

February 2010 Advocacy Newsletter

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



Education

- **Full Board of Regents Report for January 2010 meeting:**
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2010Meetings/January2010/0110monthmat.html>
- There are some new terms in Education. For more information, please go to the below websites.
 - Race to the Top
 - Common Core Standards
 - ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009)
 - **STATEMENT BY EDUCATION COMMISSIONER DAVID STEINER: AN AGENDA FOR EDUCATION REFORM IN NYS**
<http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/AgendaforEducationReform.html>
 - **Race to the Top Information:**
<http://www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>
<http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/>
 - **Common Core Standards Information:**
http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards/home.html
Commissioner Steiner on New York State's Common Core Standards Initiative -
<http://usny.nysed.gov/videos/>
 - **ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009) news**
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/index.html>
<http://usny.nysed.gov/arra/>
- **Experts say that Science instruction should begin in preschool** (Education Week)
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/01/13/18preschool.h29.html?tkn=ZYYFP8Uepm5DZmPTu%2B7WjgMarnEBmHsqhdJ%2B>
Some academic experts are recommending that science be taught to students beginning in preschool, and a recent push to promote science, technology, engineering and math education in schools is adding urgency to their cause. Efforts to improve science teaching in preschools include specialized training for teachers and a "Young Scientist" curriculum developed with help from the National Science Foundation that helps teach preschoolers physical-science concepts by building structures and playing with water.
- **Competition is tight for applicants to public colleges, universities** (USA today)
http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2010-01-14-college-admissions_N.htm
Would-be college students are facing a difficult year for acceptance at many public universities and colleges as they limit enrollment because of budget cuts. More people are also seeking admission to four-year schools as well as community colleges. The effect is stiffer competition for fewer spots and an increased likelihood that applicants will be turned away, forced into more expensive private schools or unable to take classes.



Environment

- Not a fan of **single use plastic bags**? Want to convince your friends and neighbors to switch to reusable bags? Here's an 8 minute video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8U6vxJu1tI>
- **Kids' jewelry** might contain toxic cadmium (a known carcinogen) www.washingtonpost.com
- Controversy on drilling for natural gas in the **Marcellus Shale** continues Here is a recent article and audio file <http://www.sciencefriday.com/program/archives/201001084>
- **FDA reversed its much criticized position on BPA safety**, saying it is concerned about the chemical's effects on fetuses, infants and children. <http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/watchdogreports/81724607.html>



Health and Wellness

- **Health Reform:** To help you better understand the implications and complexities of the two major bills being considered in the Senate and a tri- committee bill in the House of Representatives, a comparison of all three bills can be found at the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation Web site: www.kff.org/healthreform
- **Quit Smoking and Get Sick Less**
When you quit smoking your immune system is free of tobacco smoke and works better. After 30 days your immune system begins to improve. A non smoker will get less upper respiratory illnesses like the flu and will get well faster the smokers. Within 20 minutes after you quit smoking, your heart rate and blood pressure drop to that of a nonsmoker. After twelve hours carbon monoxide levels in your blood return to normal. For help to quit smoking, call the New York State Smokers' Quitline at **1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487)**. If you know someone that would like to quit that is not a resident of New York State, you can call the National Quitline at **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)**
- **Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids:** In New York State, 13.8% of high school students smoker (154,800), 13,938 kids (under 18) have become regular smokers in 2010 and 35.5 million packs of cigarette have been bought or smoked by kids each year in New York State. Help plan an event in your school on Wednesday, March 24, 2010 for Kick Butt Day. Kick Butts Day is a day of activism that empowers youth to take action against tobacco use at more than 2,000 events from coast to coast. Have the students in your school join thousands of youths around the state and the world to **Stand Out, Speak Up and Seize Control Against Big Tobacco**. To help you organize and plan an activity, go to: www.TobaccoFreeLids.org to download a guide and promotional material. Start planning today for this important campaign next month and make sure you register your event.



Parenting and Family Life

- **Roads to Success Career and College Curriculum Free and Available Online, Grades 7-12**
www.roadstosuccess.org
Roads to Success, a 6-year-old nonprofit offering a new guidance curriculum, training and technical assistance in New York and nationally, is pleased to announce that all our of program materials are now **available online**, and school-based and afterschool-based counselors and educators can download them **free of charge**.
- **Choosing a College**
The purpose of this site is to give you the information you need to understand the process of [picking a college](#), applying to colleges, being accepted to college, and having a successful college career as a student. www.collegeguide.com/
- **Articles and Campus Visit Checklists for College**
With articles written for students, by students as well as articles written by career professionals, the Making It Count website is a valuable tool for students transitioning into high school, into college and into their career. The site also includes interactive games, tools, and e-newsletters www.makingitcount.com/students



Special Education

- A **new certificate alternative** is proposed to replace the IEP diploma in the attached memo from NY SED's Rebecca Cort and John King. While there are some positive aspects of it, it falls short of being a state recognized diploma.
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2010Meetings/January2010/0110emscvesidd1.htm>
- **NYACTS:** Families with children and adults who have Autism Spectrum Disorder can find help, resources, and gain support from a newly designed website thanks to a multi-NYS agency collaborative task force. This initiative will provide families with a much needed place to go when challenged with searching for help with their children with ASD. They are seeking feedback on the site and they expect to add new resources on a regular basis. See www.nyacts.org.