

Welcome to NYSCEA!

September 2009

Letter to the Delegates of NYSCEA

Welcome back for an exciting and new 2009-2010 school year.

We will have an interesting year with many changes:

* **Dr. David Steiner** becomes our Commissioner on October 1. He has been invited to join us and has agreed to attend our spring meeting. We look forward to that meeting.

* Senior Deputy Commissioner **Johanna Duncan-Poitier** is leaving SED to assume a position in the SUNY administration. We wish her well and look forward to working with her replacement.

There are so many topics that affect our educational system – NCLB Differentiated Accountability, plans for a major outbreak of H1N1 flu and student absenteeism, teacher preparation and improving teacher quality, closing the gap, budget cuts, status of the P-16 plan, educational technology, state standards and assessments – to name a few.

One of the areas that we will continue to focus on is Professional Development. The ‘heart’ of each of our organizations fosters professional development– through conferences, forums, journals, newsletters and by being the teachers’ voice with the State Education Department. The educational organizations spend countless hours volunteering their time to that endeavor.

On July 24, 2009, President Obama made remarks at the Department of Education on **Race to the Top**, a competition to get states to implement school reforms that produce real results. The \$4.35 billion fund, the largest pot of discretionary funding for K-12 education reform in the history of the United States, will reward eligible states for their accomplishments, and create incentives for future improvements.

Under Race to the Top guidelines, states seeking funds need to implement four core interconnected reforms:

- adopting standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and careers;
- recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals;
- building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals on how they can improve their practices; and,
- turning around our lowest-performing schools.

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/secletter/090902.html>

The President said, “*Everyone has a role to play in training these (outstanding) teachers.*” We, the professional educational organizations, have a duty to be involved in bettering our standards, our teachers and educational leaders and our schools so that all of our children can meet the challenges of the 21st century.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNbDv0zPBV4>

The draft Race to the Top application requires that states not have any legal statutory or regulatory barriers to linking student achievement or student growth to teachers for the purpose of teacher and principal evaluation. New York State tenure law states that the teacher shall not be granted or denied tenure based on student performance. Board of Regents Chancellor Merryl Tisch maintains that the fact that the tenure law does not disqualify.

<http://gothamschools.org/2009/07/23/draft-race-to-the-top-regulations-would-ban-new-york-state/>

We are pleased with the full and informative agenda. We are very fortunate that four members from the state education department will be joining us. Don't miss Kathie DeKalb's professional development template and Jim Viola's update on the Governor's Summit and professional development in the afternoon.

We appreciate the state education representatives and our NYSCEA members for participating in the program and thank them for all their efforts on our behalf.

Sincerely,

Grace A. Wilkie
President of NYSCEA 2009-2011