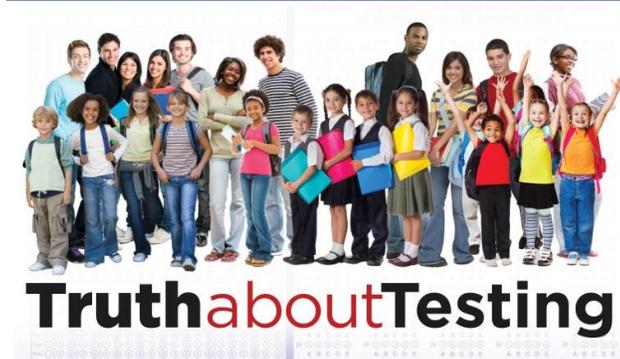


Legislative Update



Testing Update

➤ NYSUT launched its new web ad to celebrate the hard work and dedication of our educators to make it clear that a teacher is more than a test score. Please tell your legislators to #evaluateTHAT! by watching and sharing our web ad at https://mac.nysut.org/my-teacher_1.

➤ Assemblyman Edward Hennessey (AD-3) introduced A.9655, which removes the confidentiality agreement that prohibits educators, administrators, and other school employees from publicly discussing and sharing test content after the state test has been administered. Furthermore, it prohibits the requirement that educators and administrators must even sign such a confidentiality agreement.

Lastly, the bill requires the Commissioner of Education to release test content, questions, and answers for public review and discussion after the test has been administered.

➤ Assemblyman Edward Ra (AD-19) has introduced A.9868, which would repeal the Teacher Excellence Fund, created in the 2014-15 budget, and replace it with a fund for collaborative curriculum development. These funds would be awarded directly to districts for local collaboration to increase materials available to school districts and aid them in the development of curriculum.

➤ Senator Terry Gipson (SD-41) introduced two bills in regards to testing companies. S.7451 would stop the use of exams developed by Pearson and prohibit the State Education Department from entering into any future contracts with Pearson. The second bill, S.7445, would end the requirement for teacher certification applicants to take and pay for Pearson (or affiliate) examinations.

ACTIONS OF THE WEEK:

*Watch and Share Our “#EvaluateTHAT” Web Ad!
Go to: https://mac.nysut.org/my-teacher_1

*Reform the Unconstitutional, Undemocratic, Blatantly Punitive and Destructive Tax Cap! Go to: https://mac.nysut.org/faxlegislators2/widget/issue/199#issuesheadline_mobile



Higher Education Update

On May 28, NYSUT higher education affiliates testified at a forum held by the Senate Democratic Conference on the NY Dream Act. Fred Kowal, President of United University of Professions, and Kate Pfordresher of the Professional Staff Congress, presented testimony favoring passage of the legislation in the Senate; The measure has already passed the Assembly. NYSUT strongly supports the NY Dream Act and will continue to work with our higher education affiliates to advocate for its enactment into law.

853 Schools and Special Act Schools

This week, the governor, in consultation with the Division of Budget, announced a 3.8 percent increase in reimbursement rates for 853 and Special Act schools. 853 schools provide education to students with various disabilities. Special Act schools provide education services for students with behavioral and emotional issues and some are attached to residential facilities.

Last year, NYSUT secured a rate increase of 3 percent for these schools. Prior to 2013-14, these schools did not have an increase for four years.

NYSUT will continue to lobby for the concerns these schools have in regards to funding, the hiring and retention of staff, school safety, and workplace violence.

Back-Door Voucher Bill Update

NYSUT is working with over a dozen statewide coalition partners to aggressively oppose the “Education Investment Tax Credit” (A.1826-D, S.6808 and S.4099-A) which, in its

Legislative Update is written by NYSUT’s Legislative Department.

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first three years alone, would siphon off \$675 million from the General Fund to private schools and corporate-backed charter schools.

This week, NYSUT and its coalition partners issued a joint opposition memorandum and will meet with legislators to continue to educate them on the destructive impact this legislation would have on public schools and other vital public services.

Gaming Revenue Report: No Jackpot for Schools

In his recent report, State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli stated that New York's dependence on gaming revenues has grown over the past two decades while the share of state aid to school districts, which includes lottery revenues, is smaller now than in 1967 (the year the New York State Lottery was created). In the 2012-13 school year, monies from the Lottery accounted for five percent of total state aid. From 1967-68, Lottery revenue provided forty-three percent of state school aid.

DiNapoli's report concludes that much of the gaming revenue derived from the introduction of new state licensed casinos will come from New York residents. Such activity will represent a substitution of spending, rather than actual new money, causing estimates of employment and revenue gains from new casinos to be inflated.

Nurse/Health Care Lobby Day Summary



(l-r) NYSUT 2014 Health Care Professional of the Year Cynthia McDaniel, Chair of the Senate Health Committee Kemp Hannon (SD-6), and NYSUT Executive Vice President Andy Pallotta

This year, the NYSUT Health Care Professionals' Council's legislative agenda included the following:

- **Safe Staffing for Quality Care Act** - A.6571 Gottfried/S.3691-A Hannon
- **(anti-MOT) Hours Worked by Home Care Nurses** - A.1632 Gunther/S.1673 Grisanti
- **Minimum School Nurse Staffing Standards** - A.1497 Gunther/S.1755 Robach
- **Student Self-Medication Best Practices** - A.9334-B, Nolan/S.7758 Flanagan; and
- **Allowing Non-Medical School Staff to Administer Insulin to Diabetic Students** - A.4987 Benedetto/S.4473 Marcellino OPPOSE

Unionists from PEF, 1199, NYSNA, and CWA joined NYSUT to hear remarks by Senators George Maziarz (SD-62), Ruth Hassell-Thompson (SD-36), and Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther (AD-100).

In The News.....

➤ Governor Andrew Cuomo has secured the Working Families Party (WFP) endorsement and has chosen former Congresswoman Kathy Hochul from Buffalo to run as his lieutenant governor. In order to secure the nomination, Cuomo promised to support a democratic takeover of the Senate, to increase the minimum wage to \$10.10 with an index tied to inflation, and to enact a statewide public campaign financing system.

Senator Dean Skelos responded, "And now we have Governor Cuomo who on one hand is saying in commercials how great it is for Republicans and Democrats to work together, four on time budgets, cutting taxes, creating jobs and then you have another Andrew Cuomo, maybe it is a different middle initial who is basically kowtowing to the most extreme liberal Working Families Party, saying bipartisanship doesn't work and we should go back to the days of dysfunction, deficits, overspending, over taxation."

➤ Senator Malcolm Smith's (SD-14) request for a delay in his federal corruption trial – so he can run unfettered in a democratic primary – was rejected by the judge; His trial began last week. Although Smith is fighting the charges in court he has been at the Capitol and has been voting on bills.

➤ Republican gubernatorial candidate Rob Astorino hosted a fundraiser in Manhattan that featured Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker. NYS AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento led a protest to tell Walker, "Your divisive and failed policies are simply not welcome here in our state."

Federal Update

On Tuesday, Los Angeles Superior Court overturned key protections in California law regarding teacher tenure and seniority by deciding they were unconstitutional. In the Vergara v. California decision Judge Rolf Treu wrote the protections, "Impose a real appreciable impact on students' fundamental right to equality of education."

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan called the ruling, "A mandate to change similar laws, practices and systems that fail to identify and support our best teachers and match them with our neediest students."

AFT response can be found:

<http://www.aft.org/newspubs/press/2014/061014b.cfm>

NEA response can be found:

<http://www.nea.org/home/59351.htm>

NYSUT response can be found:

<http://www.nysut.org/news/2014/june/nysut-california-decision-meritless-assault-on-workers-rights>