



Michael Havens
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Wayne Central School District

LETTER to the BOARD

September 27, 2002

"It is the commonest of mistakes to consider that the limit of our power of perception is also the limit of all there is to perceive."
-- C.W Leadbeater

Greetings from Wayne Central School District. Below are some items of interest.

Newsletter:

1. **Visit to Gananda Pool:** Mr. Blankenberg has arranged for a visit to the Gananda pool for Tuesday, October 1st. People interested in attending should meeting at the high school at 5:30 p.m. It is an open swim time so feel free to bring your suits. I have a presentation that evening so I will not be able to join you.
2. **Ontario Primary School Nurse:** We have had concerns for over a year now about the ability of our OP nurse to perform her job. It was reported that she injured her back while trying to lift a handicapped child two years ago. Since that time she has had to be out frequently and when she is here is limited in what she can do. Workman's comp. Has been involved in the case for some time. Our concerns revolve around whether she could perform the tasks needed should there be an emergency and CPR or other aid was needed. Her most recent doctor's note has her out through mid-October. We are working with our school physician to arrange for an independent assessment to see if she can safely perform her job or if she needs to be placed on a leave.
3. **Test Results Article:** Enclosed is a copy of the article on our test results published in this week's paper. We continue to improve as pointed out in the article.
4. **Sales Tax Update:** Our most recent conversations with the County indicate there are no current discussions on this issue. Supervisors have privately told us that there is little interest in making a change, but for a few people who will make it an issue. Conversations with our two supervisors indicate that both are solidly behind keeping the money where it

is. Budget discussions will get serious for the County over the next 6 weeks so we will continue to monitor this closely.

5. **Building Project Presentations:** Last night I presented to the Ontario Civic Club. It was my warmest reception to date. Some said they had been unsure before the presentation but were now certain we needed the project. They also were positive about the pool citing the many benefits. They talked about the last time the pool was proposed and how there seemed to be too many unanswered questions then. This time they felt more comfortable with the facts. We have less than two weeks to go. Again the key will be to get the yes people out. Keep spreading the word. I have included 5 brochures for each of you to give to five more people. With these latest brochures the Board alone will have spoken to 90 people (Scott, I left you out since you already will be visiting many people). Incidentally if anyone would like to offer Scott some help he can be reached at 524-4191

6. **Events -**

10/1 – High School Open House – 7:00 p.m.

10/3 – Middle School Open House – 7:00 p.m.

10/5 – Four County School Boards “Area 2 Voting Delegates Discussion @ Canandaigua Academy – 9:00–11:00 a.m. *Please let Lori know if you wish to attend.* <http://4csba.org>

10/9 – Board of Education Meeting @ Ontario Primary School – 6:30 p.m.

10/16 – Four County School Boards “Meet the Candidates Night” @ Club 86, Geneva
The NYS candidates for Governor, Lt. Governor, Congress, Senate and Assembly have been invited to attend this meeting and discuss their position of key educational issues.

Buffet Dinner will be served – 5:30 social, 6:00 Executive Council, 6:30 Buffet, 7:30 Program

Please let Lori know if you wish to attend www.4csba.org

10/24-27 – NYSSBA Annual Convention – Syracuse

Athletics: (home games)

9/30 Girls’ JV Tennis vs. Victor – 4:15 p.m.

10/1 V Golf vs. Geneva @ OGC – 4:15 p.m.

10/2 Girls’ JV & V Soccer vs. Penn Yan – 4:15 – 7:00 p.m.

10/2 Girls’ JV & V Volleyball vs. Pal-Mac – 5:30 & 7:00 p.m.

10/2 V Golf vs. Canandaigua @ OGC – 4:15 p.m.

10/3 JV Football vs. Penn Yan – 4:00 p.m.

10/3 Boys’ JV & V Soccer vs. Canandaigua – 4:15 & 7:00 p.m.

10/4 Girls’ JV & V Soccer vs. Newark – 4:15 & 7:00 p.m.

10/7 Girls’ JV & V Volleyball vs. Clyde-Savannah – 5:30 & 6:30 p.m.

10.7 V Golf vs. Victor @ OGC – 4:15 p.m.

10/8 Boys' JV & V Volleyball vs. East High – 5:30 & 7:00 p.m.

7. Attachments:

1. NYSSBA Resolution Consideration Request – Levittown CSD
2. NYSSBA Resolution Consideration Request – Fairport CSD
3. NYSSBA Resolution Consideration Request – Pawling CSD
4. Newspaper Article – State Testing Scores



LEVITTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Levittown Memorial Education Center
Abbey Lane
Levittown, New York 11756



SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT

Herman A. Sirois, Ph.D. Superintendent of Schools
516 520-8300 Ext. 674

September 6, 2002

Dear Colleague:

I am asking you to consider a Board resolution in support of the attached proposed NYSSBA resolutions (#19 and #20). Attached is a copy of the resolutions and our rebuttal statements. The Resolutions Committee's statements of opposition can be found in the 2002 Proposed bylaw Amendments and Resolutions booklet. I am offering the following sample resolution for your convenience.

"RESOLVED, that the _____ Board of Education does, hereby, support Resolutions #19 and #20 for the annual business meeting of the New York State School Boards Association; such resolution(s) would reinstate the local diploma."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Herman A. Sirois'.

Herman A. Sirois

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The NYSSBA Resolutions Committee bases its opposition to this resolution, not on the facts, but on the uncritical repetition of the rhetoric issued by the Board of Regents and its Commissioner. An examination of each of the Resolutions Committee's points of opposition reveals the need and justification for NYSSBA delegates to pass this resolution.

1. While the Resolutions Committee admits that the current "one-size-fits-all" Regents Standards Plan has not proven successful, it characterizes any change that might improve or modify this plan as a threat to the success of the plan. If we are willing or otherwise compelled to admit that either the current Regent Plan or its implementation strategies are flawed and/or even failing, we must be willing to endorse changes in such plan or strategies.
2. In opposing the resolution, the Resolutions Committee falsely states that school districts throughout the state have proven that they can educate most students to the Regents standards. This statement is at best misleading, if not outright false, since barely half of the students in the state (50.3%) currently earn Regents diplomas. Such a statistic hardly qualifies as "most." In fact, all that has been "proven" to date is that, despite their best efforts, school districts have not been able to get almost half of all students to earn a Regents diploma. Moreover, even these results have nothing to do, whatsoever, with the Board of Regents' push for higher standards, but reflect for the most part a commitment on the part of school districts to increase the percent of students earning Regents diplomas, which commitment predated any current Regents Plan for "higher" standards.
3. The Resolutions Committee correctly recognizes that, despite all the efforts and negative pressure placed on school districts by the Commissioner and the Board of Regents, school districts throughout the state have not proven that they can educate all students to Regents standards. In making this observation, the Resolutions Committee reiterates the Commissioner's rhetoric that the only reason half of the students in the state are not earning Regents diplomas is because school districts are not trying. The NYSSBA should recognize that its member school districts have made significant effort and progress in raising Regents diploma rates over the past dozen years, and demand that such progress be recognized. By opposing the restitution of limited authority for awarding local diplomas, the NYSSBA is abdicating its responsibility toward local Boards of Education, and is aiding and abetting the Board of Regents and its Commissioner in their ongoing strategy of undermining local school districts with rhetoric claiming continued failure.
4. In opposing this resolution, the Resolutions Committee misrepresents the intent of the resolution by suggesting that the resolution claims that any educational reform that seeks to "lift the boat for all students is doomed to failure." In making this accusation, once again, the Resolutions Committee reveals its blind acceptance of the propaganda and rhetoric issued by the Commissioner and the Board of Regents. By using the metaphor of "lifting the boat" the Resolutions Committee is revealing its acceptance of the one-size-fits-all approach. It also reveals

the single biggest problem with the current standards reform in New York State which is that a student is either in the boat or drowns. The current reform effort in New York State simply does not make provisions to get all students into the boat; it refuses to recognize that all students may not be able to fit into only one boat, and, moreover, refuses to allow any alternative boats to float.

5. In opposing this resolution, the Resolutions Committee expresses the belief that it is too soon to make dire predictions about the Regents Reform effort. Once again, the committee is blindly reiterating the propaganda and rhetoric of the Commissioner and the Board of Regents in their defense of a plan which was put together for political not educational reasons; which after seven years has shown no evidence of success on any independent measure; and which has for several years now contributed to an increase in high school drop out rate and a decrease in college attendance rates.

6. In allowing school districts which have proven their commitment to raising standards the authority to issue a local diploma, we would be guaranteeing success in life for hundreds of thousands of students for whom the current Regents plan guarantees failure. In opposing this resolution, the NYSSBA Resolutions Committee turns its back on its membership; abrogates its responsibility to children; and continues to supplicate itself to the political establishment in New York State.

7. Where school districts have proven their commitment to raising standards for all students, including the attainment of a Regents diploma by the maximum number of students possible, they have earned the right to be entrusted with the authority to issue a local diploma. Such school districts certainly have demonstrated a far greater commitment to improving standards of student learning and to improving the lives of individual students than has the Board of Regents which arrogantly denies local school Boards their traditional authority to award a local diploma.

8. As part of its strategy to secure public acceptance of its plan for standards reform, the Board of Regents and its Commissioner sought to discredit all school districts in New York State by falsely claiming that the local diploma was universally abused and lacking in rigor and standards. The fact is, however, that it has never been established that such abuse was rampant or even existed in school districts outside of New York's inner cities. The NYSSBA should have fought this accusation immediately and demanded that the Board of Regents and the Commissioner deal with the problem as and where it did, in fact, exist. It is an insult to all of its members that the NYSSBA did not stick up for them in this regard. It is unconscionable, however, that after seven years that the NYSSBA appears to be not only endorsing but joining the Board of Regents and its Commissioner in falsely accusing its member districts of misusing their authority relative to issuing local diplomas. The NYSSBA should insist that the authority of local school districts relative to local diplomas be fully restored and should not engage in any excuses or give credence to any of the rhetoric thereto issued by the Board of Regents and its Commissioner.

9. At this time, we are only a year or so away from the point of no return, at which, if left unchanged, the current Regents standards plan will condemn almost half of the children in the state to a life of failure. It is time to face reality and save the lives of our children. It is, also, clear that the only agencies capable of salvaging the current Reform Plan are local school districts, and the only vehicle that will enable them to do so is the restoration of the authority to issue a local diploma. Members of NYSSBA and its leadership cannot sit idly by and allow our children to be “acceptable casualties” in a war of dubious merit.

This resolution deserves the support of all NYSSBA delegates and NYSSBA leadership.

Statement of Rebuttal to the NYSSBA Resolutions Committee's Statement of Opposition to Resolution #20

The NYSSBA Resolutions Committee bases its opposition to this resolution, not on the facts, but on the uncritical repetition of the rhetoric issued by the Board of Regents and its Commissioner. An examination of each of the Resolutions Committee's points of opposition reveals the need and justification for NYSSBA delegates to pass this resolution.

1. While the Resolutions Committee admits that the current "one-size-fits-all" Regents Standards Plan has not proven successful, it characterizes any change that might improve or modify this plan as a threat to the success of the plan. If we are willing or otherwise compelled to admit that either the current Regent Plan or its implementation strategies are flawed and/or even failing, we must be willing to endorse changes in such plan or strategies.
2. In opposing the resolution, the Resolutions Committee falsely states that school districts throughout the state have proven that they can educate most students to the Regents standards. This statement is at best misleading, if not outright false, since barely half of the students in the state (50.3%) currently earn Regents diplomas. Such a statistic hardly qualifies as "most." In fact, all that has been "proven" to date is that, despite their best efforts, school districts have not been able to get almost half of all students to earn a Regents diploma. Moreover, even these results have nothing to do, whatsoever, with the Board of Regents' push for higher standards, but reflect for the most part a commitment on the part of school districts to increase the percent of students earning Regents diplomas, which commitment predated any current Regents Plan for "higher" standards.
3. The Resolutions Committee correctly recognizes that, despite all the efforts and negative pressure placed on school districts by the Commissioner and the Board of Regents, school districts throughout the state have not proven that they can educate all students to Regents standards. In making this observation, the Resolutions Committee reiterates the Commissioner's rhetoric that the only reason half of the students in the state are not earning Regents diplomas is because school districts are not trying. The NYSSBA should recognize that its member school districts have made significant effort and progress in raising Regents diploma rates over the past dozen years, and demand that such progress be recognized. By opposing the restitution of limited authority for awarding local diplomas, the NYSSBA is abdicating its responsibility toward local Boards of Education, and is aiding and abetting the Board of Regents and its Commissioner in their ongoing strategy of undermining local school districts with rhetoric claiming continued failure.
4. In opposing this resolution, the Resolutions Committee misrepresents the intent of the resolution by suggesting that the resolution claims that any educational reform that seeks to "lift the boat for all students is doomed to failure." In making this accusation, once again, the Resolutions Committee reveals its blind acceptance of the propaganda and rhetoric issued by the Commissioner and the Board of Regents. By using the metaphor of "lifting the boat" the

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6. In allowing school districts which have proven their commitment to raising standards the authority to issue a local diploma, we would be guaranteeing success in life for hundreds of thousands of students for whom the current Regents plan guarantees failure. In opposing this resolution, the NYSSBA Resolutions Committee turns its back on its membership; abrogates its responsibility to children; and continues to supplicate itself to the political establishment in New York State.

7. Where school districts have proven their commitment to raising standards for all students, including the attainment of a Regents diploma by the maximum number of students possible, they have earned the right to be entrusted with the authority to issue a local diploma. Such school districts certainly have demonstrated a far greater commitment to improving standards of student learning and to improving the lives of individual students than has the Board of Regents which arrogantly denies local school Boards their traditional authority to award a local diploma.

8. As currently implemented, the Regents Standards Plan amounts to de facto discrimination against identifiable groups of disadvantaged children including poor, certain minorities, the intellectually disadvantaged, and others who through no fault of their own are unable to achieve the arbitrary standards established by the Board of Regents. This resolution calls for the recognition of such specific factors in order to save children with such disadvantages from lives of failure.

9. As part of its strategy to secure public acceptance of its plan for standards reform, the Board of Regents and its Commissioner sought to discredit all school districts in New York State by falsely claiming that the local diploma was universally abused and lacking in rigor and standards. The fact is, however, that it has never been established that such abuse was rampant or even existed in school districts outside of New York's inner cities. The NYSSBA should have fought this accusation immediately and demanded that the Board of Regents and the Commissioner deal with the problem as and where it did, in fact, exist. It is an insult to all of its members that the NYSSBA

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10. At this time, we are only a year or so away from the point of no return, at which, if left unchanged, the current Regents standards plan will condemn almost half of the children in the state to a life of failure. It is time to face reality and save the lives of our children. It is, also, clear that the only agencies capable of salvaging the current Reform Plan are local school districts, and the only vehicle that will enable them to do so is the restoration of the authority to issue a local diploma. Members of NYSSBA and its leadership cannot sit idly by and allow our children to be “acceptable casualties” in a war of dubious merit.

This resolution deserves the support of all NYSSBA delegates and NYSSBA leadership.

Resolution 19 – Restore Local Authority for Local Diplomas

Resolved, that the New York State School Boards Association seek legislation providing local school boards in those school districts, who maintain a Regents diploma rate above the state average, the authority to grant a local high school diploma in lieu of the Regents diploma.

Rationale

By now, it is clear that the “one size fits all” Regents diploma requirements imposed by the New York Board of Regents has needlessly condemned up to half a generation of New York students to a life of failure. School districts that meet the criteria as called for in this resolution have already demonstrated their commitment to high standards and their ability to educate every student to their highest capacity. It recognizes the reality that such school districts can be trusted to identify the needs and certify the abilities of students to lead a productive life beyond high school. And, third, the restoration of the local diploma is the only strategy available to the Board of Regents that will salvage New York’s plan for higher standards and accountability.

Resolution 20 – Conditional Approval to Award Local Diplomas

Resolved, that the New York State School Boards Association seek legislation requiring the New York State Education Department to authorize local Boards of Education to award local boards of education to award a local high school diploma in lieu of the Regents diploma wherein such authority shall be automatically granted to school districts who maintain a Regents graduation rate above the state average and to other school districts by a process as may be established by the Board of Regents that recognizes local constraints.

Rationale

By now, it is clear that the “one size fits all” Regents diploma requirements imposed by the New York Board of Regents has needlessly condemned up to half a generation of New York students to a life of failure. School districts that meet the criteria as called for in this resolution have already demonstrated their commitment to high standards and their ability to educate every student to their highest capacity. It recognizes the reality that such school districts can be trusted to identify the needs and certify the abilities of students to lead a productive life beyond high school. And, third, the restoration of the local diploma is the only strategy available to the Board of Regents that will salvage New York’s plan for higher standards and accountability.