

ReAD

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Issues are published every month except for December-January and June-August combined issues. For more information, please contact Sandi Kurbiel at skurbiel@nycap.rr.com. (Above image from GoogleImages)

Don't forget, now you can become a friend to NYSRA on Facebook! Have you?
Thanks to all who contributed their time and expertise to our issue this month!

Inside: [NYSRA & Legislative News](#) by Sandi Kurbiel; [NYSED News](#) by Kristen Driskill; & [Literacy News/Links of Interest](#) by Sandi Kurbiel

[NYSRA and Legislative News](#)

A Message from Thea Yurkewecz, our NYSRA President:

The New York State Reading Association (NYSRA) recognizes that this is a difficult time for our community. Thank you to all the educators and the parents/caregivers who are working incredibly hard to provide instruction remotely. We have been working to uphold the mission of our organization and support our members during this time.

In an effort to support our local councils, teachers, parents/caregivers, and students, we collected a list of resources from our members:

<https://www.nysreading.org/DistanceLearningResources>

We hope the recommended external sites will provide some guidance for the continuity of distance learning during this time. Is there a resource not on our list you would recommend? Let us know and we will add it:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeXjiAflPoVw423YO6FGN3ZCixqmIyImMhxDUZDZ4DOmAnAcg/viewform>

The March Board of Directors and Assembly of Delegates meeting was held on March 20th and 21st. In order to accommodate the health and safety of attendees we quickly shifted to a virtual meeting. There was an overwhelming number of participants who joined us online. We appreciate everyone's dedication to our organization, especially during this time.

We still plan to hold our Leadership meeting on May 29th & 30th. During this time of uncertainty, we do not yet know if this meeting will be held face-to-face or virtually. We plan to make this final choice by the end of April. Until that time, our executive board members are planning for both scenarios. We want to remain consistent with the dates originally planned in order to not add further disruption to everyone's schedules.

The digital literacy is working behind the scenes to transition our current website to new software. After much deliberation and research, we have chosen a new website hosting platform to accommodate our membership database and support online conference registration. I would like to extend my deep appreciation to Kathleen (Kay) Gormley. Kay has put in endless amounts of time and energy into the digital literacy committee. She has facilitated multiple transitions in technology to better serve the needs of our organization and supported us all as the liaison to our current website. On behalf of NYSRA, I would like to thank you for her leadership as she transitions away from her role on this committee.

Please contact our organization if you need any further assistance, and be sure to take care of yourself and your loved ones.

Past President Insights

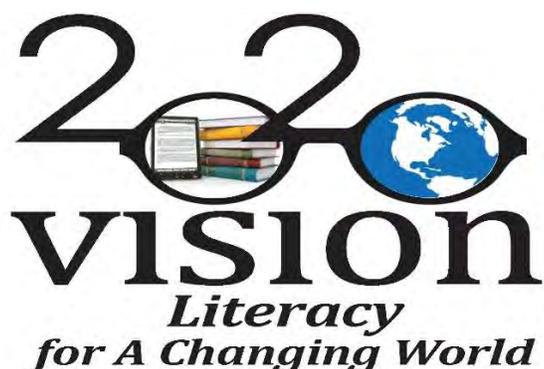
by Sharon Kelly

The Nominating Committee delivered their slate of officers to the Assembly of Delegates meeting. They elected to vote Keith Newvine in as Vice President, and here are the officers for July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021:

President -Mary Miller
Past President -Thea Yurkewecz
President Elect – Kirsten Smith
Vice President – Keith Newvine
Treasurer – Larry Kline
Secretary – Darlene Mergendahl

I am going to be helping Amy Merrill, Chair of the Charlotte Award, out on the **Charlotte Award Ballot 2020**. Because of the state of the United States and schools teaching time, we have decided to move the voting on the current ballot to April 15, 2021. Once we are back at school, I hope that you will start exploring the books that are at your teaching level with your students. Also, encourage your media specialist to acquire the books so the books can be shared among our teaching colleagues. Here is the link for the Charlotte Award 2021 ballot so that you can check the books now: <https://www.nysreading.org/content/nysra-charlotte-award-2021> .

2020 NYSRA CONFERENCE UPDATE



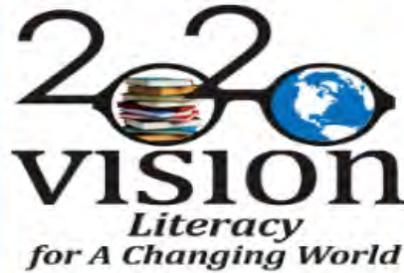
The NYSRA Conference 2020 Committee is proud to announce we will be holding a pre-conference community event in partnership with the **STRONG Museum of Play on Wednesday, 11/11/2020.**

All conference attendees will be offered a discounted admission for Wednesday, Thursday or Friday.

With November 11th being Veteran's Day, mark your calendars now and plan on arriving early, enjoy the day or the afternoon at the STRONG and then join us for the pre-conference training sessions at the Hyatt!

SAVE THE DATE!

Hyatt Regency
Rochester
Rochester, NY



November 11-13,
2020



53rd Annual NYSRA Conference

Keynote Speakers:

Penny Kittle, Cornelius Minor and Pam Allyn

Featured speakers confirmed to date:

Julie Corio, Kate Eagan Cunningham, Timothy Rasinski, Kate Roberts, Kathy Hinchman, and NYSED Curriculum Office Representative

the strong
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF PLAY

Join us for our community event in partnership with The Strong Museum of Play on Wednesday, 11/11/20.

All conference attendees will receive a discounted admission rate to the Strong Museum Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

<https://www.nysreading.org/>



#NYSReading

powered by

 **PIKTOCHART**

NYSRA Charlotte Award

by Judy Ehrensbeck

The 2023 Charlotte Committee is seeking members to review books and recommend them for the ballot. The ballot consists of four categories: primary, intermediate, middle school, and high school. Interested NYSRA members please contact Committee Chair Judy Ehrensbeck (judy@ehrensbeck.com) for more information.

NYSRA Charlotte Committee Member Guidelines

1. The committee member must be a member of good standing in the New York State Reading Association.
2. The committee member must submit a letter of interest describing why he/she should be chosen for the committee.
3. NYSRA's Board of Directors must approve the committee member.
4. The committee member must be willing to commit several hours weekly to reading and reviewing books submitted for the Charlotte Award and maintain records of the work he/she has completed.
5. The committee member must maintain ongoing communication with the award chairperson.
6. The committee member must be willing to participate in meetings (both Charlotte and NYSRA Delegate Meetings) either in person, or via internet.
7. The committee member must be willing to be a part of a team presentation at NYSRA's annual conference.
8. The committee member must work well with others.
9. Committee members must promote Charlotte throughout their regions by creating presentations and collaborating with schools (both public and private), libraries, teacher centers, preschools, bookstores, or presenting at their local reading councils.
10. It is encouraged for committee members to obtain thoughts/reviews of book submissions not only from their own interpretations, but also through the interpretations of a child of the appropriate age/grade level.
11. All books received by the committee members may be kept by the member or donated, but may never be sold for any amount. Members will be asked to donate books for NYSRA events such as the Silent Auction at conference.
12. A committee member or the chairperson may serve for only three consecutive ballots.



Accepting Applications Now!

NYSRA AWARDS 2020

The New York State Reading Association offers 11 amazing awards to its members. Please check out the awards packet on our website or email below for details.

Applications will now be accepted through 8/1/2020. For more information or questions:

NYSRAawards@gmail.com

NYSRA Awards Information Packet 2020

by Kirsten Burke Smith

NYSRA Vice President, 2019-2020

Do you know someone who is deserving of recognition for promoting or supporting literacy? Does your local council have noteworthy initiatives, or individuals that have helped boost membership, participation, or great programming? Do you promote diversity in your literacy instruction? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, please consider applying for a NYSRA award or mini-grant.

Applications are now being accepted for the New York State Reading Association 2020 awards cycle. There are eleven incredible honors offered to members of NYSRA. The awards and mini-grants are designed to encompass a variety of members for their contribution to literacy in their schools, communities, or state-wide. There are grants for educators, community service leaders, graduate students, local literacy advocates, council initiatives, etc.

This year, applications must be emailed to NYSRAAwards@gmail.com for consideration.

The deadline for applications is now August 1, 2020. Please also feel free to use this email for information on awards, questions you might have, etc.

College Reading Educators (CRE) of NYSRA

Did you know that NYSRA also has teaching resources for educators at the *collegiate* level? Here is a segment from their website:

“CRE is largely based online through our list-serv where members share resources, updates, job postings, and other relevant information for teacher educators. CRE convenes annually at the NYSRA Conference to review business, legislation, trends, needs, and the like. We also host a session at the annual NYSRA conference where presenters focus specifically on items related to literacy teacher-education at the collegiate level.”

Check out the link above for more information, and please contact Keith Newvine at konewvine@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Advocacy News, April 2020 BOD

by Barbara Vokatis, Ph.D.
NYSRA Advocacy Chair

COVID-19 Outbreak

As the COVID-19 outbreak resulted in suspending K-12 school operation, school districts are trying to provide alternative ways of supporting students academically during this time. To help K-12 teachers incorporate remote learning during this time of emergency, SUNY Oneonta created a special website to provide this support. The website is <http://remoteEd.org/>. The website has weekly events to help teachers, leaders, and schools stay connected and support one another.

Dyslexia Legislation

Link that includes the currently used definition of dyslexia:

<https://www.medicinenet.com/dyslexia/article.htm>

Both senate and assembly bills made it to the respective education committee and have remained there. We continue to encourage members to comment to their local legislators before the bill is introduced and voted in in the New York State.

Link to the proposed legislation:

https://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?default_fld=&leg_video=&bn=A08697&term=2019&Summary=Y&Actions=Y&Committee%26nbspVotes=Y&Floor%26nbspVotes=Y&Memo=Y&Text=Y

Link to the site listing assemblymen and senators:

<https://www.aqeny.org/find-your-new-york-state-legislators/>

The following points discussed in Dr. Donna Scanlon's presentation on this topic at the NYSRA conference in November 2019 could be considered in comments to legislators. Dr. Donna Scanlon is a professor at the University at Albany and Director of Child Research and Study Center. Her research focuses on children who experience substantial difficulty in learning to read and on how to prevent and remediate these difficulties. She also leads "Early Literacy Leaders" (ELL) group. Currently, she considers a collaboration with NYSRA to write a letter to our legislators for consideration in connection to the proposed legislation.

The points on dyslexia legislation to consider:

- While dyslexia is defined as a disability with a neurobiological origin, it is impossible to determine whether a child's reading difficulty is neurobiological or not (everything we do is neurobiological in origin – the question is whether the difficulties some children experience is due to underlying neurobiological differences or to experiential/instructional differences) .
- Word reading difficulties can occur for a variety of reasons, such as limited understanding of the workings of the alphabetic code, limited engagement in meaning making while reading, or limited oral language.
- Dyslexia screening is already required by many states, but there is no broadly accepted way to identify someone as being at risk for or being dyslexic. In the research literature there is not a clear distinction between reading difficulties and dyslexia. The terms are used interchangeably.
- While there is no broadly accepted way to identify someone with dyslexia, the dyslexia legislation suggests that multi-sensory sequential phonics is the approach to choose for intervention. However, there is no evidence this approach is superior to other approaches to intervention for word reading difficulties. Research shows that improving in phonics skills alone does not result in improving comprehension (Torgesen et al., 2007).
- There are also potential risks associated with identifying children as as dyslexic: lowered expectations and reduced sense of efficacy.

Further resources to consider regarding dyslexia legislation:

- A podcast interview Dr. Scanlon recorded several months ago: <https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/interview-dr-donna-scanlon-dyslexia-reading-difficulties/id1448225801?i=1000444024572>
- A link to a recording of Joe Elliot's (first author of The Dyslexia Debate) talk for ACARC from September 2019 (<https://vimeo.com/364608773/4b7d8db0c7>) – which is a powerful commentary on where things currently stand relative to dyslexia legislation and what we should be advocating for.
- It is also recommended to read the book by Elena Grigorenko entitled *The Dyslexia Debate*.

New York State Education News

by Kristen Driskill

NYSED Contributing Editor

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response

As you know, New York State is in a state of emergency regarding the outbreak of COVID-19. Both K-12 and higher education institutions across the state have been closed; on March 27th Governor Cuomo announced they will remain closed until April 14th. NYSED has developed a website dedicated to providing information and guidance for P-12 schools, colleges, and universities, which you can access [here](#).

Here are other updates regarding the current crisis:

- [2020 Elementary- and Intermediate-Level State Assessments are Suspended for the Remainder of the School Year](#)
This applies to the grades 3-8 ELA and Math assessments, Grade 4 and 8 Science assessments, NYSESLAT, and NYSAA for grades 3-8.
- [The College Board has Provided a Few Options for Students Taking AP Exams](#)
Students can take a 45-minute online free-response exam, they have access to free resources up until the exam date, and if already registered for an exam they can choose to cancel at no charge.
- [There is Now a "Learn-at-Home" Program Available in Partnership with NYSED and 9 Public Television Stations](#)
As of March 23rd, students in grades pre-K through 12 have access to educational programming on PBS stations. Programming for grades Pre-k-4 will be on one station, and programming for grades 5-12 will be on another. They can be viewed for free over-the-air with an antenna or cable.
- [NYSED has Released Guidance for Parents Regarding COVID-19](#)
which was last updated March 27th.
[NYSED has also Released Guidance for Schools in Response to COVID-19](#),
which was last updated March 18th. Earlier in March, NYSED released guidance for [colleges and universities](#) as well.

As a parent and an educator in a teacher preparation program, I am so humbled to be part of such an amazing profession. Teachers across the state have moved so quickly to ensure a continuity of learning for students. They are making themselves available not only for students' academic needs, but social-emotional needs as well. I have also seen educators continue to be amazing mentors for teacher candidates while juggling the additional tasks of now teaching online. I am so proud of the work we are all doing!

Literacy News and Links of Interest

by Sandi Kurbiel

ReAD Editor

Federal Resources for Educators

Find federal resources and information for educators re: the COVID-19 outbreak situation.

NYS Center for School Health

Find many COVID-19 and other physical and mental health-related resources for both educators and students here.

Affordable Internet Service

Find help for the many students who cannot currently afford the internet services necessary to correspond with schools and online learning.

Resources for Learning at Home

Find some resources from *Reading Rockets* for the many students who are now at home.

Online Reading and Writing Apps

Find a list of 17 online reading and writing apps recommended by ILA's *ReadWriteThink* website.

April is National Poetry Month

Find a calendar of noteworthy April dates listed above, and here for poetry resources:

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/calendar-activities/april-national-poetry-month-20478.html>