

January 2008 Advocacy Newsletter

Information gathered by the Education, Environment, Health and Wellness, Parent Involvement, Parenting and Family Life, Cyber Safety and Special Education Chairs to assist you in your advocacy efforts



Education

- **P-16 Action Plan:** The Board of Regents Announced Support for the P-16 Action Plan's Student Achievement Initiatives and College Readiness Programs. For more information: <http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/documents/GatesWallaceCommitment.doc>
- **Proposed NYS Professional Development Standards draft:** The State Professional Standards and Practices Board for Teaching, in its advisory role to the Board of Regents and the Commissioner, is proposing that NY adopt state standards in the area of professional development. The purpose of these standards is to define effective professional development and support the implementation of professional development programs throughout the State. For complete report : <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/resteachers/stds.htm>
- **For the complete NYS Regents Education Report: December 2007-January 2008:** go to: http://www.regents.nysed.gov/ed_report/dec-jan08.html
- ***Engaging Parents in Education*,** which profiles the work of five Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs) and partner organizations in increasing parental involvement in education, including their work in sharing information and providing support for NCLB's parent options is available online. Check out the website for further information. <http://www.ed.gov/admins/comm/parents/parentinvolve/index.html>.
- **US Students Fall Short in Math and Science:** Teenagers in a majority of industrialized nations taking part in the 2006 [Program for International Student Assessment](#), or PISA, showed greater scientific understanding than students in the United States, and they far surpassed their American peers in mathematics. The results show U.S. students ranking lower, on average, than their peers in 16 other countries in science, out of 30 developed nations taking part in the exam. For complete article: http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/12/04/14pisa_web.h27.html?tmp=1951029312



Environment

- **Schools and Toxic Waste Sites:** Children throughout the country are attending schools that were built on or near toxic waste sites, putting them at increased risk. The majority of these schools in the Northeast are in Massachusetts and New York. NY has 235 schools with 142,738 students on or near toxic sites. Many states have been slow to create legislation about the proximity of school to hazardous sites but this past year, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has passed the [High-Performance Green Buildings Act of 2007](#) that would promote environmentally-friendly government

buildings and also require the first ever development of federal school siting guidelines to prevent schools from being built on contaminated land. For more specific information to your local area, contact the NYS EPA or local EPA office. (www.epa.gov)

- **Green Seal Proposed Revised Environmental Standard:** Since September 2006, schools in NYS are required to use “green” cleaning products. NYS follows the Green Seal Standards. These standards are being updated. The Proposed Revised Standard is open for comment until January 16, 2008.. The Proposed Revised Standard, along with a background document providing information about the proposed changes, is available on the Green Seal web site:

http://www.green Seal.org/certification/g37_iicleanersstandard_dev.cfm



Health and Wellness

- **Teen Birth Rate Rises in US:** After falling steadily for more than a decade, the birth rate for American teenagers jumped last year, according to a [new federal report](#). The birth rate rose by 3% between 2005 and 2006 among 15-to-19-year-old girls, after plummeting 34% between 1991 and 2005. While experts said it was unclear what may be causing the reversal, the new data reignited debate about abstinence-only sex education programs.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/05/AR2007120501208.html>

- **Rickets in Children:** Bone specialists are treating children for rickets, a disease caused by too little calcium in the diet. In addition to lack of calcium and Vitamin D, overweight and too little exercise are adding to the problem. Many other children may be at risk for osteoporosis later in life.

<http://www.forbes.com/feeds/ap/2007/11/27/ap4379622.html>



Parent Involvement

- **PTA Take Your Family to School Week Posters Available:** Download the 11x17 "Follow the Signs to Family Involvement" poster-
http://www.pta.org/documents/TYFTS_2008_Poster.pdf;
Download the 11x17 "Follow the Signs to Family Involvement" poster (Spanish-language version) - http://www.pta.org/documents/TYFTS_2008_Poster_Spanish.pdf



Parenting and Family Life

- **Teen Workplace Safety:** The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) has information available for free on teen safety in the workplace on their web site at www.asse.org/newsroom. "Important Workplace Safety Guide for Young Workers" and the "Teens At Work: Safety First" are helpful tools for teachers, parents, employers and teens.
- **Poster Contest:** For information on the ASSE kids' "Safety-on-the-Job" poster contest visit <http://www.asse.org/newsroom/naosh08/poster-contest.php> Entries must be postmarked by February 14, 2008 and winners are announced during the North American Occupational Safety & Health Week www.asse.org/naosh08 in May.

- New York State Department of Transportation has released the application and guidebook for **Safe Routes to School** and created a webpage with detailed information about the program. Please visit:
<https://www.nysdot.gov/portal/page/portal/divisions/operating/opdm/local-programs-bureau/srts>
- **Toy Recalls:** For information on toy recalls you can go to www.Toyinfo.org/toy-recall-info/recall-list.html or you can go to the article on www.i-safe.org. Click on i-Parent Times and scroll down to the article on toy recall.



Cyber Safety

- **Choosing video games:** For assistance in choosing video games, parents can check out the Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB) at www.esrb.org.
- **Regulating game time:** Need help in regulating game time? Check out www.pta.org. National PTA, Microsoft and Super Bowl champ Jerry Rice have joined forces to help kids manage their interactive media use.
- For free **Internet Protection**, go to www.bluecoat.com, under Blue Coat Solutions click on K-9Web Protection and follow simple directions.



Special Education

- **Response to Intervention (RTI)** is a hot topic now in schools. Too many students in urban schools, particularly, have been tracked inappropriately in special education because of "learning disabilities" and/or behavioral problems, but the core issue has been poor instruction and/or lack of school readiness. Response to intervention is being given a lot of attention right now because under the IDEA 2004 improved screening is being required before classification for special education. This is a very important tool for our children and youth. For more information go to:
http://www.nasdse.org/documents/RtI_Bibliography.pdf
- **Web-based Video Glossary for Autism:** Autism Speaks, a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing awareness of autism and raising money to fund autism research, together with First Signs, the leader in early identification and intervention of children with developmental delays and disorders, and Florida State University, today announced the launch of a web-based video glossary to help parents and professionals learn more about the early warning signs of autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The glossary, available to the public free of charge at www.autismspeaks.org, www.firstsigns.org, and www.firstwords.fsu.edu, contains more than a hundred video clips that illustrate both typical and atypical development.