



TAKING STOCK

Gene Goldwasser



With the advent of the New Year, we tend to look back at our achievements while looking ahead to see what we can do better, set goals for the future, and prepare for new challenges. Looking back, I am reminded about our focus on advocating for changes in the No Child Left Behind Act and its unrealistic expectations, and the rollout for the Common Core Standards. You may recall the goal of having every child read on grade level by 2014. Laudable, yes, but totally impossible to attain. When the law was used to tie student achievement to federal funding and, ultimately, to teacher and school administrator evaluations, it engendered so much opposition that it became unsustainable and in December it was repealed by the present Congress. Its replacement returns to the states the power to set standards and determine accountability procedures. As a result, New York has imposed a four-year moratorium on linking high stakes testing to evaluations while a new model can be developed.

I am also reminded of two features the newsletter ran during 2015 – one that asked members to communicate about the activities they have been pursuing in retirement, and the other that asked members to respond to questions posed by newsletter articles as well as such features as “The Quarterly Query” that asked members for their opinions on a variety of issues. The members who responded to these features helped guide the focus of the organization and gave us an understanding of where our members stood on a variety of issues and concerns.

NYSRSAS conducted a focus group in November to determine whether we should consider supporting/endorsing candidates for public office. It was decided that we would support candidates and we established a set of criteria to help us measure which candidates are worthy of our support. We would support/endorse candidates for office who:

- demonstrate support for issues that affect retirees, i.e. Medicare and Social Security

- demonstrate support for public education
- demonstrate support for educational opportunities for disabled individuals, programs for school dropouts, and vocational educational opportunities for those who are interested in non-academic pursuits
- demonstrate their opposition to onerous high stakes testing programs and using high stakes testing results to evaluate teachers and school administrators
- demonstrate support for the right of workers to organize and bargain to influence their working conditions.

We recognize that other issues may be important for consideration in vetting candidates including: addressing the national debt, climate change, sustainable energy concerns, and foreign policy approaches. However, for our purposes, we decided to limit the criteria to the five issues listed.

We plan to hold another focus group on Wednesday, March 23rd. As a follow-up to the November meeting, we plan to develop a set of questions we will pose to various contenders in order to determine the candidates who meet the criteria we have established. If you would like to attend the focus group, please call the office (631-761-5451) or send an e-mail to info@nysrsas.org to reserve a place at the table.

Finally, this issue of the newsletter contains a form for you to use to renew your membership in NYSRSAS. Please complete the form and return it with your check in the envelope provided. If you are currently a “Lifetime” member, you need not respond – your membership renews automatically. If you know of a retired school administrator or supervisor who would like to join our association, please share your copy of the newsletter or call the office and we’ll send you additional copies to share.

On behalf of the Executive Board, may I convey our best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year.

Gene Goldwasser served as principal of several NYS elementary schools for 24 years. Since his retirement, he has been an adjunct professor at Hofstra, a coach with the Institute for Student Achievement and president of NYSRSAS.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Jack Zamek

Always identify yourself as a NYSRSAS Member whenever using the following benefits.



Sterling Optical.

Sure Sight eye care plan at
800-Eyes-789 (800-393-7789)

MVCP pre-negotiated new and used autos at 800-345-0990

Decide on the make and model as well as features you want and then call MVCP . They'll contact a dealer and negotiate the lowest possible price for you.

auto-price-finder.com & truecar.com

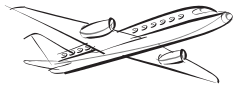
Get a free price quote on the make and model of the vehicle you want.



Car Rentals.

- **Avis Worldwide** at 800-352-7900,
Rate code AWD S 061700
(if trouble with discount code, call 800-831-8000)
- **Alamo** at 800-354-2322
Discount rate code 706768

Southwest Airlines



at 800-435-9792
(20-50% discounts
for travelers over age 65)

Eastern Dental Plan [EDP]

This is a discounted dental program.

Phone 631-272-5230

Identify yourself as a NYSRSAS member for best discount rates. Select from hundreds of dentists on Long Island.

Also: vision plan, pet discount drugs, hearing plan.



United Health Programs of America

Identify yourself as a NYSRSAS member for dental and chiropractic rates.

Hugh Marasa, one of our members, is one of their agents Ask for him.

Phone UHP @ 800-238-3884

Family Assist Net provides 10-15% discounts for nursing home care or assisted living care.
Phone 518-482-3509.

**For additional hints for discounts in other areas, visit our website:
<http://nysrsas.org/benefits>**

QUARTERLY QUERY WINTER 2016



Charter schools are tuition-free public schools created by parents, educators and community leaders. While privately run, they receive funds from school districts. Charter schools appear to be proliferating. In fact., Long Island is likely to get its first charter high school next fall.

In your opinion, are charter schools a positive or a negative contribution to the education of our children? Please explain your answer.

Please e-mail your response to info@nysrsas.org.
(Include your name and the district from which you retired.)

We hope to hear from you!

NYSRSAS

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We welcome your comments on articles or current issues.

To start a discussion, contact us at

info@nysrsas.org

**Check Our Web Page!
<http://nysrsas.org>**

NYS COMMON CORE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Beth Dimino

Governor Cuomo's Common Core Task Force released their recommendations and, at first glance, they were better than I was expecting. Here are some of the highlights from the governor's press release.

To ensure that the State moves forward with high quality education standards, the Task Force made 21 recommendations including:

- *Overhauling the Common Core and adopting locally-driven high quality New York education standards with input from local districts, educators, and parents through a transparent and open process that are age-appropriate and allow educators flexibility for Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners.*
- *Establishing a transparent and open process by which New York standards are periodically reviewed by educators and content area experts, since educators know their schools and students best.*
- *Providing educators and local school districts with the flexibility to develop and tailor curriculum to meet the needs of their individual students and requiring the State to create and release new and improved curriculum resources that educators can then adapt to meet the needs of their individual students.*
- *Engaging New York educators, not a private corporation, to drive the review and creation of State standards-aligned tests in an open and transparent manner.*
- *Minimizing student testing anxiety by reducing the number of test days and test questions and providing ongoing test transparency to parents, teachers and districts on test questions and student test scores.*
- *Ensuring that State tests account for different types of learners, including Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners.*
- *Additionally a four-year moratorium is supposed to be placed on using Common Core state tests to evaluate teachers.*

Unfortunately, the above points only represent the possibility of change, not the "momentous" victory NYSUT and AFT Leadership are proclaiming. Without legislative changes to 3012d, there continue to be numerous concerns:

- There is language that includes "overhauling" and "input from educators." Historically though, the state's definition of overhaul tends to look a lot like the current standards with a few small changes and a nice new name. Additionally, the state is now contractually obligated to Questar to create the tests after the Pearson contract ends.

- The document never stipulates how cut scores on state tests will be determined. This allows for the possibility that the state will continue to arbitrarily decide what constitutes a passing and failing grade.
- The college and career benchmarking was never addressed. This allows for Cuomo to continue repeating the privatizer's myth that NY Schools are 38th in the nation.
- Schools can still be placed in receivership based on poor test scores. Receivership allows the state to unceremoniously negate a local's contract and fire teachers.
- The four-year moratorium on APPR and teacher evaluations is only a possible temporary reprieve, not the elimination of the mandate. The possibility that state test scores will comprise 50% of a teacher's evaluation in the future still remains. Allowing for a moratorium implies that the Task Force continues to believe in the legitimacy of test based teacher evaluations. In fact the press release states that, "The Education Transformation Act of 2015 will remain in place and no new legislation is required to implement the recommendations of the report, including recommendations regarding the transition period for consequences for students and teachers."
- Annual testing for 3-8th graders continues.
- The testing concerns for ELL students and students with disabilities were not adequately addressed.

I'm quite certain that the formation of the Task Force was Mr. Cuomo's response to the ever growing opt-out movement. He has used a lot of his political clout and war chest monies in his ed-deform and teacher devaluation propaganda. I believe that AFT and NYSUT Leadership continue to call this a victory in the hopes that working teachers won't read the full report. If teachers weren't so busy in the classroom and had the time and/or inclination to be fully immersed in NY politics, especially the politics within their unions, they would unceremoniously run Weingarten and Magee/Pallota out of office. Working in conjunction with NYSAPE, BATS, Long Island Opt Out and Lace To The Top, I will continue to support the IREFUSE Movement to ensure that all NY politicians understand that if significant changes to the 3012d legislation are not made they will not be re-elected.

Beth Dimino, President of the Port Jefferson Station Teachers' Association and an active supporter of the Opt-Out movement, was invited to the October meeting of the NYSRSAS Executive Board to talk about her concerns regarding the Common Core and high-stakes testing. At our request, she provided this follow-up in response to the recommendations of Governor Cuomo's Common Core Task Force.

TECHNOLOGY FOR SENIORS

Nick Radesca, SeniorNet @ FSL Publicity Chair

A recent Pew Research report entitled "Older Adults and Technology Use" found what many suspected: seniors (people ages 65 and older) are late adopters of technology -- 56% go online compared to 86% of all adults.

Also of no surprise is Pew's finding that "a significant majority of seniors say they need assistance when it comes to using new digital devices. Just 18% would feel comfortable learning to use a new technology device such as a smartphone or tablet on their own, while 77% indicate they would need someone to help walk them through the process. And among seniors who go online but do not currently use social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, 56% would need assistance if they wanted to use these sites to connect with friends or family members."

While many seniors look to family and friends for help, should that fail, Long Islanders of all technical abilities -- beginner and advanced -- have a better option. They can turn to award-winning SeniorNet. SeniorNet is a non-profit organization staffed with tech-savvy volunteers from all backgrounds who have been offering free library seminars and low-cost classes since 1999, geared specifically to seniors on the most current tech topics.

In its modern Huntington and Bellport learning centers, SeniorNet provides hands-on classroom instruction regarding the proper use of computers, smartphones, tablets, Windows 10, Facebook, iTunes, Skype, Word, Excel, File Management, etc. In addition, volunteers couple technology with their career experience or hobbies to offer specialty classes such as Stock Market Investing Online and Computer Art.

Using a lecture format, SeniorNet's one-day library seminars strive to help seniors understand the workings of today's tech world. Topics have included Internet Security, The Cloud, Social Media, YouTube, Pinterest, the iPhone Camera, Great Travel Apps, Dazzling iPad Apps, etc.

For more information about classes or volunteer opportunities, call (631) 470-6757 or 6922 or visit our websites: www.seniornetli.org or www.Facebook.com/SeniorNetLI.

FROM THE DESK OF: *The Reflective Retiree*

Corine Lipset-Huberman

AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT

It's that time of year again...

When resolutions come full circle,
Resolutions made last year and never fulfilled,
Made again for the new year, knowing full well
That they too have little chance for success.



It's that time of year again...

When memories long-buried rise to the surface of conscious thought,
A love lost decades ago struggles to be felt once more,
The force of its power, still sweet, pulsing through the layers of time
As though yesterday were the new tomorrow.

It's that time of year again...

When friendships, once strong, now depleted of their content
Emerge in a flood of remembrances that bring both smiles and tears,
A kaleidoscope of faces, figures, words and caresses
That blend into the fabric of past encounters.

It's that time of year again...

When those who now lay cold in the ground
Re-awaken in my heart and dance to the melodies of life,
Bringing momentary joy for the quick, though fleeting, renewal,
All too soon gone again.

It's that time of year again...

Time to put away the past, the *did's* and the *didn't's*,
Time to join the cacophony of life's sounds outside my window,
Time to renew my debt to those I love and live for,
Time to rejoice that I have another year to feel, to grow, to love.

It's that time of year again.

Dr. Corine Lipset-Huberman has had extensive experience at all levels of education. She spent the last 19 years prior to retirement as principal of the Village School in Syosset, NY.

Vetting Candidates for NYSRSAS Support

**A Focus Group to develop questions to screen candidates
Wednesday, March 23, 2016
at 10:00 a.m.**

at the CAS offices, 490 Wheeler Road, Suite 280, Hauppauge, NY
11788

**Interested NYSRSAS members are urged to attend to share
their views on these topics.**

Please call 631-761-5451 so we can arrange for seating.

**Is “Effective” the New “Ineffective”?
A Crisis in New York State Teacher Evaluation**

Kenneth Forman and Craig Markson

In our esteemed opinion the New York State Teacher Evaluation System is flawed! We examined the relationship among New York State's APPR teacher evaluation system, poverty, attendance rates, per pupil spending, and academic achievement. The data from this study included reports on 110 school districts, over 30,000 educators and over 60,000 students from Nassau and Suffolk counties. The data from this study were obtained from the New York State Education Department Data Site for the 2013 to 2014 school year. There were 15 school districts excluded from this study for having a population of less than 50 teachers. We gathered: (a) the number and percent of students collecting free and reduced lunch; (b) the percent of average daily student attendance; (c) the numbers of educators and their APPR teacher rating percentages; and (d) grades 3-8 student achievement as indicated by levels 3 and 4 on State English Language Arts and Mathematics examinations.

The Variables

Student achievement (our dependent variable) was measured by performance on standardized State examinations in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, grades 3-8. We gathered information for Levels 3 and 4, which included students performing on grade level and

. . . many variables affecting student achievement were considered . . .

above. We also looked at districts' poverty, identified as the percent of students receiving free and reduced lunch. Attendance was indicated as the percent average daily attendance for the entire school district. Teacher performance included the percent of teachers rated on each category of the district's Annual Personnel Performance Review. During the 2011-2012 public school year, New York State implemented a revised teacher evaluation system, the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). Teachers were rated highly effective, effective, developing or ineffective by a legislated formula resulting in a composite rating: 20% from "growth" results on State assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics, 20% from results of local testing in English Language Arts and Mathematics, and 60% from supervisory observation of teaching using an established rubric. The APPR was designed to be a significant factor in employment decisions such as promotion, retention, tenure determinations, termination, and supplemental compensation, as well as a significant factor in teacher professional development. Scoring ranges that determined teachers' performance levels were developed as a result of negotiations between school district and union. Early in 2015, New York State enacted a law altering the APPR require-

ment so that student performance plays a significant role and critics debated the impact the APPR would have on student achievement. Our hunch was that the APPR was neither fair nor effective as an evaluative tool for teacher performance.

Our Findings

Here's what we found. We found weak to conflicting correlations with student achievement. The percent of teachers rated "highly effective" had a statistically significant positive correlation with student achievement (ELA and Math). The school districts' percent of teachers rated

“As the percent of teachers rated ‘effective’ went up, student performance on the State assessments went down.”

"effective" had a negative correlation with student achievement. As the percent of teachers rated "effective" went up, student performance on the State assessments went down. The "developing" APPR rating did not have a statistically significant relationship with ELA and Math assessments. The "ineffective" APPR rating had a statistically significant and negative correlation with the ELA and Math assessments.

Interpretation

What does this all mean? The Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) rating that had the strongest correlation with student success, Levels 3 and 4, on both the English Language Arts and Mathematics examinations was the "ineffective" category. Predictably, this had a negative correlation with students' performance on both State assessments. However, only 11 of the 110 districts included in this study had reporting in the "ineffective" category.

“ . . . surprising was the inverse relationship . . . the ‘effective’ APPR category had with the student achievement rates . . . ”

The other 99 districts had zero percentage reporting.

What was surprising was the inverse relationship that the "effective" APPR category had with the student achievement success rates, Level 3 and 4. With only 11 school districts reporting "ineffective" and the inverse relationship that "effective" had with student achievement, "effective" has become the new "ineffective." This was probably caused from the underreporting of "ineffective" and "developing" categories, which had only 53 school districts reporting some percentage of its teachers in these categories and as such, the

(continued on page 6)

PORT CITY PONDERINGS
(cont'd from page 8)

happen by accident. It is a testament to Mr. Newsome's dedication, drive and skill as an educator. I am citing him because he was my mentor, who got me interested in pursuing a career in engineering. ...Most of us did not realize it at the time, but those experiences, both educational and otherwise, including the role models we had, prepared us to compete with anybody from anywhere."

- "Frequently, in conversations with family and friends, I reflect on my physics class with Mr. Moore at Williston Senior High School. One of the things that stands out about the class was his requirement that we produce single subject papers every six weeks. Some of the topics were electricity, magnetism and electromagnetism. Each paper had to be 10 typed pages with at least five references. Of course I was able to type my papers because I had taken Typing 1 and Typing 2 under Mrs. Anna Burnett, in addition to Gregg Shorthand which I still use when I take notes. ...It was this type of rigor and teachers that earned Williston Senior High School the title "the greatest school under the sun."

Would that the alumni of every school could express the same gratitude and appreciation for the education they received!

(Much of the information in this article and all of the quotations are from the *Wilmington Star News*.)

A former editor of the NYSRSAS Newsletter, Joe Marchese received his Ph.D degree from St. John's University. He retired as Assistant Principal of Half Hollow Hills H.S East.

ANOTHER READER RESPONDS

Do you think our organization should support candidates for public office?

Yes, Retired School Administrators and Supervisors should support candidates for public office. Our years of experience may be very valuable for the candidates.

Top three issues:

(1) Gun control - Stop all the talk and do something to control who purchases guns, how many guns do they have, no purchase of automatic and semi-automatic weapons, future buyers of weapons cannot have a history of mental illness.

(2) Declare a period of two years at least when our nation stops sending money to foreign nations, and uses this money to fix our roads, railroads, seaports, our infrastructure.

(3) Use money (no.2 above) to assist students to pay off their student loans. Give these students a chance to start fresh -- no debts.

William D. Vita

IS "EFFECTIVE" THE NEW "INEFFECTIVE"?
(cont'd from page 5)

results were skewed.

"... the real crisis with the ... evaluation system was that it overshadowed the most important problem of poverty ..."

We believe that the real crisis with the New York State teacher evaluation system was that it overshadowed the most important problem of poverty and its harmful effects on student achievement. The correlation analyses revealed that as poverty went up, attendance rates went down. Lower school attendance also put downward pressure on student success on the State assessments. Moreover, there was a positive correlation of student attendance and student achievement. We found that districts that had a high average daily attendance also evidenced higher levels of student achievement. Finally, school districts should focus more of their attention on developing programs that alleviate the detrimental effects that poverty has on student achievement.

Some final thoughts. Can teacher effectiveness be reliably measured using value-added metrics to evaluate teachers and hold them accountable? This dilemma is not easily resolved, but after looking at the data from 110 school districts across Long Island with over 60,000 students and

"... some obvious suggestions ... enhanced teacher observation protocols with multiple trained evaluators ..."

30,000 teachers there are some obvious suggestions. Use enhanced teacher observation protocols with multiple trained evaluators and downplay the importance of testing for teacher evaluation since value-added metrics have proven to be unreliable and an inaccurate predictor of teacher performance. As more demands are placed on principals to evaluate their teachers in an objective and standardized format, principals will be forced to lean on their teachers to perform other important duties, such as curriculum and professional development, and to lead work in different structures within the school, such as professional learning communities or instructional rounds. A new breed of teachers will evolve, "teacher leaders" who could assume responsibility as leading learners for their schools, leading their colleagues collaboratively to maximize student achievement.

Kenneth Forman, Ph.D., and Craig Marson, Ed.D., are colleagues in the School of Professional Development at Stony Brook University. This article was adapted from a piece published in the Journal for Leadership and Instruction, Fall, 2015.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2016



New York State Retired School Administrators and Supervisors

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January, 2016

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Dear Colleague,

We welcome you again as a member of NYSRSAS, the organization dedicated exclusively to the interests and concerns of retired school leaders. NYSRSAS continues to be the voice of advocacy for retired school administrators.

Our organization provides print and electronic news and updates with an opportunity to express your views through the newsletter or email. We also offer discounts for the membership in many areas that include dental, optical, travel plus auto rentals and purchases.

Your renewed membership and participation is essential if we are to maintain and increase the vitality and activity of NYSRSAS.

Our yearly dues are \$25.00; lifetime dues are \$175.00. Please return your check made out to **NYSRSAS** in the enclosed envelope along with your updated membership form.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

John Wallace
John Wallace
Membership Chairman

Gene Goldwasser
Eugene Goldwasser
President

Membership Renewal Form (Return with your check in the enclosed envelope)

Name: _____

Winter Address

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Street: _____

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Telephone Number: _____

e-mail: _____ District from which you retired: _____

Membership Category (please circle one)

Position : _____

\$25 general membership

\$175 lifetime membership

PORT CITY PONDERINGS

Joe Marchese



On February 8, 2014, the Wilmington Symphony Orchestra presented a program marking the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act. It featured a performance by the Alumni Choir of East Williston High School, Wilmington’s all-black high school before desegregation. Some members of the choir were in their eighties, and as the group entered the stage to take their places on the risers behind the orchestra, several needed the assistance of walkers and canes. As an octogenarian myself, I wondered how strong their voices could rise above the sound of the symphony. Marva Robinson, their director, a classically trained soprano and an alumna of Williston, raised her arms, gave the downbeat, and the strong, rich vibrant voices of the choir soared above the orchestra and nearly lifted me out of my seat!

The New Hanover County Board of Education closed Williston High School in 1968, dispersing its students to the other formerly all-white high schools in Wilmington to comply with federal desegregation regulations. The building is now an integrated middle school. Yet Williston alumni continue to be very active, not only with its choir but also with reunions and other functions. In his book *Dixie Rising*, New York Times writer Peter Applebome noted, “For a school that closed in 1968, Williston seems amazingly alive today.”

During its existence Williston High School was a pillar of the Wilmington African-American community, a source of great pride to its students and their families and its major social center. From all reports, it gave its students an excellent education, despite having older textbooks and being short-changed in its upkeep, not an unusual situation during segregation. Undoubtedly, its strongest characteristic was the quality, devotion, and high standards of its faculty who insisted on attention to the work at hand as well as proper discipline and manners. Williston alumni include

tennis star Althea Gibson, who was the first African-American woman to win the Grand Slam, Phillip Clay, professor of city planning and chancellor of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harlem Globetrotters’ star Meadowlark Lemon, jazz saxophonist Jimmy Heath, and a host of physicians, lawyers, judges, teachers and civic leaders.

The sudden closing of their high school in 1968 caused a great sense of loss within the black community, almost as if many of its traditions had been stripped from them. Its students and even some of its teachers encountered episodes of racial discrimination in the formerly all-white high schools to which they were assigned. Dissension would continue during the next several years culminating in the 1971 race riots and the “Wilmington 10” case.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the opening of Williston High School, and the Williston Alumni Association has sponsored several events to mark the occasion. The Wilmington *Star News* recently published a retrospective of the school which included comments from its alumni. As a fitting conclusion to this article, I would like to quote several of these to illustrate the esteem in which the school is still held 47 years after its closing:

- “Our teachers were waiting for us, expecting us to be disciplined, knowledgeable and attentive. ...Some of my teachers were my aunt’s friends, my Sunday School teachers and neighbors, so there was no way I could act up in school and it not get back home before I go there.”
- “Recently, I had the opportunity to reminisce about Williston High School when I attended the *Star News* Lifetime Achievement Awards luncheon where one of our teachers and my mentor, Mr. Carter W. Newsome, was honored. This event provided me with the opportunity to talk about how Mr. Newsome and his students won the trade competition in Drafting for nine consecutive years. That’s a streak worth noting! This type of thing does not

(continued on page 6)



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