

## December 2009 Advocacy Newsletter

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Information gathered by the Education, Environment, Health and Wellness, Family/ School and Community Engagement, Parenting and Family Life, and Special Education Chairs and Educator Vice President to assist you in your advocacy efforts

### Education

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- Report of the **November Board of Regents** meeting:  
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2009Meetings/November2009/1109monthmat-new.html#bor>
- **Regents Prepare to Transform Teacher Preparation!** The Regents are authorizing the development of a performance-based approach to teacher certification and inviting – on a trial basis – new entities to prepare teachers for certification.  
<http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/TeacherPreparationSkilledTeachers.html>
- **Grading NY's Schools:** View this interesting report recently put out by the US Chamber of Commerce. New York received grades from an A to a C within areas such as technology, high-school quality and removing ineffective teachers. <http://uschamber.com/reportcard/default> . On the website, click on the **state profile** tab and there is a drop-down menu.
- **NYSED: new Guidance on Collection and Reporting of Ethnic and Racial Student Data** Guidance directly addresses three sets of issues: (1) How schools and school districts will collect and maintain racial and ethnic data from students; (2) How racial and ethnic data will be aggregated in State and federal reporting; and (3) How data on multiple races will be reported and aggregated under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). New York is required to implement these changes for the 2010-11 school year.  
<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/sirs/documentation/RaceEthnicityDataCollection11-10-09.pdf>
- **Joint Report of the State Education Department and Dept. of Health on H1N1 Guidance**  
<http://usny.nysed.gov/swine-flu-info.html#November>
- **Changes Urged in Rules for Federal Innovation Aid** (EdWeek/Michelle McNeil) As the U.S. Department of Education prepares final rules for the \$650 million Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) strong concerns from school districts and philanthropies that requiring matching funds from the private sector is unworkable and would turn foundations into the gatekeepers for these federal grants  
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/11/19/13stim-i3.h29.html?tkn=TQUFwkVijT5ojNSs4ktKAooUD01vEED%2Bek5%2B&print=1>
- **Rev those engines, the Race to the Top Begins!** U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan released the final application for more than \$4 billion from the Race to the Top Fund, which will reward states that have raised student performance in the past and have the capacity to accelerate achievement gains with innovative reforms. <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/11/11122009.html>
- **Library of Congress – The Primary Sources** The US Library of Congress has a great web site filled with resources and many topics for both teachers and students. The site is filled with information, pictures, and video. The teacher sections have full curriculum examples on a wide range of topics. Visit <http://www.loc.gov> to get to the main page. There are many great areas to explore. Teachers should start with the "Teachers" button near the top left on the main page. Students should start with the "Kids, Families" button, also in the top left box.

### Environment

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- **Consumer Reports: Tests Find Wide Range of Bisphenol A in Canned Soups, Juice, and More -** Consumer Reports' latest tests of canned foods, including soups, juice, tuna, and green beans, have found that almost all of the 19 name-brand foods tested contain measurable levels of Bisphenol A (BPA) [www.ConsumerReports.org](http://www.ConsumerReports.org).
- More on BPA can be found here: <http://www.ewg.org/chemindex/chemicals/bisphenol>
- **Gas Company Won't Drill in New York Watershed:** Bowing to intense public pressure, the Chesapeake Energy Corporation says it will not drill for natural gas within the upstate New York watershed, an environmentally sensitive region that supplies unfiltered water to nine million people. The reversal seems to signal a more conciliatory tone from the gas industry, which is facing mounting opposition in New York to its drilling practices. The decision also increases the pressure on state regulators to reverse their decision to

allow drilling within the watershed. Read the entire article here:  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/28/business/energy-environment/28drill.ht...>

## Health and Wellness

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- **Make a Difference at Your School: Key Strategies to Prevent Obesity.** The percentage of children who are obese has more than doubled, and among adolescents the rates have more than tripled since 1970. Obesity is a risk factor for health conditions such as diabetes and is associated with problems such as poor self-esteem. The good news is that schools can help students and staff, adopt healthy eating and physical activity behaviors that are the keys to preventing obesity.  
[www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/KeyStrategies](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/KeyStrategies)
- **Build Your Vocabulary** and feed the hungry. Go to **freerice.com** and see how many words you can define. For each right answer, 10 grains go to the United Nations World Food Program.
- **BeFireSmart** sponsored by Liberty Mutual, is a fun and engaging interactive way to teach Fire Safety for Parents, Children, Firefighters and Educators. Take a tour through the site. You'll find that it will help you and your family to be fire smart. Under each section are also drop downs where questions are asked and answered about fire safety: make your home safer, fire escape challenge, how fast can you get out, safety quizzes for children, winter safety fire tips, etc. [www.BeFireSmart.com](http://www.BeFireSmart.com)

## Parenting and Family Life

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- **Preparing Parents for Teen Driving** To better understand parents' knowledge of the teen driving issue and to help parents prepare their teen for driving, The Allstate Foundation recently conducted a national survey of 1,000 parents of teen drivers.  
<http://www.allstate.com/foundation/teen-safe-driving.aspx>
- **Partners for safe teen driving** <http://www.safeteendriving.org/>
- This is a site full of **tips for new drivers.** <http://www.teendriving.com/>
- Even though the driver's license allows the teen to drive independently, it is important that **parents establish clear rules** for safe and responsible driving and rules for the use of the car.  
[http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts\\_for\\_families/helping\\_your\\_teen\\_become\\_a\\_safe\\_driver](http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/helping_your_teen_become_a_safe_driver)

## Special Education

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- **December Board of Regents Consider Extending 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. It is anticipated that the proposed amendment will be submitted for adoption at the December 2009 Board of Regents meeting with a proposed effective date of January 7, 2010. To read the proposal  
<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/lawsandregs/safetynetexpress.htm>

- **Changes Ahead for Certification Structure for Teachers of Students with Disabilities** Deputy Commissioner Joseph Frey has requested field input on recommendations regarding options for the State's

special education teacher certification structure. The current four-tiered structure was developed to focus on

student developmental levels and academic content areas to ensure that students with disabilities have continued access to teachers academically prepared to teach them. Over time, the Department has closely monitored supply and demand of students with disabilities (SWD) teachers. There is a shortage of SWD teachers to fill special education positions, especially at the middle and secondary levels.

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/memoceo110509.html>