

March 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

- **February Board of Regents Meeting:**
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2010Meetings/February2010/0210monthmat.html#bor>
- NYS Education Commissioner, David Steiner has a **message on homelessness and state assessments**. For the news release, go to
- **57 Schools Identified as "Persistently Lowest Achieving"** and Eligible for New Funding for Turnaround; Schools to be Focus of Race to the Top and School Improvement Efforts. For more information, go to <http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/PersistentlyLowAchiev2010.html>
- The **New York State Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Instructional Technology** (CI&IT) has updated their webpage. You can sign up to automatically receive information. For more information, go to <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/eblast/>
- **NYS Teacher of the Year Program is Seeking Nominations for 2011** Applications are due by Friday, March 19, 2010. Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Higher Education, Joseph P. Frey, invites you to nominate an outstanding professional for the 2011 New York State Teacher of the Year. This program, now in its 41st year, is affiliated with the National Teacher of the Year program. A minimum of five years of current teaching experience is required. For further information and nomination materials visit: <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/ted/toty>
- **PBS Teachers Innovation Awards: The entry deadline is March 12, 2010**. America's teachers innovate every day. Your inventive thinking continuously fuels, inspires and engages young minds. Whether you teach your students physics by using rocket launchers, social studies by re-enacting historical events, or literature by inviting kids to create digital stories, you are innovating and making a difference. Win a four-day, three-night trip to the PBS Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas on May 17-20, 2010. For complete contest rules, go to pbsteachers.org
- **State Archives Sponsors 20th Annual Student Research Contest** The entry deadline is July 1, 2010. To promote and recognize excellence in student research, the New York State Archives, a program of the State Education Department in the Office of Cultural Education, is sponsoring the 20th annual Student Research Awards. The program is open to all New York students in grades 4-12 who use historical records in their research projects. For information about this year's program, visit http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/grants/grants_student_sraguidelines.shtml
- **Read.gov Resources:** Read.gov, sponsored by the [Center for the Book](#) in the [Library of Congress](#), offers many reading resources for kids, teens, adults, and educators & parents. This site includes a Young Readers Center, digitized classic books, author webcasts, contests,

local/community resources, and suggested reading lists. To learn more, visit <http://www.read.gov>

- **PBS** has some exciting programs that increase literacy skills – **PBS Raising Readers Literacy campaign**. Online Kids Island – where preschoolers can play reading games with favorite PBS KIDS characters, earn tickets, and win prizes. Parents and teachers can track children's progress and find fun reading activities to do every day. <http://pbskids.org/read/research/> and <http://pbskids.org/read/play.html>

- **Academy of American Poets Resources**
The Academy of American Poets offers many free resources through their website, www.Poets.org This website includes poems and biographical information for [hundreds of poets](#), [audio/visual resources](#), [poetry resources for teens](#), a [poetry map](#) along with a page for [New York State](#). A heads up - as April is National Poetry Month.

- **Best Practice Resources for Middle Level Schools**
The New York State Middle School Association (NYSMSA) has launched a new resource making available a data base of best practices in Middle Level Education. The best practice submissions are organized under the umbrella of the Seven Essential Elements of a Standards Focused Middle Level Program. To view or contribute to this database visit <http://www.nysmsa.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=46>

- For more **New York State Summer School of the Arts program (NYSSA)**, please visit <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/nysssa/> There are 8 summer programs. The applications and information for summer 2010 programs are available now.

- **2010 Edition Physical Setting/Earth Science Reference Tables**
The 2010 Edition of the Physical Setting/Earth Science Reference Tables (ESRT) has been completed and is now available on the Department's web site at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/scire/reftable.html>



Environment

- **National Healthy Schools Day is April 26, 2010.** Plan an event to celebrate and promote healthy and green school environments. National Healthy Schools Day is coordinated by Healthy Schools Network in collaboration with US EPA and the Council of Educational Facility Planners-International (CEFPI) www.nationalhealthyschoolsday.org

- **Environmental Education Week is April 11-17.** Join millions for a week of educational preparation for Earth Day. www.eeweek.org

- The **Alliance to Save Energy** says schools spend more on energy than on computers and textbooks combined. A timely topic during budget season. Visit www.ase.org for information about their green schools program and green campus program.

- Interested in why organic food costs more and how healthcare reform could begin at our dining room tables? Read this from **Environmental Working Group** <http://www.ewg.org/agmag/2010/02/health-reform-should-begin-at-usda/>

- Concerned about children's exposure to industrial chemicals? Read more about the **Kid Safe Chemicals Act** here: <http://www.ewg.org/kid-safe-chemicals-act-blog/kid-safe-chemicals-act/>

- The EPA recently released its list of chemicals to review. This list includes **chemical flame retardants** which are added to upholstery and carpeting. Scientists say these chemicals accumulate in our bodies. A new study says these chemicals affect the intelligence of children. Listen to the audio file here: <http://www.loe.org/shows/segments.htm?programID=10-P13-00005&segmentID=3>
- **Free Solar & Wind Energy Workshops by NYSERDA**
The Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) in conjunction with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) is offering free workshops for New York State teachers on solar and wind energy. For more information please go to <http://www.nesea.org/k-12/events/>.



Health and Wellness

- **Nutrition.gov**
This site is a great resource for up-to-date food and nutrition information (a service of the National Agricultural Library, U.S. Department of Agriculture). In addition to serving as a gateway to reliable information on nutrition, healthy eating, physical activity and food safety for consumers, educators and health professionals, the site offers current food and nutrition news and publications, information on weight management, information on food assistance programs and also offers grocery-shopping tips. www.nutrition.gov
- **How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label**
This site offers easy-to-understand information on Nutrition Facts labels, it shows a sample label with notes on how to tell how much of each listed item is high or low and what to watch out for. It also gives a consumer-friendly overview of calories, nutrients and percent Daily Value using additional sample food labels. www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html
- **Interactive Menu Planner**
This site provides an online tool that calculates the servings and calories of your selections from a list of available foods and beverages to make up a meal of specified calories. It also has a link to, among other sites, a Body Mass index (BMI) calculator and Portion Distortion, which describes the evolution of portion sizes in restaurants. www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/menuplanner/
- **FoodSafety.gov**
This site is a gateway Web site that provides links to selected government information on food safety. The Consumer Advice section of this site provides extensive access to information about safe food handling and food safety concerns for specific population groups, such as seniors, pregnant women, and children. The site also contains a News and Safety Alert section with links to product recalls, alerts and warnings, as well as to other announcements. www.foodsafety.gov
- **Choosing a Safe and Successful Weight Loss Program**
This site provides a helpful fact sheet designed to help individuals make informed decisions about weight loss programs. It includes an outline of what safe and effective weight loss program should include, questions to ask weight loss program providers about everything from cost to contents and contact information for additional resources. www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/choosing.htm

➤ **Drugs of Abuse**

This site from the National Institute on Drug Abuse provides drug information and facts, educational materials, curriculum guides, classroom tools and related topics for parents, students and teachers. www.drugabuse.gov



Parenting and Family Life

- **New York State Office of Mental Health Child and Family Clinic Plus** works closely with families to help with early identification of emotional needs by providing free voluntary screening in community settings like schools and health centers, and screening is available only with a parent or guardian's signed consent. In compliance with HIPAA laws, the results of a child's screening and any recommendations are shared only with the parent or guardian unless they grant permission for further dissemination. Child and Family Clinic Plus is designed to help keep New York's children on track at home, in their school and in their community. This exciting new initiative ensures that New York families have the tools they need to help their children grow to become strong, resilient adults. www.clinicplus.org
- **STEM Instruction for Students with Disabilities**: The World's leading website for children with learning disabilities and ADHD. This website helps students with a learning disability to better prepare themselves with technology-based academic supports to help students succeed in K-12 STEM classes and prepare for higher ed STEM studies. www.ldonline.org; www.LDOnline.org/helpinghelpers
- **CASE: Center for Autism Support and Education** is a resource for parents and anyone who lives or works with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). CASE provides information, training and support for families of individuals who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and the professionals who work with them. This support center will help families and community providers to help better serve families. It will help families and to become more aware of ASD. www.parentnetworkny.org
- **Related sites:**
Autistic Services: www.autisticservices.org
Early Childhood Direction Center: www.chob.edu/ECDC
The Parent Network of NY: www.parentnetworkny.org
Summit Educational Services: www.summited.org



Special Education

- **The Power of Art: Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities**: Applications entry deadline is March 1, 2010. The workshop date is April, 30, 2010. The Power of Art is a national competition which celebrates excellence in art education and innovative teaching methods. The one day workshop is for art teachers who work with students with learning disabilities. A total of 32 art teachers will be selected from the applications received. Sponsored by the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation at The Lab School of Washington, the program will present ways art can be used to teach academic skills for students with learning disabilities. For more information: <http://www.labschool.org/content/powerart>