

June 2009 E-Newsletter

Dear Colleague,

Click on [Summer Travel Ideas](#) to find some novel places to spend a few summer days. Please share this e-newsletter with your peers and invite them to subscribe by e-mailing us at teacher_center@wsboces.org with their names and e-mail addresses. Enjoy your summer!

Jane, Carol and Elyse

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FYI

Announcements

The NYS Teacher Center Tech Committee is pleased to announce another statewide partnership! At our last meeting we were visited by Jon Rubin from WNET/PBS and they demonstrated the Vital system which is a FREE standards aligned video system. As many of you know the contracts with Discovery Learning are running out for the various PBS stations and this resource will replace them within the PBS stations. ***PBS will be working with us to create a training model in both traditional face to face formats as well as online formats.*** Please feel free to **start utilizing** the service and to place links to the resource on your websites. <http://vital.thirteen.org>

New York State Education Department's Student Technology Survey. This brief survey is for students at all levels and stages of learning: What kinds of technology do you use both in and out of school? What kinds of technology do you want to use, and how? The survey can also be accessed from www.emsc.nysed.gov/edtech. Please note that students can only complete the survey once from each computer. The survey is available now through **June 30, 2009.** http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=pb4TIGC8ViT7ftFNWEibhQ_3d_3d

September 25, 2009: Submission Deadline. On Earth Day, we launched a challenge for schools called the Bright Green Dream. The Bright Green Dream is a CONTEST To Launch Greenovation, our new K-12 education initiative to bring sustainability and energy efficiency to schools. The Bright Green Dream encourages students and teachers to actively identify energy hogs and sustainability offenders in their schools and submit entries telling us about them. Each submission will also detail the students' proposal for what they would do to fix the problems, and how they would turn that space into the "greenest" space in the school. You can learn more on www.greenovationnation.com. Applications for entry are being taken on www.greenovationNation.com/Dream.

Courses and Workshops

June 29 - July 2, NASSAU COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART HOLDING SUMMER INSTITUTE. The Nassau County Museum of Art (NCMA) and Nassau BOCES invite you to four stimulating days of creating, thinking, reflecting, artcaching, journaling and photography at NCMA's galleries, outdoor garden, and 145 acres of ponds, fields, and woods. Titled "The Inquiring Eye," this summer institute is geared for teachers and administrators interested in developing a deeper understanding of Habits of Mind (HOM), connecting with museum and environmental educators, discussing 21st century skills, and discovering how informal learning environments can help you re-frame the way you teach. To learn about this professional development opportunity, and to register, click [here](#).

July 8 to August 26, 2009. NYS Teacher Center Online Academy Summer, 2009. All classes are 15 hours in length. Teacher Center Member Fees: \$125 per course - Non-Teacher Center Member Fees— \$150 per course. Register using MyLearningPlan at <http://www.rockteach.org>. If you already have a MyLearningPlan.com ID, register at <http://mylearningplan.com>. Check the OLA website, www.olacatalog.org for course requirements and expectations —BEFORE registering! Please contact Marianne Smith, 845 942-7604, RTCI@optonline.net for further questions.

Controversy in the Classroom. This course focuses on the use of controversial public issues in secondary school classrooms to teach students the essential skills of democratic dialogue and civic engagement. Research based with a practical bent, this course is designed for secondary school teachers, graduate students, and other educators who wish to improve their ability to teach young people how to participate more effectively in classroom discussions of controversial public issues. We will focus on defining controversial public issues, the rationales for including issues in the curriculum, and the research that supports this form of teaching and learning. We will select especially powerful issues, learn different discussion models, and become effective facilitators of controversial issue classroom discussions.

Instructor: Diana Hess is an Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the author of *Controversy in the Classroom: The Democratic Power of Discussion*

Location: Teachers College of Columbia University

Registration information: For credit: please contact the Office of the Registrar at (212) 678-4050. For questions regarding tuition and fees, please contact the Office of Student Accounts at (212) 678-3056 at Teachers College Columbia University. For non-credit: Register here online: <http://www.tc.edu/continuingeducation>.

St. John's University Now Offers Gifted Education Program. The New York State Department

of Education now requires teachers to pass the Gifted Content Specialty Test and to successfully complete 12 credits of graduate courses in gifted education in order to teach in designated gifted classes. The graduate program in Gifted Education at St. John's University is designed to provide educators with a solid background of expertise in gifted education, enabling them to work more effectively with a diverse population of exceptionally capable learners, and to take leadership roles in the field. To register, please contact Professor Linda J. Faucetta, St. John's University, 500 Montauk Highway, Oakdale, New York 11769. 631-218-7775, faucettl@stjohns.edu

Events

July 8-12. Southampton Children's Literature Conference. MFA in Writing & Literature, Stony Brook, Southampton, 239 Montauk Highway, Southampton, NY 11968.

Dear Writers, Readers, Illustrators, Educators, and Lovers of Children's Literature, We're so excited to bring you this update on this summer's conference. In addition to our stellar, award-winning faculty, which includes Tor Seidler, Emma Walton Hamilton, Cindy Kane, Margaret McMullan and New Yorker illustrator Gahan Wilson, we have a lineup of special events sure to inspire you in your work. We're also thrilled to announce that we have additional scholarship funds available and the application deadline has been extended. Applications are available at: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/writers/>. For more information, please telephone: 631-632-5007.

October 2-3, 2009: AEP National Forum, Cambridge, MA. AEP will hold a **National Forum** called "Chartering a Course for the Arts and 21st Century Learning," to be held on October 2-3, 2009 in Cambridge, MA. This forum will be a lively exploration of the connections and synchronicities between the arts and 21st century learning. The forum will be hosted by Lesley University. For more information, click [here](#).

October 20, 2009. National Day on Writing. To draw attention to the remarkable variety of writing millions of Americans engage in, and help make writers from all walks of life aware of their craft, the National Gallery of Writing is working to establish October 20, 2009 as the National Day on Writing. To celebrate composition in all its forms, the National Council of Teachers of English is inviting diverse participants - students, teachers, parents, grandparents, service and industrial workers, business owners, legislators, retirees, and many more - to submit a piece of writing to the National Gallery of Writing. To learn more about this opportunity, click [here](#).

November 20, 2009, 9-11 AM, 9th Annual Kids in Action Youth Conference. The conference is **free** to middle school students and their teachers, compliments of Kids in Action, Action Long Island, and generous sponsors. [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#). This year, Kids in Action will support the efforts of middle schools as they work to foster self esteem, wellness, and leadership in their students with keynote speaker **Sarah Reinertsen**. Sarah is an athlete, motivational speaker, role model and an advocate for change. She is the **First Female Amputee to finish the Ironman Triathlon** Championships, ESPY winner 2006, seen on CBS's "The Amazing Race" and was honored in 2009 with the Cool Women Award from the Girl Scouts of America. She will empower your middle school students with her powerful mantra: Don't ever give up on what you believe in. Not once. Not ever! Fear Less Live More! For reservations please submit the form on our website by November 6th. www.ourkidsinaction.org. Questions? Please call 631-425-2700.

Worthwhile Websites

[TeacherPlanet.com](#) FREE Teaching Resources for June/July 2009 including Father's Day Resources, Summer Lessons, Student Safety Month, Canada Day & Independence Day, along with 350 Additional Theme Resource Pages - complete with Lesson Plans, Worksheets, Theme Units, Certificates, Teacher Tools and a Whole lot more!

[Free Printables for Teachers @ softschools](#) FREE Worksheets, quizzes, games and online practice on math, grammar, phonics, handwriting, word search, language arts, social studies and geography for preschool to middle school.

[abcteach](#) 6000+FREE printables,Language Arts, Math, Languages, Portfolios,Theme units, Seasonal Units, Basics, Shapebooks, and Teaching Extras! CLIP ART. Join the popular membership section with ABCTOOLS to generate Handwriting, Math, Word Walls, Worksheets & Puzzles, 20,000+ pages. SPECIAL Group Prices!


[SchoolExpress](#) FREE -11,000+ worksheets, create worksheets, 130 software programs, online math, funtime area, make awards, and more.

[Free Clipart Pictures](#) Offers free clip art downloads in dozens of categories and some animated gifs that may be helpful for the teachers, educators, students and the children.


[www.childrensprogress.com](#) Computer-delivered formative assessments, tailored reports and recommended activities are the ULTIMATE TEACHING TOOL - simplifying the process of learning advancement for every student. Click on the link above to see how to create a unique and successful classroom learning environment.

Ten great websites for elementary and middle school students

[United Nations Cyberschoolbus](#).  <http://www.un.org/pubs/cyberschoolbus/> View information about member nations, take a virtual tour, explore issues of human rights relating to children or take quizzes and play games to help you learn about the countries of the world. Interactive and well designed for school-age children.

[University of California Museum of Paleontology, Berkeley](#).  <http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/>
If you like paleontology, you'll enjoy the online exhibits here.

[USA Today Weather](#).  <http://www.usatoday.com/weather/wfront.htm> Weather by USA Today news.

[Chris Van Allsburg](#)  <http://www.chrisvanallsburg.com> Join Fritz the little white dog to find out more about the award-winning author of Jumanji and The Polar Express. An amazing interactive site with many book-related activities, games, video clips, and a scavenger hunt!

[Views of the Solar System](#).  <http://www.solarviews.com/> Presents a vivid multimedia adventure unfolding the splendor of the sun, planets, moons, comets, asteroids, and more. Discover

the latest scientific information, or study the history of space exploration, rocketry, early astronauts, space missions, and spacecraft through a vast archive of photographs, scientific facts, text, graphics, and videos. Available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and German.

[Virtual Reality Tours of the Historical, Scientific, and Cultural Sites of Philadelphia.](http://www.phillyvrtour.org)

<http://www.phillyvrtour.org> This site, presented by the Gilbert Spruance Elementary School, takes you on a virtual tour of Philadelphia, our nation's first capital.

[Virtual Science Center.](http://www.chabotspace.org/vsc)

<http://www.chabotspace.org/vsc> The Chabot Space and Science Center in Oakland, California, offers a virtual tour of selected exhibits and programs, a virtual planetarium, and space photographs taken by their telescopes. Try your hand at a lunar landing.

[Walking with Dinosaurs](http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/prehistoric_life/dinosaurs/)

http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/prehistoric_life/dinosaurs/ An easy-to-navigate, comprehensive site about the rise and fall of dinosaurs, fossils, and sea monsters. Site is sponsored by the BBC in conjunction with their television series "Walking with Dinosaurs."

[Weather Wiz Kids.](http://www.weatherwizkids.com)

<http://www.weatherwizkids.com> A veritable wealth of weather information that includes a glossary, terms, jokes, experiments, folklore, an "ask" section, and even access to Doppler sites, hurricane tracking charts, and charts for wind chill, heat index, and temperature conversions.

[Webrangers](http://www.nps.gov/webrangers)

<http://www.nps.gov/webrangers> The National Park Service provides activities for children. This site lets them experience activities similar to those found in the organization's onsite Park Rangers program. Participants can choose to complete activities as a visitor or can enter a user name and password to design their own ranger station and earn online patches for their work. The activities are rated as easy, medium, and hard and include topics such as learning about trees, animals, historical events, and the effects of nature on the park.

[NCTE Inbox](#)

[News](#)

On Students and the Internet

"The New Student Excuse?" [Inside Higher Ed, June 5, 2009](#)

"Lawsuits Test Free Speech in Internet Era": [eSchool News, June 4, 2009](#)

"Schools in Two States Unblock LGBT Sites": [eSchool News, June 8, 2009](#)

"'Dumbest Generation'? Professor Blames Technology": [USA Today, June 3, 2009](#)

. . . On School Reform

"Teachers Should Be Judged on Student Performance": [Google News/Associated Press, June 8, 2009](#)

"Sanford Loses Stimulus Fight": [The Post and Courier, June 5, 2009](#)

"U.S. Education Secretary Pushes to Improve Milwaukee Public Schools": [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, June 4, 2009](#)

"Former Failing School Serves as National Model": [The New York Times, June 1, 2009](#)

. . . More on School Reform

"Carver Middle School Wins National Honor": Principal Drives Transformation of Once-Struggling

Virginia School: [Richmond Times-Dispatch, May 27, 2009](#)

"School of the Future: Lessons in Failure": [eSchool News, June 1, 2009](#)

"Freshman Year: Make or Break": Portland Schools' Focus on Freshmen Helps Some Oregon Students Succeed: [The Oregonian, May 29, 2009](#)

. . . On Testing and Assessment

"School District Calls New Testing Program a Success": [The Salt Lake Tribune, June 4, 2009](#)

"Longer High-Stakes Tests May Result in Sense of Mental Fatigue, But Not in Lower Test Scores": [ScienceDaily, June 2, 2009](#)

"Assessing Student Affect": [Educational Leadership, May 2009](#)

A Need to Read: What Parents Can Do to Encourage Summer Reading. "Evidence suggests three months of learning is lost for the average student who doesn't read during the summer," says NCTE member Richard Allington, professor of literacy at the University of Tennessee. "The loss can be as much as three to five months for struggling readers and students from low-income families who have little access to books." [Knoxville News-Sentinel, May 26, 2009](#)

A Changing Student Body. According to [The Condition of Education 2009](#), the United States is hitting a record with nearly 50 million students enrolled in the nation's public schools this year; about 44% of those students are minorities. [The Washington Post, June 1, 2009](#)

Educational Perspectives on Sotomayor's Nomination to the Supreme Court.

"Supreme Court Nominee Was on the Side of Minorities in Key Cases": [The Chronicle of Higher Education, May 27, 2009](#)

"Sotomayor's Record on Education Scrutinized": [Education Week, May 26, 2009](#)

"No Stranger to Higher Ed": [Inside Higher Ed, May 27, 2009](#)

Views

Technology Is Integral to Literacy Learning in the 21st Century. While "'Dumbest Generation?' Professor Blames Technology" ([USA Today, June 3, 2009](#)) contends that students are losing their intellects to online pursuits, NCTE recognizes the value of [new literacies](#), often enabled by technology, and encourages teachers to [incorporate these new literacies into their classrooms](#).

Ideas

Writing and Online Technologies. Over the past five years, a variety of authors have taken up the Internet as a source for the plotlines and the format of their novels. In the recent *Text Messages* episode [Teen Literature and Technology](#) (M-S), you'll hear about books that "break the rules of writing" by telling stories in the form of emails, blog entries, and instant messages. The episode also features books that raise questions about the risks of online interactions and the reasons why teens go public with online writing.

The ReadWriteThink.org lessons [What's the Difference? Beginning Writers Compare Email with Letter Writing](#) and [Write Right Back: Recognizing Readers' Needs and Expectations for Email Replies](#) (E) outline opportunities for investigating the genre of email in the classroom. For more information, read the article that inspired the lessons: "[Email as Genre: A Beginning Writer Learns the Conventions](#)" (E) from *Language Arts*.

Explore the language of electronic messages and how it affects other writing with the ReadWriteThink.org lesson [Audience, Purpose, and Language Use in Electronic Messages](#) (M). To set up online chats and email with students, check out the *Voices from the Middle* article "[Improving Writing: Online Bulletin Boards](#)" (M).

The *English Journal* article "[Virtually Being There: Creating Authentic Experiences through Interactive Exchanges](#)" (S-TE) describes an email writing exchange between pre-service teachers and high school students, designed to help students develop conversations about writing as a tool for learning across the curriculum. For resources to structure your own writing exchange, check out the ReadWriteThink.org lesson [Exploring Literature through Letter Writing Groups](#) (S-C).

Invite students to explore the lingo of the online world by reading books included in the *English Journal* book review "[Internet Literature for Media-Savvy Students](#)" (M-S). Even teachers with limited access to technology in the classroom can explore the ways that people read and write with technology.

The *College English* article "[Distant Voices: Teaching Writing in a Culture of Technology](#)" (C) considers the ways that technology can influence our teaching in light of "the increasing replacement of face-to-face contact by 'virtual' interaction via multimedia technology, email communication systems, and the recently expanded capabilities of the World Wide Web" in our campus classrooms and in distance education.

Summer Activities to Keep Kids Learning. Share learning activities and resources with families, tutors, summer school teachers, and other literacy volunteers to help keep kids learning all summer long. The [Learning Beyond the Classroom](#) section from [ReadWriteThink.org](#) provides summer activities that educators can complete with their own children or share with families looking for ways to support summer learning. Don't miss the growing collection of [podcasts and videos!](#)

[Learning Your Address and Phone Number](#) (E) Children will learn their address and phone number to help keep them safe. Memorization strategies include singing, rhyming, and dialing using telephone keypad models for practice.

[Fairy Tales and You](#) (E) Drawing on their knowledge of story structure and fairy tales, children will write their own. Events from their own lives become the basis for personalized fairy tales that can be published, read aloud, or performed for others.

[That Sounds Fun! Sound Words and Sports Poetry](#) (M) In this activity, children and teens use their experiences playing or watching sporting events (or other types of outdoor games) to write poems that are full of the sounds of the games, practicing the use of onomatopoeia.

[Connecting with Young Adult Authors through Writing](#) (S-C) This activity guides teens in reaching out to authors of books they love by composing personal letters or connecting to authors through their websites or blogs. To share these and other resources from the [Learning Beyond the Classroom](#) site, visit [The Importance of Reading and Writing Beyond the Classroom](#) page for a link to a printable flyer you can send home with students and share with others in your educational community.

[In the News](#)

[Eye on Curriculum](#)

Do mixed-ability classrooms benefit all students? A Connecticut middle school that mixed low- and high-achieving students rather than tracking them into separate classes found struggling students improved their behavior and earned better grades. Some high-achieving students said they weren't being challenged. A plan to expand the pilot drew parent opposition. [The New York Times](#) (6/14)

Low-income students suffer greater summer-learning losses. As the school year ends, a Washington Post story looks into "the summer brain drain" that leaves some students playing catch-up when the new school year begins. Experts say middle-class students improve their reading skills over the summer while their poorer peers suffer a setback of between two and three months. Across income levels, student math skills suffer the most over the summer months. [The Washington Post](#) (6/15)

New Jersey to study personalized learning plans. The New Jersey Department of Education is testing individual student-learning plans at 16 middle and high schools. Starting in the fall, every sixth- and ninth-grader will get a personalized plan with academic, career and personal goals. The results at the schools will help educators determine whether to implement the program statewide beginning in the sixth grade. [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (6/10)

2 Dallas magnets top Newsweek's annual high-school ranking. Two Dallas magnet programs -- one for gifted students and the other for those interested in science and engineering -- led Newsweek's [annual list of top U.S. high schools](#). The ranking of 1,500 public schools divides the number of students who take Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Cambridge tests by the number of seniors graduating, an approach that has prompted criticism as well as [an explanation](#) from the Washington Post columnist who designed the ranking system. [The Dallas Morning News](#) (6/10)

Report: N.J., Iowa and Wisconsin lead U.S. graduation rates. New Jersey, Iowa and Wisconsin lead the nation with [graduation rates](#) of more than 80%, while fewer than half of students in Nevada and Washington, D.C., graduate on time, according to Education Week's annual [Diplomas Count report](#), released today. Some individual districts, including Cincinnati schools, won recognition for graduating far more students than their demographics would predict. [NorthJersey.com \(Hackensack, N.J.\)](#) (6/9), [The Cincinnati Enquirer](#) (6/9), [The Washington Post](#) (6/9)

[Learning and Teaching](#)

Will \$125,000 teacher salaries make a successful school? A new New York City charter school for disadvantaged students that is offering \$125,000 salaries to its eight teachers prompted a Teacher Leaders Network discussion of the merits of such a model. While some were enthusiastic about the idea, others questioned whether top educators would be able to collaborate well or

whether skimping on other areas -- such as administration -- would cause problems. [Teacher Magazine](#) (free registration) (6/10)

Game can predict kindergarten success. Kindergartners who are able to listen, take direction and remember instructions in a short self-regulation game performed better in reading, vocabulary and math than their peers who performed poorly in the game, a new [study](#) found. "The evidence strongly suggests that improving self-regulation is directly related to academic achievement and behavior," said a researcher. [ScienceDaily](#) (6/9)

Professional Leadership

California's oldest principal says children haven't changed much. After 64 years as an educator, Sacramento Principal Virginia Grabbe, 84, is retiring this summer after receiving a preliminary layoff notice and deciding to retire instead. "I fell in love with it," Grabbe said of teaching her first class in 1945. "It's been that way ever since." [The Sacramento Bee \(Calif.\)](#) (6/12)

Fla. district will assign elementary-school students to multiple teachers. A well-regarded Florida district next year will expand a departmentalization program that assigns elementary-school students to different teachers for instruction in various subjects. School administrators say parts of the program were implemented this year at 72 schools and were received well, but some parents oppose the plan and say they've received too little information about it. [Sun-Sentinel \(Fort Lauderdale, Fla.\)](#) (6/8)

Duncan: Merit pay makes sense. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan says that teacher pay should be linked to student achievement, but says test scores should not be the only factor. Duncan, who is using stimulus dollars to force the matter, says teachers should be involved with crafting merit pay systems. [Yahoo!/The Associated Press](#) (6/8)

Assistant-secretary pick nearly rounds out Obama's education team. Thelma Melendez de Santa Ana, 50, who leads a California school district, is Education Secretary Arne Duncan's choice for assistant secretary for K-12 education and is awaiting Senate confirmation. Despite a learning curve for her new job, "she is going to understand, walking in the door, the issues," said Tim Quinn, who manages alumni-support services for the Broad Superintendents Academy, which trained Melendez. [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of EdWeek.org\)](#) (6/10)

Technology

Will free digital textbooks become national model? California's exploration of open-source digital textbooks could prompt other states to try similar measures. Such an approach would keep materials more current, proponents say, but some question the anticipated cost savings, particularly in the short term, and schools' ability to ensure equal access to students without computers at home. [San Francisco Chronicle/The Associated Press](#) (6/10), [ABC News](#) (6/14)

Student-tracking system may become national model. Montgomery County, Md., high-school senior Duane Wilson credits an automatic tracking system that sent his mother notes when he started getting D's with ensuring he got into college. The high-tech data system and others like it

could be coming soon to schools around the country as states pledge to implement such technology to become eligible for education stimulus funds. [The Wall Street Journal](#) (6/12)

Web site allows students to anonymously report bullying. Hillsborough County, Fla., officials will soon launch a Web site that allows students who are afraid to bring up bullying to anonymously report incidents. A school board member said the goal is to bring these incidents to the forefront to help students. [The Tampa Tribune \(Fla.\)](#) (6/10)

Policy Watch

Duncan offers \$350 million for national assessments. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan says the Obama administration will spend \$350 million to help states develop common, national education standards. Forty-six states already have committed to establishing national standards, and Duncan said Sunday the federal funds would help officials create new student tests based on common standards. [The News & Observer \(Raleigh, N.C.\)](#) (6/15) , [USA TODAY/The Associated Press](#) (6/14) , [The Washington Post/The Associated Press](#) (6/15)

Arizona bill would fine district for ethnic-based classes. Arizona's state schools chief wants to ban Tucson schools from teaching ethnicity-based courses. A bill to go before the state Legislature would reduce the district's state funding 10% for every month it continues to offer the classes, which teach academic subjects with an ethnic focus. [Arizona Daily Star \(Tucson\)](#) (6/13), [The Arizona Republic \(Phoenix\)](#) (6/13)

Schools scramble to keep up with demand for free lunches. With record numbers of students getting free and reduced-price lunches, many U.S. districts are struggling to keep up with demand. While the cost to districts averages \$2.92 per free lunch, schools receive just \$2.57 in federal reimbursement, according to the School Nutrition Association. Some states pitch in extra, but many schools are stretching budgets to make up the difference. [USA TODAY](#) (6/11), [USA TODAY](#) (6/11)

Advocates to press Congress for healthier school lunches: As Congress prepares to consider reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act, some nutrition advocates plan to ask for higher lunch-reimbursement rates, a broader selection of federally provided commodities and guidelines that encourage healthier options. Currently, the law encourages cheap, easily prepared foods that appeal to students, something health experts say leads to childhood obesity and poor long-term eating habits. [Chicago Tribune](#) (6/11)

Lawmaker: Deficits may mean dialing back reform expectations. Massive state deficits are threatening state and local plans to use education stimulus funds for reforms, says Rep. David Obey, a Wisconsin Democrat who oversees education funding. Obey told Education Secretary Arne Duncan that schools "face a devastating storm just in terms of economic conditions." He added: "It's legitimate to question whether it's realistic to ask them to also implement dramatic new reforms." [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of EdWeek.org\)](#) (6/10)

Opinion: Put NCLB out of its misery. Seven years after No Child Behind, little evidence indicates it has improved student achievement or closed the racial gap, said former Assistant U.S. Education Secretary Diane Ravitch, who now is a research professor of education. Rather than simply

tweaking the law, the Obama administration should kill NCLB, she says. [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of EdWeek.org\)](#) (6/10)

Parent feels that longer school year offers time for innovative classes. Year-round classes give students time to work on interdisciplinary projects and learn other valuable skills such as CPR, swimming, art and music, writes parent and reporter Brigid Schulte. She praises the Obama administration's push to extend the school year, writing that the extra classes are far more valuable to students' futures than traditional summer activities. [The Washington Post](#) (6/7)

In the Field

Educators: Fun summer reading may motivate students. More educators and librarians are encouraging students to pick up fun summer reading rather than classic novels and other literary works. The approach is meant to encourage reading and may help children develop a love for it, they say. [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#) (6/14)

Observant teacher helped homeless teen stay on track. Despite being homeless, Minneapolis student Valencia McMurray graduated last week with help from an Advanced Placement history teacher who noticed her absences. The district's homeless liaison, Elizabeth Hinz, helps train Minneapolis educators and staff to be aware of signs of homelessness such as a disheveled appearance or hanging out in secluded parts of the school building. [Minnesota Public Radio](#) (6/11)

Personal-finance class prepares teens for life after graduation. A New York high school is teaching its juniors and seniors about college loans, buying a car and other personal-finance topics as part of a semester-long course required for graduation. The course's teachers incorporate student input into lesson plans and try to focus on issues that teens will encounter soon after graduation. [Newsday \(Long Island, N.Y.\)](#) (6/8)

Study shows multiple benefits of naps for young children. Daytime naps for children ages 4 and 5 can help reduce hyperactivity, anxiety and depression, according to a small study of 62 children. Researchers said they have not found the ideal age for children to give up napping. [Yahoo!/HealthDay News](#) (6/8)

Summer Travel Ideas

Travel abroad within 60 miles of home

Wishing you could travel the world? You can, without the expense and aggravation of long flights, delays, or scheduling problems. New York City's five boroughs are "the world in a city." Russia, China, Japan, Indonesia, Lebanon, Greece, Morocco...wherever you've thought of going, there's a neighborhood to explore in NYC! One third of the millions of immigrants that came through Ellis Island settled in New York, arriving from over 200 countries.

Dreamed of going to Russia someday? Pick a warm sunny day and drive west on the Belt Parkway to Brighton Beach in Brooklyn. Walk along Brighton Beach Avenue where you can taste, smell and hear the Russian presence. Stop at **M & I international** or **Taste of Russia** to buy Russian imports like smoked fish and caviar, cheeses, sausages, and chocolates, or sample prepared foods like chicken Kiev, pierogi and blintzes. Walk into **Black Sea Bookstore** to find Russian language books, or

Mosvideofilm to listen to Russian music CDs and videos. Take a stroll on the boardwalk one block south. Sit outside at **Volna** or **Tatiana** to eat a Russian lunch of borscht , Herring under a Fur Coat (herring, eggs, carrots, beets and mayo) and goluptsi (cabbage rolls). You'll feel like you're in the Russian seaport of Odessa!

Have you imagined yourself in China? Choose one of three Chinas: Brooklyn's Chinatown in Sunset Park, Manhattan's Chinatown, or the largest one in Flushing, Queens. All three have markets selling everything from paper lanterns to miniature Buddhas to rice crackers. The best place to be awestruck is the bi-level **Pearl River Mart** on Canal Street, just west of Chinatown, Manhattan. Afterward, visit the unique **Museum of Chinese in the Americas (MoCA)** on the corner of Mulberry and Bayard, then head for Chinatown's very best dim sum restaurant, Jing Fong Banquet Hall on Elizabeth Street. www.chinatown-online.com.

Has Greece piqued your curiosity? Astoria, Queens is still a thriving Greek community as well as a "united nations" neighborhood. Sandwiched between Greek stores are dozens of businesses from Brazil, Morocco, Bangladesh, Egypt, and more. Park at the municipal lot on Broadway and 31st Street and walk up 31st to **St. Demetrius Church** to view the beautiful domed sanctuary. Stop at **Greek House Foods**, an old-fashioned Greek grocery on 30th Avenue, to see a dozen kinds of feta cheese, colossal olives, creamy yogurts and dolmas (stuffed grape leaves). Snack nearby at **Yaya's Bakery** on their famous spanakopitas, sugar doughnuts and baklava. Spend the rest of the day "being Greek" or go to the fascinating **Museum of the Moving Image** or the beautiful **Isamu Noguchi Museum** nearby.

Got Italy on your mind? Say "arreederci" to the diminishing Italian communities of Little Italy in Manhattan and Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. Both neighborhoods are being usurped by bordering Asian communities in the oft-repeated immigrant pattern of migration to bigger, greener spaces, thus allowing room for the group on the next lower rung of the socio-economic ladder to move up and in. Or head for the Bronx with a big cooler and a bigger appetite. Spend the morning at the **Bronx Zoo or Botanical Gardens** and then drive 5 minutes to the thriving Italian Arthur Avenue. The **Arthur Avenue Retail Market** is a sight to behold, with delectable salamis, cheeses, sauces, and produce.

Is Japan on your travel wish list? Visit the serene **Japan Society** on East 47th St. and then eat a sushi lunch at **Megu**, next door. Are you curious about India? Jackson Heights, Queens is your destination. For a vivid picture of the immigrant experience and a memorable tour, visit the **Tenement Museum**, at 97 Orchard Street, LES. Go to **Russ and Daughters**, **Guss' Pickles** and/or **Yonah Shimmel's Knish Bakery** for a true Jewish eating adventure.

Submitted by Pat Sommerstad

NYC Neighborhood Walking Tour Websites

www.bigonion.com Tours of ethnic neighborhoods.

www.foodsofny.com Food-tasting and cultural walking tours.

www.newyorktalksandwalks.com. Lower East Side, Brooklyn Bridge

www.noshwalks.com Culinary tours of New York.

www.nyctours.com Walking tours focus on neighborhood history.

www.walkingnyctours.com Gotham Walking tours. #5 in popularity

[A Light Touch](#)

Increase your vocabulary! Summer is a great time to learn a few new words with which to impress your colleagues and students at the start of school in September. Find more at wordsmith.org. Here are some examples:

Decuman (DEK-yoo-muhn), *adjective*: Very large. From the Latin *decumanus*, variant of *decimanus* (of the tenth), from *decimus* (tenth), from *decem* (ten). The word was often applied to waves from the belief that every tenth wave is greater than the others. A related word is [decimate](#) and a *dean* is, literally speaking, a chief of ten.

"The lover whose soul shaken is in some decuman billow of bliss." Francis Thompson; *The Way of a Maid*; c. 1890.

Ancient medical practitioners believed that a healthy body had a balance of four essential fluids, also known as humors (from Latin *humere*: to be wet, which also gave us the word *humid*). Those humors were blood, yellow bile (aka *cholera*), black bile, and phlegm. Each humor was associated with a season and an element (air, water, fire, and earth). An imbalance of humors was thought to cause a change in temperament or worse. Thankfully, we have come a long way from that theory about the human body. We no longer use that method to diagnose people's conditions, though the terms live on in the language by being used as metaphors. One example is:

Choleric (KAHL-uhr-ik), *adjective*: Easily irritated or angered; hot-tempered. From the Latin *cholericus*, from Greek *cholericos*, from *chole* (bile). Ultimately from the Indo-European root *ghel-* (to shine) that is also the source of words such as *yellow*, *gold*, *glimmer*, *gloaming*, *glimpse*, *glass*, *arsenic*, and *cholera*.

"In every choleric outburst from Sir Alan, every lifted eyebrow and pursed lip from his lieutenants, the subtext is clear." Libby Purves; *The Apprentice*; *The Daily Telegraph* (London, UK); Jun 6, 2009.

Trammel (TRAM-uhl) *noun*: 1. Something that limits or hinders. 2. A fishing net having three layers. 3. An instrument for drawing ellipses. 4. A shackle used in training a horse to amble. 5. An instrument for gauging and aligning parts of a machine. 6. A hook for hanging a pot or a kettle over a fire. *verb tr.*: To restrain; to hinder. From Old French *tramaill*, from Latin *tremaculum*, from *tres* (three) + *macula* (mesh). Ultimately from the Indo-European root *trei-* (three) that's also the source of such words as *three*, *testify* (to be the third person: to bear witness), and [triskaidekaphobia](#) (fear of the number 13).

"John Singleton, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. spokesman, said [the ban on cigarette sales at Boston drugstores and on college campuses] does trammel on businesses' right to sell what they want to sell." Stephen Smith; *Hub Seeks More Bans on Tobacco*; *The Boston Globe*; Sep 4, 2008.

Grig *noun*: 1. A cricket or grasshopper. 2. A small or young eel. 3. A lively or lighthearted person. The word is often used in the phrase "merry as a grig". The word is of uncertain origin, though various theories have been suggested, such as a corruption of "merry as a cricket" or "merry as a Greek", as in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*: "Then she's a merry Greek indeed."

"When all is reversed and we shall be like the insane, to whom the antics of the sane seem the crazy twistings of a grig." EB White; *Removal*; 1938.

"I walked into my local branch of Boots the Chemists as merry as a grig, with a twinkle in my eye and an annoying whistle on my lips." *The Weasel*; *Independent* (London, UK); Jun 8, 1996.

Growler *noun*: 1. One that growls. 2. A container (as a pail or pitcher) brought by a customer to fetch beer. 3. A small iceberg. 4. A four-wheeled cab. 5. An electromagnetic device for testing short-circuited coils. From growl, from Middle English groule, grollen (to rumble), probably of imitative origin.

"The two-story building will feature a to-go bar on the first floor for beer aficionados to buy and fill growlers." Rachael Fisher; Brewing Company on the Move; The Anchorage Daily News (Alaska).

“Society is composed of two great classes: those who have more dinners than appetite, and those who have more appetite than dinners.”

-Sebastien-Roch-Nicolas de Chamfort, writer (1741-1794)