

## Advocacy Newsbriefs...

### Hydrofracking

The Marcellus Shale is a deposit of natural gas located under much of the southern half of New York State. There is great interest in exploiting this resource through hydrofracking.

The main public health concern with this process is contamination and depletion of the clean water supply. Forty-two schools in New York State have private wells that would be directly threatened by hydrofracking. Public health impacts from this process are not being adequately addressed.

Guidelines for hydrofracking are currently being developed by New York State agencies. The Draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement, which is the basis for developing the guidelines, is available for public comment until December 12, 2011; we urge you to view and comment on it: [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov).

Comments can be emailed directly to Governor Cuomo at: [www.governor.ny.gov/contact/GovernorContactForm.php](http://www.governor.ny.gov/contact/GovernorContactForm.php).

Facebook: Write your comments on Governor Cuomo's Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/GovernorAndrewCuomo](http://www.facebook.com/GovernorAndrewCuomo).

### Special Education IEP Changes

The State Education Department (SED) has issued proposed regulatory language for public comment that would phase-out the Individualized Education Program (IEP) diploma for all students with disabilities, and establish a new credential, only available to students with severe disabilities participating in the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA). [Click here to view article.](#)



***"Advocacy is at the heart of PTA's mission and vision. Taking action provides both parents and PTA leaders with the resources to become more involved with their community at home and their community across the nation."***

November 28, 2011



**everychild.onevoice: We Advocate for ALL children...**



**In the Spotlight...**

### Regents Approve Mandate Relief

At its November 14 meeting, the Board of Regents approved SED proposals to provide mandate relief in several areas. NYS PTA, in cooperation with other organizations, lobbied to keep mandates that require the second parent member and school psychologist on the CSE/CPSE committees.

The Regents approved the removals, with only Regents Cashin and Rosa voting to keep both members. Thanks go to all that participated in the "call in" from Sunday's Convention morning session in Niagara Falls and to all those in the regions, councils and units who also contacted a Regent. The fight is not over because the decision must still be approved by the legislature.

Stay tuned!

### Health/Wellness Advocacy

#### World AIDS Day Theme: Getting to Zero

Since 1988, December 1<sup>st</sup> has been recognized as World AIDS Day. This is the time of year when school districts typically host HIV/AIDS programs. What many people do not know is that the NYS Education Department has instructional mandates regarding comprehensive Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade HIV/AIDS education. These mandates are covered in the NYS Commissioner's Regulations, Subchapter G, Part 135: Health, Physical Education and Recreation. The regulations for elementary and secondary school students provide that:

- instruction be given during class and include accurate information on the nature of the disease, transmission and prevention;
- parents can opt out of prevention instruction for their student as long they assure the school that the instruction is provided at home;
- Boards of Education establish an advisory council (including parents, school board members, appropriate school personnel and community representatives) and is responsible for making recommendations concerning the content, implementation and evaluation of an AIDS instruction program; and
- Boards of Education or trustees shall determine the content of the curriculum and approve its implementation, and be responsible for the evaluation of the district's AIDS instruction program.

As a supplement to HIV education, PTAs can provide information to their units from the following organizations:

- World AIDS Day ([www.worldaidsday.org](http://www.worldaidsday.org))
- Centers For Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov/hiv/](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/));
- Averting HIV and AIDS ([www.avert.org/](http://www.avert.org/));
- World Health Organization ([www.who.int/hiv/en/](http://www.who.int/hiv/en/))
- New York State Department of Health ([www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/))

#### Advocacy Action

The [House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Bill \(HR 3070\)](#) will cut funding for mental health and addiction services (SAMHSA) by 8.4 percent – a crippling, irreversible cut that would take years from which to recover.

This bill comes on the heels of funding cuts already imposed in FY 2011 and further cuts in critical programs that ensure a strong public behavioral health infrastructure.

National PTA has indicated that this is on their radar, and has sent a letter opposing any cuts to Labor HHS appropriations.

[Contact your representative to oppose this bill.](#)

The NYS Board of Regents meets monthly, except for August. To access the 2011-2012 meeting schedule, agendas, materials and webcast opportunities, go to:

[www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings](http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings)