

November 2007 Advocacy Newsletter

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



Education:

- **Educational Materials website:** An education website that permits users to contribute and tweak assorted educational materials. Scott McNealy is the founder of the website. The goal is to be a central (and trusted) repository on the Internet for teachers and parents: www.curriki.org
- **Demonstration Math Courses:** Short courses on introduction to algebra, physics and calculus are available on this site. These are brief lessons and are quite helpful.
<http://www.curriki.org/xwiki/bin/view/Demo/nrocCourses>
- **Latest Changes in NYSED Diploma requirements:** This document reflects the latest in changes in NYS Diploma requirements: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/gradreq/intro.html>
- **Internet Homework Helpers:** Following sites can be helpful to assist in homework assignments: Fact Monster (homework center): www.factmonster.com/homework/; Bartleby (book/literature center): www.Bartleby.com; Funbrain (interactive educational games from K-8): www.funbrain.com; Math central (math help and resources K-12): <http://mathcentral.uregina.ca/index.php>; Navigate through 3,000 years of history: www.hyperhistory.com; History channel: www.history.com; Science help: www.funology.com; Elementary subject assistance (there is free stuff and/or you can join for minimal fee): www.enchantedlearning.com; Homework site: <http://www.homeworkspot.com/>; B.J. Pinchbeck's Homework Helper: <http://school.discovery.com/homeworkhelp/bjpinchbeck/>
- **National Report Card Shows Big Gains in Math'**: American students are making strides in math, and slower but still significant gains in reading, according to [National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\) results](#). Only 32% of 8th graders and 39% of 4th graders were rated proficient in math, but those figures also were record highs. In reading, 4th graders scored higher than ever in reading, but 8th-grade reading scores showed only a slight increase over the last test in 2005.
- **Public School Choice and SES:** There is a new resource out to help districts and states with public school choice and supplemental educational services and provides concrete ideas to improve parent notification and implementation of these two choice options under the law. Copies can be downloaded or ordered free at <http://www.ed.gov/admins/comm/choice/options/index.html>
- **New York Just Says No to Abstinence Funding:** NY is joining at least 10 other states in rejecting millions of dollars in federal grants for abstinence-only sex education. The state health commissioner said NY made the decision based on evidence that abstinence-only programs did little to prevent teen pregnancies.
- **Congress Weighs Bills on Early-Childhood Education:** Several lawmakers have crafted legislation that would build upon the steady growth of state prekindergarten programs. In what pre-K supporters are calling a "trickle-up" effect; three federal plans have been offered that call for tying preschool to No Child Left Behind.



Special Education

- **Free bilingual booklet** available on ADHD – www.help4adhd.org
- When you see, meet or think about a person with a disability, presume competence. For more information, visit www.disabilityisnatural.com

- For **mental health information** and materials, visit www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov
- **Learning Centers** – assistance with dyslexia: www.childrenslearningcenters.org
- **The NYS Procedural Safeguards Notice** has been revised and updated. These will be effective September 1, 2007. These safeguards include the revisions required by the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in implementing federal regulations (Part 300 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations). For a copy of the safeguards, go to this website: <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/psgncover.htm>
- Fall 2007 Issue of Mental Health News "**Understanding and Treating Bipolar Disorder**" is available online at: www.mhnews.org
- **Do Title I School Choice and Supplemental Educational Services Affect Student Achievement?** This RAND research brief summarizes the results of a research study on how school choice and supplemental education services (SES)--core ingredients of NCLB's parent involvement provisions--impact student achievement. The brief concludes that SES positively affects student achievement, that school choice has no effect on student achievement, and that differences exist among those who use various services.
http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9273/index1.html



Environment:

- **Indoor Air Quality Testing:** Now that autumn is here, it's time to shut the school windows and be aware of the indoor air quality of our schools. The EPA has a wonderful testing kit and program to test indoor air quality <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/>



Health and Wellness:

- **November is PTA Healthy Lifestyles Month!** For more information: www.pta.org
- **Clinic-Plus Initiative:** NYS PTA is helping to raise awareness of the Clinic-Plus Initiative. Clinic-Plus is part of the NYS Dept. of Mental Health's "Achieving the Promise for New York's Children and Families" program. Clinic Plus is an early screening and intervention program using research based interventions that assist children and families in early identification and treatment of emotional/behavioral problems. Clinic Plus is supported by NYSED and the Regents. All children are covered by this initiative, not just those in special education. Any screening is done with written permission from parents. More information on Clinic Plus can be obtained on the OMH web site at: www.clinicplus.org
- Asthma fact sheets – www.cdc.gov/nchc.fastats.asthma.htm
- **The New York State Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Alliance (NYSHEPA):** A partner organization with the NYS PTA, NYSHEPA is a new statewide alliance dedicated to improving policy and practices that promote healthy eating and physical activity. The group's vision is to create a statewide environment where all children and adults are eating healthy food and participating in daily physical activity to promote lifelong wellness. Their website www.nyshepa.org has many resources and links to related information.



Parent Involvement:

- **The Next Generation of Antipoverty Policies:** The latest issue of *The Future of Children* explores the increasing poverty rate over the past two decades and, through a series of chapters by renowned scholars, presents proven and recommended policy strategies to help combat poverty in America through improvements in work conditions, child care provisions, and educational

opportunities. http://www.futureofchildren.org/pubs-info2825/pubs-info_show.htm?doc_id=5

- **Empowering Parents School Box:** The U.S. Department of Education released a tool kit to empower and support parents to be involved in their children's education. The tool kit provides information on NCLB and tips and tools parents can use to support learning at home and in school, as well as posters and brochures. For a free copy of the tool kit, call 1-877-4ED-PUBS or visit the website. <http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/schoolbox/index.html>



Parenting and Family Life:

- **Extended Deadline for Take Your Family to School Week Awards:** Support your local unit in building and strengthening family-school partnerships by participating in PTA Take Your Family to School Week, February 10-16, 2008. Make sure your unit applies for the \$1,897 Awards for a chance to help fund their activities. Award applications are due **Wednesday, November 28** to PTA national headquarters. This is an extended deadline and is available online at: www.pta.org/familytoschool
- **Limiting Computer and Television Time:** Limiting the amount of time children spend with the television or computer to one hour per day can help prevent a sedentary lifestyle and alter the blueprint for future health problems. For more information: www.iparentingfitness.com/articles/2860/1
- **Domestic Awareness Month:** Domestic violence is a serious problem affecting families of all socio-economic levels and cultural origins. For more information: www.ncadv.org/learn/TheProblem_100.html



Cyber Safety

- **Public School Practices for Violence Prevention and Reduction:** A recent issue brief by the National Center for Education Statistics describes results from a 2003-2004 survey of school-level violence prevention, honing in on three strategies schools use to reduce crime: efforts to involve parents, safety and security procedures, and discipline policies. The brief reports that more than half of the schools in their sample formally obtained parent input on school crime policies and provided training to parents to deal with behavior issues. About one fifth of schools also involved parents in the school building to maintain discipline. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007010>
- **Cyber ethics:** Valuable information on helping your child remains safe on the Internet, including the 10 Commandments of Cyber Safety. Go to www.isafe.org click on i-ParentTimes and i-EducatorTimes.

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