Tennessee Principal

Journal of the Tennessee Principals Association

Inside Winter 2014 Issue:

- *NAESP 2014 In Nashville*
- *PARCC Testing*
- *E-Rate 2.0*

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Contents
Winter 2014

Volume XXV
Winter 2014

On the Cover

Tennessee Principals Have a Voice through our state and national organizations. Pictured on the cover with the two senators from our great state are members of the Tennessee delegation. From left are Janice, Tankson, TPA president; Ernie Bentley, Executive Director; Sharon McNary, NAESP state rep; Sen. Alexander; Teresa Dennis, former NAESP state rep; Sen. Corker; Nancy Meador, NAESP president; and Brian Partin, Zone 4 director.

Editor's Page

Catherine Prentis

Principal, Retired

Email: c1prentis@gmail.com

Dear Friends:

This edition of the TPA Journal is coming to you at a slightly different time of the year. I take responsibility for the delay, but hope that since it didn't land on your desk during the hectic holidays, you will take the time to study it carefully.

Sometimes we overlook the advertisments, but this time, I hope you will take the time to look at what is there. Our Executive Director, Dr. Ernie Bentley, takes pride in recruiting the top educational corporations to work with our organization and enhance our programs for our members. In return for their involvement, they are provided advertising space to share their products with you. In other words, a company cannot simply buy an ad in this Journal. They must be committed to our Tennessee Schools as much as we are to be invited to run an ad.

We continue to bring you information from a variety of sources that I believe will help you stay informed during these ever changing times. Inside you will see research and the latest updates on everything from social-emotional learning to the E-rate. I hope you find these topics useful and of interest. Please remember that we are also very interested in your own research and discoveries. If you are implementing something in your school that you feel would be of interest to your colleagues across the state, please send me an email with your idea. Also, many of you are finishing your doctorates and have some great dissertation topics. A brief on what your research turned up will also be welcomed for publication consideration.

Because we have a growing group of retired members, I (being one of those) invite you to tell us the "rest of your story" about what you are currently working on. I know there is a risk that I could get a bunch of annedotes on knitting projects and pictures of grandchildren, but I also know that plenty of you are still heavily involved in the education field and your experiences will be of interest to others. Think about it. You could be the inspiration that others need to continue to grow and explore their options as they support our mighty profession.

Tennessee Principals Have a Voice through our state and national organizations. With the president of NAESP, Nancy Meador, from Tennessee this year, and our Zone 4 director of the NAESP Board, Brian Partin, a former TPA president also in Washington, we have a unique opportunity to impact education on the national level. Please plan to attend the national convention of the NAESP this July in NASHVILLE and see what else we can do to ensure that our profession remains strong. I look forward to seeing you in Nashville in July. It is definitely the place to be--make plans NOW! Registration information is on the NAESP website at naesp.org.

Find Us On The Web At www.tnprinassoc.org

Message from the President

Dr. Janice Tankson

2013-14 TPA President

Principal - Levi Elementary School

Email: tanksonjv@scsk12.org

On behalf of the entire TPA Board of Directors, I want to thank each of you who took time out of your busy schedules to attend the our annual conference in Pigeon Forge in December. At the same time, I am sorry that some of you missed this rich opportunity to gain valuable professional development and to network with your fellow principals from across the state. It is our sincere hope that in the future you will consider making this event a permanent part of your fall agenda. I assure you that you will return home with many valuable lessons and memories.

During this time of the year, recruiting and renewing membership to the organization is very important. The Grand Division Directors, ambassadors, and the executive board members have worked diligently to spread the news of the many benefits that come with belonging to an organization that is FOR PRINCIPALS. In our recent brochure entitled, What's in it for you?, affirms the many advantages of being a Tennessee Principals Association (TPA) Member. TPA provides its members ideas from others across the state who work in comparable environments. In addition, TPA offers opportunities for principals to get involved by writing articles for publication in the Tennessee Principals Journal. Furthermore, TPA believes in staying on the cutting edge of educational leadership by providing focused and data-driven professional development annually. TPA also gives its members a robust safety net by providing liability insurance in partnership with NAESP for K-8 members and legal assistance whenever needed. These are just abbreviated examples of what the organization makes available to its members.

However, with membership comes many responsibilities and we need YOU this summer! Tennessee will be the host state for the 2014 NAESP Conference which will be held in Nashville, TN on July 10-12, 2014 at the Gaylord Orpyland Resort Hotel. We are honored because our very own Dr. Nancy Meador from Nashville, TN is the NAESP President this year. We want to paint the Music City with principals from across the state to show our support. So mark your calendar early, and we look forward to seeing you there. I promise, it will be a time in your professional career that you will never forget.

Hope to see you there,

Dr. Janice Tankson

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20 Things Every Tennessee Teacher Should Know about the PARCC Assessment

PARCC stands for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career. A partnership of 18 states and the District of Columbia, PARCC is developing math and English language arts / literacy assessments in grades 3-11. Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, the PARCC math and English language arts assessments (ELA) will replace the Achievement and End of Course math and ELA assessments as part of the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP).

PARCC is still in the design process. Test blueprints have been developed and released and the first round of items has been developed and reviewed by educators in Tennessee. Tennessee, along with other PARCC states, will participate in a field test of these items during spring, 2014. As with the field test for all TCAP assessments, the PARCC field test will help the consortia make final decisions about the design and scoring of the assessments. With Tennessee's strong support, PARCC is committed to creating high quality tests that will be improved over time based on results and feedback from all of the member states.

Based on the design of tests as of October 2013, here are 20 things every Tennessee teacher should know about PARCC:

1) Tennesseans helped build PARCC. Tennessee is a governing state in PARCC and Tennessee educators from K-12 schools and from institutions of higher education have participated in the design of PARCC and reviewed items for content and for bias and sensitivity. Together with other states, we are building the PARCC assessments.

2) The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) will include the PARCC Assessments in grades 3-11 in Math and English Language Arts / Literacy. Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, the PARCC assessments will replace the Achievement and End of Course tests for math and English language arts (ELA) as part of the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). We will continue to have Achievement and End of Course exams in science and social studies as part of TCAP.

3) Participating in PARCC will allow Tennesseans to see how our state performs and grows over time in math and English language arts / literacy compared to other PARCC states. Right now, with each state developing its own tests, there is no way to know how our students' growth and performance compares with our neighbor's performance or pace of growth. Working with other states to develop and administer PARCC will allow us to see how our students' achievement level and pace of growth compares to other PARCC states every year and will allow us to learn from others.

4) The PARCC assessments will be given in two separate windows during the year: a Performance-Based Assessment Component in February or March and an End of Year Assessment Component in April. There will be a block schedule administration available for both the Performance-Based Assessment and the End of Year Assessment (which will be called the End of Course Component in high school) in the fall and winter. Unlike the Achievement and End of Course math and reading assessments, not all of the testing will happen at the end of the course or year.

5) Students' final scores will reflect their performance on both the Performance Based Assessment and the End of Year Assessment. The Performance Based Assessment will include all of the questions that students have to perform a task not just pick an answer – for example, write an essay or create a model. The Performance Based Assessment has three parts ELA/Literacy and two parts math. The End of Year Assessment has two parts math, two parts ELA/Literacy. The final student score will be based on performance across all the components (students will not get a different score for each component).

This list represents the best information about the PARCC assessment as of October 2013. As is true of any assessment design process, there may be changes to the PARCC design informed by ongoing feedback and the field test.

6) Sixty percent of the PARCC ELA / literacy assessment will involve writing. Unlike previous assessments that chiefly assess ELA through multiple choice questions, writing will be a key element of PARCC. You can learn about the three writing task types in more detail and see sample items here.

7) More than 60 percent of the math questions will focus on the math standards that have been identified as the "major work of the grade" (as outlined in the PARCC Model Content Frameworks – see here). Unlike the Achievement and End of Course math assessments, with small number of items on every State Performance Indicator (SPI), there will be more questions on certain standards on the PARCC math assessment. Students who do well with the major work of the grade in math will do well on PARCC.

8) The PARCC math and ELA / literacy assessments will include many different types of questions. There will be questions that ask students to do something – these are typically called constructed response questions. All constructed response questions will part of the the Performance Based Assessment window to allow for hand scoring by the end of the year. There will also be multiple choice questions and interactive technology questions – questions that require students to drag and drop items or type an answer where no choices are given or select from many options. All of these questions will be able to be scored automatically. The End of Year component will only include questions that are automatically scored.

9) Constructed response and writing questions will be hand-scored by trained reviewers. Reviewers will go through in-depth training on how to use the rubric, similar to the training on our current writing assessment, to ensure fairness and consistency. Multiple reviewers will score each assessment, and a third reviewer will examine student scores if there is a discrepancy in the scoring. This scoring process is a similar approach to the scoring of the writing assessments students have taken for many years.

10) There will be accommodations and accessibility features that allow all students to have the support they need to do well on PARCC. Unless a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines that the student will participate in the portfolio assessment, he or she will participate in the new PARCC assessment. PARCC is being designed to be accessible for all students other than those taking the Portfolio assessment (the MAAS assessment will no longer be administered beginning in the 2014-15 school year.) Students with disabilities will be able to use accommodations specific to the PARCC assessment chosen by their IEP teams. More information about these accommodations can be found here.

11) The PARCC portion of TCAP will be administered online, and there will be a paper-pencil back up option at first. Not all students will take the PARCC tests at the same time, as typically has been the case with the Achievement and End of Course paper-pencil assessments. Groups of students will cycle through different test parts during a window of several weeks and return to class and continue learning throughout the window. Students will only work on assessments for a few days within the testing window.

12) There will not be questions on the ELA/Literacy assessments that test grammar in isolation; grammar will be assessed through students' writing. On PARCC, grammar is assessed solely through writing. There will not be stand-alone multiple choice questions assessing grammar.

13) All passages on the ELA/Literacy parts will come from an authentic text. The PARCC passage selection guidelines state: "The texts students encounter on tests should be worthy of careful attention, be content rich and challenging, and exhibit professional published quality." Unlike previous assessment passages, written for the purpose of the test, PARCC will feature only previously published texts.

14) Multiple-choice and selected-response questions on the ELA/Literacy Assessments will focus on reading and vocabulary. All multiple-choice questions will be based on a text and require students to provide evidence to

This list represents the best information about the PARCC assessment as of October 2013. As is true of any assessment design process, there may be changes to the PARCC design informed by ongoing feedback and the field test.

support their answer. Additionally, vocabulary questions will focus on meaning as presented in the text. Students will not be expected to have prior knowledge of the subject or content of the text.

15) Tennessee will offer the PARCC high school level math assessments for both the traditional course sequence (Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II) and for the integrated course sequence (Math I, Math II and Math III). Unlike the previous End of Course offerings which only followed the traditional sequence with Algebra I and Algebra II tested, PARCC will offer the full suite of assessments for both traditional and integrated courses. Click here for more information on the mathematics pathways.

16) Students will get partial credit for some questions in math. On some of the constructed response math questions, students can receive partial credit if they demonstrate understanding of a concept. Students will need to generate a precise and accurate answer in order to earn full point value.

Continued on pg. 32

The Common Core State Standards – Myth vs. Fact

Myth: The Common Core is a "federal mandate."

Fact: The Common Core State Standards are part of a state-led effort to give all students the real world skills and knowledge they need to succeed. The standards were not developed by the federal government, and individual states choose whether or not to adopt these standards. Tennessee chose to set higher expectations for students by first adopting higher standards in 2008 and then adopting the Common Core State Standards in 2010. Our state's policymakers, legislators, business leaders, and parents were concerned that Tennessee's students did not have the skills and knowledge needed for success in the workforce. In today's economy, competition for jobs comes not just from across town but from across the country.

Myth: The Common Core is a curriculum.

Fact: Tennessee's Common Core State Standards set goals for what students should know in each grade, but they are *not* a curriculum. Local school districts will continue to customize and choose their own curriculum and textbooks in order to best prepare their students for success. If the standards represent the finish line or final destination, the curriculum represents the different paths that can be taken to get there.

Myth: The Common Core is a "dumbing down" of Tennessee's standards.

Fact: The Common Core State Standards are more rigorous than Tennessee's old standards, focusing on more critical thinking and problem solving, which are the real world skills that students need upon graduation. In addition, Tennessee's new standards focus on a deeper understanding of materials, not just basic memorization and test-taking skills.

Myth: Tennesseans do not support the Common Core State Standards.

Fact: In a statewide opinion poll commissioned by the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) in May 2013, 76 percent of voters supported the Common Core State Standards after hearing just a brief statement about them. To date, more than 220 organizations across Tennessee, representing hundreds of thousands of Tennesseans, have joined the *Expect More, Achieve More Coalition*. This group believes high expectations for students, through the Common Core State Standards, are critical to our state's future.

Myth: The Common Core will mean that personal, identifiable information about a student will be shared with the federal government.

Fact: Common Core is not a tool for federal data collection and it does not authorize student data sharing between states or with the federal government. The federal government can only collect aggregate-level student data and is prohibited from reporting information that would make it possible to identify an individual student.

Personal, identifiable information about an individual student is protected under the federal privacy law known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy ACT or FERPA. New FERPA regulations established in 2008 and 2011 were direct responses to state requests for clarification regarding the role of the state in using student data while maintaining privacy protections. The new regulations provided a clearer interpretation of the original legislation to help states better understand and fulfill their role in protecting data.

Myth: The Common Core is the first step toward nationalizing education.

Fact: The Common Core does not impact an individual state's control over its public education system. Tennessee's Constitution makes it clear that it is the state's responsibility to maintain and support the public education system. Tennessee chose to set higher expectations for students by first adopting higher standards in 2008 and then adopting the Common Core State Standards in 2010. Local school districts will continue to customize and choose their own curriculum and textbooks in order to best prepare their students for success.

Myth: The Common Core is a "threat to academic freedom."

Fact: The Common Core gives teachers more freedom than they have had in the past. The new standards are clear and focused, allowing teachers to explore important topics in depth with students, rather than skimming the surface of numerous topics and spending time preparing them for tests. With fewer standards to teach in each subject, teachers can now spend more class time devoted to making sure every student understands the material.

Myth: With the Common Core, students will no longer be reading The Great Gatsby or *works by Mark Twain.*

Fact: With the Common Core State Standards teachers will continue to teach literary classics, as they always have. The Common Core enhances that material with added emphasis on informational text (the Gettysburg Address, for example), because research shows that the old standards required students to read little informational text in school. In addition, reading for the workplace and education beyond high school is often based on informational and non-fiction texts.

A State-by-State look at Top Ed-tech Initiatives

By Laura Devaney, Managing Editor, @eSN_Laura

Sometimes, an ed-tech initiative grabs national headlines. Other times, a technology initiative quietly spreads throughout a school building or district as it connects teachers with mentors, helps administrators become more efficient, or boosts student achievement and engagement.

Here, we've compiled a list of one ed-tech initiative in each state and the District of Columbia, to offer a look at some of the great technology advocacy and work being done around the nation.

The initiatives included here are not necessarily the most-discussed or the biggest in a given state. Sometimes they're small, and sometimes they're well-known. Some relate to the use of digital content, some support broadband expansion, and in others, states have formed groups to better support administrators and teachers as they work tirelessly to advocate for ed-tech's crucial role in today's classrooms.

But each initiative, resource, or program, no matter the size of its scope, is a promising ed-tech practice that serves to demonstrate just how powerful ed-tech is.

Editors Note: The initiatives listed here are for the states in Zone 4 which seem to most relate to our own state of Tennessee.

Tennessee: A report from Connected Tennessee, a local broadband consortium that advocates for eLearning, shows that online learning helps students become comfortable with technology early on, which helps them better prepare for college and careers. Data from the report shows that 55 percent of parents said their children use home internet for schoolwork, 60 percent said their children use the internet in school, and 39 percent of rural Tennessee internet users said they took classes online or researched schoolwork online.

Alabama: First introduced in 2002, the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) expands teachers' access to professional development, in-school support, and important technology. The two-year AMSTI program focuses on boosting student achievement through teacher strategies involving hands-on, inquiry-based instruction. Technology to deliver this instruction plays an important role. A study that took place in five separate parts of the state, Evaluation of the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative, evaluated 82 schools, 780 teachers, and 30,000 students to determine the program's effects on student achievement.
Overall, AMSTI teachers and students have access to more than $68 million worth of equipment and materials. This includes high-tech devices such as DNA replicators, SPARK Science Learning Systems, and more, at the high school level.

Arkansas: The EAST Initiative, which focuses on environmental and spatial technology, is an educational model featuring student-directed community service projects accomplished with teamwork and technology. Students work to identify problems and then use real-world, professional technologies to solve those problems in the classroom. The initiative focuses on critical thinking, collaboration, and college- and career-readiness

Florida: Each of Miami-Dade's 350,000 public school students will have access to a mobile learning device by 2015, according to a groundbreaking plan approved by the Miami-Dade School Board, which governs the nation's fourth largest school system. The $63 million initiative, among the largest in the country, aims to provide devices such as laptops or tablets for students from kindergarten through 12th grade who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford them.

Georgia: The Georgia STEM initiative seeks to empower students to become innovators and technologically-proficient problem solvers. It also aims to take learning outside of the classroom walls by extending and enhancing learning experiences through technology.

Kentucky: Encyclomedia is an internet-based comprehensive learning service offered free to Kentucky public schools through a partnership between Kentucky Education Television and the Kentucky Department of Education. It offers teachers and students more than 4,000 videos, 40,000 video clips, and thousands of digital images, all searchable by key word, content area, grade level, and Kentucky academic standards.

Mississippi: This statewide initiative aims to expand broadband access across the state, especially to rural areas and those where students are in need of reliable, high-speed connections.

Missouri: While now a national initiative with multiple partnerships, eMints began in Missouri. It changes how teachers teach and students learn, and eMINTS National Center programs were developed in collaboration with the University of Missouri, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Missouri Department of Higher Education.

North Carolina: The Mooresville Graded School District has captured headlines for months in the wake of Superintendent Mark Edwards being named National

PARCC Approves Testing Policies for English-Language Learners

PARCC has posted online the materials on accommodations for English-language learners and common-core testing that it made available to its governing board.

A group of states designing common assessments to measure how well students have mastered the Common Core State Standards has given its first round of approval to a series of test supports to help English-language learners and students with disabilities demonstrate what they've learned.

The Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, or PARCC—made up of 22 states—agreed on what will be a "first edition" of the accommodations and accessibility policies that will be field-tested with student test-takers in the 2013-14 school year.

Every state but Colorado voted to support the first edition, and that state's objections centered almost entirely on the recommendation that a "read aloud" accommodation be allowed for certain students with disabilities.

For English-learners, PARCC's policy urges that any decisions about accommodations for such students be made by more than one individual, and may include English-as-a-second-language and bilingual teachers, content-area teachers, guidance counselors, principals, parents, and students, among others. These same stakeholders should also decide on and assign accommodations to English-learners early in the academic year or upon enrollment, the recommendations say, and no student should encounter an accommodation for the first time on test day.

The policy also call for accommodations to be available to ELLs, in large measure, by the level of their language proficiency. Students at beginning levels of proficiency, for example, can have test directions "clarified" by a test administrator in their native language for both the math and English/language arts tests, though that accommodation is not recommended for ELLs with advanced proficiency. Beginning ELLs will also be allowed to have their oral answers transcribed to text on the math common assessment.

Written word-to-word translations from English to a student's native language are recommended for ELLs with intermediate and advanced proficiency levels. PARCC did not recommend this accommodation for beginning ELLs. The accommodations manual states that students at the lowest levels of proficiency generally benefit more from oral supports than written ones. Extended time will also be available to all ELLs, regardless of proficiency.

A major issue that PARCC must address, along with Smarter Balanced, the other assessment consortia, is getting member states to agree on a common definition of who an English-language learner is and more universal criteria for determining when ELLs have reached proficiency in the language.

That effort also involves the two groups of states working together to create new English-language proficiency tests that will measure the language demands of the common core.

The thorniest accommodation for ELLs has not been addressed yet by PARCC states: Native language translations of assessments. With member states like Arizona—an "English-only" state—and New York—which provides assessments in multiple languages—PARCC staff members said that issue will be more difficult to resolve.

Superintendent of the Year by the American Association of School Administrators. Under Edwards' leadership, all students in grades 4-12 are provided with a laptop for 24/7 use. Technology is supported with comprehensive professional development for teachers, and the number of district students who move on to college has increased from 74 percent to 88 percent.

South Carolina: South Carolina's Coalition for Mathematics & Science brings together advocates from business/industry, education, government and community organizations to serve as an active proponent for economic and workforce development through STEM. SCCMS partners with S²TEM Centers SC, a nonprofit K-12 STEM education group, and other organizations pursuing goals consistent with its vision for STEM education

Virginia: The Games, Animation, Modeling and Simulation (GAMeS) Lab at Radford University designs interactive mobile games and study the impact of these products on student engagement and learning. With funding from the National Science Foundation and the Virginia Department of Education, the GAMeS Lab designs and implements Standards of Learning (SOLs) aligned games for participating schools in rural, southwestern Virginia. In addition, the GAMeS Lab collaborates with participating teachers to determine how best to integrate these games within the existing curricula.

Will New Common Standards Mean Less Teaching To The Test?

A view from another state: BY JOHN O'CONNOR
One of the big questions as Florida and 44 other states transition to new education standards and new tests over the next few years is how much time will teachers have to spend teaching to the test?

Teachers complain that they can only spend classroom time on items which will appear on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. In addition, another complaint is that class time is used to teach kids how to take a test rather than imparting more important knowledge. Common Core is a set of shared education standards which outlines what students should know in math and English language arts at the end of each grade. Advocates say the standards emphasize critical thinking skills over memorization.

Here's how Hillsborough County's elementary math supervisor Lia Crawford explained how "teaching to the test" will change with Common Core during a summer training session:

"If you guys continue to have your students (be) really deep thinkers and problem-solvers, the test won't be an issue. The problem comes in when our assessment doesn't match and line up to our instruction. And so that's what we need to start thinking about.

"Once we know that they're assessing students on 'X,' we as teachers have always known how do we better prepare our students for that. So that's really critical that we are modeling those types of strategy on selecting effective responses based on the question and not just a number.

"Think about when we teach testing strategies to kids – and Cynthia brought up the multiple-choice. We always teach kids to eliminate wrong answers, correct? I did it. "Well now they're changing it. They're saying there's multiple correct answers. So if a student gets hung up on 'there's always one,' once they pick the first one what are they going to do? They're done. They're going to go to the next question.

"So if you refer that back to your instruction and you start bringing those as part of your regular talking with kids through things, then you're now starting to put a bug in their ear, saying 'Wait, yesterday she gave us a problem where we thought there was one answer, but then when we stopped and thought about it we could justify that there was multiple answers.'

"So once kids start thinking that way, it doesn't matter whether I'm teaching math. It doesn't matter whether I'm teaching reading, whether I'm teaching science. That strategy applies regardless of the setting you're in. So that's really important."Some believe Crawford's description is overly optimistic. The National Center for Fair and Open Testing, or FairTest, is a leading critic of the current use of standardized exams. FairTest argues that two new Common Core-tied exams under development will still rely heavily on multiple-choice questions.

One of the tests, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, will be administered during at least two rounds of testing. The first round will be administered near the end of February. These tests will require students to perform tasks to answer questions in an attempt to measure higher-order thinking and analytical skills. The second round of testing will be given about 90 percent of the way through the school year. Test designers say this round of exams will be scored by a computer so states will receive results more quickly. Most of the questions will have objective right-or-wrong — multiplechoice — answers. "Heavy reliance on such items continues to promote rote teaching and learning," FairTest said.

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E-rate 2.0 Proposal Outline

ConnectEd – President Obama' K-12 Broadband Initiative

ConnectED is President Obama's bold new initiative to bring high speed Internet access to 99% of our nation's students within five years. This ambitious goal is certainly within reach, but it will require creative solutions and hard work. Note that in a Funds For Learning® survey released last October, only 10% of schools described their current communications networks as ready for the future[1]. Obviously, much work needs to be done.

With a Few Modifications, the FCC's E-rate Program Provides the Means to Achieve the President's Goal

Fortunately, a well-oiled, time-tested FCC program already exists that is perfectly suited to answer the President's challenge. Since 1998, that program, commonly called "E-rate," has provided much of the funding to connect our nation's schools. To help the President achieve his ConnectED goal, all the FCC has to do is slightly modify it. The following three adjustments are the only changes necessary:

1. Increase annual E-rate funding to $4.5 billion permanently, with an ongoing adjustment for inflation. Increasing the amount of funding allows more applicants to enhance their network connectivity.

2. Restore the original technology-neutral E-rate framework by removing the "Priority System" funding cap. Restoring technology-neutral funding priorities gives applicants the flexibility to choose the most cost-effective solutions that they conclude they need to meet their own unique, local needs.

3. Place reasonable limits on the annual amount of E-rate discounts available to any single applicant. Placing limits on the total discounts available to individual applicants encourages thoughtful, cost-effective decision making, stops large-spending applicants from creating dramatic, annual funding shortages, and helps to ensure that E-rate discounts are applied to the eligible goods and services that each applicant needs the most.

These three changes can be implemented relatively quickly, with only minor tweaks to the E-rate program's existing successful structure. Significantly, no changes would be required to the current E-rate discount rate matrix, eligible services list, or application process. Every applicant will benefit from:

- more manageable budgeting, more predictability, and faster E-rate funding decisions.
- the ability to spend E-rate discounts at any of their educational facilities on whatever E-rate eligible services and equipment they decide meets their specific needs -- including internal connections.
- incentives to seek the most cost-effective services and submit accurate funding requests

The Key E-rate Modification Required

Under the current priority funding cap system, most applicants receive no E-rate funding for wireless infrastructure or any other type of internal connection. Soon, because of skyrocketing demand, many applicants will be shut out from telecomm and Internet funding too. Replacing the priority funding cap system with a discount budget calculation that places a reasonable limit on funding requests is the key element of the E-rate 2.0 proposal.

Total funding requests for school districts would be capped. This annual limit, based on a Per Student spending limit and Budget Floor set by the FCC, would vary for each school district. Additionally, the maximum annual discount received by remote rural applicants would be doubled to account for their higher costs.[2]

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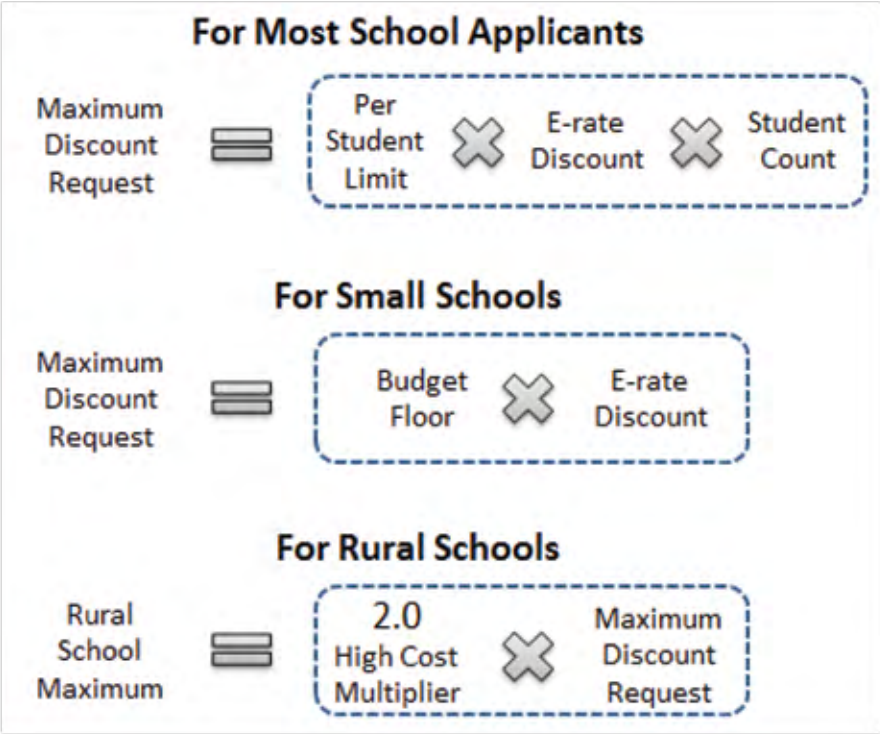
[1] See http://www.fundsforlearning.com/docs/2012/10/FY2012 FFL E-rate Survey 2012-10-08.pdf

[2] See http://www.fundsforlearning.com/docs/2013/07/FY2013 20P1 School Demand Analysis 2013-07-03.pdf (page 21)



If, for example, the FCC were to set the Per Student Budget Factor at $115, a number that "works" in this context, this would allow a school district with 4,000 students and a discount rate of 60% the opportunity to request as much as $276,000 in annual E-rate discounts [$115 x 4,000 students x 60% discount rate]. Similarly, if the FCC were to set the Budget Floor at $40,000, this would allow a small rural school district with 11 students and a 90% discount rate to request as much as $72,000 in annual E-rate discounts [$40,000 x 90% discount rate x 2.0 high cost multiplier]. NOTE: in both cases, the school district would still be required to submit its E-rate applications and to pay its portion of each bill just as it currently does.

Under the E-rate 2.0 proposal, an estimated 87% of applicants would qualify in FY2014 for total E-rate discounts that were equal to or greater than their FY2013 telecommunications and Internet funding requests combined. Furthermore and unlike today, 100% of applicants would enjoy greater freedom and flexibility to use their discounts on any service or equipment that the FCC included on its eligibility list and, in addition, have them delivered to any eligible building in their systems that they decide needs it. These are a few of the reasons why Miami-Dade Superintendent Anthony Carvalho is on record in support of these changes[3].

The E-rate Reform Coalition is a group of stakeholders with a single common interest: providing the E-rate Program with the framework it needs in the short term to help it connect 99% of America's students with broadband within 5 years and for continued success long thereafter.

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[3] See http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7022127287

NAESP 2013 National Conference

The 2013 NAESP Conference in Baltimore last July held many exciting moments for attendees. From the opening session, through the keynotes and special quests, such as Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, to top authors, such as Todd Whitaker and James Patterson, particpants were not disappointed. Our own TPA president, Janice Tankson, was there to polish her skills as a principal. Maybe she was also focused of picking up pointers to help make the 2014 conference in NASHVILLE the best one yet!

Principals helped build city school new playground

One hundred principals partnered with NAESP and Landscape Structures to build an inclusive playground for students of all abilities at John Ruhrah Elementary-Middle School in southeast Baltimore.

For the past several years, the principals have kicked off their annual conference with a community service project. They hope the new playground will provide students with a fun way to get and stay physically fit.

“We know as educators that when you take care of the physical, that certainly helps the mental and academic, and we hope the structure of this playground and the children using it for years to come will benefit them academically, as well,” said Nancy Meador, a principal from Nashville.

Two Tennessee principals were on hand to help. Brian Partin, left, the new NAESP Zone 4 Director and Right, Nancy Meador, NAESP President showed up in their work clothes to be a part of the effort.

2013 NAESP Conference Revisited

NAESP Foundation Features Author James Patterson at Fundraiser to Benefit Student Leadership

The New York Times best-selling author wants to shine a light on literacy

The NAESP Foundation hosted a fundraiser to benefit student leadership programs, and promote literacy, leadership development, and community service. The fundraiser, Jeans & Jerseys, was held in Baltimore on July 10 in conjunction with the National Associations of Elementary School Principals' (NAESP) Best Practices for Better Schools™ National Conference and Expo of the Year.

Education and youth literacy advocates were invited to attend a fundraiser featuring a silent auction, live music, and an address and book signing by best-selling author James Patterson. For the past decade, Patterson has been championing youth literacy, spreading the message that we all have a responsibility to get kids reading. "It is our job as parents to get our kids reading, and to help our educators as much as we can in this fight for our kids' futures," Patterson said. "NAESP knows how important this fight is, and I'm proud to say we're allies in this battle. The stronger our kids are as readers, the stronger they'll be as students, as employees, and as citizens. I can't think of anything more worthwhile than arming our kids with the skills they'll need to succeed in life."

Best-selling author, James Patterson, spoke to principals during the fundraiser at the 2013 NAESP National Conference in Baltimore.

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NAESP Recognizes Distinguished Principals during National Principals Month

Sharon McNary Selected NDP From Tennessee

Sharon McNary, principal of Richland Elementary School in Memphis Tennessee, is the 2013 NAESP Distinguished Principal of the Year. Sharon served as TPA president in 2011 and is currently Tennessee's state representative to NAESP. Richland Elementary School is recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. We are all very proud of Sharon's accomplishments and grateful for her continued service to TPA/

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan provided congratulatory remarks to K-8 principal honorees.

ALEXANDRIA, VA–October 8, 2013–Outstanding elementary and middle school principals from across the nation and abroad have been named 2013 National Distinguished Principals (NDPs) by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). They were honored October 25 at an awards banquet in Washington, D.C., which has been generously funded by VALIC for nearly 25 years. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan delivered the opening address, honoring principals during National Principals Month.

Established in 1984, the two-day NDP program, which was held at the Capital Hilton Hotel, recognized public and private school principals who made superior contributions to their schools and communities. The principals also had the opportunity to share best practices. The 61 principal honorees are selected by NAESP state affiliates and by committees representing private and overseas schools.

NAESP Executive Director Gail Connelly commended the honorees for being exemplars of successful school leadership. "Only a principal can move a school from good to great, simultaneously championing children and uplifting the communities they serve," she said. "We congratulate this class of NDPs for their steadfast dedication to educating our nation's children to their fullest potential."

"VALIC is proud to continue its support as sole sponsor of the National Distinguished Principal's Award Program," said Bruce Abrams, President of VALIC. "This program allows us to recognize the important role of principals on the education and development of our nation's children, our future leaders. On behalf of VALIC, I congratulate all 61 of this year's National Distinguished Principals and extend my deepest thanks for all that they do."

It is particularly fitting to acknowledge the work of principals in October because it marks National Principals Month, which was established to recognize and honor the contributions of school principals and assistant principals toward the success of the nation's students, and encourage awareness of their significance.

While in Washington D. C. , the NDPs gathered for a panel discussion on instructional leadership with the U.S. Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Deb Delisle, and three top education policy experts: Chris Minnich (The Council of Chief State School Officers), Richard Laine (National Governors Association), and Jane West (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education). They also had the opportunity to listen to a leadership presentation from Colonel Art Athens, network with fellow NDPs, share mementos and stories from their schools and their states, and meet for a group photo in front of the White House

NOTE: A list of the 2013 NDPs and their biographical information can be accessed at www.naesp.org/ndp.

How Coaching Can Impact Teachers, Principals, and Students

Elena Aguilar Transformational Leadership Coach from Oakland, California

The following is an excerpt from my new book, The Art of Coaching: Effective Strategies for School Transformation. It offers a coaching framework and dozens of tools which can used by a range of educators. The following is from chapter one.

What Can Coaching Do for a School?

There's generally an agreement that educators need more knowledge, skills, practice, and support after they enter the profession. Malcolm Gladwell, the author of Outliers: The Story of Success (2008), calculates that it takes ten thousand hours of deliberate practice -- practice that promotes continuous improvement -- to master a complex skill. This translates into about seven years for those working in schools. The majority of teachers and principals want professional development; they want to improve their craft, be more effective, implement new skills, and see students learn more.

Opinions diverge as to what professional development, (PD) should look like. Traditionally, PD has taken the form of a three-day training, say in August before school starts, and then perhaps a couple of follow-up sessions throughout the year. This kind of PD by itself, which just about every teacher has experienced, rarely results in a significant change in teacher practice and rarely results in increased learning for children. According to a 2009 study on professional development, teachers need close to fifty hours of PD in a given area to improve their skills and their students' learning (Darling-Hammond and others, 2009). While the research on the ineffectiveness of "one-shot" PD continues to pile up, a search is under way for PD that might work...

Coaching is an essential component of an effective professional development program. Coaching can build will, skill, knowledge, and capacity because it can go where no other professional development has gone before: into the intellect, behaviors, practices, beliefs, values, and feelings of an educator. Coaching creates a relationship in which a client feels cared for and is therefore able to access and implement new knowledge. A coach can foster conditions in which deep reflection and learning can take place, where a teacher can take risks to change her practice, where powerful conversations can take place and where growth is recognized and celebrated. Finally, a coach holds a space where healing can take place and where resilient, joyful communities can be built.

When considering hiring a coach, principals often ask the following kinds of questions about the impact of coaching: What does the research say about how coaching can transform a school? Is there a model that is most effective? Is there evidence that coaching will result in increased student achievement?

As coaches, it is our responsibility to know what can be expected. We can't go into schools purporting to raise test scores by 50 percent in the first year. We need to articulate what we might be able to accomplish. Fortunately, there is a growing body of research indicating that coaching can help create the conditions necessary for instructional practices to change and student outcomes to improve. These are valuable data points for coaches to be aware of as they help direct the work we do; our work is not simply about working individually with teachers to improve their practice -- it must extend farther.

To date, the most thorough and comprehensive study on coaching was done in 2004 by the Annenberg Foundation for Education Reform. It reports a number of finding which offer powerful validation for coaching. First, the report concludes that effective coaching encourages collaborative, reflective practice. Coaching allows teachers to apply their learning more deeply, frequently, and consistently than teachers working alone. Coaching supports teachers to improve their capacity to reflect and apply their learning to their work with students and also in their work with each other.

A second finding from the Annenberg report is that effective embedded professional learning promotes positive cultural change. The conditions, behaviors, and practices required by an effective coaching program can affect the culture of a school or system, thus embedding instructional change within broader efforts to improve school-based culture and conditions.

Continued on pg. 32

A Teacher Perspective: Advice for Principals

By: Ben Johnson, HS Principal, Consultant, Author and Instructional Learning Coach

Being back in the classroom has given me a refreshed perspective. Below, I would like to share with administrators some helpful observations and suggestions that may improve your relationship with the teachers you serve.

Observation #1: Students are different than when we were students

Lesson learned: Teachers must either engage students at their level with interesting learning activities or fight the battle of wills to force them into compliance with worksheets and controllable activities. In the former, students will want to learn, in the latter, passive aggression will force the teacher to always watch his back and not trust students. In this situation, even good students will actively try to undermine the teacher.

Rather than tell the teacher he needs to work on his classroom management, help the teacher gain control of the classroom by being there and identifying and dealing with the ring leaders (you know who they are because they do the same in every class, but the teacher may not know that). All it takes is an extra pair of eyes to see that just a few instigators in the classroom can destroy an effective learning atmosphere.

Observation #2: Teachers need support with materials, textbooks, and technology

Lesson learned: Teachers can make do for a while without some things, but don't you want teachers to be as effective as possible from the start? Make sure that your teachers not only have the necessary tools, but that they are trained on how to use them best to instruct students and to manage their classroom, before you require them to produce with them. It may seem to you that teachers are whining and complaining about little things, but sometimes a little thing makes the difference and gives the teachers an edge on being able to reach the students more effectively.

Observation #3: Teachers are among the busiest people on the planet

Lesson learned: Teachers resent being pulled away from their daily work of improving their effectiveness as a teacher for trivial or unproductive reasons. For example, personal learning communities (PLCs) are not meetings called by administrators for administrator agendas. To be productive and to be valuable uses of time, PLCs must be teacher-driven and focused on resolving student-learning concerns through teacher capacity (for example, what do I as a teacher need to learn to help students learn better?) This also means that the teachers need a defender at the district office level who will protect their time from those who have forgotten how busy teachers are. You can do that for the teachers.

Observation #4: Teachers talk and are always trying to guess the direction of the principal

Lesson learned: Help the teachers out and just tell them what your direction is. Make it crystal clear in every newsletter, blog, faculty meeting, and message. If this is done well, teachers can actively help the school reach those goals. If you believe that teachers need to use cooperative learning, mind maps, or lesson framing, then help teachers by first stating that is what you want, and then focus training in faculty meetings on those things so teachers have a clear picture of your vision.

Observation #5: Teachers are asked to do a lot of extra things besides teach

Lesson Learned: Teachers know busy work when they see it. Make sure your requirements make sense and honor the teacher's time and efforts. Don't have a meeting just because it is on the calendar. Have the meeting to either train, discuss, or plan (all of which are essential things you need teachers help with) and not one to inform; that can be done with an email or newsletter.

Observation #6: Elective teachers have to fend for themselves next to content teachers

Lesson Learned: Elective teachers can help content teachers in significant ways by reinforcing what content teachers do especially in reading and writing. Don't ignore them.

Observation #7: Parents Are as Frustrated with Their Students as the Teachers Are

Lesson Learned: While we communicate with parents and enlist their help, we cannot count on all of them to be successful. Behaviorist principles work and must be applied in these situations -- stimulus and response. We do no favors by being lenient about established consequences.

Observation #8: Teachers Have Good Days and Rough Days

Lessons Learned: It makes a world of difference when the principal shares a kind thought, a smile, and a handshake.

Four Suggestions to Help You Lead by Relationships and Realize Your Vision

By Scott Taylor, Supt. Kenilworth Schools

Abraham Lincoln inspired me, like so many others, to lead by relationships. Donald T. Phillips (Lincoln on Leadership) and Doris Kearns Goodwin (Team of Rivals) describe that president as a kind, gentle and genuinely personable man for whom many subordinates deeply cared. He got close to his cabinet, his personal secretaries and his generals, and wasn't afraid to let them into his personal world.

But Lincoln never gave up his ideals. He made his vision clear to all and assertively redirected anyone he thought might take the country off his prescribed course. As a school administrator, it took me a while to lead in "the Lincoln way" (I have a very steep learning curve). I've been practicing educational leadership for 16 years in some of the highest performing schools in the country, but only recently recognized the importance of garnering the admiration of my faculty and administration team by developing deep personal and professional relationships with everyone. Like my favorite American president, I have tried hard to be nurturing, personable and caring while being clear and firm in the pursuit of my vision.

The key to building relationships that will strengthen an educational leader's vision is being highly accessible and spending quality time talking and listening to teachers and support staff. This might seem like old news to veteran educators, but with email and social networking as the prevailing ways of communication, it is worth reminding leaders that there is no substitute for pressing the flesh. Here are my four suggestions toward becoming a more effective leader.

1. Make the Rounds

Be a presence in schools each day. I make a point to start my morning in the hallways and then conduct my walks before the day gets ahead of me. Start the day in the office, and you're likely to end the day in the office (save for that weekly administration team meeting). An educational leader's work clock runs at least seven hours. How much time can one possibly spend in meetings and doing office paperwork? Just by cutting one to two hours out of my office day to spend a few minutes in each classroom and hallway of my small school district, I've learned more about the little (but often very important) things going on than I would have learned from email, phone calls or hearsay. Besides learning about the evolving culture of my schools, walking the hallways every day and being highly accessible has been key to showing everyone that I care about the school district at every level.

2. Open, Relaxed Conversation

Invite a school leader's cabinet to an early takeout dinner once per month. A conglomeration of parents and teachers sitting around Chinese food can lead to the same open, relaxed conversations we might have on the town soccer fields. A wonderful way to learn about what's really happening in the local community is to break bread (or egg rolls) in a casual setting on a regular basis.

3. Town Hall Accessibility

Hold vision town halls during which you share your short-, mid- and long-term goals in a conversation-style gathering. The meeting could be held in a classroom to set the context. You want to make it absolutely clear that your vision is all about children.

4. Establish a Satellite Office

I have a second, smaller office in another school district location. I took this cue from another American president, Woodrow Wilson, who heavily promoted a change in the way government operated by making frequent visits to Capitol Hill. He set up shop in the building's President's Room as often as three times per week to help him complete his work in the presence Congressional legislators. Wilson used the power of personality to engage the people on whom he depended to enact his proposals, and his satellite White House allowed for this engagement to happen naturally.

I once asked a very successful school district superintendent if it is possible for school leaders to be too visible. He told me that relationships are key to showing everyone that you care about them, their successes and their challenges. Relationships are key, he reminded me, to engendering trust and respect for the vision that you believe will help your school district "go world class."

How to Create Effective Homework

Based on a recent spate of articles on homework, it's clear that the homework wars — how much? how often? — are still topic of big interest to both parents and teachers. Some teachers hate to give homework; others see it as a vital necessity. But according to some research presented by Annie Murphy Paul, the question isn't how much, but whether the homework teachers do give actually advances learning.

"A recent study, published in the Economics of Education Review," Paul wrote in "How Can We Make Homework Worthwhile?", "reports that homework in science, English and history has 'little to no impact' on student test scores. (The authors did note a positive effect for math homework.)

"Enriching children's classroom learning requires making homework not shorter or longer, but smarter." Paul goes on to describe specific practices, like spaced repetition (in which information is presented and repeated spaced out over time), retrieval practice (testing or quizzing not for assessment, but to reinforce material learned), and cognitive disfluency ("desirable difficulties" used to make learning stick) — all memory/retrieval techniques that may help homework move beyond busy work and advance real learning.

But to get those elements to work, said Fires in the Mind author and speaker Kathleen Cushman, students must be motivated to do their homework in the first place. One example Cushman gave was creating a project so interesting and involved, students naturally wanted to keep working on it after the bell rang. She pointed to a chapter in the book where she describes a particular motivation for some high school students she interviewed, under the heading "Homework We Actually Want to Do":

"Christina and Nicholas both remembered a global studies unit on the French Revolution in which students acted out a courtroom trial of the king and queen. The project brought even routine homework assignments to life, they said. "I was the queen. So of course I wanted to do my homework all the time, so I could know the facts of what happened and what didn't happen, know what I wanted to say when someone tried to say I did this or that thing. I could say, 'Oh no, I didn't!' – because I'd read my homework," said Christina.

Christina was using a form of retrieval practice — but because it was so much fun to be the queen, she only knew she wanted to stay in character. The queen had to study the information to get it right.

Another way teachers can take a good, hard look at homework practices, said Cushman, is to ask themselves a few vital questions: "Does this homework ask each student to practice something that the student hasn't yet mastered? Does the student clearly see its purpose? When students are asked to repeat or rehearse something, does it require them to focus? Or can they do it without really paying attention?" If the homework meets these criteria, she said, then it falls into the desirable realm of "deliberate practice." Dan Bisaccio, former high school science teacher and now Director of Science Education at Brown University, said that after years of experience giving homework to high school students, he now "preaches" to his future teachers: "Homework should be practice and extensions of what happens in class and should not be 'new learning,'" he said. "That is, students [shouldn't be] having to teach themselves new content or skills."

He said he agreed with Cushman that motivation is key, and tried to design homework that kept students interested. "Teachers need to clue into what motivates their students, giving them something that they really want to complete, and complete well." One assignment Bisaccio used, called an "Experience Map," asked students to create a map of their experiences after a field study or other important project – a technique employing both retrieval practice and the somewhat trickier interleaving, a "desirable difficulty" in which problems of different types are presented in one assignment, making students think harder to come up with solutions and answers.

"We 'map' mentally and physically each day. It helps to keep us orientated through our frenzied sun-up to sun-down daily experiences," reads the assignment. Directions are to draw a field experience map, including — with regard to the class — where students have been, what they have done, new challenges, and insights. Special suggestions for drawing include "a place of danger, a favorite place, a place of power, a place with a secret." Students are also called upon to map the places where they learned the most, where they were challenged the most, and where the funniest experience happened.

In addition, Bisaccio asked students to write what had challenged them most as a learner, what had stretched their limits most — meant to be reflections just for students themselves, and asked to be kept on the back of the map. "What they wrote on the back was not shared with others," he said. Once the assignment was completed, maps were posted to form a class atlas of what they had learned.

All the examples included here, however, are examples of homework in a traditional classroom. What about homework in a flipped classroom, where the lectures, usually videos, are the homework? A recent New York Times article on flipped classrooms may provide insight into flipping homework on its head, too: it quoted high school senior Luwayne Harris, saying, "Whenever I had a problem on the homework, I couldn't do anything about it at home. Now if I have a problem with a video, I can just rewind and watch it over and over again."

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING
Teaching Your Students How to Have a Conversation

Dr. Allen Mendler Author, speaker, educator

I was recently in a third grade classroom and was struck by the presence of rules that were posted for how to have a conversation. The poster said, “Each person must contribute to the discussion but take turns talking. Ask each other, ‘Would you like to add to my idea?’ or ‘Can you tell us what you are thinking?’ Ask questions so that you understand each other’s ideas. Say, ‘Can you tell me more about that?’ or ‘Can you say that in another way?’”

Having visited many middle and high schools, I think these same rules could -- and probably should -- be posted there as well.

Maybe you have also observed how common it is nowadays for students to not know how to have a conversation. Perhaps this owes to a preponderance of talk shows in which people with different opinions rarely listen to each other, instead preferring to out-shout their opponent. Maybe it is due to changed dinner habits where more families are eating on the go rather than sitting down together and catching up on each other’s day. It could be about how texting and tweeting now trump talking and listening as today’s preferred forms of communication.

8 Tips for Speaking and Listening

While it is impossible to know all of the reasons, there is no doubt that learning to listen and talk is an extremely important way to broaden knowledge, enhance understanding and build community. Perhaps this is why the core standards in English-language arts include an important emphasis on developing speaking and listening, the basic tools for conversation. The eight tips below can be used regularly to help your kids learn good conversational skills.

1. Model a Good Conversation

Make a point of having one-to-two minute interactions, one-on-one, at least a few times each week with students who struggle conversationally. Share information about yourself as you might when meeting a friend or acquaintance, and show interest in the student by asking questions about his or her interests. Conversation enhancers include responses and prompts like:

- “Really?”
- “Wow!”
- “That’s interesting.”
- “No kidding!”

If these students don’t or won’t share easily at first, don’t give up.

2. Encourage Physical Cues

Identify procedures for having a conversation that includes appropriate non-verbal behavior. For example, you might teach a strategy like S.L.A.N.T. (Sit up straight. Listen. Answer and ask questions. Nod to show interest. Track the speaker.)

3. Challenge Put-Downs or Hurtful Comments

For example, if a student says, “I think what she did was really stupid,” challenge with “How else can you say that without being hurtful?” If the student seems unaware, teach an alternative like, “I disagree with that.” Ask the student to repeat what you said and then move on to:

- “What happened to make you feel that way?”
- “How would you have handled things differently?”
- “Do you think there is only right answer, or could there be more?”

4. Ask Open-Ended Questions

These are questions without one correct answer, questions that stimulate discussion and can be a very powerful way to reinforce the idea that there are different views of an issue, or a set of beliefs that can be equally valid. For example: “So if Columbus came knocking on your door and told you that sailing to the New World would be an amazing adventure and there might be lots of riches there, but you might never arrive because the world was flat, would you go?”

5. Put Thinking Ahead of Knowing

When asked a question, don’t accept “I don’t know.” Tell students that you don’t require them to “know” but that you do expect them to “think.” Teach them how to wonder aloud, speculate, guess or give the best answer they can. (“I’m not sure about that, but I think _____ .”)

6. Have Informal Chats

Before class begins or in the hallway, ask students about their other classes, what they think about a current event, or how they feel about the outcome of a game. Share your thoughts as well. (“I thought it was more that the Jets lost the game than anything the Eagles did to win. How did you see it?”)

7. Make Eye Contact

When a student is speaking in class and you are listening, give him or her your eye contact. However, gradually scan away from the speaker and direct your gaze and movement towards other students. This will often get the speaker to redirect his or her talk toward peers, and it invites peers to get and stay involved with what’s being said.

8. Encourage Turn-Taking

Use an object, such as a talking stick, as a signal for turn-taking. Teach your students that when they have the object, it is their turn to talk or pass while others are expected to listen.

Art Education

As we celebrate Arts in Education Week, it is fitting to point out the many benefits of arts education. Research has shown that the arts prepare students for success in school, work and life by boosting math and literacy achievement, developing creativity and critical thinking skills, strengthening perseverance, facilitating cross-cultural understanding and much, much more (the Arts Education Partnership has compiled a research bulletin with citations for these and other outcomes of arts education, if you would like more information).

Of course, there are other, more direct reasons to study the arts. As Teacher in a Strange Land Nancy Flanagan pointed out last year:

> I wonder why we feel compelled to defend music, art, dance and drama for their subsidiary benefits: enhanced brain development, spatial/visual/temporal processing, improving memory and attention, physical coordination, personal discipline and teamwork? … Kids should study music because it's central to every human society on earth and has a vitally important role in every aspect of culture, from history to literature to media and communication studies.

I would expand "music" to include the other arts. But I agree that the intrinsic value of the arts and their role in our daily lives and society -- and the importance of helping young people understand and appreciate that value and role -- should not be overlooked by educators. Yet in a time of tough budget choices, advocates must speak to the tangible benefits of arts education to ensure it remains (or in some places, becomes) a vital part of our public education system. One benefit which may prove particularly powerful in helping reprioritize arts education: Its potential to close the achievement gap.

The Achievement Gap

A 2012 report from the National Endowment for the Arts showed that, by nearly every indicator studied, a student from a low-socioeconomic (SES) background with a high-arts educational experience significantly outperformed peers from a low-arts, low-SES background, closing (and in some cases eliminating) the gap that often appears between low-SES students and their more advantaged peers.

The arts don't just impact standardized test scores, though the report does show, for example, that low-SES eighth grade students who have a history of high arts engagement have higher science and writing scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) than those who do not. Such high school students had better GPAs than their low-arts, low-SES peers (and in some instances, than all students). But I was more impressed with some of the other outcomes the study showed. Consider: High-arts, low-SES students were more likely to graduate than low-arts, low-SES students -- and all students: Only 4 percent of high-arts, low-SES students did not graduate from high school, compared to 22 percent of low-arts, low-SES students -- and 7 percent of students overall (though the latter difference does not appear to be statistically significant)

- High-arts, low-SES students were more likely to both attend and finish college than low-arts, low-SES students: 71 percent of high-arts, low-SES students attended college after high school, compared to 48 percent of low-arts, low-SES students; 18 percent of high-arts, low-SES students who started college achieved a bachelor's degree and 24 percent achieved an associate's degree, compared to 6 percent and 10 percent, respectively, of low-arts, low-SES students
- High-arts, low-SES students were more likely to register to vote than low-arts, low-SES students -- and all students: 78 percent of high-arts, low-SES students registered to vote, compared to 67 percent of low-arts, low-SES students -- and 76 percent of all students (though the latter difference was not statistically significant)

Of course, this report showed correlation, not causation, on all these results. Yet it is encouraging that the benefits of high-arts environments appear especially strong for disadvantaged students, offering a possible strategy that schools can use to address their achievement gaps.

The Opportunity Gap

Of course, arts education can't close the achievement gap if low-income students lack access to it. And unfortunately, U.S. Department of Education data suggests that an opportunity gap does exist, with low-income students less likely to have access to arts education than their higher-income peers.

In culling through the data, Erik Robelen of Education Week pointed out the differences in arts education available to students based on the wealth of their peers. Some discrepancies have improved over time -- for example, while currently 95 percent of low-poverty elementary schools offer weekly music instruction compared to

Does It Help Close The Gap?

93 percent of high-poverty elementary schools, just a decade ago the comparison was 95 percent to 82 percent. However, in other areas, low-income students are losing access to the arts. In the 1999-2000 school year, 100 percent of high-poverty secondary schools offered music, but just 81 percent did in the 2008-09 school year. Ninety-three percent of high-poverty secondary schools offered visual arts in 1999-2000; just 80 percent did in 2008-09. And dance and drama for all elementary school students have, to quote Robelen, “all but disappeared.”

Unaddressed in the data are issues of quality, though I might offer a guess based on some of the findings. For example, just 59 percent of high-poverty elementary schools have a dedicated room with special equipment as the primary space for visual arts instruction, compared to 76 percent of low-poverty elementary schools. It seems reasonable to assume that a school with a dedicated arts room can offer higher-quality lessons in painting, ceramics and the other visual arts than one where a teacher must carry supplies from room to room and perhaps lacks easy access to water for clean-up and adequate storage space for completed projects.

The overall message: Low-income students could benefit greatly from an arts-rich educational experience, but they are less likely to get it than their wealthier peers.

Daniel Pink, a proponent of Arts Education, also appeared at the 2013 NAESP convention

What Can Educators Do?

In addition to advocating for education in music, drama, dance and the visual arts for all students -- and for low-income students in particular -- educators can work to integrate the arts into their schools and classrooms. While arts integration is not a substitute for time spent studying the arts for arts sake, it has many benefits for all types of students, including increased student engagement and academic achievement.

For examples of schools that have successfully integrated the arts across the curriculum, consider Bates Middle School in Annapolis, Maryland, where a research-based approach to arts integration has help raise student achievement. And consider Woodrow Wilson School in Weehawken, New Jersey, an arts-integrated school that has been helping its low-income students outperform their peers across the state for years.

Individual educators can also work to integrate the arts into their classrooms. One resource: Susan Riley’s post on using arts integration to enhance the Common Core, which offers descriptions of specific strategies and sample lesson seeds to help teachers get started.

HOW DO VALUE-ADDED INDICATORS

A Meta-Analysis of Research on the Subject
by Douglas N. Harris, Associate Professor of Economics; Chair, Public Education, Tulane University

HIGHLIGHTS

- Value-added measures are positively related to almost all other commonly accepted measures of teacher performance such as principal evaluations and classroom observations.
- While policymakers should consider the validity and reliability of all their measures, we know more about value-added than others.
- The correlations appear fairly weak, but this is due primarily to lack of reliability in essentially all measures.
- The measures should yield different performance results because they are trying to measure different aspects of teaching, but they differ also because all have problems with validity and reliability.
- Using multiple measures can increase reliability; validity is also improved so long as the additional measures capture aspects of teaching we value.
- Once we have two or three performance measures, the costs of more measures for accountability may not be justified. But additional formative assessments of teachers may still be worthwhile to help these teachers improve.

In the recent drive to revamp teacher evaluation and accountability, measures of a teacher's value added have played the starring role. But the star of the show is not always the best actor, nor can the star succeed without a strong supporting cast. In assessing teacher performance, observations of classroom practice, portfolios of teachers' work, student learning objectives, and surveys of students are all possible additions to the mix.

All these measures vary in what aspect of teacher performance they measure. While teaching is broadly intended to help students live fulfilling lives, we must be more specific about the elements of performance that contribute to that goal – differentiating contributions to academic skills, for instance, from those that develop social skills. Once we have established what aspect of teaching we intend to capture, the measures differ in how valid and reliable they are in capturing that aspect.

Although there are big holes in what we know about how evaluation measures stack up on these two criteria, we can draw some important conclusions from the evidence collected so far. In this brief, we will show how existing research can help district and state leaders who are thinking about using multiple measures of teacher performance to guide them in hiring, development, and retention.

FROM VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY TO PRACTICALITY

In addition to questions of validity and reliability, it is worth briefly considering the practicality and costs of the various evaluation measures. Value-added measures, in most districts, can only be used with about one-third of teachers who are in tested grades and subjects and who have at least two years of data. This necessitates some other approach with other teachers. On the other hand, value- added measures are fairly inexpensive once the testing regime is in place. Also, while some have criticized the complexity of value-added measures, at least one handbook for SLOs is nearly 60 pages long, and classroom observations can involve more than 100 sub-measures. A complete comparison of multiple measures requires that these practical considerations be accounted for as well.

WHAT MORE NEEDS TO BE KNOWN ON THIS ISSUE?
We know much more about value-added measures than we do about other evaluation methods, so clearly we need more research on the latter, as well as additional research on value-added measures to determine how valid they are for particular groups of teachers. The limited evidence is a big problem; it means that even what we think we know about value added does not get us very far in deciding what to do with it. Without conducting similar analyses on the other measures, we can't compare alternatives and choose the best options.

More research on other measures would also help us understand why the correlations among them are so modest—why they differ as much as they do. The first reason they differ is simply that they each measure really captures a different notion of teacher performance; they should be different. For example, we have every reason to believe that principals care about students' academic achievement more than anything else. In one study, principals' assessments of overall teacher performance and their assessment of teacher contributions to student achievement are correlated at about 0.7, very high.26 However, principals rank a "caring" disposition as one of the most important teacher traits.27 Clearly, a principal who cares mainly about academic achievement thinks about teacher performance differently than one who prefers a caring personality.

If each measure were valid and reliable, the correlations would no doubt be much higher. But even then, the correlations would still be less than 1.0 for two reasons.

COMPARE TO OTHER MEASURES OF TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS?

First, one measure might be less valid than another, even when the intended notion of teacher performance is the same. Second, the maximum correlation is roughly equal to the reliability of the two measures, which is generally much less than 1.0.28 For example, two measures with reliabilities of 0.5 (which seems realistic given the above measures) have a maximum correlation of 0.5.

These examples are largely hypothetical because we lack evidence on the validity and reliability of measures other than value-added. But the evidence does suggest that the main reason the measures differ is that each measure is unreliable. This is an important lesson because there are steps that can be taken to increase reliability, such as increasing the number of classroom observations and years of data used in value-added calculations.

WHAT CAN'T BE RESOLVED BY EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ON THIS ISSUE?
While choices about the mix of measures should be made partly based on evidence, they also require value judgments. We have to decide first what aspects of teaching we value. Are we more concerned about students obtaining academic skills or social skills or creativity? Choosing the right mix of measures therefore depends on what we think school should be trying to achieve. A valid measure of teacher performance is one designed to capture how well teachers contribute to the student outcomes we value most. On this, there are legitimate differences of opinion.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS Does this issue impact district decision making?
There is wide support for using more measures in addition to value added to make high-stakes decisions. If a multiple-measures approach helps create a composite that is more representative of what stakeholders value, then validity improves. Using multiple measures also improves reliability, up to about 0.65 in the MET study.29 This figure is still below conventional levels in educational assessment, but it is better than the alternative of a single measure.
But we can go further in thinking about how many, and which, measures should be used. Basic economic theory provides a useful perspective on multiple measures. First, economics recognizes that quality teacher evaluation is expensive and time-consuming. To observe teachers in class, for example, principals must take time away from other duties, and some of the best teachers must be pulled from the classroom to evaluate others. What matters is not just how many measures are used, but how much information is collected with each.
Second, basic economics suggests that when two measures are highly correlated, there is not much point in using both of them. This issue might seem moot since none of the measures are highly correlated, but the same principle applies. It's just that we have to interpret "highly correlated" based on the maximum correlation possible.

Yet many states and districts are considering using three or more measures. So the question then becomes: how much additional information would a third or fourth measure bring? The answer depends on the reliability of the additional measure, as well as how the random error in the additional measure correlates with the random errors in the other measures. In general, additional measures will increase both validity and reliability, but at some point the additional gain is not worth the cost. Austin, Texas schools use 13 measures to evaluate teachers – a costly strategy that may confuse teachers about what they are supposed to be aiming for. States and districts can test the worth of adding more measures by calculating the correlations between simpler and more complex composite measures. If the correlations are very high, it might indicate that the additional measures are not worthwhile.

The economics-based approach, however, focuses on so-called summative performance measures that evaluators use to make high-stakes decisions about teachers' salaries and careers. Organizations also need formative information to help teachers improve; they need indicators of a teacher's specific skills in classroom management, for instance, or her ability to provide meaningful feedback to students. Both types of measures are important.30
So, even if an additional measure gives evaluators little in the way of summative information, it may be quite valuable for the formative information it provides.

Performance measures are the lynchpin of teacher evaluation systems. The choice of measures is therefore the crucial first decision for administrators developing any system of teacher improvement and accountability. We have learned a great deal about the strengths and weaknesses of one of those measures – valued added – but we need to know much more about the others. After all, we can't decide how best to use value-added measures without determining how the other measures compare.

So far, the modest correlations we see imply that different evaluation measures will yield different results for the same teacher. We can reduce these classification errors by using multiple measures to improve validity and reliability, and by creating additional checks and balances when making high-stakes decisions. We can never eliminate classification errors, but we can reduce them.

20 Questions About PARCC Testing ... continued from pg.9

17) In grades 1-6, there will be math questions that assess students' speed and accuracy with basic procedures without a calculator, (i.e., their math fluency). The list of fluency standards can be found here. Beyond grade 6 will have fluency standards, but there will not be a fluency component of the PARCC assessment.

18) In grades 6 and beyond, PARCC will have calculator and non-calculator sections. Assessments in grades 3-5 will not allow the use of a calculator. Assessments in grades 6-7 will allow for a four-function plus square root calculator, assessments in grade 8 will allow for a scientific calculator, and assessments in high school will allow for a calculator similar in functionality to a TI-84 graphing calculator. PARCC's calculator policy can be accessed here.

19) Students will have a math reference sheet for grades 5 and higher. Students in grades 3 and 4 will not be provided a reference sheet. Reference sheets for grades 5-8 and for high school will be available to students during the assessment.

20) Students who do well on PARCC will know they are ready for college and career. PARCC will ask students to do the kind of work they will need to do to be ready for college and career. Tennessee public institutions of higher education have agreed to use students' performance on the PARCC assessment as an indicator of readiness for credit bearing work. PARCC will give students and parents clear information about whether they are on track towards meaningful options in life.

If you have additional questions about the PARCC assessment, please go to the PARCC section of the TNCore website at www.TNCore.org or email your questions to TNCore.Questions@tn.gov.

This list represents the best information about the PARCC assessment as of October 2013. As is true of any assessment design process, there may be changes to the PARCC design informed by ongoing feedback and the field test.

How Coaching Can Impact Teachers, Principals, and Students ... continued from pg.23

Coaching was also linked to teachers' increase in using data to inform practice. Effective coaching programs respond to particular needs suggested by data, allowing improvement efforts to target issues such as closing achievement gaps and advocating for equity. The Annenberg report found that coaching programs guided by data helped create coherence within a school by focusing on strategic areas of need that were suggested by evidence, rather than by individual and sometimes conflicting opinions.

Another key finding was that coaching promotes the implementation of learning and reciprocal accountability. Coaching is an embedded support that attempts to respond to student and teacher needs in ongoing, consistent, dedicated ways. The likelihood of using new learning and sharing responsibility rises when colleagues, guided by a coach, work together and hold each other accountable for improved teaching and learning.

Finally, the Annenberg report determined that coaching supports collective leadership across a school system. An essential feature of coaching is that it uses the relationships between coaches, principals, and teachers to create the conversation that leads to behavioral, pedagogical, and content knowledge change. Effective coaching distributes leadership and keeps the focus on teaching and learning. This focus promotes the development of leadership skills, professional learning, and support for teachers that target ways to improve student outcomes...

As the field of coaching in schools develops, it is critical that we identify and gather sets of qualitative and quantitative data that can reveal the impact of our work on student learning. We need to track the changes we see in teacher and leader practice and gather evidence that our work is resulting in improved student learning. This can be an exciting and validating effort -- it is these data that help us feel effective and that let us know objectively that we're doing good work. In order to do this, we need to make sure that the scope of our work is defined and narrow, that we're gathering data on how our clients make progress, and that we're articulating these findings.

A highly effective, comprehensive coaching program in a school or district supports coaches to systematically gather a range of evidence to illustrate the impact of coaching on teachers, administrators, and students

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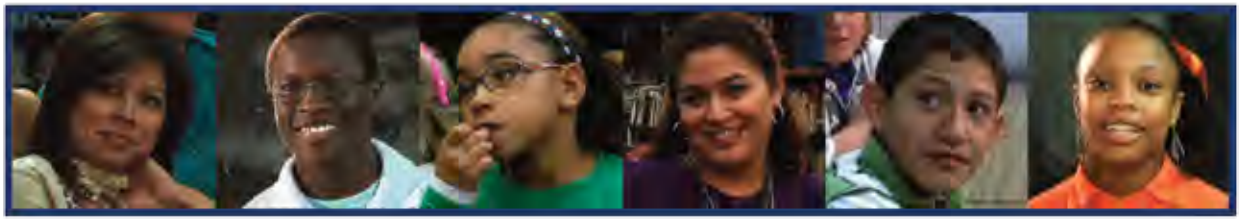

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