



## AS I SEE IT

*Eugene Goldwasser*

Although we have refrained from commenting on world events, the war in Ukraine is impacting our lives as it threatens us economically and morally as we try to figure out how to support the Ukrainian people in this catastrophic conflict. It's hard to imagine what the people in Ukraine are going through. Just a short time ago, they were living in their communities, doing all the things that people do without having to worry about being subjected to a war being fought in their streets, in their neighborhoods. That all changed on Thursday, February 24, 2022, when the threat of war became an actual invasion, an escalation that began in 2014 after Russia annexed Crimea. The February invasion has resulted in the destruction of Ukrainian cities, the deaths of thousands of Ukrainian civilians and the displacement of millions of people creating a refugee crisis in Europe.

Ukraine has marshalled its forces to resist the Russians while limiting their progress to the Eastern parts of Ukraine. The fear is a continuous escalation of the war from the Russian perspective which may pursue a scorched earth policy, as they did in destroying Syrian cities while helping Syrian president Assad deal with rebel forces. In the Syrian case, there are still millions of displaced people living in refugee camps in Turkey and other nations bordering Syria.

From the onset, there are a host of questions to address. What should the United States and its NATO allies do? Should the West risk sending troops to the Ukraine? Should there be a limit as to how much is spent and what kinds of arms and other materiel necessary to fight the Russians is sent to Ukraine? Should additional sanctions be levied to make it more difficult for Russia to continue to pursue the war? How far should Russia be allowed

to go before NATO acts to stop the aggression? And, how would NATO act? Why is the UN seemingly so powerless to help? Wasn't the UN created to resolve conflicts like this?



### **DeSantis vs. Disney**

How many of us have visited Disney World with our kids or grandkids and enjoyed the resort, rides, and attractions? We didn't realize that Disney World, Florida's largest employer with 77,000 employees, was an entity unto itself, providing all the services necessary to make visitors safe and comfortable. Those services include hotels and restaurants, rides and bus transportation, as well as guides and others who interact with visitors on a daily basis. Disney also pays for health workers, police and fire personnel and others working to insure the health and safety of everyone at the resort. Additionally, Disney had the right to approve building permits for construction on its property as well as options for sewage treatment and other services usually approved by governing bodies like counties, cities and towns.

Then came the "Don't Say Gay" law passed by the Florida legislature and signed by Governor DeSantis. The Disney corporation waited until after the law was passed to oppose it and to state that they would cease to make political contributions to politicians of both parties. It didn't take long for Governor DeSantis and the legislature to pass a law eliminating Disney World's special status to control its own destiny at Disney World.

The jury is still out regarding the ability of a private company to regulate itself and act like a quasi-government on its own behalf. Whether you agree with Disney World being able to govern itself or not, the result *(cont'd on page 3)*

## RETHINKING THE SCHOOL YEAR

*Kenneth Forman*



Let’s put on our thinking caps to rethink what the school year might look like as a result of various pandemic-related school closures. Schools have experienced learning loss by our most vulnerable students. How can we address this issue? Perhaps an earlier start date (before Labor Day) or a later end date (past June), including breaks throughout the year, might allow a more flexible learning calendar to provide remediation — and enrichment for our students. Other options might include enrichment or remediation Saturdays and validated summer programs to support learning loss. **Education Secretary Miguel Cardona posed:** “Why do we go back to the same system that gives kids two months without engagement in the summer? . . . We need to rethink that.”

The other side of the coin is teacher burn-out, prompted by the omicron variant forcing schools to struggle to remain open. Districts are in the process of addressing this overpowering burnout issue as well as the mounting stress for student achievement.

We might also consider a less-rigid calendar that might lead to greater flexibility to deal with COVID-related emergencies, allowing districts to consider more easily closing for a week or two to quell an outbreak, knowing they could make up closures with a flex schedule.

A fundamental shakeup to the traditional calendar might be a tough sell. David G. Hornak, Superintendent of Holt Public Schools in Michigan said: “. . . many who are new to the concept are left with the wrong impression.” Most districts still operate on a 180-day schedule. He suggested that additional, or elongated breaks, called ‘inter-sessions,’ might be another option.

“COVID gave us a chance to think outside the box, to look for different ways to reach students, moving away from the cookie-cutter approach,” said Jon Ram Mishra, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education for the Washing-

ton State Education Department. A newly constructed calendar, one with built-in flexibility in how it rolls out the typical 180 days of instruction, would allow kids an opportunity to spend more time in the classroom, if needed, offering them a more tailored experience than the traditional model.

Kevin Chase, Superintendent of Educational Service District 105 in Washington state, said, “. . . longer breaks throughout the year — many participating districts shave six or seven weeks off of the typical 12- to 13-week summer vacation — help teachers recharge. They also allow families to spend more time together during the holidays with, oftentimes, a full week off for Thanksgiving.”

However, only four percent of the nation’s roughly 50 million public school children attend so-called “balanced calendar” schools. Educational leaders have indicated that this approach has many merits, including cutting down on the amount of time teachers spend reteaching the previous year’s curriculum (which could take up to 40 days). “A balanced calendar is particularly helpful for economically disadvantaged students who demonstrate learning loss during the summer,” Superintendent Hornak said, also allowing those educators who choose to participate a chance to make additional salary — and student teachers to sharpen their skills.



But not everyone seems eager to make the switch to a balanced calendar: 66 percent of 1,500 parents surveyed nationwide in November said they did not support a longer school year. Seventy-three percent opposed longer school days and 67 percent spoke out against a shorter summer vacation. A full 84 percent of parents in that same survey said they were not at all concerned or only a little concerned about the amount of time their child spent learning.

Highland School District 203 *(cont’d on p. 3)*

**AS I SEE IT (cont'd from page 1)**

of the new law may require the city of Orlando and county governments in which Disney World's 25,000-acre complex is located to assume the billion-dollar debt Disney has outstanding, and pony up to provide the police, fire, ambulance and sewer services that Disney World has been funding for the 55 years it has been in existence. The proposed law would adversely affect the citizens of Orlando and Kissimmee financially.

**NYSRSAS Annual Meeting And Election**

Our annual meeting on June 16<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM must be via Zoom. If you would like to attend, just e-mail [ejgoldwasser@optonline.net](mailto:ejgoldwasser@optonline.net) and you will receive a link to access the meeting a few days before. Normally, we would conduct our biannual election of officers in person at the meeting but this year we will use the absentee ballot (seen at right). Please complete your ballot and mail it to:

*NYSRSAS, 1300 Veterans Memorial Highway – Suite 330, Hauppauge, NY 11788.*

***The deadline for receipt of ballots will be Friday, June 10, 2022.***

*NYSRSAS President, Gene Goldwasser, was a school principal for 24 years. He has served as a Hofstra adjunct professor and as a coach with the Institute for Student Achievement.*

**NYSRSAS Election Ballot**

*Please indicate your voting preference below. (Use the write-in line only if you wish to vote for a different candidate.)*

**President - Eugene T. Goldwasser**  
 Write-in \_\_\_\_\_

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President – Patricia Galaskas**  
 Write-in \_\_\_\_\_

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President – Ken Forman**  
 Write-in \_\_\_\_\_

**Recording Secretary – Sherry Alessandro**  
 Write-in \_\_\_\_\_

**Treasurer – Edward Price**  
 Write-in \_\_\_\_\_

*Mail completed ballot to:*

*NYSRSAS, 1300 Veterans Memorial Highway – Suite 330, Hauppauge, NY 11788.*

***The deadline for receipt of ballots will be Friday, June 10, 2022.***

**RETHINKING THE SCHOOL YEAR (cont'd from page 2)**

in Washington state, roughly 150 miles southeast of Seattle, implemented a balanced calendar for the first time this school year. More than 50 percent of its 1,200 students participated in the October 25-29 intersession where kindergarteners built catapults to launch mini-pumpkins, first and second graders constructed weight-bearing bridges and high schoolers worked on coding and robotics. Teachers said the intersession provided a break for people who needed it. Teachers who worked the intersession felt a renewed passion for teaching. Students gave the experience mixed reviews.

But the cost — approximately \$300,000 per year — remains a concern for districts with a

limited budget. However, intersession did not add days to the teachers' contract because it allowed teachers to make extra money . . . so the union was on board, especially with teachers designing the activities. But be reminded that intersession activities did expand the school year.

Maybe the September through June calendar is antiquated. The options are plentiful, including the mid-February recess which was designed to save fuel oil during the energy crisis. My thinking cap is on, however. Let's look at alternatives that are not budget busting!

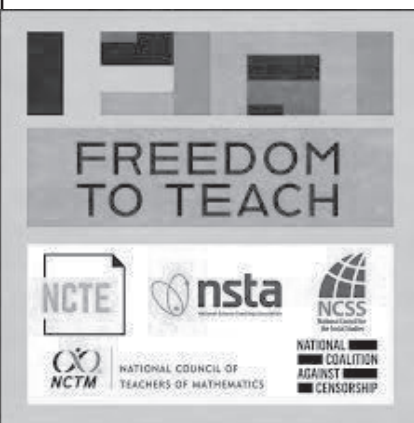
*Kennth Forman, Ph.D, has had extensive experience as an administrator in various New York public school systems. He currently serves as an adjunct professor in the Educational Leadership program at Stony Brook University.*

## TEACHERS IN THE POST PANDEMIC ENVIRONMENT

Mary Louise Haley

The last two years have been challenging for teachers as they served on the front lines of the pandemic. Teachers were stretched to the limit in an environment that ignited and reignited political and cultural debates on educational policies and practices. Much of the attention directed at teachers and schools was hostile, adding more stress to an already stressful job. If there were any questions as to whether the pandemic took a toll on teachers, the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Merrimack College Teacher Survey of 2022 reflects their disillusionment with their profession.

According to the survey, less than half of the survey respondents said the general public respects and views them as professionals, down from 77 percent in 2011. When asked, given the current challenges, would the respondents advise their younger selves to do it all again, teachers were split with less than half (45%) saying they would. Salary is one reason teachers are dissatisfied – only 26% feel that they are paid fairly for the work they do. With more than 40 states taking steps to curtail instruction on race, gender and with book banning on the rise, teachers are also concerned about challenges to their professional autonomy. It is noteworthy that a joint statement, “Freedom to Teach,” was recently released by these professional teacher organizations: The National Council for the Social Studies, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and National Science Teachers Association.



the Social Studies, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and National Science Teachers Association.

One example of the way in which partisan pressures affect teachers’ professionalism and au-

tonomy is the recent announcement by the Florida Department of Education that it had rejected dozens of math textbooks because they “contained prohibited topics.” These topics included social-

emotional learning and critical race theory. Until recently the idea of building social-emotional skills was fairly uncontroversial. Research suggests that students with these skills earn higher test scores. However, conservative think tanks have connected social-emotional learning to the broader debate about teaching race, gender and sexuality in the classroom. The decision by the Florida Department of Education has garnered national attention. Teachers are concerned that partisan pressures on instruction exerted by school boards and legislatures serve to undermine the public’s perception of teachers as professionals, who make educational decisions based upon their knowledge of curricula and instruction.



In the Merrimack Survey, teachers expressed frustration and concern over multiple aspects of their jobs – salary, autonomy, and the respect they perceive for their profession. The increasingly hostile and polarized environment in which they work will remain for the foreseeable future. So the question is: Will teachers remain in their chosen career? In 2011, 29 percent of the teachers who participated in the MetLife Survey of American Teachers said that they were likely or very likely to leave their profession. In the current Merrimack survey that number has doubled to 44 percent of teachers stating that they will leave their jobs in the next 2 years. Of course, not all the teachers who said they were very likely to leave will do so, due to financial constraints. But combine this trend with the data that show fewer and fewer young people are considering teaching as a career, and it raises real concerns about the future of the nation’s ability to sustain its critical K-12 teaching force.

*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.*

## FROM THE DESK OF: *The Reflective Retiree*

### SCAMMERS, HACKERS AND HOW TO FIGHT THEM

Corine Lipset-Huberman



A few months ago a friend called me and asked me how I was feeling and what gift cards I needed her to buy for me. I had no idea what she was talking about. She informed me that she had received an email, ostensibly from me, telling her that I had injured my leg, was unable to walk and needed someone to purchase some gift cards for me. I told her the email was a form of scam, thanked her for her efforts to help me and put it out of my mind. **UNTIL . . .** that day and days after that, I continued to receive calls from friends with the same message. Almost all realized that it was a scam and were just calling me to make sure I knew about it. One of my friends said he knew immediately it was a scam because there were grammatical errors in the email and he knew that I would never make those errors. Another friend called and laughingly asked how many gift cards I wanted. Apparently, Yahoo had hacked my contact list and sent that email to almost everyone on that list. I subsequently voided my Yahoo email account and now use a different one.

The point of telling you this little story is that not one of my friends went out to buy me gift cards. I think all but one person knew immediately that the email they received was a scam. What is most unfortunate is that there is an army of scammers out there attacking us, many of them successful at robbing people of large amounts of money, often money hard-earned, hard-saved and not replaceable. Members of our organization are pretty savvy about the usual ploys scammers use. We are knowledgeable, well-read, well-versed in the litany of schemes emanating in the creative minds of scammers. But even people like us are not impervious to the fraudulent efforts of these evil schemers. What follows is some information that may be helpful to you in the battle of Scammers v Us.

Fraud starts with information about individuals or corporations. There is “a massive illegal, international underground economy “ serving the needs of scammers (according to Katherine Skiba, writing in the AARP issue of the April 2022 Bulletin). More than 15 billion pieces of stolen data (including names, email addresses, Social Security numbers, passwords, credit card numbers and other personal data) fund the efforts of scammers. Scammers are constantly stealing data from computers. According to the Identity Theft Resource Center, there were a record 1,862 reported breaches of large-organization databases last year. Much of that data is bought and sold in a dark web marketplace. Hackers steal the information and sell it in bulk, code writers help hackers by infecting your computer with malware, vendors buy the stolen data, repackage it and sell it to the people who are trying to ensnare you in a scam.

Malware is critical to these crimes. If a computer is compromised, every letter you type on your computer can be retrieved by these villains, who can then grab your banking and email credentials and access your accounts. Smart phones are also targeted, with phone numbers sought, since that is the weakest link.



How can you fight back against these fraudulent attacks? According to Skiba, as printed in the same AARP article, follow these guidelines:

- Set up your digital accounts to require multi-factor authentication.
- Freeze your credit at the three major credit bureaus. Do the same for your dependents' credit. That helps prevent a scammer with your information from making any major transaction in your name or the *(cont'd on page 8)*

## WINTER QUARTERLY QUERY—PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

### ***Should parents be held legally responsible for their child's actions if the actions result in deadly consequences?***

The response to this query would generally be “Of course.” As expected, overarching questions might be: Should parents be subject to both criminal and civil liabilities? Would the prospect of legal actions against parents actually deter students from committing acts that result in deadly consequences? To what extent, if any, should a child's age, impulsivity, psychological illness or societal influences be taken into account? Should the type of weapon used be a mitigating factor, e.g., a gun, a stolen automobile, a pocket knife, a large or heavy object thrown out of anger?

*The New York Times* posed a similar set of questions in the Debatable portion of the December 14, 2021 opinion page. Reactions to their questions included statistics related to gun control and societal issues. The following facts were cited:

- Every year nearly 350 children under the age of 18 unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else.
- Up to 80% of gunfire incidents that occur on school grounds are done with guns obtained from home or homes of friends.
- The Times researchers found that the proper storage of guns and ammunition significantly reduced the likelihood that minors will have access to firearms. Yet, 54% of all gun owners do not adequately secure their guns.
- *The Times* found that laws making parents legally responsible for their child's actions do not exist in all states.
- After a school shooting, we often hear, “Where were the parents?” Yet, there are those who would argue that it would be too difficult to convict parents for their child's actions resulting in deadly consequences due to the number of legal, medical and psychological variables.

A most difficult question then becomes,

“What can be done?” One option is to legislate criminal liability for parents whose children have committed acts that resulted in deadly outcomes. A second and necessary option is to increase behavioral observation by parents, medical and school personnel in order to identify students who are at risk of such behavior. Yes, research and training are necessary to accomplish successful programs, especially in a country that has 120.5 firearms for every 100 residents.

However, we must start somewhere. All members of our society are aware that too frequently children are involved in gun-related acts that result in death or serious injury. The question I pose is . . . “Where is somewhere? Will special interest groups let society get anywhere?”

### **Martin Mandelker, Syosset CSD**

There is an epidemic of violence sweeping the US. It is resulting in tremendous hardship, emotional and physical pain and even death. This epidemic of school shootings has increased dramatically. According to a *Washington Post* review of 105 school shootings, school shootings have increased from 96 in 2020 to 141 in 2021. This increase and the resulting carnage could not happen if kids could not gain access to guns. Only the parents of four of these shooters were criminally charged (New York News, Dec. 4, 2021).

These acts of violence are not limited to a specific part of the country; rather, these attacks happen at random, wreaking havoc everywhere they occur. Too many children have died or suffered serious injuries. Too many parents have had their hearts broken and will never recover emotionally from the loss or injuries to their children. Additionally, the children who have witnessed these terrifying events will live with the trauma for the rest of their lives.

So what can we do to prevent these shootings in schools? The perpetrators are held responsible but since many are juveniles they are not severely punished. Often the guns they use in these shootings belong to their parents, family members or close friends. In NY (*cont'd on p. 7*)

**WINTER QUARTERLY QUERY (cont'd from page 6)**

NY a parent cannot be held responsible for damages caused by a child due to their failure to supervise the child properly (Holdook v Spencer, 36 NY 2d 35.51.364, NYS 2d 859 324 N.E. 2d 338) except when the parent has negligently entrusted a dangerous instrument to the child. The adults who fail to secure their guns carefully are rarely charged with any crime. There are, unfortunately, no laws holding parents or other adults responsible for death or injury caused by a minor who accesses their guns and then shoots or kills another person. Parents of injured children can file a Civil Suit against the parents of the minor who does the shooting but as of now they are not held criminally liable.

In my opinion, parents should be held responsible for any violence committed by their children. This is particularly applicable if the parents fail to keep their guns safely locked or if they purchase guns for the child. If a child breaks a neighbor's window, the parent is responsible for replacing that window, yet if a child uses their parent's gun to commit mass murder in a school, the parent is generally not held responsible. It is impossible to replace a lost child but there should be some legal responsibility for not keeping weapons safely locked up. Additionally, we need stronger gun control laws that could be a deterrent to parents who are irresponsible with their guns. Happily, it appears laws are moving in that direction.

If more parents were charged with criminal behavior following a shooting committed by their child, might these shootings decline in number? The parents of two 15-year-olds, one in Oxford High School in Michigan and another in Santa Fe High School, have been charged criminally as a result of their children's actions. These two cases could be the beginning of addressing this epidemic. If parents understood that they could be held criminally responsible for the shootings committed by their children, they might be more cautious about the security of their guns. Stronger gun laws, keeping guns secure and addressing the psychiatric needs of children could be a multi-pronged ap-

proach to attacking this awful problem.

However, assigning blame will not alone address the problem of school shootings. Children who can conceive and carry out a plan to murder classmates cannot be thinking rationally. We need to address the mental health of children, especially now in the aftermath of the Covid-19 lockdowns. We need more counselors and social workers to address the needs of students. Students with mental health issues need to be identified early and then provided with the necessary supports to help them.

**Sherry Alessandro, Rocky Point UFSD**

*Newsletter articles reflect the views of their writers and do not represent "official" NYSRSAS positions unless so indicated. We welcome your comments. You can contact us at [info@nysrsas.org](mailto:info@nysrsas.org)*



**Quarterly Query  
SPRING 2022**



**SHOULD THERE BE TERM LIMITS  
FOR CONGRESSIONAL SEATS?**

*Since 1789, 32 members of the House have served 40 years or longer. Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the House, is in her 18<sup>th</sup> term. At 82, she has served in the House for 35 years.*

*The Senate is the oldest in history, with many leaders close to 90. Minority Leader, Mitch McConnell, 80 years old, is in his sixth term and has been in the Senate for 37 years.*

**What do you think? Should there be a limit on the number of times one can be re-elected to the Senate or the House of Representatives?**

***Please write and let us know your opinion.***

**Send your thoughts to**

[clipsethuberman@gmail.com](mailto:clipsethuberman@gmail.com)

*(Kindly include your name and the district from which you retired.)*

**SCAMMERS, HACKERS AND HOW TO FIGHT THEM (Cont'd from page 5)**

- name of a dependent.
- Do not save credit card numbers online with merchants or service providers.
- Activate biometric locks (facial recognition or fingerprints) on your mobile device to safeguard data if the device is lost or stolen.
- Use antivirus software and perform recommended cybersecurity updates on your devices.
- Because your phone number increasingly is being used to identify you, remove it from as many accounts as possible. You may need to use your number to open some accounts, but go back and remove it later.
- Another frequent type of scam is the “boiler room” scam, so called because the original illicit call centers were often set up in building basements. These are the scams bombarding your email accounts, phones, text screens and social media feeds with pitches that sound so real and so good that you may find them hard to resist.

How to fight back? According to Hanna Kozłowska, writing in the AARP Bulletin, follow these strategies:

- Ignore phone calls from numbers you don't

- know. Let the caller leave a message.
- Never make a quick decision involving money. If a caller says you have to act now or miss the opportunity, it's a sign to walk away.
- Listen for words and phrases like 'insider trading' or 'exclusive deal,' the language of fraud.
- Before committing to any investment, check the broker's credentials, call the state's securities regulator to find out if he or she is registered. Go to [brokercheck.finra.org](http://brokercheck.finra.org) to check information given you with officially listed details.

There are many other types of scams, too many to print here. The gift card scam described above is but one of them. To learn more, use the internet to read about the scores of others and how you can protect yourself from being “taken” by a scammer. Remember the old adages – “If something smells fishy, it usually is” and “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't.”

Stay wary, stay safe!

*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 the Syosset Central School District.*

**Tuesday – May 17**

**New York State—School Budget Vote & Election of Boards of Education**

We know the selection of School Board members is crucial if professionals are to be able to do their very best for the children and communities they serve. Be sure to cast your ballot on May 17.



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