

Dear NYS TESOL,

The year-end frenzy has begun, and we whirl with it as we prepare for the last day of classes, review for finals and NYS Regents exams, schedule students for rooms, ensure that ELL accommodations are in place, set up a plan for scheduling conflicts for students who must take two exams on the same day, enter the correct codes for the Fall and Spring 2015 semesters, and so on . . . These are just a few of the many activities happening as this President's letter is being written. By now, your eyes have gone from rubric to essay and to rubric again. Yes, it's the middle of June once again.

Another school year has flown by. How have we grown, what has been different, what will the summer bring?

This has been a year of much activity with regard to our ELLs, and I'd like to commend and thank our Associate Commissioner of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies, Angelica Infante-Green, for many new initiatives. First of all, the Blueprint for ELL Success is a document we celebrate! I urge you to share it enthusiastically with all your colleagues, department chairs, and building and district leaders. For so long, among ourselves, we have said such things as, "The second-grade teacher spends more time with the ELLs than I do, so she is an ESL teacher, whether she knows it or not, whether she's prepared for it or not, or whether she likes it or not." We can replace "second-grade teacher" with science, math, English, or history teacher—who may not even spend more than 43 minutes daily with ELLs, but who needs appropriate tools to reach them. This first principle of the Blueprint—All teachers are teachers of English language learners—is one that will be welcomed by all educators who care about connecting with ELLs in their classes. Our work is to support the implementation of the eight principles as best we can. For me, that first principle is paramount and fundamental to the seven others. We are **all** teachers of ELLs, for they are **all our** students, and perhaps the largest growing population of students in our public schools today.

This is an exciting time, one that brings us back full circle as we read about the latest linguistic, educational, and psychological research data in the media showing that young children fare better when their home language is used in early educational programs. Parents of monolingual English speaking children are signing their babies up for foreign language immersion programs like never before. The New York State Seal of Biliteracy for our high school graduates is another great milestone reached and being piloted this year.

Forty years ago in California, a group of Chinese-speaking families got together and spoke up for their rights to a curriculum that was accessible and meaningful to their children. That became known as the landmark lawsuit of *Lau v Nichols* (1974), a decision stating that students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education. In recognition of the 40th anniversary of this landmark legislation, we are planning a commemorative event with NYSABE and other like-minded organizations this fall. Watch out for more news of this event!

I thank the Executive Board for all their hard work and unwavering support of NYS TESOL. We are planning other events with NYSABE throughout the state next year, and I am most excited about them. Together, both organizations' voices are louder. United, we can all work toward full implementation of the Blueprint for ELL Success. I look

forward to seeing you all at our Annual Conference in Albany on November 14 and 15, 2014.

Wishing you each a summer of renewal, reflection, and relaxation . . . and listening to your inner voice.

Yours in NYS TESOL,

Susanne

Susanne Marcus

June 16, 2014