




Happy New Year



Despite the problems we face in our own country and across the world, we are happy to say that NYSRSAS is alive and well and flourishing. We will be meeting in March to begin our annual work on elections, during which each member of our Executive Board will choose an open position among Federal and State elective offices, review the backgrounds of all candidates for the position, and then offer a recommendation to the Executive Board as to which candidate we will endorse. The endorsed candidates will be notified and have the option of using our endorsement in their campaign literature.

We are continuing our efforts to highlight the importance of civic responsibility through our program of rewarding recommended high school juniors who have demonstrated extraordinary work that benefited their school and/or community. We have selected juniors so that these students can highlight this reward in their application to colleges or for job openings in their senior year. The reward consists of a certificate and a check for \$100. We are especially proud that we have designed this program to highlight the efforts of students who are not necessarily the highest achieving students scholastically but who have the motivation, the interest and the heart to serve others.

As we meet throughout the year, we often schedule a focus group meeting in order to address an issue on which we feel we need to take a position. Undoubtedly, as we meet the challenges facing our country and the world in 2024, there will be issues we will want to address. As former administrators in our respective schools, we faced many challenges with which we had to deal. It is a credit to our membership that we continue to study, read and review issues that help us to stay current and of value to our respective communities and to our country.

*As President of NYSRSAS, I send you my best wishes for the New Year . . .
good health, much joy and a productive and fulfilling life in 2024!*

Eugene Goldwasser

WHAT...NO MORE REGENTS' EXAMINATIONS! NOW I CAN GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL WITHOUT DOING ANY WORK!

Frank Chiachiere and Ken Forman

Wait a minute...that's not the case! We know as educators that Regents Examinations have been around for over 100 years. It's a rite of passage! But high school seniors in the coming years will most likely see a shift in graduation requirements to demonstrate mastery and include civic responsibility, financial literacy, visual and performing arts, and computer competency that could count towards receiving a high school diploma. Currently our high schools offer three types of diplomas: Local, Regents, and Regents with Advanced Designation.

The New York State Board of Regents established a Blue Ribbon Commission for reimagining what high school graduates should know upon graduation. The Commission recommended increasing assessment options beyond Regents examinations, thereby offering students other opportunities to demonstrate mastery of learning. Some of these options included performance-based assessments, capstone projects, and demonstrated mastery in career and technical education. The Commission also recommended that the number of diploma types be reduced from three to one, with options to add seals for demonstrated mastery.

Dr. Betty Rosa, Education Commissioner, is calling for revising the state's graduation requirements to give disenfranchised minority and low income students a variety of pathways for demonstrating success via expanding the variety of options for these struggling youngsters. Likewise, many parents and students involved in the process called for more flexibility in graduation pathways from credit

requirements and testing. Students urged for more project-based assess-



ments and/or the ability to replace Regents with advanced placement, international baccalaureate, and college course mastery.

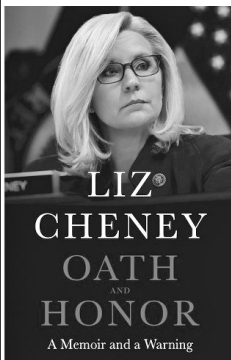
Since New York State is one of a few states that require exit exams for graduation from high school, we think that the removal of such criteria needs further study. Perhaps expand the opportunity for broadening pathways to graduation by offering a variety of pathways. Let's not throw out our history of Regents examinations! However, the "one size fits all" pathway to graduation should be enhanced with alternate pathways which demonstrate high levels of mastery. Gloria Sesso, Co-President of the Long Island Council for the Teaching of Social Studies, put it this way in *Newsday*: "When you say it's not important for graduation, when you say that, that's the end of Regents exams." She continued by stating that "if you don't require a Regents exam in US History for high school graduation, you're contributing to illiteracy." Dr. Chiachiere believes that "many educators in the teaching community agree with Ms. Sesso. Those of us who have taught a Regents class believe in their value and that the Select Commission recommendation will further water down an already floundering system of assessment." How- (continued on p.4)

FROM THE DESK OF: *The Reflective Retiree*

RUN, LIZ, RUN? SEE LIZ RUN! WILL LIZ RUN?

Corine Lipset-Huberman

During the past weeks, Liz Cheney has been on almost every talk show on MSNBC. So why is one of the most prominent Republicans in the country appearing on MSNBC, a cable channel that is known for its preference for the Democratic Party? One reason is that she has recently completed a book and is hoping that it will sell many copies; another is that she is fervently hoping that Donald Trump will not be reelected for President of the United States, assuming he will win the Republican nomination which he is likely to do. In the epilogue to her book, *OATH AND HONOR*, Cheney wrote: “Every one of us –



Republican, Democrat, Independent – must work and vote together to ensure that Donald Trump and those who have appeased, enabled, and collaborated with him are defeated. This is the cause of our time.” A third reason is the possibility that Cheney

may be considering running for president on a third party line and is hoping to garner support.

Cheney certainly has the background and the qualifications for the position. Born in 1966, the daughter of Dick Cheney, a man active in politics and Vice-President under George Bush for two terms, she played an active role in her father’s campaigns. A graduate of the University of Chicago Law School, she first practiced law in Washington, D.C., and then worked for the State Department in Near Eastern affairs. In 2009, Cheney co-founded *Keep America Safe*, an organization

vocal and often criticized for its opposition to the national security policies of President Obama. In 2016, she won Wyoming’s seat in the House of Representatives, served on several influential committees and then was elected chair of the House Republican Conference, effective in 2019, making her the third-ranking Republican in the House. Cheney largely voted with Trump’s agenda and voted against his first impeachment.



After the 2020 election, which Trump claimed was rigged, and after the January 6th attack on the Capitol, Cheney’s support of Trump changed. She voted in favor of his second impeachment and was thus stripped of her position as chair of the House Republican Conference. She was censured and dropped from the roles of the Republican Party. In July, 2021, Nancy Pelosi chose Liz Cheney to serve on the *House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol*. She was ultimately named Vice-Chairwoman of the Committee.

The rest is history – major history – as Liz Cheney became the face of the Committee, the primary figure in the televised recounting of that infamous day in the life of our country. Most people would say – even Republicans, albeit begrudgingly – that she did an excellent job in steering the Committee’s investigation of the events and how it was presented to the public.

But should Cheney’s success in her position as Vice-Chair of said Committee encourage her to try for the Presi- *(continued on p.4)*

RUN, LIZ, RUN? SEE LIZ RUN!

(Continued from page 3)

dency, given her goal of keeping Trump away from the White House? History has shown us that third party candidates are never successful and often only result in creating havoc in the elections in which they are involved. Consider George Wallace and Ross Perot! We already have several such possibilities for the 2024 election – conspiracy theorist Robert F. Kennedy Jr., activist and scholar Cornel West, the Green Party’s Jill Stein, and possibly Joe Manchin, who’s thinking about running. So, who is likely to vote for Liz Cheney? Probably some old-school Republicans who do not favor Trump but cannot bring themselves to vote for a Democrat. The MAGA Republicans will certainly not vote for her. But perhaps many Democrats who would never vote for Trump but do not favor Biden (his approval ratings are still quite low) and do approve of how

Cheney handled the January 6th Committee, would put aside their reservations about her very conservative policies on the economy, trade relations, budget and entitlements. She might indeed draw many votes away from Biden, not enough to make her President but perhaps enough to throw the election to Trump, the exact opposite of her stated intention.

It will be interesting to see what Cheney decides to do. If she does decide to run, what will Trump’s reaction be? What delicious verbiage will come out of Trump’s mouth as he discusses her merits and demerits? If Cheney and Trump meet in the crossfire of electioneering, the 2024 election might be one we never forget!

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. She serves as editor of this newsletter.

NO MORE REGENTS? (Continued from page 2)

ever, Dr. Forman believes that “change is good. Let’s look at options; maybe one size fits all doesn’t work in the 21st century.”

Critics of this potential change are concerned that the exam should be re-evaluated and made strong to reflect students' mastery of content. They say: “Let’s not throw the baby out with the bathwater.”

However, officials at the New York State Education Department are currently working to identify alternative options and pathways for graduating students. Currently, some New York State high schools already have alternative performance-based standards for graduation where students work on projects or ex-

periments and present their findings to a panel of educators and experts.

Stay tuned...change is coming!

Dr. Frank Chiachiere and Dr. Ken Forman both serve as lecturers in the Educational Leadership Program at Stony Brook University..

NYSRSAS BOARD MEETINGS 2023-24

March 14, 2024

June 13, 2024

To attend one of these Zoom meetings, email eigoldwasser@optonline to request an invitation for access to the session.

ANOTHER CHALLENGE TO EDUCATION

Phyllis Berkowitz

The challenges impacting educational achievement have been in sharp focus politically in recent years. A new challenge centers around the homeless population – specifically homeless children. It is reported that one in nine students in New York City are now homeless. The city’s record homeless student population is now larger than the entire public school system of Philadelphia.



According to Troy Closson, a *New York Times* reporter who covers education on the Metro Desk, homeless New York City students have reached a high of 119,300 (November 2, 2023).

These homeless students of varying ages are scattered and housed in temporary shelters, relatives’ homes, hotels and other transient places. Migrant children have made up most of the increases.

Presently there is no central office to address these statistics or to understand the educational and emotional needs of these migrant children. They are under great stress with many having language difficulties and/or special education needs. We do not have sufficient bilingual teachers, social workers or nurses to address their needs. It is possible that these children may also not be receiving enough food to sustain them. We do not even know if they have sufficient learning supplies nor who is taking responsibility to address and plan for adequate and appropriate supplies.

In one section of the Bronx, a study found that 22% of the students were homeless. While there were some bilingual teachers, they were lacking a knowledge of Farsi and Dari for Afghan students.

To compound these issues, NYC Mayor Eric Adams announced a 60 day limit as to how long any family could stay at any shelter. According to Closson’s article, he did this to encourage people to leave the homeless shelter system. Mayor Adams is also shipping people by bus to other states. For the students and their families, this adds more uncertainty to their lives. What happens to families who have no place to go? How can we expect parents to become involved in their children’s education with so much uncertainty? Many of these children routinely miss school.

There is an urgent need for NYC School Chancellor, David D. Banks, to form a committee to fully address the educational, health, and social-emotional needs of these children and to better coordinate resources with the Mayor and the city’s different shelters.

Closson has put a spotlight on a serious challenge to educating these many homeless and/or migrant children. It is important to understand that the needs of these children are highly symbolic of the homeless and migrant children throughout the United States. We need a countrywide plan to address this serious problem.

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Phyllis Berkowitz retired from the Great Neck Public Schools as an administrator with a focus on early childhood education. Prior to that, she worked for the Westbury Public Schools specializing in reading, special education and Pre-K education. She also taught at SUNY Old Westbury College and has published several early childhood handbooks.

AUTUMN QUARTERLY QUERY—WHAT'S ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?

Our Executive Board and most of our membership have been together now for many years. Having joined when we were in our sixties or seventies, many of us are now in our late seventies or eighties, some in our nineties. SO – what is on your bucket list? What do you most want to do in the years to come and why?

I have given some thought of late to learning a foreign language – probably Spanish. I believe that being able to speak Spanish would enable me to communicate with another group of people – people who do not speak English. I believe that it makes people feel good when someone speaks their language. In addition, our country has changed in recent decades with a greater influx of Hispanic residents. Names on store fronts, airport signs, menu descriptions, etc. are often written in Spanish. I'd like to find a class on Zoom that teaches Spanish. If someone knows of one, please let me know.

MARTIN MANDELKER

My “bucket list” has always been rather short-term and simple but it evolved over the years. Fifty years ago, my desire was to keep my research projects on schedule and getting the works published. After leaving the world of “publish or perish,” becoming a school superintendent, my focus changed to maintaining quality educational programs, convincing skeptical communities to approve taxes to fund the schools, and keeping members of the Board of Education happy so they would renew my contract. Since retiring, my life has become rather boring. I get up in the morning, care for the cats, go swimming, and then go to one of many doctors who attempt to keep me going. My

“bucket list” has become even more short-term and simple. I look forward to getting up in the morning. If I can complete the other activities, the day is a success, and I am happy with the result. **EDWARD PRICE**

When I was in college, I spent my junior year in Munich, Germany, studying art history. One of my courses focused on Rubens. There was an extensive collection of his work in the Alte Pinakothek and I'd often leave the lecture hall and pop over to the museum to see the originals of pieces discussed by the professor. Still, there were many works that could only be viewed elsewhere – principally in Spain. While serving as a diplomat there, Rubens' artistic efforts attracted the attention of the acquisitive Hapsburg rulers who added much of his work to their collections. The result was the first (and for a long time the only) item on my bucket list –to learn Spanish and go to Madrid to see Rubens' work in the Prado. Fast forward to retirement with time and (thanks to NYSTRS) the means to so some travelling. After courses at Berlitz (to be able to speak), I was off to Spain. The first trip was a taste that just made me want to know more about Spanish culture and history and resulted in more in-depth study of the language and multiple trips.

The interesting thing is that having checked that one item off my bucket list, the unexpected outcome seems to be a continually growing list of additional places to see and things



QUARTERLY QUERY
(Continued from page 6)

to learn! I sometimes feel like a kid in a candy store – a trip to Japan prompted a desire to see a bit more of southeast Asia (Vietnam’s Halong Bay is said to be very beautiful) and to learn more about the art and culture of those areas. At home, responding to the interests of my neighbors at Jefferson’s Ferry, I’ve been coordinating some workshops – they, too, are opening my world, so now my bucket list includes learning more about topics ranging from Chinese history and Islamic culture, to geology and climate change – there’s so much to learn!

The reality principle forces me to recognize that financial and physical factors may limit my ability to check some items off my growing list – still, as long as the curiosity continues and libraries and the internet are available, I’m happy.

PAT GALASKAS



Quarterly Query
WINTER 2024

The Oxford University Press has chosen *rizz* as the 2023 word of the year. It defines *rizz* as “someone’s ability to attract another person through style, charm and attractiveness.” Some say it is a youth culture word and comes out of social media such as Tik Tok. Others say it is short for charisma. Many people have said they never heard of the word *rizz*; others say they don’t think much of it as the word of the year. Thinking about the events of 2023, what word would you suggest as the word of the year and why?

Please send your thoughts to
clipsethuberman@gmail.com

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

GENDER SPECIFIC COCKTAIL GLASSES? WHAT NONSENSE!

Corine Lipset-Huberman



Choose your socks, choose your hairstyle, choose your profession, choose clothing, even choose your pronouns – all chosen with respect to the gender you choose to be. But to insist that your cocktail glass match your gender? That is going a bit too far. But only males insist on this ludicrous notion. The macho man! According to *The New York Times*, “in New York City, bartenders are fielding requests from men who ask that their drinks are served in ‘manly’ cocktail glasses in lieu of glassware they deem too feminine, such as stemmed glasses. Straws, fruit garnishes

and colorful umbrellas, too, are unnecessary embellishments for customers who request their beverage be transferred to an ‘on the rocks’ glass.”

We are certainly living in an age when human sexuality is encased in an “anything goes” venue. An individual can be asexual, biphobic, bisexual, gay, genderqueer, gender binary, gender dysphoric, gender expansive, gender expressive, gender fluid, homophobic, lesbian, non-binary, pansexual, queer, transgender or transitioning. Perhaps men who insist on “manly” cocktail glasses are fearful that they may not be seen as “manly” enough.

A New Year's Wish List

As we enter the new year of 2024, we would like to feel optimistic, to experience a sense of hope and expectation that our troubles would abate, that our personal world and the world that surrounds us would appear rosy and benign. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

Internationally, we see Russia and Ukraine at war, as well as Israel and Hamas. The Houthis are firing upon cargo ships crossing the Red Sea with the U.S. retaliating, leading to a possible war with Iran. Hezbollah and Israel are exchanging serious gunfire. Nationally, there is great concern as to who will be our next president, little agreement between our two major political parties and thousands of homeless sleeping in the streets of our great cities. Geographically, our planet is suffering from floods, fires, extreme heat and earthquakes. Socio-economically, thousands of people are fleeing their native countries in fear of starvation or political distress leading to imprisonment or murder. Climate change is an additional serious factor. . . in short, our world is a mess.

Now, about a month into the New Year, we offer these wishes for 2024. We think you will all agree that they are worthwhile and important. We wish that:

- more people would embrace the idea of a return to “civility” – an understanding that life is more agreeable when we are considerate of the needs of others;
- our leaders would return to an attitude of accepting that they might disagree without being disagreeable – that a modicum of RESPECT for each other and for the views of others will make it easier to get things done that would benefit the American people;
- all of us, from world leaders to ourselves and our neighbors, would abandon the view that “winning” is all that matters, understanding the value of compromise in which each of us gets some (not all) of what we want in order that together we can progress toward a better future.

**“The positive thinker sees the invisible, feels the intangible,
and achieves the impossible.” - Winston Churchill**



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