

# Initiatives Update

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to the 15-16 school year. We are off to a smooth start and I am looking forward to our upcoming events and initiatives.

This newsletter is simply a vehicle to keep you all in the loop.

-Clare



## Important Dates

**September 23rd-** NGSS Science Grades 7&8

**September 24<sup>th</sup>**- Seminar: Helping Our Children Develop Resilience as They Face Life's Stressful Events

**September 30th-** NGSS Science Grades 7&8

**October 7th-** NGSS Science Grades 7&8

**October 14th-** NGSS Science Grades 7&8

**October 21st-** NGSS Science Grade 9 Biology

**October 28th-** NGSS Science Grade 9 Biology

**November 4th-** NGSS Science Grade 9 Biology

**November 9th-** NGSS Science Grade 9 Biology (Monday)

**November 18th-** NGSS Science Grades 5&6

**November 25th-** Professional Development Day

## Community of Practice – Shared Classroom Initiative

All K-12 ELA and Math teachers will again participate in our **Community of Practice – Shared Classroom Initiative**. The premise of the initiative is simple; by visiting other classrooms we can gain exposure to varied teaching practices, reflect on our own practices and encourage conversation about the art and craft of teaching. In addition, this initiative will serve as another vehicle to ensure that our curriculum is articulated and aligned K-12.

I will be working with building principals to schedule the dates. Based on last year's feedback, we will be expanding this initiative. Teachers will have the opportunity to observe teachers in other districts as well. I will be reaching out to faculties for volunteers to be "host" teachers. All the information and scheduling will be within the shared Google doc.



Congratulations to Mr. John Knasas, North Smithfield Schools Teacher of the Year!!

# Growth Mindset

Last Spring and again this fall; we have offered professional development sessions sharing information about Growth Mindset. Growth mindset is a core belief that intelligence and abilities can be developed with hard work and perseverance. E. Claire McWilliams led both of the sessions and has received fantastic feedback.

I am organizing a book club/book study of Carol Dweck's book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. If you are interested in joining the group, send me an email.

**10 Growth Mindset Statements**

**FIXED MINDSET** **GROWTH MINDSET**

What can I say to myself?

**INSTEAD OF:** **TRY THINKING:**

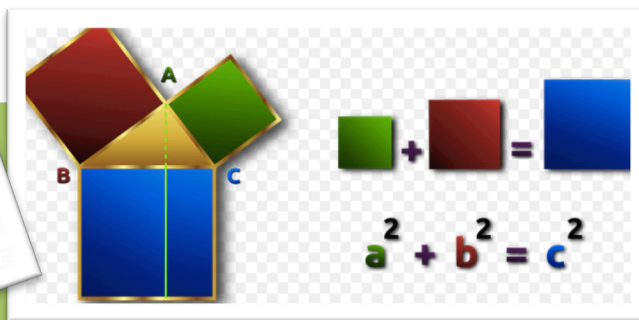
I'm not good at this.	① What am I missing?
I'm awesome at this.	② I'm on the right track.
I give up.	③ I'll use some of the strategies we've learned.
This is too hard.	④ This may take some time and effort.
I can't make this any better.	⑤ I can always improve so I'll keep trying.
I just can't do Math.	⑥ I'm going to train my brain in Math.
I made a mistake.	⑦ Mistakes help me to learn better.
She's so smart. I will never be that smart.	⑧ I'm going to figure out how she does it.
It's good enough.	⑨ Is it really my best work?
Plan "A" didn't work.	⑩ Good thing the alphabet has 25 more letters!

(Original source unknown) @sylviaaduckworth

## Digital Citizenship Continuum of Study

Our K-12 Health teachers have been working together to develop a Digital Citizenship continuum of study. They are using the Isafe platform that was brought to us through a grant from the RI State Police. Lt. Stephen Riccitelli and Meghan Martinez, Cyber Terrorism Program Manager introduced the platform last spring. Our teachers are integrating lessons into our Health curriculum focusing on online safety, online communication, digital footprint, and information.





# GO MATH!

Mathematics is the music of reason.

- James Joseph Sylvester

The “Big Ideas” Math Program and materials will be fully implemented in Grades 6 through Algebra II. The program had been unanimously recommended by our Math Program Selection Committee after a thorough review of multiple programs. The new math materials are aligned to the Common Core State Standards and include the textbook, an online text subscription, student consumable journals, online tutorials and assessment software. The program was

developed in a way that will help students master content through inductive reasoning opportunities, engaging activities that provide deeper understanding, rich thought-provoking exercises, and a continual building on what has been previously taught.

During the August Professional Development Day, our 6-12 math teachers utilized the online resources and were able to set up classes and explore all of the resources.

This year we are anticipating grant funds that will support math interventionists at the elementary level. Last year was the first year that we implemented the successful program.

An elementary math program committee will be formed this fall to explore and eventually recommend a math program aligned to the common core standards. Elementary teachers interested in participating should shoot me an email. [carnold@nsps.us](mailto:carnold@nsps.us)

## Summer Technology Institute

We are thankful for all the teachers who participated in the NWSC Technology Institute. The four districts in the North West Consortium are: Smithfield, North Smithfield, Burrillville and Lincoln. The summer Teacher Technology Institute was open to all teachers, administrators or staff members from any of the four districts. The institute consisted of four professional development sessions spread across two days during the summer. Each session focused on different technology tools and how to integrate them into your current practice. A special thanks goes out to Ms. Sarah Glover, Mr. Adam Stanley, Ms. Deana Cook and Ms. Melissa Mathurin for developing and presenting sessions. It was a great success!





# A Walk in the PARCC

The surveys and feedback from the spring administration of the PARCC assessment led to some significant changes that will help districts tremendously.



Last year, we introduced the new PARCC (or Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) assessments in mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA)/literacy.

These assessments replaced the NECAP Mathematics, Reading, and Writing assessments that we have used for the past 9 years. Last year the PARCC testing had two separate testing periods (March and May.)

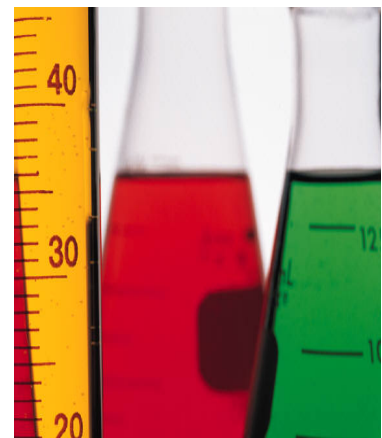
The changes (based on feedback from the districts) to the

assessment include:

- Consolidate the two testing windows that stretched from March to June into one testing period of approximately 30 days;
- Reduce the number of test units from 8 or 9, depending on grade level, to 6 or 7 test units;
- Reduce the testing time for students by 90 minutes overall (30 minutes in English language arts, 60 minutes in mathematics); and
- Simplify administration of the assessments while giving schools flexibility in setting their testing schedules within the testing period.
- Though the testing period will be about 30 days, most schools will need only one or two weeks to complete

## Science Curriculum Development

This year North Smithfield Schools will develop Science curricula. We will create curriculum guides that 'unpack' each standard, a curriculum map that shows which standards we are teaching by quarter and units of study based on the Understanding by Design (Ubd) format. After the curriculum is written we will be making live binders of the work and embedding into curriculum website. During the curriculum development we will establish a "Task Force" which will meet after school to review research, and ensure the curriculum is articulated and aligned across and between grade levels.







The Holt Funeral Home is sponsoring a seminar, Helping Our Children Develop Resilience as They Face Life's Stressful Events, on September 24, 2015 at 6:30pm, in Chapel Hall at Mount Saint Charles Academy.

All teachers and support staff are invited to attend free of charge.

Holt Funeral Home has hired a world-renowned children's grief expert speaker, Maria Trozzi. Maria has worked with Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, in educating parents, teachers and caregivers on talking with children about grief and loss. She has provided consultation and trainings in the wake of Newtown, Columbine, 9/11, Boston Marathon Bombings and numerous other crisis events. Maria has been the Director of the Good Grief Program at BU, for over 20 years, working with various educators; health providers and communities in helping adults help children to face stressful events.

You can find more information concerning the seminar and Maria Trozzi, M.Ed. on the Community Seminar page of our website, [www.holtfuneralhome.com](http://www.holtfuneralhome.com).

### **The Gift of Dyslexia By Ron Davis**

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of "The Gift of Dyslexia" and/or joining a book study, send me an email request. Written by an adult dyslexic, the book gives the reader a unique perspective and strategies that have been proven effective. I have ten copies available.

## **Professional Development**

The Professional Development Advisory Committee worked last year to help to extend and refine professional development sessions and offerings. Our first PD day was a success due to the collaborative effort.

I am thankful for time, energy and effort of presenters. They made it a wonderful day of learning and leading.

A special thanks goes out to:

- Melissa Mathurin – Chromebook and Google App Basics
- Tracey Nangle – Google Classroom
- Claire McWilliams – Growth Mindset 101
- Jillian Bitee and Kim Cote – Student Anxiety Resources
- James Williamson -- Google Forms
- Adam Stanley -- Coding in the Classroom
- Sarah Glover -- Game Based Apps and Tools for Instruction
- Andrea McKay -- Kaizena and Google Drawing
- John Lahar and Tim McGee – Google Time
- Deana Cook – Extensions, Apps and Add-Ons
- James Fitzgerald – Digital Citizenship

