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Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to share Volume II of *Educator's Voice*, NYSUT's journal of best practices in education.

Building on the foundation of early literacy that was explored in Volume I, this issue will help educators in the intermediate and middle levels guide learners to understand the demands of more intensive and complex reading of fiction, non-fiction and specific subject content reading. The fourth-grade slump is not just a catch phrase. By the fourth grade, students must be agile, independent readers who are able to understand and retain texts and visual content. It is indeed the transitional time of shifting from "learning to read" to "reading to learn."

This issue contains research-based practices developed by NYSUT members who are helping to close the achievement gap in reading comprehension from grades 4 to 8. You will find practices to use in language arts classrooms, with English language learners and special education students. You will learn about professional development activities that lead to teachers fostering discussion that leads to increased comprehension.

Both of NYSUT's national affiliates, the American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association, have identified improving student literacy as an essential key to educational reform in our nation's schools.

Our challenge in New York is to work collaboratively and build systems to share expert knowledge in our schools. This journal provides you with classroom practices educators have found helpful as they seek to help their students understand more of what they read in their daily lives.

Enjoy this issue of *Educator's Voice*. We welcome your comments and ideas for future publications.

Sincerely,



Maria Neira
Vice President, NYSUT