

News & Notes

VOL. XLIV No. 1 • JANUARY 2015



www.saanys.org

Commissioner King Heads to Washington



In an evening statement released December 10, the State Education Department announced that New York State Education Commissioner John King, Jr. will join the U.S. Department of Education as a senior advisor.

“John is an extraordinary leader who has dedicated his life to improving the opportunities of our young people, as a teacher, a school leader, and a

leader of school systems,” Arne Duncan said. “His passion, his fierce intelligence, and his clear understanding of the difficult but vital work of education change will be an enormous benefit to this department and to the nation.”

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Cuomo’s Office Goes on Offense in Letter to SED



A letter dated, December 18, from Governor Cuomo’s Director of Operations, Jim Malatras. The letter is addressed to Regents Chancellor Merryl Tisch and Commissioner King, and requests responses “without political filters or consideration of the power of special interests” to twelve sets of “questions Governor Cuomo heard from New Yorkers.” In his closing paragraph, Mr. Malatras requests to be received the chancellor’s and commissioner’s responses by December 31.

Dear Chancellor Tisch and Commissioner King:

As you know, one of most important obligations we have is educating our children. Although over the past four years we have done much to improve public education,

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SAANYS Welcomes New Unit:

– REGION 6 –

Hoosick Falls Administrators

Board of Regents Recommends \$2 Billion School Aid Increase

The New York State Board of Regents gave final approval to its 2015-2016 state school aid proposal, calling for a \$2 billion increase in state aid, more equitable funding for high need school districts, funding directed to restoration of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), and increased investments in programs to ensure that school districts can improve performance consistent with the goal of college and career readiness for all students. The proposal was approved at the Board of Regents meeting on December 15.

“The Regents state aid proposal strikes the right balance, driving more money to school districts with the greatest student needs and addressing the Regents’ priorities,” Board of Regents Chancellor Merryl H. Tisch said.

“The proposal includes funding to help create multiple pathways to graduation, improve services for English language learners, and support early childhood learning, while at the same time working to restore the GEA that unfairly penalizes many districts. This is not an either/or proposition – the resources exist to help lift student achievement across the board, and the Regents will continue to advocate forcefully to make sure our students get the funding they need to succeed.”

In its deliberations, the Regents state aid subcommittee considered three possible methods to allocate general support for public school spending. The first method focused on foundation aid, leaving GEA deductions outstanding; the second focused on full GEA restorations, which raised concerns about an approach that applied primarily to lower need districts. The subcommittee ultimately chose and adopted a third approach – a blended “transitional operating formula” – that features a combination of GEA restoration and new operating aid allocated according to the existing principles underlying the foundation aid formulas.

The state aid proposal reflects several emerging policy issues and details the means by which state aid can be used to address the board’s goals, including:

- Support for the high quality career and technical education programming that will create new

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LEGAL BRIEFS

Testing Procedures

Prior to the administration of a state examination, it is important that administrators fully understand the state testing procedures that must be followed and the consequences that may be imposed for not following such procedures. Each district receives testing materials from the Department of Education/ Board of Regents that includes examination day instructions and exam material. Thoroughly reading the materials that are provided will help ensure that proper procedure is followed. With the abundance of materials received along with the amount of substance within the material, it is often hard to fully understand what procedures must be followed. Some of the major issues that continue to arise during testing procedures include fraud. It may not seem like fraud is being committed, but those involved in testing procedures need to be careful to ensure that they are not unintentionally doing so. The consequences can lead to termination and revocation of licenses. It is the responsibility of the principal for all aspects of the school’s administration of state exams, and principals are required to take appropriate measures to prevent, as much as possible, and to investigate all irregularities, in association with the administration and scoring of these exams.

According to the rules of the Board of Regents, fraud includes: the use of unfair means in taking an exam; giving aid to or obtaining aid from another person during an exam; alteration of any Regents credential; and intentional misrepresentation in connection with exams or credentials. Fraud also includes mishandling of testing materials by

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SAANYS is proud to honor many exceptional New York State administrators with an annual awards program. This program was established to recognize educators who demonstrate outstanding leadership skills and have made exceptional contributions to the educational process.

For a complete list of the awards and criteria, as well as nomination forms, go to www.saanys.org/newsroom/criteria.asp.

For additional information, contact Susan Jaronski at SJaronski@saanys.org.

**Application Deadline:
January 31, 2015**



Executive Viewpoint

Kevin S. Casey, Executive Director

Are We in Fact Going Forward?

It is said that every governor of New York has tried to bring the State Education Department (SED) under his control, generally with little success. SED is governed by a Board of Regents (BOR), whose members are elected by the members of the state legislature to a five-year term. As a practical matter, this translates to the assembly democrats doing the electing.

Governors don't like this construct because it dilutes a governor's control, but changing it has proven difficult as the BOR is a creature of the New York State Constitution, albeit one primarily

dependent upon the state budget process for its funding. It is in this budget process that a governor may seek to exercise significant influence over SED. The organizational separation of SED from the governor and legislature (with the exception of the election of the Regents), was designated to protect education policy from being politicized. That now seems like a quaint anachronism.

Recent events have created an environment susceptible to executive meddling. Last year, SED and the BOR were roundly criticized by the governor and legislators alike for the flawed rollout of the

common core. The public outcry even prompted the governor to draft his own "safety net" bill to protect educators from being adversely impacted by this flawed rollout. The bill passed the legislature on a message of necessity. Now that roughly 90 percent of all teachers and principals are rated either highly effective or effective, the governor has hinted at vetoing his own bill. As of this writing, the fate of that bill remains uncertain. What is crystal clear however is that the governor does not like the optics of 90 percent of teachers and principals being rated effective or better in face of the plunging proficiency rates on the 3-8 math and ELA assessments. Never mind that the flawed common core rollout impacted proficiency rates, as that is yesterday's news.

What creates further uncertainty at SED is Commissioner King's resignation to accept a position at the US Department of Education. In a recent letter from the governor's director of state operations to Chancellor Tisch and Commissioner King, it was stated the governor intends to ... "pursue an aggressive legislative package to improve public education." The letter (see page 1 for the full letter) asks questions about reforming the APPR, tenure, certification, charter schools, and mergers ... the last two questions ask about changes to the selection and appointment process of the Board of Regents, and an "open" selection process to replace Commissioner King.

It is clear that changes will be proposed to many aspects of the educational status quo, and if SED, at

some point, becomes controlled by the governor's office, either directly or by proxy, we may be entering a period of endless reform not necessarily designed to maximize pedagogy, but rather primarily for alignment with the philosophy and interests of whoever it is that is occupying the governor's office at the time. I can't help but think that would be a step backward. ■

Commissioner King Heads to Washington...

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King is expected to join the department in early 2015 and will be delegated the roles and responsibilities of the deputy secretary, which includes managing the department's operations and overseeing implementation of major initiatives.

Commented SAANYS Executive Director Kevin Casey, "SAANYS would like to take this time to acknowledge Commissioner King for his civility and accessibility during a tumultuous period of reform.

Although SAANYS and the commissioner did not always agree on policy or approach, Dr. King has consistently made himself accessible to SAANYS over the years, creating opportunities for SAANYS to raise its concerns and suggestions. We wish him well in his new post, and encourage him to keep the voices of practitioners with him as he affects national education policy."

At its December 15 meeting, the New York State Board of Regents

elevated Beth Berlin to acting commissioner and announced that Ken Wagner will serve as senior education policy director. Commented Chancellor Merryl Tisch during an interview with Capital Education, "The search is going to take place within our board. Every member of our board will be given an opportunity to have input, and we are going to set up a process that I think will be a good, honest, honorable process to make such an important decision. ... We are hoping that superintendents and principals and teachers and leaders of institutions of higher education will apply." ■

Cuomo's Office Goes on Offense in Letter to SED...

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we continue to face critical challenges. Although we spend the most per pupil than any other state, we lag behind in graduation rates, only 34.8 percent of our students are proficient in math, 31.4 percent proficient in ELA and only 37.2 percent of our high school students are college ready.

We all can agree that this is simply unacceptable.

Governor Cuomo believes in public education – it can open up unlimited opportunity to our students. But the system must work. Virtually everyone agrees that the system must be reformed and improved. That is why he will pursue an aggressive legislative package to improve public education. Part of the package will be to strengthen one of our most important professions – teaching. While some seek to demonize teachers, Governor Cuomo believes the exact opposite – wanting to reward excellence in teaching, and by recruiting the best and brightest into the profession.

As you know, the governor has little power over education, which is governed by the Board of Regents. The governor's power is through the

budget process and he intends to introduce the reforms during that process.

Over the recent campaign, Governor Cuomo spoke to New Yorkers all across the state that had many questions about why we've fallen behind and what we could do to fundamentally improve public education. Therefore, we'd ask that you consider the following questions Governor Cuomo heard from New Yorkers to help start addressing some of these critical issues in education.

We understand that change is difficult and that there are political realities, but please give your opinion without political filters or consideration of the power of special interests and respond on what you think is best as a pure matter of policy. Leave the political maneuvers to the legislative process so at least the conversation is informed and the public sees what enlightened policy would do.

So, let's reframe the Albany dialogue from what is politically acceptable to what is the best education program for our future. In essence, what is the right thing to do for our

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News & Notes

School Administrators Association of New York State

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* denotes Executive Committee

CAPITAL UPDATE

Board of Regents Recommends \$2 Billion School Aid Increase...

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opportunities under the multiple pathways initiative;

- A more coordinated early childhood system that enhances access to high-quality education programs statewide;
- Improved services for English language learners (ELLs);
- Support for the education of recent immigrants;
- The need to invest in new instructional materials that reflect college and career ready standards;
- Professional development for teachers that relies on teacher leaders with proven classroom success to serve as coaches and mentors for their colleagues; and
- Encouraging regionalization efforts where appropriate.

Additionally, the Regents state aid proposal recommends two areas in which the state can make one-time investments using some of the \$4.8 billion that is available through non-recurring legal settlements. First, the proposal recommends that a portion of the settlement funds be used to eliminate the current lagged reimbursement process that limits the ability of many upstate districts to participate in the new statewide universal full-day prekindergarten program. Second, the Regents recommend that a portion of the funds be used to support an accelerated payment of certain already-approved school district aid claims for past years (referred to as "prior year adjustments"). Without a major payment, some of these claims will otherwise go unpaid for over a decade. The Regents also call for investing capital funds in BOCES Career and Technical Education Centers in order to support the multiple pathways initiative. ■

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New York One of 18 States Awarded New Preschool Development Grants

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell announced today that 18 states have been awarded grants, totaling more than \$226 million, under the preschool development grants program.

From the 36 applications the departments received, five states will be awarded development grants: Alabama, Arizona, Hawaii, Montana, and Nevada. Thirteen will receive expansion grants: Arkansas, Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, and Virginia.

"Expanding access to high-quality preschool is critically important to ensure the success of our children in school and beyond," said Secretary Duncan. "The states that have received new preschool development grants will serve as models for expanding preschool to all four-year-olds from low- and moderate-income families. These states are demonstrating a strong commitment to building



and enhancing early learning systems, closing equity gaps, and expanding opportunity so that more children in America can fulfill their greatest potential."

Under the grant program, states with either small or no state-funded preschool programs were eligible for development grants, while states with more robust preschool programs, or that have received race to the top-early learning challenge (RTT-ELC) grants, were eligible for expansion grants. Twelve states that have not previously received funding from RTT-ELC will receive funding from the jointly-administered preschool development grant program.

Through these preschool development grant awards, more than 33,000 additional children will be served in

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Board of Regents Passes Emergency Regulation Concerning School Enrollment Following Joint Review by SED and the Attorney General's Office

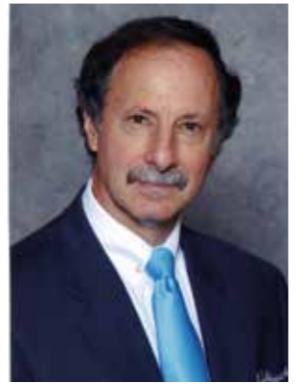
SAANYS is continuing to work with legislative leaders to promote an understanding of the fiscal and programmatic strain experienced by school districts impacted by surges of unaccompanied minors and undocumented youth. Many of these students are English language learners and many are students with interrupted formal education.

It was not possible for the school districts to anticipate and budget for the arrival of such students and many of the impacted school districts do not have the infrastructure to accommodate the numbers and needs of the arriving students. The provision of additional current-year state aid to impacted school districts is essential for the provision of quality educational services to the current and entering students.

Read the SED press release here:



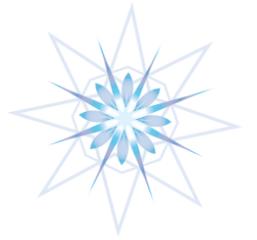
<http://www.nysed.gov/news/2014/new-york-state-board-regents-passes-emergency-regulation-concerning-school-enrollment>



For more information regarding the SAANYS legislative agenda, the New York State Board of Regents, the Educational Conference Board, or other government relations concerns, contact James Viola, SAANYS director of government relations, at JViola@saanys.org.

Congratulations Retiring Members

Pamela Buresch
Justine Noreen Cambria
Anthony Cerullo
Tony Clark
Denise Gibbs
Ellen Graba Quaglio
Joseph Hendrickson
Mary Hoffman
Yvonne Johnson
Craig Martin
Eric Romanino
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Benefit of the Month



Auto and Home Insurance Benefit Available from Liberty Mutual

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SAANYS
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the leader in school law training

\$50 per online course **New courses just added!**

NEW!
EMPLOYMENT LAW:
Staff Legal Rights and Responsibilities
This comprehensive online course offers participants valuable resources and access to important case law, along with videos featuring school employee law experts, in a format designed to ensure that school leaders are properly handling the legal rights of staff.

NEW!
STUDENT SAFETY AND RIGHTS:
Essentials of Student Safety
This online course is especially designed to ensure that school leaders know how to address legal matters concerning student rights and safety through valuable resources and access to important case law, along with videos featuring information and suggestions from education law experts.

NEW!
STUDENT SAFETY AND RIGHTS:
Essentials of Student Expression
This course includes informational videos featuring education law experts and resources related to student expression. Essentials of Student Expression is a "must take" for dealing with First Amendment rights of students!

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERIES - COURSE 1
Program and Placement and Section 504
Special education law is extremely complex and disputes in this area often give rise to litigation. This course will help you better understand how to provide all students with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), and properly address complex issues related to developing student IEPs, student placement, and program. You will also gain a deeper understanding of the legal requirements related to Section 504, including developing 504 plans, addressing student allergies, and meeting the needs of student athletes who qualify for Section 504 protection.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERIES - COURSE 2
Due Process, Discipline, and Changes in Placement
This online course will help you better understand how to provide all students with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), and properly address complex issues related to discipline and due process. Viewers will gain a deeper understanding of the legal parameters for determining whether or not student behavior is a manifestation of a student's disability, the student discipline and other options available for addressing improper student conduct, key steps to ensure that IEPs are being properly implemented, and obligations related to child find.

BULLYING PREVENTION
The NY Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)
New York State's Dignity for All Students Act seeks to provide the state's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus, and/or at a school function. This online course will help you understand best practices related to bullying prevention and legal requirements for addressing bullying and cyberbullying.

Three hours of professional development credit for each course.

Register today!

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Regional Events

FIND OUT MORE
DETAILS AT
SAANYS.ORG/EVENTS

**REGION 1
FINANCIAL
PLANNING FOR
LIFE**

January 21
5:00 -7:00pm

AXA Long Island Office,
1000 Woodbury Road,
Suite 300, Woodbury

Open to all members, member spouses, and colleagues. Join your colleagues for this comprehensive retirement planning workshop presented by AXA and NYSTRS for members on Long Island to be hosted at the AXA Long Island office in Woodbury. A representative from the NYS Teachers Retirement System will attend and review all options as outlined in the member booklet.

Sponsored by:
AXA and NYSTRS

**REGION 5
LEARN FROM
THE EXPERTS:
NEGOTIATING
DURING DIFFICULT
TIMES**

February 5
5:00 pm - 7:00pm
SAANYS Headquarters,
8 Airport Park Blvd.,
Latham
pizza and light
refreshments

Explore the art of negotiations during increasingly difficult and demanding times. All aspects of negotiations will be covered including: salary/monetary compensation, changing terms and conditions of employment, merit pay, non-monetary compensations, benefits, PIP and appeals, and more. The panel of experts includes SAANYS legal counsel, lead negotiators, and building administrators.

Sponsored by: AXA

**Developing
BULLET PROOF
IEPs**



January 30, 2015 Half Day Conference



Ecamp style relaxed "unworkshop"

Like cookies, come with an idea to share and leave with a dozen!

8:00am - 1:00pm
Plainview Holiday Inn
Plainview, NY



Keynote Speaker:
Jacob S. Feldman, Esq.

Participants will hear from one of the leading special education attorneys in the nation and receive information on key legal requirements related to the development and implementation of IEPs based on federal and state statutes, regulations and case law. This will include a review of the most common legal mistakes made by districts and proactive steps to minimize potential liability. The program will include a panel discussion with knowledgeable practitioners who will outline best practices in all aspects of the IEP process.

Cost:
\$125 SAANYS Members
\$150 Non-Members

REGISTER ONLINE
www.saanys.org/events



Agenda:

- 8:00-8:30 Coffee/Registration
- 8:30 - 8:45 Welcome/Overview
- 8:45 - 10:00 David Nash/Karen Siris
Keynote: Developing a Bullet Proof IEP
Jacob Feldman, Esq.
- 10:00 - 10:30 Breakfast/Networking Break
- 10:30 - 11:30 Panel Discussion:
Best Practices in IEPs
Debra Kienke, Anne McGinnis, Cara Riebe, Ellen Levine
- 11:30 - 12:00 Case Study and/or Video Scenario with Small Group Discussions
- 12:00 - 12:45 Next Steps/Bringing It All Together
- 12:45 - 1:00 Q & A

Cost:
FREE SAANYS Members
\$10 Non-Members



What's working? Is there an idea that has come to life in your school that has caught on, that works, that people relate to, that makes a difference for students? From the most nitty gritty ways to get kids to be on time and bring materials to class, to bigger steps around school climate, culture, academics, data exploration, communication to families, observation practice, teacher collaboration, you name it! Share your story of what's working and what you've learned along the way - this informal get together is a way to listen, learn, and share with your colleagues around the region! Feel free to bring any materials, photo, or video you want to share with the group!

January 27, 2015

4:30pm - 6:00pm
SAANYS Headquarters
8 Airport Park Blvd.
Latham, NY

- cookies and light refreshments
- informal get together
- listen, learn, share, or just listen!

REGISTER ONLINE
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**REGION 11
2015 AWARDS
CEREMONY**

SAVE THE DATE!

April 21
5:00 pm
Reception and Appetizers
5:45 pm
Awards Program

Midvale Country Club
2387 Baird Road
Penfield

Join a cohort of your colleagues from neighboring districts for a comprehensive professional development experience:

- Six collegial days at HFM BOCES – January through June followed by optional online meetings and individual follow up to provide ongoing help with implementation.
- Professional development provided by SAANYS.
- Michael Fullan's new book: *The Principal* and \$200 SAANYS event voucher provided to all participants.
- Open to all administrators in HFM BOCES schools.

For more information contact SAANYS Director of Professional Development Karen Bronson at kbronson@saanys.org.

To register go to www.saanys.org

Please note that participants must register for the series, not individual sessions.

January 22:
EnVISIONING Success

February 26 and March 26:
LEADING the Learning

April 20:
CONNECTING to Community

May 19:
MANAGING Safely and Effectively
Two HALF DAY sessions 9-12 and 1-4.
Participants may CHOOSE which topics related to Managing Safely and Effectively are most relevant to their role and attend either or both sessions.

June 15:
REFLECTING for Professional Growth
SUSTAINING a Positive and Welcoming School Culture
Followed by capstone dinner celebration.

Location: HFM BOCES
8:30 am - 4:00 pm
except April 20 and June 15: 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Provided at no cost for participants from HFM BOCES districts, but registration is required.

TEAMWORK
MOTIVATION
INSPIRATION
LEADERSHIP
VISION
+ INNOVATION
= SUCCESS



For information on any SAANYS professional development event, contact Karen Bronson at KBronson@saanys.org.

Did you know that it's easy to create a professional development event tailored to the needs of your region? Your regional reps can contact me here at SAANYS and we can shape a program that reflects your needs. It would be great if 2015 could be the year to see a PD event in each of our twelve regions around the state!

Two upcoming events in Regions 5 and 6 are planned for January 13 and February 5, respectively. They provide a good model of how an event in your region could look. Both began with a phone call from representatives from those

regions who described their needs and vision for the event, and SAANYS took it from there. Coincidentally, both Region 5 and Region 6 were looking for a similar topic (negotiations) and a similar time frame (5-7 pm), so the program that we created with them looks something like this:

- Social time and light refreshments, one region opted for pizza and finger food at the beginning, the other for coffee and dessert at the end. Other regions have opted to hold the event at a local restaurant.
- Panel discussion on the topic of negotiations during difficult times. Panelists will include SAANYS legal counsel, lead negotiators, labor relations specialist, and building administrators.
- Brief message from a SAANYS sponsor, which can help the region defray the cost of the refreshments.
- Discussion and Q&A.

Region 5 chose to hold their event at a nearby hotel, and Region 6 will host their event right here at SAANYS in our conference room. Because these events in January and February will be facilitated by SAANYS legal counsel, the only cost to the region is for the space, if held at a hotel, and refreshments. Similar PD events over the past year in other regions have featured professional development topics around instructional leadership, legal updates, RTI, and other topics presented by in house SAANYS staff.

Getting together with colleagues is as important as the topical part of the program. Combining a social opportunity with a learning opportunity at a location and time that fits the needs of regional members is a great way for SAANYS to provide tailored professional development opportunities that work for the busy people like you who make up our membership! If you are interested in exploring a PD event for your region, contact your regional rep, have your rep contact me, and we will get the ball rollin'... All the best to you in 2015! ■



January 29, 2015

Cornell University
Statler Hotel, 130 Statler Dr., Ithaca, NY

Schedule for the Day

8:00 am - 8:30 am	Registration
8:30 am - 9:30 am	Opener Session Vote Audience
9:30 am - 9:45 am	Networking Break
9:45 am - 10:00 am	Session Presentation
10:10 am - 11:00 am	Session 1
11:10 am - 12:00 Noon	Session 2
12:00 Noon - 12:45 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm - 1:50 pm	Session 3
2:00 pm - 2:50 pm	Session 4
3:00 pm - 3:30 pm	App Smackdown Closing Remarks

Topics include but are not limited to:

1. Chromebooks in the Classroom
2. Google Apps Management
3. Google + Hangouts
4. Understanding Google Classroom
5. Going Google
6. Customizing Chrome to make your life awesome!
7. Google Scripts
8. Google Apps for Mobile Devices
9. Deep Dive with Drive
10. Google Glass Demo

What is an Edcamp Format?

An "unconference" without keynoters; everything to be discussed that day is determined by the attendees themselves on the morning of the event. Four exciting, interactive, practical sessions will result, with a focus on all things Google.

Register early to reserve your spot!

Registration cost is \$125 per person, includes full program, Google Chromecast, lunch, and breaks.

All attendees are eligible for door prize drawings, to be held during the closing remarks. Parking - \$12.

Registration and Payment

Please register online at: www.nyscate.org or fax registration to: 518-786-3983.

First Name	Last Name		
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City	State	Zip	
Employer			
Check#	Purchase Order #		
Credit Card #			Exp. Date
Name on Credit Card			

This program may now be covered under BOCES CoSer!

SAANYS MentorCoach Service
The Roots of Success

To support, inspire, and invigorate new and mid-career administrators.

For more information, contact Karen Bronson at 518-782-0600 kbronson@saanys.org • www.saanys.org

LEGAL BRIEFS

A Message From
Rebekah Staats,
SAANYS Counsel
RStaats@saanys.org



Testing Procedures...

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allowing them to be released prior to the date of the scheduled exam, and also by retaining possession of any exam material after scoring has been completed and material returned to SED. Further, Section 225 of the education law makes fraud in exams a misdemeanor, whether perpetrated by a student, by a teacher, by an administrator, or by any other person.

The commissioner's regulation puts into

practice Section 225 of the education law. The regulation expressly lists what would constitute misconduct when handling state examinations. It includes, but is not limited to, duplicating or keeping any exams without written approval from SED. This presents a danger area for some administrators. For example, your district may have instituted a program for test preparation at the various grade levels. If you are involved in such a program and set aside some unused

exams because you wish to review them to get an idea of where or how your curriculum matches up with the test materials, you are at risk of being accused of cheating.

So much more can go wrong. In the bustle of the daily environment, those unused materials can be misplaced or lost, and you will be immediately, almost inexcusably, or as we say in the law, strictly liable.

Testing improprieties by administrators are handled by the SED's security unit or "TSU." School officials and personnel are required to report any testing misconduct by an educator or other person involved in testing. Some examples of improper testing conduct that must be reported are: suspected or confirmed

cases of a school official giving aid to students during a state exam or altering student responses on an exam paper; cases in which a school official alters or otherwise misrepresents a student's earned exam

School officials and personnel are required to report any testing misconduct by an educator or other person involved in testing.

administrators who are involved in inappropriate conduct in regards to administering and scoring state exams may be subject to disciplinary actions in accordance with Sections 3020 and 3020-a of education law, or they may face disciplinary actions against their certification pursuant to Part 83 of the regulations of the commissioner of education.

If you have been accused of committing fraud during the course of state testing or have questions relating to testing administration, contact a SAANYS attorney immediately and we will be more than happy to assist. ■

score during scoring, recording, or reporting; and any instance of an administrator instructing another administrator to alter or interfere with a student's exam score.

Proctors, teachers, and administrators who do not follow the policies and procedures of SED may face discipline. Teachers and

Contract Settlements

NOTICE: Please send copies of your unit's settlements in the event that SAANYS did not negotiate the contract. This information is important and is helpful to fellow SAANYS members.

Pearl River Schools Educational Support, Operations, Administrators, and Supervisors Association, Region 2

The Pearl River Schools Educational Support, Operations, Administrators, and Supervisors Association was represented at the bargaining table by members Shawn Fredericks and Maureen Schwarz. They were joined by SAANYS General Counsel Art Scheuermann and Negotiator Linda Melton Mann.

Each year of the three-year contract included a \$300 increment and then a 1.5 percent annual increase to base. In addition, the unit unified an annual vacation buy back provision (it was bifurcated depending on the title) that accelerated the ability of unit members to sell back unused vacation leave as follows:

3 days buy back after 5 years of service down to after 2 years of service.

4 days buy back after 15 years of service down to 3 years of service.

5 days buy back after 20 years of service down to 4 years of service.

The unit also unified a longevity provision so every member is consistently treated. In addition, unit members are now able to use their unused accumulated vacation leave upon retirement to pay for their contribution toward the cost of retirement health insurance. The sick leave will go into a constructive trust and thereby pass through as a non-taxable event under the current tax laws. In exchange, the members' contribution toward health insurance will increase in year two, July 1, 2015 by 1 percent. Members will now contribute 20 percent toward the cost of health insurance, which is equal to other bargaining units in the district. ■

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Cuomo's Office Goes on Offense in Letter to SED...

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students.

1. How is the current teacher evaluation system credible when only one percent of teachers are rated ineffective? The NYC system was negotiated by Commissioner King directly and no one claims it is an accurate reflection of the reality of the state of education in NYC. What should the percentages be between classroom observations (i.e. subjective measures) and state assessments, including state tests (i.e. objective measures)? What percent should be set in law versus collectively bargained? Currently, the scoring bands and curve are set locally for the 60 percent subjective measures. What should the scoring bands be for the subjective measure and should the state set a standard scoring band? In general, how would you change the law to construct a rigorous state-of-the-art teacher evaluation system?

2. How would you address the problem of removing poor-performing educators when the current 3020-a process makes it virtually impossible to do so? Likewise, how would you change the system in New York City where poor-performing educators, with disciplinary problems, continue to be paid in the absent teacher reserve pool as opposed to being terminated?

3. What changes would you make to the teacher training and certification process to make it more rigorous to ensure we recruit the best and brightest teachers? Do you agree that there should be a one-time competency test for all teachers currently in the system? What should be done to improve teaching education programs across the state?

4. What financial or other incentives would you provide to high-performing teachers and would you empower administrators to make those decisions?

5. Do you think the length of a teacher's probationary period should be extended and should the state create a program whereby teachers have to be recertified every several years, like lawyers and other professions? What other changes would you propose to the probationary period before a teacher is granted tenure?

6. What steps would you take to dramatically improve priority or struggling schools, schools that condemn generation of kids to poor educations and thus poor life prospects? Specifically what should we do about the deplorable conditions of the education system in Buffalo?

7. What is your vision for charter schools? As you know, in New York City, the current charter cap is close to being reached, so would you increase the charter school cap? To what? What other reforms would you make to improve charter schools' ability to serve all students?

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NY Awarded New Preschool Development Grant...

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high-quality preschool programs that meet high-quality standards in the first year of the program alone. States receiving grants will develop or expand high-quality preschool programs in regionally diverse communities — from urban neighborhoods to small towns to tribal areas — as determined by the state. Preschool programs funded under either category of grants must meet the criteria for high-quality preschool programs. To support states in planning their budgets, the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services developed annual budget caps for each state that is eligible to receive a preschool development grant. The departments developed grant funding categories by ranking every state according to its relative share of eligible children and then identifying the natural breaks in the rank order. Then, based on population, budget caps were developed for each category.

The grants were part of more than \$1 billion in new federal and private sector investments in early childhood education announced by President Obama during a recent White House summit on early education. The president also announced a new public awareness campaign called "Invest in US" in partnership with the First Five Years Fund.

The announcements include:

- Up to \$750 million in new federal awards to reach more than 63,000 additional children in 49 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Mariana Islands with high-quality early education.
- More than \$330 million in private-sector commitments to expand the reach and enhance the quality of early education.

The preschool development grants program will lay the groundwork to ensure that more states are ready to participate in the preschool for all initiative proposed by the Obama administration. The president's 2014 budget request would create a federal-state partnership that ensures universal access to voluntary, high-quality preschool for all four-year-olds from low- and moderate-income families, with incentives for states to provide high-quality preschool for these children. It also includes support for other early childhood investments as part of a cohesive system of early learning and development for children, beginning with prenatal care and continuing through third grade. ■



and an invitation to accept the award at a White House ceremony with Michelle Obama. Winners will also have an opportunity to attend an awardee conference in summer 2015.

Deadline: Online applications are due February 2, 2015
More details: <http://www.nahyp.org>

Lowe's Toolbox for Education

As a part of their Toolbox for Education grant program, the Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation is donating up to \$5 million in funds to public schools and public school parent teacher groups. As many as 1,000 different schools per school year will receive grants valued between \$2,000 and \$5,000. The deadline for the Spring 2015 cycle is February 13, 2015, but Lowe's reserves the right to stop accepting applications after 1,500 have been received.

Deadline: February 13, 2015
More details: <http://www.toolboxforeducation.com>

RGK Foundation Grants

The RGK Foundation funds programs that focus on math, science, reading, and teacher development. There is no deadline or specific project guidelines; interested applicants should submit a letter of inquiry outlining a specific project.

Deadling: Rolling
More details: <http://www.rgkfoundation.org/public/guidelines#programs> ■

2015 CALENDAR



National African American History Month

National Children's Dental Health Month

Feb 2-6 National School Counseling Week

Feb 12 Abraham Lincoln's Birthday

Feb 14 St. Valentine's Day

Feb 16 President's Day

Feb 18 Start of Lent (through April 4)

Feb 19 Chinese New Year

Feb 22 George Washington's Birthday



Music in Our Schools Month

National Middle Level Education Month

Women's History Month

Youth Art Month

Mar 2-6 National School Breakfast Week

Mar 2 NEA's Read Across America

Mar 3 Adoption of US National Anthem

Mar 8 Daylight Savings Time

Mar 14 Albert Einstein's Birthday

Mar 17 St. Patrick's Day

Mar 20 First Day of Spring



Recycle Your Resources . . .

Do you know of a website, a book, a grant, or other resource that your colleagues should know about? Share it in this column by emailing MHebert@saanys.org.

Captain Planet Foundation Grants

This foundation funds environmental education programs that are project-based. Grants of \$500 to \$2,500 will be awarded to schools whose projects promote hands-on environmental stewardship. Preference is given to projects that have secured at least 50 percent matching or in-kind funding.

Deadline: January 31, 2015
More details: <http://captainplanetfoundation.org>

National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards

This award recognizes and supports excellence in after-school arts programs that open new pathways to learning, self-discovery, and achievement. Each year, the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards recognize 12 outstanding programs in the United States, from a wide range of urban and rural settings. Eligible programs use one or more arts discipline as core content, and provide participants with ongoing sessions rather than one-time opportunities.

The 12 award-winning programs will receive \$10,000



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Cuomo's Office Goes on Offense in Letter to SED...

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8. Do you support using technology to improve public education, like offering online AP courses by college faculty to high schools students who do not have any such courses now, even though these changes have been resisted by education special interests?

9. What would you do about mayoral control in NYC and do you support mayoral control in other municipalities? What changes and improvements would you make to NYC mayoral control?

10. There are approximately 700 school districts in New York, many of which have declining enrollment. Do you think we should restructure the current system through mergers, consolidations, or regionalization? If so, how would you do it?

11. As you know, the appointment and selection process of the Board of Regents is unique in that, unlike other agencies, selections and appointments are made by the legislature. Would you make changes to the selection and appointment process? If so, what are they?

12. Chancellor, the Board of Regents is about to replace Dr. King; can we design an open and transparent selection process so parents, teachers, and legislators have a voice?

Several weeks ago Governor Cuomo said that improving education is thwarted by the monopoly of the education bureaucracy. The education bureaucracy's mission is to sustain the bureaucracy and the status quo and therefore it is often the enemy of change. The result is the current system perpetuates the bureaucracy, but fails our students in many ways.

Tackling these questions with bold policy and leadership could truly transform public education and finally have it focus on the student as opposed to the bureaucracy.

With Commissioner King's imminent departure, we hope he can give us his best advice now free from external pressure before his departure. I've worked closely with Dr. King over the past several years and I want to wish him much success in his new endeavor. On behalf of Governor Cuomo, I look forward to hearing your responses by December 31 so they can be considered in the governor's state of the state address.

Sincerely,

Jim Malatras
Director of State Operations ■

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716-672-5473 jmerrins@cecomet.net

Embracing 2014 NYS Released Test Items

Opinion piece by Dr. Bruce H. Crowder,
Senior Researcher for Educational Vistas, Inc.

Now that teachers have access to 2014 released test items, multiple choice, and performance, what do they do with them? That is the question!

Since the advent of Common Core-based testing, this is the first time SED has released a significant portion of its tests for grades 3-8, ELA and math, for public review. Also, the released items are mapped to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) with annotations. This is remarkable!

These tests have been used for the past two years with disastrous results. It may be assumed that the goal of these tests is to measure students' overall mastery of Common Core. They are given with the assumption that students are prepared to take them. Nothing could be further from the truth! Not only have CCSS not been fully implemented with requisite shifts, but also these standards are not meaningful until they exist within testing formats. In this reform the tests inform the standards.

Therefore, the released test items need to be studied and used. Teachers and administrators should examine how the items work with insights from the annotations. In addition, the new formats need to be built into regular instruction. For example, constructed response items require an inference and two details. Nothing more is required. Why, then, are students writing extended paragraphs in attempting to respond to them over the past two testing administrations? While this practice may have worked in the past, it now has the adverse effect of preventing many students from completing the test.

So, aside from studying and integrating similar test formats within instruction, I recommend that schools consider using the released test items in an instructional manner at each grade and subject. First, share the scoring rubrics with students! For example, in ELA, students read the passages and complete the related test items, not for a grade, but for the opportunity to experience the manner in which the standards are tested. Whatever scores are generated may be used to compare current results with those from the spring of 2014.

Dismiss the idea of teaching to the test; however, embrace the idea of understanding the deeper nature of the standards by the manner in which they are assessed.

Dr. Bruce H. Crowder is a senior researcher for Educational Vistas, Inc. He is a former NYS assistant commissioner for Quality Assurance and the Education and Accountability Program. Dr. Crowder may be reached at evibruce@aol.com. ■

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