http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/199405/lessons-stepfamilies>

- National Center for Education Statistics at the Institute of Education Sciences Releases **High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2007**
http://nclد.convio.net/site/R?i=5ag_o0jDS-SxWTQnhss9-Q..
- U.S. Department of Education to Spend \$29 million over the Next Five Years to Enhance and Operate the **ERIC Digital Library of Education Literature**
<http://nclد.convio.net/site/R?i=-ut5Um1utIRhUcgQYynlg..>
- NCLD has released, **Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act and Section 504**, which highlights changes to the law that improve access and accommodations for school-age students. <http://nclد.convio.net/site/R?i=Vhgqzh6ScZoph69iaBg5XA>
- High School Graduation Rates: **What We Know About Ensuring Success for Students with LD** http://nclد.convio.net/site/R?i=dkVHt7FdC-c8_LSynRxSag



Special Education

- **Safety Net:** The proposed amendment to section 100.5 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education will extend the existing Regents Competency Test (RCT) Safety Net for an additional year to make it available to all eligible students with disabilities entering grade 9 prior to the 2011-12 school year. The proposed amendment will be discussed at the October 19-20, 2009 Board of Regents meeting. Public comment must be received by November 16, 2009.
<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/lawsandregs/announcesafetynet.htm>
- **Technical Assistance Centers:** With the establishment of new Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers (RSE-TASC), the New York State Education Department now has a comprehensive and coordinated system of technical assistance and school improvement resources available to directly assist school districts, particularly those school districts with the poorest performance for students with disabilities, in improving results for students with disabilities.
<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/rsetasc/memo909.htm>
- Check out the **Institute for Innovative Transition**
Website: www.urmc.rochester.edu/pediatrics/transition
- **Looking to Become More Aware?**
Check out these articles on different types of disabilities:
 - **Reading**
Dyslexia Basics by the International Dyslexia Association answers your questions about the causes, signs, and treatments of a reading disability.
read more at http://www.ldonline.org/article/Dyslexia_Basics
 - **Writing**
NCLD's What is Dysgraphia? offers specific ways to help students of all ages overcome their writing challenges.
read more at <http://www.ldonline.org/article/12770>
 - **Math**
Dyscalculia: A Quick Look is another NCLD goodie with basic facts about math disabilities and a list of warning signs.
read more at http://www.ldonline.org/article/Dyscalculia%3A_A_Quick_Look
- **Nonverbal Students** With Nonverbal Learning Disabilities clears up some common misconceptions about NLD.
read more http://www.ldonline.org/article/Students_with_Nonverbal_Learning_Disabilities

- **TWD: A call for a nationwide ban on texting while driving.** Senator Charles Schumer has introduced a bill in the US Senate banning texting while driving. Representative Carolyn McCarthy has done the same in the House. States could lose 25% of federal highway funds, if they do not comply.
<http://www.newsday.com/long-island/nassau/schumer-texting-while-driving-should-be-banned-1.1499933>
- **Keep the Communication Door Open:** learn texting and the lingo.
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/32955977/ns/today-parenting_and_family/
- **CNN Examines Tech Safety:**
 - Will your privacy be compromised online?
<http://www.cnn.com/2009/TECH/09/28/online.security.tactics/index.html>
 - Social Media: An Inviting Target
<http://www.cnn.com/2009/TECH/09/28/dcot.socialmedia.privacy/index.html#cnnSTCText>