



Pathways

A weekly collection of information, thoughts, reflections, and accolades for the Reading Public Schools Community

January 1, 2017

Volume 3, Number 17

Upcoming Dates

- January 1 – Happy New Year
- January 2 – New Year's Holiday Observed – Schools and Offices Closed
- January 3 – Welcome Back
- January 5 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- January 6 – (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Drama Improvosaurs Show in the Endslow PAC
- January 7 – (9:00 a.m.) SEPAC Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- January 9 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- January 11 – Grade 6 – 12 Early Release; (afterschool) District PLC Meetings
- January 12 – (after school) RISE/Elementary Building Meetings (grade level common time); (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room; (7:00 p.m.) Middlesex Partnership for Youth Internet Safety & Social Media Presentation @ the Parker Middle School
- January 14 – (7:30 p.m.) Coolidge Drama Production Beauty & the Beast, Jr. in the Endslow PAC

School Committee Meeting This Week

There will be a meeting of the Reading School Committee on Thursday, January 5th at 7:00 p.m. in the School Committee Conference Room at the Reading Public Schools Administration Offices. The agenda will focus on an update from the Joshua Eaton School on their school improvement plan process and a districtwide K-12 mathematics presentation.

This is a public meeting and all are invited to attend. The School Committee will begin hearing a presentation on the FY18 budget on Monday, January 9th at 7:00 p.m.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Superintendent of Schools John Doherty at john.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us.

8 Reasons Why School Secretaries Deserve More Credit

By Peter DeWitt for [Education Week Finding Common Ground Blog](#)

In many small school communities, and even in a few larger ones, school secretaries take on roles and have influence that can be impactful to students, parents and teachers, and I think it's important to recognize that.

No, today is not Administrative Assistant's Day. You didn't forget to buy a card or flowers at the grocery store on your way into school. It's a random Tuesday in September still at the beginning of the school year for many of you. I didn't want to wait until a special day on one day during the year to write about secretaries.

A few months ago I had lunch with my former secretary who is also a friend. She's newly retired and I'm out of the building role, so we can get together during the school day. When we get together the good stories and the bad ones flow through our conversations. Once, those stressful situations that almost broke us are now distant memories we can chalk up to experience.

As I left our lunch date, I began thinking about the secretaries I was fortunate enough to work with as a teacher and principal. There was Joan Cox, Marsha Winslow and Dani Jones. They were lifesavers many times when I forgot to hand things in as a teacher. And then there was Sue Curtis who was our school secretary when I began as a principal.

I was hired as principal three months before my official starting date, which was a good thing because I happened to be teaching full-time in another school. My predecessor Sharon Lawrence, who was going to be the assistant superintendent, set up a schedule with Sue where I could come over after school about once a week and get to know staff and students.

I took my last two personal days so I could visit the school during the school day, and Sharon and Sue set up a schedule for that as well. All of which helped me start off my new career as a principal on a positive note that helped me more than they ever knew. This all helped set me up to be more collaborative with staff.

Sue Curtis went the extra mile. She handed me a yearbook so I could study the faces of the students and get to know their names before I met them. She even put the first names of the teachers and their spouses in the yearbook as well so I could memorize those. It sounds simple but it was a huge deal.

The last three years I was a principal I won the lottery again when it came to secretaries because I got to work with Donna Nikles, who I met up with for lunch yesterday. We were fortunate enough to get Mrs. Nikles in a school consolidation that you can [read more about here](#). Maybe it was due to the stressful circumstances, but Donna and I hit it off quickly, and she was one of the main reasons why the consolidation worked out...albeit after some very hard times.

Donna has a love for the Yankees, and would fake kick students out of the office if they wore Red Sox jerseys...which they did proudly as they walked into the office. She was the face of the school, and she made the main office a fun place to visit, which is something every school should have. Our students should want to feel welcome in every part of the school. It's called a positive school climate.

8 Reasons School Secretaries Deserve More Credit

As I walked away from lunch yesterday, I thought about all of the reasons why good school secretaries, or those we can call iconic like Donna Nikles, deserve more credit than they deserve. If you were, or are, fortunate enough to work with an iconic school secretary, you will recognize some of the following reasons.

Those reasons are:

Working the front line - Unlike anyone else in school, the main office is the first place visitors go to, which means that secretaries see parents at their best and their worst. Whether it's in person or on the phone, a school secretary has to listen to a parent or visitor when they may be most irate, and can help deescalate a situation. No, we don't always want them to do that because it might not be their job, but sometimes they take the opportunity to help when they can.

Students confide in them - A great secretary, much like Mrs. Nikles, was a person who students loved to come and talk to when they were having a problem. Sometimes when students are sent down to the office and principals are otherwise engaged, secretaries are able to get the background story which help us make our best decisions.

They know the parents - Many secretaries don't just know the students but they know the parents as well. Sometimes that's because they live in the same neighborhood and other times it's because the parents were students once. Secretaries can help bridge the gap when principals and teachers are working through issues with parents.

History of the district - For new principals, talking with a veteran school secretary is worth its weight in gold because the secretary knows the ins and out of the district, all of which can help explain decision making from the central office or the culture of the district.

School climate - Walking into the main office, and seeing how we are treated as guests, is the first aspect of whether a school climate is positive or negative. If the secretary merely is

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to RMHS Football Player Nick DiNapoli for being named a Globe All-Scholastic.
- Congratulations to RMHS Girls Swimming Coach Lois Margeson on being named Globe Coach of the Year.
- Congratulations to the boys and girls hockey teams, swimming, and the girls and boys basketball teams for recent victories.
- Kudos to RMHS wrestler Trevor Morton on capturing a championship at the recent Lisitano Memorial Tournament

sitting and saying "can I help you?" as if they work at Motor Vehicle, we probably won't feel warm and fuzzy. However, when we walk in and the secretary is smiling, we see student work...and even better...smiling students with the secretary, we get a feeling that we have entered into a positive and inclusive school climate.

Provide the other side of the issue -

Calm us down - There are many times when secretaries calm tough situations and tell us not to e-mail or call someone back so quickly.

The Real Assistant Principal - I was a principal in a small school district without an assistant. Donna was the assistant principal for all intents and purposes. She knew as much about the students, school and parents as I did, and knew what to do at times when I didn't. We worked as a team.

They don't get paid enough - Many secretaries work longer hours than they get paid for, can't escape school even when they're home, and don't get paid equivalent to the stress of their job. If you don't believe so, go visit a school on the first week of school at bus dismissal. That should open your eyes.

In the End

I hope you don't mind a blog post that is a bit different than the others. It's just that I don't believe that secretaries get the credit they deserve as often as they deserve it. In the end, a good school secretary helps build relationships, and is an integral part of the school climate.

Peter DeWitt, Ed.D. is the author of several books including [Collaborative Leadership: 6 Influences That Matter Most](#) (September, 2016. Corwin Press). Connect with Peter on Twitter.

Don't make New Year's resolutions this year. Redesign your life instead, Stanford professor says.

By Neda Semnani for the Washington Post *Inspired Life Column*



Superintendent's Office

Hours this Week

All are welcome

1/6 (7:45-8:45 a.m.)-

Killam

1/7 (9:00-10:00 a.m.)-

Reading Public Schools
Administration Offices

Throughout our lives, there will be moments when we'll find ourselves stuck or worried that we've fallen short of our potential and greatest ambitions. We might find ourselves fantasizing over a different career or another partner, wondering if it is too late to change.

In their new book, "**Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life**," Stanford professors, Bill Burnett and Dave Evans, provide tools for how we can initiate meaningful changes when we're feeling stuck without overhauling our whole lives. For the latest in our Inspiring Reads series, Burnett, a Silicon Valley veteran and the executive director of Stanford University's design program, describes how they've taken the same process designers use to develop new products and gadgets and applied it to finding greater fulfillment in our lives. And, to that end, he explains why he doesn't make New Year's resolutions.

Q: What is life design founded on?

Life design has grown out of design thinking. In design, a person looks for problems to solve by going out into the world. They talk to people; they use empathy and intuition to understand the problem they are trying to solve. Once designers can understand the problem, they can reframe it and come up with lots and lots of solutions. Then they create prototypes to determine which solutions are best.

For most people, they feel stuck because they have either defined their problem in a very narrow way or they've mixed up the solution with the problem. For example, a nurse who says she wants to chuck everything to become a singer-songwriter needs to figure out what's really going on. Being a singer-songwriter is a solution, so what is the problem? Is it that she needs a creative outlet or something else? Problem-finding is a very powerful tool.

Q: What do you say to people who are worried that they chose the wrong path for their lives — they spent too long wandering or they settled down too quickly?

We tell everyone to start where they are. If you're feeling restless, maybe there's a way to fold some wandering into your life. If you've been a wanderer but are ready for stability, perhaps there's a way to incorporate that, too. The research shows that most people in their mid-30s who settled early into a career and family life love both their career and their family but also wish they had more experiences when they were younger. Likewise people who took their time finding their way love the experiences they had but wish they had more stability by their mid-30s.

Most of the people aren't going to want to go from being a chief executive of a big corporation to being a poet or the other way around, but they are going to want to find a way to have a more meaningful and purposeful life. That's what everyone says they want, so that's what we designed around. We encourage people to bring out some of the ideas they had put away a long time ago, and maybe they can incorporate one or two into their lives. This isn't about blowing up your life and starting over. That's a cathartic reaction, but it's not a well-informed option, and it can lead you to a situation much worse than the one you were in.

Q: What are the steps for designing a life?

Begin with what you're curious about: Ask yourself: What is it that is making you feel stuck or frozen? Is it that you're bored with your job? Do you need a hobby? Is it your friends? What are your guiding values, and do they intersect with your work? You can figure some of this out by keeping track of what you do day to day. Pay attention to activities that give you

Quote of the Week . . .



The road to success is not straight. There is a curve called Failure, a loop called Confusion, speed bumps called Friends, red lights called Enemies and caution lights called Family. You will have flat tires called Jobs, but if you have a spare called Determination, an engine called Perseverance, and a driver called Willpower you will make it to a place called Success.

-Unknown

energy and those that zap your reserves. Then start to eliminate the bad stuff and double down on the good stuff.

Once you determine what it is that is making you feel stuck, make a list of those things that interest you, then find people who are doing those things. These people are your experts; they are you in the future. Talk to them about their lives: How did they arrive where they are? Do they like the work? How much work do they actually do every day? That kind of thing. Once you do these interviews three or four times, you'll start to see what makes you feel energized and enthusiastic. Explore that enthusiasm by trying stuff. This is the prototype-stage and how you will figure out if this thing is right for you.

If you think you want to be a yoga instructor, for example, don't immediately sign up for hundreds of hours of teacher-training. Start by talking to several yoga instructors to determine the qualities of a good teacher. Then develop several prototypes to help you figure out whether you have the qualities of a good teacher and would like teaching yoga. One prototype might be signing up for an intensive yoga retreat where you spend a week doing 12 hours of yoga a day. If you love it, then go deeper. If you realize on Day Three that you're bored and wish you could do anything else, then you've learned that you have resilience and grit but maybe being a yoga instructor isn't your thing.

So start with curiosity, talk to people, try stuff, have experiences, determine what resonates with you, then — lather, rinse, repeat — do these steps again and again. Each time, you'll learn something, even if that is just that you hated the experience. With each experience you have, you'll build up your creative confidence, that feeling of certainty that you can come up with a solution to any problem. The more confidence you have in your problem-solving abilities, the more likely that you'll be able to frame everything as a learning experience. Just keep your prototypes short and relatively simple.

Q: Is there a common misstep people make when they try to design their lives?

A big mistake people make is turning their hobbies into how they make their living. Sometimes it works, but often it creates a different set of problems. The reality is that when you decide to take your hobby — whether it is yoga, painting, writing or whatever — into the market place, you have to do it in a way that the market will pay for it. This means you may not be able to teach the yoga you want; you'll have to teach hipster hot yoga, or you'll have to write clickbait. Crap like that. Often people discover that they may have loved doing something as a hobby but they hate doing it on the market's terms.

Q: We're coming to the end of a hard year, and many people are reflecting on the past and getting ready to make their resolutions. Do you have any advice for them?

Statistics show that only about 20 percent of resolutions are kept, so don't make them. Design prototypes instead. Try stuff. Don't say you're going to lose weight this year; decide to prototype different gyms in your neighborhood. Try the boxing gym and the yoga studio. See which is better for you in terms of your health.

The Most Important People in the Room

By Chris Gosselin for *Edutopia Magazine*

I've learned that the most impactful form of discipline isn't a reactionary approach, but a proactive one. A mentor teacher of mine once told me something that I think about every day:

Disney Tweet of the Week



If we take the time to understand each other, we can learn to make it right.

—Sebastian (Little Mermaid II)

“Always remember: there are more important people in the room than you.”

In my first five years of teaching, I haven’t thrown a student out of my room yet. Don’t misinterpret: I’ve come close. I’ve been lucky enough to figure something out pretty early on in my career about the way I want to teach. I certainly don’t think I have found the way to promote a culture of respect and authenticity in my classes, but the very least, I’ve figured something out that works for me, something that’s at the root of who I am as a teacher and what I think the profession of teaching should be all about.

I work every day to build and maintain positive, meaningful relationships with my students. It’s a long, hard process that often takes a while. I’ve noticed that when mutual respect is achieved between me and a class of high school students, great things can happen. Powerful conversations take place. The best part? The need for “discipline” disappears. You just don’t need it. There’s no room for it. My classes are respectful of me and interested in what I have to say simply because I reciprocate.

When I was in high school, I respected the teachers who respected me back. I took interest in those teachers who took interest in me. When we reminisce on the “glory days” of high school, I’m sure we all can think of a teacher or two who was more interested in hearing their own voice than relating to teenagers. It’s funny, because we often forget that students (really at any age) are much keener than we presume – they know which of their teachers are interested in establishing relationships, and which aren’t.

As teachers, we show up at work every day for one reason: our students. We are invested in them: their well-being, comfort, and learning rest and rely on the learning community that we establish in our classroom every day. It’s our responsibility to give those students a safe place where they feel valued, accepted, and cared for.

Students need fewer people in their lives telling them “this is how it’s supposed to be” and more trusted adults saying “this is who you are right now, and that’s okay.” I try to meet my students where they are when they walk in the door, but not forgetting about where they could be going.

At some point during any given school day, I’ll hear or read about an initiative that doesn’t necessarily make me uncomfortable, but perks up my ears. Don’t get me wrong: I firmly believe that new ideas or policy in education are important, and promote and foster change in the “business” of what we do. Common Core is a good thing. New policies and procedures in educator supervision and evaluation are good things. It is important for the culture of education to continue to evolve, shift, and change based on the world in which our students live. This is a fact. Things are changing, so teachers must too.

But, with that being said, one thing that shouldn’t change is our commitment to the social and emotional well-being of our students. This is at the center of what I do.

High school, like many of us can remember, is a weird time for a lot of reasons. Spoiler alert: most teenagers are more worried about who they are going to sit next to at lunch than their English homework. Instead of condemning this mindset - only continuing to fulfill the role of being the mean adult looking over your shoulder - it’s

Important Websites

RPS District Website
www.reading.k12.ma.us

Interface Health Services
<https://interface.williamjames.edu/community/reading>

Need help finding mental health care?



important for trusted adults (in and out of school) to recognize that adolescence is a critical point in a young person's life. Neurons are firing on overtime trying to make sense of the stresses of seeking a place to fit in. Of course, social pressures and more take precedent. It's natural.

As teachers, we have to make a choice: We can either ignore this behavior, putting it off as just a "phase" and playing down the social-emotional needs of our students; or, we can recognize that this stress has a direct impact on student learning and develop and implement effective strategies that teach our students how to cope with this very normal time. The strategy I've chosen to focus on is creating and maintaining positive and meaningful relationships with my students, and when I leverage these relationships to promote a culture of understanding and respect in my classes, amazing things can happen.

Three Great Resources to Help Students Fight Off Fake News

By Patrick Larkin for [Education Week Blog](#)

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A FAKE NEWS STORY

1 READ PAST THE HEADLINE
2 CHECK WHAT NEWS OUTLET PUBLISHED IT
3 CHECK THE PUBLISH DATE AND TIME
4 WHO IS THE AUTHOR?
5 LOOK AT WHAT LINKS AND SOURCES ARE USED
6 LOOK OUT FOR QUESTIONABLE QUOTES AND PHOTOS
7 BEWARE CONFIRMATION BIAS
8 SEARCH IF OTHER NEWS OUTLETS ARE REPORTING IT
9 THINK BEFORE YOU SHARE

THE HUFFINGTON POST

In my previous post on the topic of Fake News, I mentioned that Fake News is nothing new. There have always been individuals and organizations that have tried to influence people by presenting them with stories that stray from the truth. While these stories vary in the degree of factual information they contain, the more important question regards the ability of the reader to delve into these articles and blog posts and pull out where things veer from fact to fiction. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) highlights the following skills for students in its [21st Century Literacies Framework](#):

- Students in the 21st century must be able to take information from multiple places and in a variety of different formats, determine its reliability, and create new knowledge from that information.
- Students in the 21st century must be critical consumers and creators of multimedia texts.

In order to attain these skills, teachers are encouraged to reflect on the following questions:

- Do students analyze the credibility of information and its appropriateness in meeting their needs?
- Do students use information to make decisions as informed citizens?

- Do students strive to see limitations and overlaps between multiple streams of information?
- Do students analyze and evaluate the multimedia sources that they use?

While the bulleted items above are just an abridged look at the skills and questions that are outlined in NCTE's Framework 21st Century Literacies Framework, an equally important issue is in regards to the resources that are available for students to utilize to determine the credibility of sources of information that they come across. The resources below are a few of the ones that I have come across to help support students in this complicated task:

1. [Truth, truthiness, triangulation: A news literacy toolkit for a "post-truth" world](#) - (A great post from Joyce Valenza on School Library Journal's Website)
2. [How to Spot Fake News \(and Teach Kids to Be Media-Savvy\)](#) - (From Common Sense Media)
3. [FAKE NEWS vs. REAL NEWS: How to Determine the Reliability of Sources](#) - (Website from Northern Essex Community College)

Reading Public Schools Happenings

RMHS Carolers

Over the last few weeks, students in the RMHS Chorus travelled on Friday and Saturday night to various homes, senior care facilities, and businesses to sing to families. A special thanks goes out to those students who took time out of their schedules to make everyone's holidays brighter!



RMHS Carolers

Wood End Donates Gifts To Needy Families

The Wood End staff made some local family's holiday season a little brighter by donating over 90 gifts and \$400 in gift cards to 7 families in need. A special thank you goes out to the entire Wood End staff for their generosity!



Parker Principal for the Day

Recently, Parker Grade 7 Student Peter Thompkins was selected as Parker Principal for the day. Peter had a very busy day, meeting with the Parker Principal Richele Shankland, Superintendent John Doherty, joining the cast and crew of Parker News Live for Morning Announcements, visiting classes, having lunch duty, meeting with the technology and maintenance departments, having lunch with friends, and completing his day with afternoon announcements. Congratulations to Peter on a job well done!



Contact Us

The Pathways newsletter is published weekly for Reading Public School Staff. If you have anything that you would like to share, please email your info to John Doherty at: john.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us



Hour of Code at Joshua Eaton

Mrs. Santilli, elementary technology integrator, worked with students at Joshua Eaton last week on an "Hour of Code" activity. The students had a great time as programmers!



RMHS Students Read to RISE Preschool

Students in RMHS ELA Teacher Zach Brokenrope's Grade 11 English Class took some time recently to read picture books that they created to RISE students.



Wood End Says Goodbye to Isabella Jordan

A few weeks ago, Wood End staff and students said goodbye to 12 year veteran teacher Isabella Jordan who is relocating to California. Thank you, Isabella for your years of service in the Reading Public Schools. You will be missed.



**LILY
DUNN
Class of '17**

Lily Dunn is being recognized for her excellence in academics, activities, and service. Academically, Lily is in the top 10% of the senior class and is a member of the National Honor Society. Lily has further distinguished herself at school by being recognized as a member of the Century Club for two years and by earning High Honor status throughout her entire career at RMHS. Additionally, she is a 3-year member of the Spanish National Honor Society and earned a bronze medal last year on the National Spanish Exam. Lily's favorite class at RMHS has been her rigorous and compelling class, "Honors Missing Voices". Beyond the classroom, Lily has been a contributing writer for the school newspaper, the Orbit, and she has also contributed to the production of the RMHS yearbook. Further rounding out her co-curricular work, Lily has been a two-year member of the girls volleyball program and a member of the RMHS chapter of Habitat for Humanity, where this past summer, Lily joined other classmates from Habitat in a humanitarian trip to North Carolina to help build homes for low-income families in the Winston-Salem area. Lastly, Lily also finds time to teach CCD to 4th graders at St. Athanasius Church in Reading and works as a part-time office assistant at a local business. Next year, Lily will be attending college and will be majoring in business or communications. Congratulations, Lily!



**THOMAS
BRADFORD**
Class of '17

Thomas Bradford is being recognized for his excellence in academics, activities, and service. Thomas is a member of the National Honor Society and is in the top 2% of the senior class. He is a 3-year member of the Century Club and was a National Merit Semi-Finalist as a result of his outstanding performance on the PSAT's. Thomas's favorite class during his time at RMHS has been Honors Film and Literature. In terms of activities this year, Thomas has been a section leader in our accomplished RMHS marching band where he plays the keyboard. Additionally, he is a member of the New Currency Club and the Playwriting Club, where he wrote a ten-minute play that was chosen to be performed by Boston University actors. Outside of school, Thomas has worked diligently to earn a black belt in Okinawan Karate and also provides instruction as an assistant teacher at a karate studio in Wilmington. In his free time, Thomas enjoys creative writing and musical composition and hopes to explore these interests further in college next year. In terms of service, Thomas went on a mission trip to Mexico a couple of years ago, helping an eye doctor in Tijuana to administer eye exams and to provide glasses for underprivileged families. Lastly, Thomas volunteers his time playing piano on the music team at the Hope Christian Church in Winchester. Next year, Thomas will be attending college and pursuing a degree in chemistry or chemical engineering, as well as a minor in music or writing. Congratulations, Thomas!

Stepping Stones...

- Our thoughts go out to RMHS Assistant Principal **Tom Zaya** who recently had surgery.
- Our thoughts and prayers go out to RMHS Guidance Counselor **Jo-Ann Gregorowicz** on the recent loss of a loved one.
- Our thoughts and prayers go out to RMHS Guidance Counselor **Steve Kennedy** on the recent loss of a loved one.
- Congratulations to Director of Student Services **Carolyn Wilson** who has been selected to be on the Board of Directors for the Massachusetts Branch of the International Dyslexia Association.
- Congratulations to Reading School Committee members **Elaine Webb**, who will be receiving the Women in the Enterprise of Science and Technology (WEST) Giving Back Award for making a difference in the Reading and Gloucester Communities.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
 - ✓ John Sievens, Physical Education Teacher, Coolidge
 - ✓ Gregory Cate, Math Teacher, RMHS
 - ✓ Cassie Penta, Grade 3 Long term Substitute, Joshua Eaton
- **We have posted** a new position. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

Special Education Teacher, 1.0FTE Reading Memorial High School
<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=205>

Temporary 1:1 Aid, Coolidge Middle School
<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=206>

Long Term Special Education Program Paraeducator, 60 hours biweekly Wood End Elementary School
<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=207>

Blazing Trails....

A Teacher's Power Over Student Self-Image- Slow, dumb, trouble-maker...these are the words that challenging students can hear about themselves from the mouths of the adults they know. One Israeli teacher wants to remind educators that your words make a difference in how students see themselves and build confidence. Check out this video to hear her experiences both in the classroom and in her personal life (**Soul Mama, Facebook.com**).

"Rising Test Scores Strengthen Case For Common Core."

The Seventy Four reports that Delaware Gov. Jack Markell a leading supporter of Common Core State Standards, recently highlighted "a fresh batch of positive results from Common Core-aligned annual assessments in dozens of states." He said, "As we enter a new era in education policy, obviously ushered in by the new federal law, our focus should not be on starting from scratch but rather on building on the hard work of students and educators that has taken place over the last few years." Meanwhile, experts from the Center for American Progress put out an analysis in September that "found that at least 27 of the 28 states that have released scores and have comparable data from the year before showed a positive trajectory in student performance." They said, "Critics of the Common Core will continue to push states to get rid of the standards. But their push has less and less credibility as scores go up and students see more...success." [Read More](#)

"How to Talk About S#xting." ASCD Emerging Leader and Massachusetts Educator, Kerry Gallagher blogs about a very serious subject many schools seem to ignore with our students. "The advice for the past few years from parents and educators everywhere has been clear: Don't do it. That advice has been less than effective." [Read More](#)

"Understanding Transformational Leadership." Ronn Nozoe is the associate executive director at ASCD and a lifelong educator with 20 years of experience successfully leading transformational change at the classroom, school, district, state and national levels. Prior to joining ASCD, Nozoe was deputy assistant secretary for Policy and Programs at the US Department of Education. Nozoe started his career in Hawaii as a teacher before serving as a school principal, the superintendent of one of the state's largest and most diverse districts, and the state's deputy superintendent. This interview with Nozoe discusses Transformational Leadership. [Read More](#)

"Pinkcast 1.14: The Power of an Empty Chair." In this quick two minute video, author Daniel Pink presents an idea to keep what is important at the forefront of meetings. It is an idea taken from Sears and Amazon, but it can easily be done in education. Check out the video. [Read More](#)

Have a Great Week!