Top Issues From the February Board of Regents Meeting

A Report from Cindy Gallagher, SAANYS Director of Government Relations

The February meeting of the Board of Regents focused primarily on graduation rates and APPR. Other items such as the State Plan for Workforce Innovation, charter school renewals, the New Netherland Research, and professional practices were discussed and all reports may be found at http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings or by scanning the QR code.

Graduation Rates

Day one of the two-day meeting started off with an overview of the graduation rates for the 2013 student cohort. Highlights of the results are as follows and the complete presentation can be accessed by scanning the QR code.

A quick glance at the data indicates that:

• The June graduation rates of the 2013 cohort retained the previous year’s gains and grew slightly.
• The graduation trend continues to move upward and is 11 percentage points higher than it was for the 2013 cohort (88.6 percent).
• The current graduation rate is on track to exceed the approved ESSA goal next year.
• Four of the Big 5 school districts had graduation rate growth that exceeded the statewide growth.
• Yonkers Public Schools surpassed the overall statewide average by 2.6 percentage points.
• Graduation rates increased most at high need, large city schools by 2.3 percentage points and charter schools by 2.4 percentage points (charter school students represent 2.3 percent of the 2013 cohort).
• Achievement gaps persist among Black and Hispanic students as well as ELLs and Students with Disabilities (NYSED, Board of Regents 2/18).
• Large City High NRC = Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers combined.

Districts serving large populations of students of color and students from low-income families receive far less funding than those serving white and more affluent students. And despite widespread attention to inequitable funding formulas—and courts that have declared them unlawful for short-changing school districts serving large percentages of low-income students—too many states continue this unfair practice, according to a new state-by-state report and online data tool released by The Education Trust.

The Nation’s History of Shortchanging Students of Color and Low-Income Students

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The Education Trust reports that in NYs, when considering state and local revenues per student, the highest poverty districts receive $1,601, or seven percent less per student than the lowest poverty districts. However, the highest poverty districts receive $1,355, or 14 percent, more in state revenues per student than the lowest poverty districts. Learn more at https://edtrust.org.
I suspect that I’m not alone in frequently being wrong about the efficacy of public efforts to enact what I consider to be common sense gun control measures. I thought such measures would be enacted after Columbine, again after Virginia Tech, and certainly after the horror of Sandy Hook. I was wrong on each occasion. After the Las Vegas massacre, I thought that an easy out for the NRA and Congress was to agree to ban bump stocks. What exactly is the argument in favor of a device which converts the already dangerous semi-automatic rifle to a fully automatic one? It would be a way to do something without doing much. Wrong again. The majority of our elected representatives did nothing, other than accepting millions in NRA money. I know there are those, even among SAANYS members, who disagree with me, but I firmly believe there are useful regulatory efforts that could be enacted that would not constitute a meaningful infringement on anyone’s second amendment rights. I do not believe in magic wands. I’m not suggesting that we can regulate away gun violence, but I do believe we can reduce it.

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State Education Department

Executive Viewpoint

Kevin S. Casey, Executive Director

This Feels Different, But Is It?

Does it really make sense that the licensing requirements to operate a motor vehicle are more onerous than to operate an AR-15, or that one can legally purchase an AR-15 long before one can legally purchase a beer? A minimum age of 21 for the purchase of a firearm, a mandatory safety course with a demonstration of competency, a more robust background check system, a banning of bump stocks, and a banning of semi-automatic rifles all make sense to me and I continue to support them. Insular as I can tell, I’m influencing no one.

We recently asked members of the SAANYS Board of Directors and the SAANYS Government Relations Committee whether they supported or opposed requiring an armed police officer in every school building. These questions reflect two options being widely discussed after the shooting in Parkland, Florida. Of the 30 responses, 27 opposed arming teachers and three favored it, conditioned upon being voluntary and having training and background check requirements. An officer in every building was favored by 16 respondents, although several raised the issue of cost. Nine respondents opposed the idea. Four thought it should be deferred to local decision making and one was undecided. At the end of the day these ideas strike me as dangerous (the former) or piecemeal (the latter). In fact, I think that they are a distraction from the real issue. In my mind the real issue is implementing the more aggressive gun control measures generally favored by 66 percent of Americans, including 50 percent of gun owners (2/18/18 Quinnipiac University Poll). More specifically, 97 percent favor universal background checks (as do 97 percent of gun owners), 67 percent favor a complete ban on assault weapons and 83 percent favor a mandatory waiting period on gun purchases (Quinnipiac).

I can’t help but hope that Parkland is the proverbial straw that breaks the camel’s back of the NRAs stranglehold on gun-related regulation. Will the current push for gun control have staying power? Will policymakers respond to those without significant money, but with the moral authority derived from literally having spilled blood as victims of gun violence? Watching the articulate and impassioned young people from Parkland, skillfully operating in the age of social media, gives rise to hope that maybe, just maybe this time will be different. However, with my track record on this subject, I will not be surprised if I am wrong again.

State Education Department

District Shoutout!

State Education Department Announces “Reward Schools”

The State Education Department has announced the schools that have been recognized as Reward Schools. Administrators, teachers, and students have worked diligently to make the kinds of gains to meet the requirements of this recognition.

SAANYS would like to extend our congratulations to the following districts:

- Akron CSD
- Amherst CSD
- North Colonie CSD
- Owego-Apalachin CSD
- Pelham CSD
- Pittsford CSD
- Plainview-Old Bethpage CSD
- Rockville Centre UFSD
- Roslyn UFSD
- Rush-Henrietta CSD
- Schodack CSD
- Wantagh UFSD
- Williamsville CSD
- Wantagh UFSD
- Williamsville CSD

In order to be identified as high achieving the following criteria needed to be met:

- Be among the top 20 percent of schools in the state for English language arts (ELA) and math performance for both the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years or be among the top ten percent of schools in terms of gains in ELA and math performance in the 2016-17 school year.

- Have made Adequate Yearly Progress for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years for all groups of students on all measures for which the school is accountable, including the requirement that 95 percent of all participants in the English language arts and mathematics assessments.

- Not have unacceptably large gaps in student performance on an accountability measure between students who are members of an accountability group (e.g., low-income students) and students who are not members of that group.

- Elementary and middle schools must demonstrate that more than 50 percent of students are making annual growth in ELA and math; and that more than 50 percent of the school’s lowest achieving students are also making gains.

- High schools must have graduation rates above 80 percent in the age of achieving school and above 60 percent to be a high-progress school and 90 percent to be an advanced designation or a Career and Technical Endorsement (CTE) must exceed the state average.

- High schools must also demonstrate that their graduation rate for students who enter the school performing below proficient in ELA or math exceeds the state average.

- Regional Superintendents
- SAANYS News & Notes
- Vol. XLVII No. 3

Washington CSD
- Scotch-Plains Fanwood CSD
- Scotch Plains-Fanwood CSD
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School Administrators

Association of New York State

Vol. XLVII No. 3

SAANYS News & Notes

URSP 625-340 is published monthly with the exception of June, July, and August, by the School Administrators Association of New York State, 8 Airport Park Blvd., Latham, NY 12110. Phone: 518-762-0080 Fax: 518-782-9592

SAANYS is a charter school as a professional association by the New York State Education Department and is a member of NAESP and NAESP.

A copy of each issue of News & Notes shall not be sent to each SAANYS member. $7.50 of each members annual dues shall be for a year’s subscription to this publication.

Periodical Postage Paid Latham, NY and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to News & Notes, SAANYS, 8 Airport Park Blvd., Latham, NY 12110
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continued from page 1

sented. Within the 2013 cohort, 9,900 students accessed pathway options for graduation. Those included in the 2013 cohort of students were likely to be low end users of the pathway options, as many of the pathway options were not implemented until the 2015-16 school year. Subsequently, the data is limited. The discussion around the table focused on what is known about the 9,900 students.

The Regents were interested in knowing that the pathway options are accessed by a wide range of students. Regent Tilles also expressed concern about the unavailability of some pathways due to lack of assessments or programs in the district (specifically the 4-1 Arts Pathway).

A second stream of discussion focused on the gaps still prevalent among racial groups. Graduation rates for black and Hispanic students continue to lag behind their white peers. The conversation that evolved was a desire to examine correlational factors, not so much as a black/white issue, but rather as an issue of poverty. The Regent members also discussed how important they believe building level fiscal data will be once schools begin reporting. The approved ESSA plan requires that school districts report to NYSED all funding sources by building. The members of the board believe that this will be an important strategy for ensuring that districts provide equitable resources to all schools regardless of zip code.

Lastly, the data presented demonstrates that persistence pays off. Graduation rates increased for students that accessed Regents examinations during the summer months or who took five or six years to complete high school. The following graph depicts the differences in rates between years five and six for the 2011 cohort group.

CLOSING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

Differences in Graduation Rates between Black and Hispanic subgroups compared to White subgroup

22.0% 23.5%

20.5% 22.0%

19.7% 20.5%

23.3% 23.0%

20.7% 20.8%

23.0% 23.5%

2013 Cohort

2012 Cohort

2011 Cohort
“Think left and think right, and think low and think high. Oh, the thinks you can think up if only you try.”

-Dr. Seuss

SAANYS and Magellan are now Approved CTLE Providers!

SAANYS Provider Number – 3084
Magellan Foundation Provider Number – 3085

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APR 13 | Student Loan Forgiveness*
There are a number of Student Loan Forgiveness options available to New York State educators, but sorting through all of them can be a challenge. Let us help you navigate the requirements by going over who may be eligible, how you may be able to qualify, all the way to how to submit the paperwork.

MAY 4 | Social Security, Medicare, Long-Term Care Planning
The Social Security and Medicare system is one of the most important, and often misunderstood, retirement systems out there. This seminar provides helpful information about the Social Security and Medicare system and how to maximize your benefits. We will also discuss Long-term Care planning and how to coordinate benefits in the ever-changing retirement environment.

JUN 1 | Planning for College
As costs rise faster than inflation, properly planning for educational expenses while balancing the need for day-to-day budgeting and long-term savings is critical. This seminar will provide a brief overview of the need to plan ahead for a college education and the types of planning vehicles available, including UGMA/UTMA, Coverdell savings accounts, and 529 plans.

Grab your lunch and join us the first Friday of each month* at noon for Financial Fridays with AXA. These short 30 minute online sessions are meant to offer tips and ideas for securing your personal financial success.

Your Role in Addressing the Growing Mental Health Crisis Among Students

Cooperating Organizations:
- Mental Health Association in New York State (MHANYS) | Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association (N-SSBA4)
- New York Association of School Psychologists (NYASP) | New York State Council of School Superintendents (NYCSS)
- New York State Education Department (NYSED) | New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) | New York State PTA (NYSPTA)
- Rural Schools Association of New York State (RSA) | School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS)

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Call for Presenters
Submission Deadline: MARCH 31, 2018

This year’s theme, Leading and Learning NOW, focuses on what the challenges and opportunities are, and more importantly, how we can navigate changing seas in new and innovative ways. We are seeking practitioner workshops that focus on the many aspects of NOW in our schools, from the perspective of all of our varied leadership roles. What are you learning? What are you trying? What’s working, and what did you learn from what didn’t? Tell your story, and share your expertise with colleagues from across New York State at this year’s conference, at the peak of fall in beautiful Lake Placid. George Couros, author of The Innovator’s Mindset: Empower Learning, Unleash Talent and Lead a Culture of Creativity and The Principal of Change blog, will be there with us to set the tone for what promises to be a memorable professional and personal experience.

Access the submission form at saanys.org. For more information contact Karen Bronson at kbronson@saanys.org.

Lessons Learned 2.0
Experienced administrators sharing their hard-won wisdom

March 13, 2018 | 4:30-6:00pm
SAANYS Headquarters

Cost: $10 SAANYS members
$20 for non-members
Includes a copy of The Administrator’s Handbook

Who Should Attend:
All current or aspiring administrators eager to learn what only experience can teach.
For additional information, contact Karen Bronson at kbronson@saanys.org.

Find regional events throughout the year at saanys.org/events.

Regional Events
Find out more details and register at saanys.org/events

REGION 4 - ANNUAL STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS
Application Deadline: April 15
Region 4 is pleased to announce that scholarships in the amount of $500 to $750 will be awarded to graduating high school seniors continuing their education at accredited post secondary institutions. These seniors must be children of active or retired-active SAANYS members.

REGION 6 - AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS
May 21 | Longfellows Restaurant, Saratoga Springs
Region 6 will offer five $500 scholarships this year to graduating Seniors (Class of 2018) in the Region 6 area. Award recipients will be notified by March 23, 2018. Recipients will be honored at the Region 6 Annual Awards Breakfast on Tuesday, May 22.

REGION 10 - WHAT NO ONE TOLD YOU ABOUT THE CRITICAL ASPECTS FOR EFFECTIVE BARGAINING UNIT LEADERSHIP
March 29 | 4:00-6:00pm | Maplewood Suites, Liverpool
Join us as SAANYS Deputy Executive Director Don Nickson discusses the role of the unit president and the specific tasks that lead to an effective unit. Open to current unit presidents and one other unit officer. RSVP before March 10 to Chick Quattrini, hq1953@gmail.com.
### Recent Changes in Labor Law

Personally, the SAANYS Legal Department likes to update our members on important changes, or upcoming ones, to the labor laws. We have identified three updates that you should know about.

The first one you may have already noticed on your pay stub. Starting January 1, 2018, New York State implemented its Paid Family Leave law (PFL), not to be confused with the Federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). PFL provides up to eight weeks of leave to eligible employees at 50 percent of the New York State Average Weekly Wage, capped at $6,529.60. PFL may be used to:
- 1) bond with a newly born, adopted, or fostered child;
- 2) care for a family member with a serious health condition; or
- 3) assist loved ones when a family member is deployed abroad on active military service. PFL is taken concurrently with FMLA when the necessitating factors for the leave are applicable under both laws.

With respect to vacation/sick days and PFL, the status of those days will vary by employer. PFL is paid through payroll taxes on all New York employers at a rate of 0.126 percent of an employee’s weekly wage and is capped at an annual maximum of $85.56 (for 2018). Despite public employees, including most SAANYS members, being required to pay the tax, PFL only applies automatically to employees in the private sector. Public employers may opt into PFL at their discretion, or negotiate the benefits of the law into their contract.

The second update is a result of a recent New York State Court of Appeals case, Froman v. Henkin decided on February 13, 2018. Previously in New York, posts on Facebook set to the private or friends-only account setting were not subject to discovery (being revealed during litigation) unless one party planned to use those posts in the trial or hearing. In Froman, the Court of Appeals found that social media settings of private or friends-only public do not require a heightened standard for discovery and that any relevant material likely to be found on Facebook should be made accessible via the discovery process during litigation. This ruling does not mean that one’s entire Facebook is subject to being made searchable in portions that could be relevant for litigation at hand, i.e., while information posted as private could still be made public as a result of Facebook friends with access to an individual’s account, the caveat now is that a judge can make private posts public if they believe the information is relevant. As always SAANYS recommendation is to think before you post anything on social media.

The last item that we must make you aware of is the proposed Department of Labor (DOL) rule changes. These rules are posted on DOL’s website in a list format. While the majority of the current proposed changes do not apply to members, the following proposed change to “tip- ping” nationwide could be the subject of a student question. Under regulations enacted in 2011, restaurants are considered the sole property of service-facing employees (waiters, busser, bartenders), etc. This is to take into account that employees are allowed to pay these employees less than minimum wage, because they get tips. Under the DOL’s new proposed rules, restaurants will be permitted to pool tips and distribute them to employees as they see fit, or to keep tips for a business as a whole. How this proposed change could play into minimum wage laws is yet to be seen.

SAANYS takes pride in keeping our members up-to-date on any changes that could affect their employment. If you have any questions regarding the above article or legal questions in general do not hesitate to contact the SAANYS Legal Department.

### 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.

Central Square Administrators Association, Region 10

The Central Square Administrators Association negotiated a successor CBA led by Unit President Larry Wink and member Brent Bowden, with assistance from SAANYS General Counsel Art Scheuermann.

The new four-year agreement centered on significant salary increases (almost 20 percent over four years) in exchange for the phase out of an $8,000 off-schedule annual payment for receiving a highly effective/ effective rating on APPR and marked changes in health insurance coverage.

As negotiated, there will be annual increases each year of $1,000 to base before multiplying the annual increase 3.6 percent. However, in year one of the contract, members who are currently ineligible for a longevity stipend will receive $1,500 in year one only to offset a 6 percent increase in employee premium cost-sharing for health insurance. This was a significant give back. Unit members will now contribute 11 percent towards the cost of health insurance. In addition, unit members’ base will increase by an additional one percent upon all employee units switching from an indemnity health insurance plan to another plan.

To phase out the off schedule $8,000 (highly effective rating) or $6,000 (effective rating) performance based pay on APPR scores, the parties agreed to the $1,000 per year added to the base formula calculation of annual increase. In addition, the district agreed to make an employer elective contribution into IRC 403(b) accounts for unit members based on the following sliding scale: July 1, 2018 - $1,000; July 1, 2019 - $1,500; July 1, 2020 - $2,000; and July 1, 2021 - $2,500 plus the district will continue to make the off schedule performance payments until the benefit is phased out in the fall of 2021 as follows: 2018-19: $6,000 (highly effective)/$3,750 (effective); 2019-2020: $4,000 (highly effective)/$2,500 (effective); and 2020-21 $2,000 (highly effective)/$1,250 (effective).

The district further agreed to improve longevity payments by $300 at each longevity increment of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 years. Note the longevity steps are added to members’ base salary. After the increase, each longevity step is now worth $1,300.

Other benefits included increasing the face value of group life insurance benefit to double the unit member’s salary up to a cap of $250,000. As mentioned, the contract was tempered by a change in health insurance plans, an increase in employee cost sharing in premium costs plus introduction of a new three-tier drug plan, fixing the health insurance buyout at 35 percent of the cost of a single plan, and elimination of a $200 benefit paid for a complete physical examination.

Lastly, the district demanded the implementation of a dress code, which now requires members to dress in a professional manner during work hours: when staff are in session, jeans, polo shirts, and other informal clothing are not considered professional. Exceptions will be made for days when there are special events or celebrations.

### Advertisement

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PBT/CBT: Planning a New York State Extended Response (ER)

Sponsor Opinion Piece by Bruce H. Crowder, Senior Researcher, Educational Vistas, Inc.

Whether paper-based testing (PBT) or computer-based testing (CBT), students will demonstrate their skills in essay writing. According to SED, the ER change in grade 3 will require comprehension and analysis of an individual text; while in grades 4-8, extended-response questions will require student to read and analyze paired texts. This type of writing continues to be a challenge for many students. Statewide data shows that it has been difficult to achieve a mean score of 2 on a 4-point rubric. A good way to look at these tasks is to clarify what is the target and the goal. Students performing at level 3, the target, demonstrate proficiency in the writing standards for their grade. On the other hand, students performing at level 4, the goal, are excelling in the writing standards for their grade.

Having scored ER questions since the inception of Common Core testing, it is evident that there are reasons why so many students tend to miss the proficiency target. One most significant area of concern is planning an ER response. State testing indicates that there is little or no evidence of student planning for these tasks at all grades, and students who do plan leave much to be desired.

It would be helpful for students to plan their response from a schema which relates to the writing rubric and prompt. Each response requires an introduction and conclusion which needs to relate to the prompt and may be brief. The bulleted portion of an ER prompt helps immensely in identifying the focus of each body paragraph. Such a schema could be represented by I (introduction) B1 (body paragraph 1) B2 (body paragraph 2) and C (conclusion): I+B1+B2+C. Insights, details, and quotations are then unpacked from the text(s) and listed on the planning page within each segment of the schema. The final step is writing from the accumulated evidence in the schema.

I have spent considerable time in designing an approach at each grade to address an ER challenge. A schema for the planning page is essential; however, to be effective, the planning page must be torn from the book and placed next to the text on a second read. With CBT students, there needs to be a loose page with schema to plan. Location of the planning page with schema is critical. Proximity is essential for effective planning to well vetted and provide ample opportunity for input from the field. There was a concern that the field would be sent the survey in a rather rapped up pace from the timeframe indicated to stakeholders such as SAANYS.

Much of the discussion around the table focused on the teacher portion of the survey. At one point in the discussion period Chancellor Rosa spoke up to remind the board that the evaluation process was also a principal evaluation process. We thank the chancellor for her sensitivity to both the role of the principal in teacher evaluations, as well as principals being evaluated.

All in all, the board expressed a commitment to enduring the process used to reopen discussions on APPR ensures a climate of trust and provides time and space for public input.

**Top Issues From the February Board of Regents Meeting**

**APPR**

The second major conversation was an update on APPR initiatives. The power point used provided an overview of the evolution of the law and other initiatives that have resulted in the current APPR status. Revisions to ELA and math standards, revisions to state assessments, and moving curriculum back to local districts have all been a part of SED’s outreach to stakeholders.

Also discussed was the formation of two workgroups, one on evaluation and assessment and the other on SLOs. SAANYS will be working diligently to ensure that our members are represented on both groups. The report and presentation can be accessed by scanning the QR code.

**Discussion Around the Table**

A first discussion focused on the APPR Survey that was just released to the field. There was discussion on the need to ensure that the processes undertaken by SED are well vetted and provide ample opportunity for input from the field. There was a concern that the field was sent the survey in a rather rapped up pace from the timeframe indicated to stakeholders such as SAANYS.

Below are just a few highlights of our many current and pending cases.

**Region 1**
- SAANYS negotiated a separation agreement.

**Region 2**
- SAANYS filed a demand for arbitration regarding failure to properly pay a buyout.

**Region 4**
- SAANYS filed a Commissioner’s Appeal regarding the removal of BOE members, dismissal of 3020a charges, and alternative stay of the 3020a charges.

**Region 5**
- SAANYS drafted Level 1 grievance regarding the number of vacation days that must be taken in a year.

**Region 6**
- SAANYS attended a board meeting hearing as a part three grievance for a member alleging age discrimination.

**Region 7**
- SAANYS assisted a member with representation at a superintendents meeting to eliminate a job title.

**Region 10**
- SAANYS researched the viability of a health insurance trust for members to determine if the new plan offered is comparable and viable.

**Region 14**
- SAANYS assisted a member with a rebuttal to a counseling memo.

**Region 12**
- SAANYS scheduled a pre-hearing conference regarding an improper practice charge for failing to negotiate a final salary upon separation of service.

Have questions? Need assistance? Use the “Ask SAANYS” button at saanys.org.
SAANYS is ... Your Voice

- A member composed Government Relations Committee representing you at the State Education Department, Legislature, and Capitol.
- A full-time government relations director on staff – a former SED senior manager and educational policy analyst.
- An Albany-based lobbyist “in the know” at the Capitol.

Did you know?
SAANYS is regularly asked to serve on numerous SED committees as the voice for school administrators in the field. As a member, you are currently represented on the following state-level committees and groups:
- ESSA Think Tank
- Committee of Practitioners
- Principal Preparation Project Committee
- Mental Health Advisory Council
- My Brothers Keeper Blue Ribbon Panel
- 180 Day Requirement Meetings
- Committee for Professional Standards for Educational Leaders
- DASA Working Group
- Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS) Committee
- Data Privacy Committee
- Early Childhood Blue Ribbon Panel
- TeachNY Round Table
- NYSTCE Teacher Certification Examinations (NYSTCE)
- EAS Test Development & edTPA Standard Setting
- NYSTCE Content Specialty Test Development
- edTPA Multiple Measures Review Process (MMRP) Panel

A resource from: Helping Children Cope With Tragedy

PARENTS

Report to Parents

Young children shouldn’t have to learn about tragic events, but they do. Some are exposed to disasters firsthand, as victims. Others discover the tragedies by watching the news or overhearing adults or other children discussing the events. It is a sad fact that all children need to know how to deal with tragic events—and their parents and caregivers need to know how to help them cope.

IF YOUR CHILD IS THE VICTIM OF A DISASTER:
Try to stay calm. Children often react the way they see adults react. As difficult as it is, it is very important for you to remain calm and reassuring, and to let your children know that, no matter what, they will be taken care of.

Explain, but don’t provide unnecessary details. Clearly, children need to know the truth, but they don’t need to hear about all of the details and consequences. Give them the facts that they need to know at that moment, but don’t share with them your fears about the future.

Make time to talk to your children. In disastrous situations, adults are often so preoccupied with the immediate needs that they forget their children are aware of what’s happening. Make sure they know they can talk to you, and that you’ll spend the time they need answering their questions and comforting them.

Get counseling. It is important to help children cope with serious life-changing events. Talk with the school counselor about the situation, then set up a time for your children to come in and “vent.” Follow-up appointments with the counselor or other experts can help your children overcome their fears.

IF YOUR CHILD IS AWARE OF A TRAGIC EVENT
Limit TV coverage. Because children can be overwhelmed with the tragedy, limit their TV exposure of the event. Instead, check in periodically with the news, and focus on finding ways to distract your children with other activities.

Be extra comforting. Even if they don't seem to be alarmed, children who are aware of disastrous events can absorb the trauma and be quietly disturbed. Make extra time for quiet activities with your children, such as reading or taking a walk; and give them plenty of hugs.

Watch for behavior changes. Children often don’t talk about being afraid, but their behavior can be a clue that they’re scared. They might have a hard time sleeping, or might wake up from a bad nightmare. Sometimes, they adopt behaviors, like thumb sucking, bedwetting, or baby talk. Others get irrationally angry or sad, and many withdraw and stop socializing. If you see any of these behaviors after a traumatic event, it means your child needs extra help and comfort.

Make sure they know that there are people in charge who are helping. Children need to know that things will eventually be okay again and that there are adults in charge who are helping to make it right. Talk to your children about the people who are helping resolve the consequences of the disaster, and share your admiration with them about the great work these people are doing.

Do something for others. One way to help children cope in the aftermath of a disaster is to find a way, through your community, to help those affected. Schools, churches, temples, synagogues, and organizations like the Red Cross are great places to go to find out how you and your children can help.

Measurement Incorporated (MI) is an industry leader in providing performance and assessment scoring services, automated essay scoring services, developing assessment methodologies, and providing innovative solutions for all testing needs. In addition, MI’s Program Evaluation and School Improvement Services division, based in Albany and White Plains, assists education organizations at the federal, state, and local levels to advance their programs and services through high-quality research, evaluation, measurement, data management, professional development, and technical assistance. We offer our clients a team of experienced professionals with deep content expertise, a thorough understanding of research methodologies, and the ability to bring about meaningful change. We’ve completed more than 2,000 projects, adhering to the highest standards of quality.

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For more information, contact Thomas J. Kelsh, Ed.D. at ThosK@miassoc.com or 1-800-330-1420 (ext. 206), www.mi-schoolservices.com.