



NYSRSAS SPOTLIGHT

Eugene Goldwasser



During the winter and spring of 2021, NYSRSAS has grappled with several significant issues – Covid19 and its impact on our lives and lifestyles, the development of several effective vaccines that have helped to get us back on track to what we considered prior to Covid19 as “normal,” the invasion of the Capitol building in January and its impact on the political climate in this country, and the first six months of the Biden administration in Washington.

We advocated for everyone eligible to get vaccinated as the key method to combat the Covid19 virus and results seem to reinforce this strategy. The number of new cases and deaths in New York State have shrunk to levels that have allowed restaurants, movie theaters, malls, and schools to re-open and to conduct business as usual, many not requiring masks, although mask wearing is probably a good idea for the rest of the summer when indoors.

We composed a position paper that advocated for a renewed emphasis on civics and citizenship education in schools at all grade levels, and we promoted dialogues among members of the school community to discuss how best to involve students in the pursuit of good citizenship. Although not everyone agreed with every point in the position paper, we still feel that we approached the subject honestly and constructively, with the goal of encouraging our members as well as the community, in general, to engage in productive discussions designed to broaden understanding between disparate groups to find common ground to go forward together. To this end, we are planning a Focus Group to examine how

our association deals with controversial political and social issues and alternative points of view. The Focus Group will take place on Thursday, August 26th, at 10 AM, on Zoom, and is open to any member who wants to participate. If you are interested, just send an e-mail to info@nysrsas.org and you will receive the link a few days before the meeting.

We initiated an NYSRSAS Citizenship Award that was designed to promote good citizenship values among high school students. To this end, and to date, we gave six Citizenship Awards to six deserving high school juniors from six high schools as selected by their principals and staff members. The names of the awardees and their schools appear on page 3 of this newsletter. The award also came with a check for \$100, the funds for which came from donations and not from member dues. We hope to give at least four additional awards in September.

Executive Board Positions Available

A vacancy exists on our Executive Board for the position of **Recording Secretary**. We also have available slots on the executive board for anyone who would like to serve in an **at-large position**; and, we would welcome members who like to write to contribute to our newsletter on a regular basis.

Should you be interested in joining the executive board in any capacity, please send an e-mail to info@nysrsas.org and we will be in touch with you. In 2021-22 we will meet on September 23, December 16, March 17 and June 16.

NYSRSAS President, Gene Goldwasser, was a school principal for 24 years. Since retiring, he has been a Hofstra adjunct professor and a coach with the Institute for Student Achievement.

RESEARCH ROUNDUP: LEVERAGING SCHOOL DISTRICT-WIDE ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Kenneth Forman and Craig Markson



In an article recently published in the Journal for Leadership and Instruction, (Vol. 20, Spring 2021), we examined the relationships among technology use, per pupil spending and school district-wide student achievement. We looked at the data from 94 school districts from Nassau and Suffolk counties, realizing that the topic was relevant for both taxpayers and school administrators.

To start our research effort, we looked at the professional literature about technology, student achievement and funding which indicated considerable disagreement when it came to the value of technology for improving student achievement. We read that some older studies suggested that the use of technology did not significantly improve student achievement; however, many of the more recent studies suggested the opposite. Additionally, we found there were contrasting findings among the studies that examined the relationships between per pupil spending and student achievement, depending upon student population, subjects, and grade levels.



So we decided to measure student achievement through a variety of variables across the school districts' grade levels and subject areas, including: (a) the percent of students receiving a New York State Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation (Advanced Regents Diploma); the percent of students receiving a passing score on the New York State high school English Language Arts Regents Examination (ELA Regents Exam); the percent of students receiving a passing score on the New York State high school Geometry Regents Examination (Geometry Regents Exam); the percent of students obtaining Levels 3 to 4 (proficiency) on the New York State Grades 3 – 8 English Language Arts (ELA) examinations; and the percent of students obtaining Levels 3 to 4 (proficiency) on the New York State Grades 3 – 8 Mathematics (Math)

examinations.

We assessed technology by the amount of technology devices available divided by the total student population by school district and stated as a percent. These devices typically included PCs, laptops, tablets, and Chromebooks. We calculated per pupil spending by school district by the per pupil expenditures that included federal, state, and local spending.



Here's what we found: technology (devices) had statistically significant and positive correlation with a range of variables that measured student achievement across the school districts' grade levels and subjects. The strongest correlations were with technology devices and student achievement on the New York State Grades 3 – 8 English Language Arts and Mathematics assessments. What does that mean for you as a taxpayer and resident of a school district across Long Island? Monies are well spent in your district's purchase of technology devices! For example, technology spending only increased per pupil spending by 7.95 percent across the 94 school districts, but this leveraged student achievement in mathematics grades 3 – 8 by over three times that amount (24.4 percent increase on performance on the 3 – 8 Mathematics assessments). That's bang for the buck! We saw that expenditure skyrocket during COVID when face-to-face classroom learning was abandoned. But the larger picture remains to be seen. Educators are saying that student learning took a dip because of a lack of teacher/pupil contact. In light of our review, and now that students are returning to "regularized" schooling, with achievement measured annually, **stay tuned!**

Kenneth Forman, Ph.D., and Craig Markson, Ed.D., are colleagues on the faculty of the Educational Leadership program at Stony Brook University. Ken has had extensive experience as an administrator in various New York public school systems and Craig as Assistant Dean at the University.

TRANSGENDER ATHLETES

William Stern

The question of allowing transgender females, that is, males who identify as female, to be permitted to compete in girls sports is a problem that is in the schools today. On a social level I have no problem with transgender females taking part in everything I can think of except for athletics.

As a former physical educator, high school and college athletic coach, and school district athletic director, I am adamantly against allowing males who identify as female to compete against biological females. If a female who identifies as male wants to compete against males, I have no objection because there would be no physical advantage.

My reasoning is based on basic biology. A male who has reached puberty has much more testosterone than a female, giving them far greater muscular development than biological females. They also have narrower hips, which keeps them from having to deal with something called a "Q Angle" which is the inward angle of the upper thigh, causing less stability in the legs, and especially the knees. Even if a male starts to "transition" as a teenager, he already has the extra muscle, and often, greater height and weight in comparison to a biological female. This translates to a very real, and often very large advantage athletically. A few years ago, two males in Connecticut, who identified as female, competed in the state girls high school track and field championship. They medaled in 18 events between them, keeping biological females from earning those awards, and possible college athletic scholarships. As another example of the clear difference between biological males and biological females, look at Allyson Felix, the U.S. Olympic star who won multiple gold medals in the 200 meter run, while competing in five Olympics. She was the fastest woman in the world at that distance, but there are over 300 high school boys in the U.S. that can beat her, and many more in other countries around the world.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association advanced what seems to be a workable solution. Biological males who identify as female can only com-

pete against biological males. Biological females who identify as males can compete against either females or males. It will probably bother some people, but it addresses the differences in biological males and females.

Those of you who have a granddaughter, picture this: she is 5'5" tall, weighs 125 pounds, and plays goal keeper on a soccer or lacrosse team. A biological male, 6'0" tall, and 180 pounds, who identifies as a female, plays forward (in soccer) or attack (in lacrosse), is coming toward the goal with the ball to score. Think for a moment about who would lose out in that athletic collision. There would be a real possibility of the goal keeper being seriously injured. People who have little or no knowledge of athletics feel that transgender participation in female sports is not a problem, but it is, as explained above, far from simple!

As a final thought: is it the responsibility of school personnel to be concerned with the rights and welfare of many thousands of female athletes (99%) or that of perhaps hundreds (1% maybe) of transgender athletes?

Dr. William H. Stern is former Director of Health, PE and Intramural Sports in the Half Hollow Hills District. He also served as coach of high school and college athletic teams.

NYSRSAS CITIZENSHIP AWARD

Recipients of our Citizenship Award were nominated by their principals as the 11th grade student who best exemplifies the qualities of civic responsibility, concern for others, and a commitment to the democratic values which are a vital part of our nation's character. They are:

- Osasikianua Amene – Central Islip High School
- Angel Dilone – Uniondale High School
- Jamir James – Wyandanch High School
- Vanessa Mendoza – Freeport High School
- Devonie Rhoden – Copiague High School
- Derick Rodriguez – Amityville High School

Members of NYSRSAS extend their congratulations. We hope that these young people will continue their commitment to civic responsibility as they continue their education and move into their chosen careers.

SPRING QUARTERLY QUERY—STATEHOOD FOR WASHINGTON D.C.

Over 700,000 people live in the District of Columbia. They are represented in the House by a delegate who is permitted to vote in committees, but not on the House floor. They have no voice in the Senate. Recently, pressure has intensified around proposals to make Washington, D.C. the 51st state.

The 712,000 residents of the District of Columbia represent a population greater than that of Wyoming or Vermont. They pay more taxes than 21 of our states. Despite these facts the people of Washington, D.C. have almost no representation in Congress, while every other American is represented by at least one representative and two senators. Is this not a glaring example of taxation without representation?

Some have said that it would take a constitutional amendment to approve this new state, requiring two-thirds approval in both houses of Congress and ratification by three-quarters of the states. This is not the case. The 37 states that have come into the Union since the Constitution was adopted were admitted via congressional action, not a constitutional amendment. Numerous constitutional scholars and political scientists have signed a letter to congressional leaders saying that there is nothing in the Constitution that prevents Congress from doing this exact thing in the case of the District of Columbia.

The residents of Washington, D.C. should definitely have representation in Congress. To accomplish this goal, the District must become our 51st state.

STEWART MORTMAN

On February 22, 2021, the US House of Representatives passed a bill to create the Washington Douglass Commonwealth in what is now the District of Columbia. The Commonwealth would not include any federal buildings or monuments. Unfortunately, it is unlikely the proposal will move any further. It was approved in the House by a vote of 216-208 with no Republican support. The legislation has no chance of approval in the closely divided Senate where all Republicans and

possibly a few Democrats oppose it. Republicans fear a new state would add two senators who would likely be Democrats while Democrats support the proposal for the same reason.

However, it is necessary to look beyond politics and review the reasons the citizens of Washington, D.C. deserve statehood:

1. Eighty-five percent of the voters approved a referendum for statehood in 2016.
2. Washington, D.C. has a larger population than either Wyoming or Vermont.
3. Washington, D.C. is short-changed as to distribution of aid. For example, every state received \$1.28B in pandemic aid while Washington received \$500M.
4. Congress can reject any law passed by the city council and mayor.
5. Citizens of the District pay federal taxes with no voting representation in Congress.
6. The slogan on District of Columbia license plates makes the essential point:
"NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION."

EDWARD PRICE



**Quarterly Query
SUMMER 2021**



**SHOULD VACCINATION AGAINST COVID-19
BE MANDATORY?
IF SO, FOR WHOM AND IN WHAT VENUES?**

Should it be mandatory for school age children 12 and above right now? If vaccines are approved for those below age 12, should they be required?

Should it be mandatory for adults? Where? In the work place, for attendance at concerts, theaters, movies, sports events, restaurants, public transportation, houses of worship?

Please write and tell us your thoughts on this issue.

Please send your thoughts to
clipsethuberman@gmail.com
(Kindly include your name and the district from which you retired.)

FROM THE DESK OF: *The Reflective Retiree*

FACTS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT INDEPENDENCE DAY

Corine Lipset-Huberman



We all know that July 4th is designated as Independence Day but did you know that the actual vote for independence took place on July 2nd? Read on and I'll refresh your memory on how it all came about.

When the Revolutionary War broke out in April 1775, few colonists were in favor of complete independence from Great Britain; those who did were considered quite radical. By mid-1776, however, many more colonists were partial to independence due to Thomas Paine's best-selling pamphlet, "*Common Sense*," and growing hostility towards Great Britain. When the Continental Congress met on June 7th at the Pennsylvania State House (now named Independence Hall), the Virginia delegate, Richard Henry Lee, introduced a motion calling for independence of the colonies. Heated debate ensued and Congress postponed the vote on Lee's motion, but appointed a five-man committee which included Thomas Jefferson



(VA), John Adams (MA), Roger Sherman (CT), Benjamin Franklin (PA) and Robert R. Livingston (NY), charged with drafting a formal statement justifying the break with

Great Britain. On July 2nd, the Continental Congress now voted in favor of Lee's motion for independence almost unanimously (the New York delegation abstained but later voted in the affirmative). On that day, John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail that July 2nd "will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival" which should include "Pomp and Parade... Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other." Two days later, the Congress formally adopted the Declaration of Independence, largely written by Jefferson, who was considered the most eloquent

writer of the declaration's writing committee whose job it was to put the delegates' sentiments into words. From then on, the 4th became the day celebrated as the birth of American independence.



But did you know that John Adams, believing that July 2nd was the correct date to celebrate the birth of American independence, would turn down invitations to attend July 4th galas in protest? Another interesting aspect is John Hancock's story! Although a total of 56 delegates eventually signed the Declaration of Independence, John Hancock's signature is the largest, although it did not hold more weight than the other signatures. Rumor has it that Hancock signed it so large so that the "fat, old King could read it without his spectacles." However, according to the National Archives, it was customary that since Hancock was the president of the Continental Congress, he should be the first person to sign the document in the large space allotted to him. This spacing led him to write his signature in large letters, leading to the saying "Put your John Hancock there!" as a way of instructing someone to sign his/her name.

Another interesting tidbit of information . . . John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826, the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. How coincidental is that?

Did you know that 86 changes were made to Jefferson's original draft until the final version was adopted? The official signing event was held on August 2, 1776 when 50 men signed the document. Months passed before all 56 signatures were in place. Thomas McKean was the last man to sign in January 1777, seven months after the document was approved by Congress. How inter-

(continued on page 7)

PLANNING FOR THE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS IN SEPTEMBER

Mary Louise Haley

Reflecting on a 2020-2021 school year that was filled with anxiety, school disruptions, social distancing and hybrid learning, teachers, students and administrators expressed relief that they made it through a tumultuous year and look forward to returning to full in-person learning in the fall. In sharing their experiences during the pandemic, several long-held beliefs were found to be true—students like going to school, student-teacher relationships benefit student learning and emotional health, schools are critical institutions that play a vital role in the well-being of the children and families in their community – especially in a pandemic.

As the COVID-19 virus cases drop across the country, there is no uniform federal guidance on schools reopening for full in-person learning. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo expects all schools in the state to reopen full time in the fall. Mayor Bill DeBlasio said that NYC schools will no longer offer remote schooling as an option in the fall. This means many parents will be able to return to work, which the mayor sees as a link to economic recovery. There remain many questions about what, if any, mandated health protocols will be in place.

Currently the CDC recommends that masks be worn indoors by all individuals (age 2 and older) for those who are not fully vaccinated. The CDC further recommends that schools maintain a distance of three feet between students within classrooms, combined with mask wearing of unvaccinated individuals. Federal officials state that students and employees fully vaccinated do not need masks when in-person classes resume. School administrators will have to decide how to deal with school populations in which some are vaccinated, others not. Undoubtedly, the CDC, state and local authorities will be offering up-to-date guidelines until the opening of schools in September.



Can schools require students to get COVID-19 vaccinations? Vaccines have yet to be approved for children younger than 12. As vaccines are only being distributed under an emergency use provision and have not been fully approved by the Food and Drug Administration, schools are not likely to mandate them for students or staff until final approval is granted by the FDA.



Schools also face serious challenges in addressing significant student learning gaps caused by 14 months of school disruptions and the effects of remote learning. The State Education Department has submitted the New York State American Rescue Plan outlining how it intends to utilize the \$9 billion in stimulus federal funds. In drafting this plan, the State Education Department drew on online comments of parents, teachers and stakeholders statewide. Based on this input, the plan prioritizes addressing lost instructional time and closing educational gaps, providing emotional support for students, and helping those most severely affected with supports they need to recover from the pandemic.

School districts across the state are developing plans for how they will utilize these funds to best address the impact of the pandemic on the students in their communities. Districts are expanding their summer programs, Saturday academies, and tutoring services to address learning gaps. Some districts are enriching their summer programs to include sports and the arts with the goal of attracting more students and helping them reconnect with their schools. Superintendents hope to expand Academic Intervention Services and small group tutoring – well-established support programs – to capture the increased number of students who have fallen behind in reading/writing and math skills. Last year many districts increased the number of counselors and/or psychologists on staff to address the emotional toll of the pandemic on stu- (continued on page 7)

INDEPENDENCE DAY

(Cont'd from page 5)

esting that Robert R. Livingston, who was one of the five original drafters, never signed it at all. Why? He believed it was too soon to declare independence.

The tradition of setting off fireworks in celebration of July 4th began in Philadelphia on July 4, 1777, which was the first organized celebration of Independence Day. A 13 gun salute was fired by a ship's canon in honor of the 13 colonies. The *Pennsylvania Evening Post* reported: "at night there was a grand exhibition of fireworks (which began and concluded with thirteen rockets) on the Commons, and the city was beautifully illuminated."

After the War of 1812, the tradition of patriotic celebration became even more popular. In 1870, the U.S. Congress made July 4th a federal holiday and in 1941, granted the day as a paid holiday to all federal employees. Since the late 19th century, the Fourth of July has become a major event, featuring all types of leisure activities and family get-togethers involving family barbeques and the viewing of fireworks.

This year, many Americans, relieved that the worst effects of the COVID-19 pandemic appear to be over, celebrated the Fourth of July with renewed enthusiasm and delight. It was our 245th celebration of Independence Day! Hail to America, land of the free and home of the brave!

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

IN MEMORIAM

We mourn the passing of **Irwin Kleinman** on January 22, 2021. Irwin was an Assistant Principal at the H.B. Thompson Middle School in the Syosset CSD. He was a much beloved member of the Syosset community. We are also sad to report the passing of **Sidney Lerner** in March of 2021. Sidney was a District Supervisor in the Levittown CSD and a long-time member of NYSRSAS.

REOPENING SCHOOLS

(cont'd from page 6)

dents and plan to maintain this extended level of support for the 2021 – 22 school year.

Teachers, students and parents are looking forward with enthusiasm to the return to a sense of normalcy in the fall. There are still some concerns about variant strains of COVID-19 but with the low rate of new cases and high rates of adult vaccinations in New York, the state is expecting schools to return to full in-person learning in September.

Mary Louise Haley (Mel) started her career as a special education teacher. She retired as an Elementary School Principal from the Herricks Public Schools and is presently serving as Education Chair for NYSRSAS.

VOTING RIGHTS CONTROVERSY

(cont'd from page 8)

Supreme Court. In 2013, the Court declared section 4 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 unconstitutional by a vote of 5-4 (*Shelby County v Holder*). Section 4 established a procedure for preapproval of voting regulations in states with discriminatory practices by the Justice Department Civil Rights Division or federal judge.

In 2019, the John Lewis Voting Rights Act was introduced in Congress to provide constitutionally acceptable procedures for determining which states have a pattern of discrimination. It also requires officials to provide notice of voting changes 180 days before elections and extends authority of the federal government to send observers to localities with substantial risk of discrimination. Unfortunately, this legislation is unlikely to be approved in a closely divided Congress.

In spite of restrictive measures, people can still vote. Voting may be more difficult, but the future of our democratic system depends upon the willingness of citizens to complete additional forms for registration and endure long lines at polling stations.

Dr. Edward Price served as superintendent in several NY and NJ districts. He is currently a lecturer in educational leadership at Stony Brook University.

CONTROVERSY REGARDING VOTING RIGHTS IN THE US

Edward Price



The issue of voting rights has become a major controversy among political parties. Republicans are accused of attempting to limit voting rights while critics of Democrats' proposals contend that they are creating an environment fostering corruption. In analyzing any dispute, it is necessary to carefully define what the terms mean. Who has the right to vote is clearly defined in the Constitution while access to the franchise is controlled by states.

The founders never supported universal suffrage. They were educated men who distrusted "mobocracy." They limited the right to vote to "freeholders" who paid taxes. But they still had concerns about the ability of voters to choose appropriate representatives. Therefore, they created the Electoral College to vote for president and had state legislatures choose US senators. Over the next two centuries, the constitutional right to vote was expanded to include Black men (15th Amendment – 1870), women (19th Amendment – 1920), and 18-year-olds (26th Amendment - 1971). These provisions essentially made the right to vote universal for adult citizens.

Access to the ballot is different from having the right to vote. During the Reconstruction era after the Civil War, black men voted and were elected to office but this effort to create equality was quickly destroyed by white Redeemers who sought return

to white supremacy. They approved state laws that required paying taxes and literacy tests for voting. White voters were exempted by "grandfather clauses" allowing whites whose ancestors voted access to the ballot. The "Jim Crow" system continued in some states until passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Recently some states made it easier to vote by expanding opportunities with early voting and easing registration requirements. During the COVID pandemic, many states eased requirements for absentee voting. As a result of these changes, voter participation in the 2020 election was 67 percent, one of the highest voter turnouts in history.

Republican leaders, even those who believe the 2020 election was valid, note that with large voter turnouts, chances of their party winning presidential elections is diminished. State legislatures controlled by Republicans responded to this concern with laws that limit access to the franchise. While not as blatant as "Jim Crow" regulations, these actions are aimed at limiting the number of poor, nonwhite citizens voting. To counteract discriminatory state actions, the Democratic controlled House of Representatives passed the For the People Act, but this legislation lacks enough support to achieve Senate approval.

Other means of preventing voting restrictions have been weakened by the *(continued on p.7)*



N.Y.S. Retired School Administrators and Supervisors

1300 Veterans Memorial Highway

Suite 330

Hauppauge, NY 11788

FIRST CLASS
U.S. Postage
PAID
Deer Park, NY
Permit No. 173

first class