



# PASCD Newsletter



**“Educators impacting teaching and learning through leadership”**

JANUARY 12, 2015

## President’s Message



Welcome 2015!

A new year signals a time of reflection and resolutions

for the year to come. Resolutions often focus on improving life—exercise more, eat healthy, save money, be positive. As educators, I challenge each of us to make a resolution to improve the lives of Pennsylvania’s children. [Pennsylvania’s Whole Child Snapshot](#) reports:

20% of PA’s children are in poverty

27% of PA’s children ages 10-17 are overweight or obese

42% of PA’s middle and high school student are called names, made fun of, or teased at school

ASCD’s Whole Child initiative has expanded the definition of educational success to include more than academic achievement. Educating the whole child recognizes that children are more likely to succeed academically when each child

is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. To move this vision forward, consider the following actions:

- Connect free and low-cost physical and mental health services with the student and families who need them.
- Support social-emotional learning and character development.
- Offer students an array of extracurricular activities and extended-day learning opportunities.
- Develop individualized learning plans for all students that connect to their academic and career goals and interests.
- Provide relevant and challenging coursework through multiple pathways.

For more information on the Whole Child initiative, visit ASCD’s Whole Child website at [www.wholechildeducation.org](http://www.wholechildeducation.org)

Let us make 2015 the year of the Whole Child!

Best wishes for a wonderful new year,  
Lori  
Dr. Lori J. Stollar  
PASCD President

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teaching strategy, and this is especially true when using technology. If you are teaching a group about this new app and how it would work in the classroom, then you need to be using it. Model the type of teacher you want to see when you go to observe your staff and use the technology you want them to use. As a principal working in a professional development situation, your teachers are your students. You cannot expect them to teach their students any differently than you choose to teach them. Take advantage of those professional development opportunities by modeling good teaching techniques.

**Share success:** It is so important to be positive with your staff. You want to celebrate and SHARE their success. It is just human nature that we want to be validated and acknowledged for a job well done. When using technology, you may have to celebrate even the tiniest success. Remember success breeds success.

Okay, there you have it. Now all you have to do is put it into practice.

## Can Character Be Taught?

Meredith Denovan  
President, Delaware Valley Region

An article in the NY Times, "The Secret to Fixing Bad Schools", caught my eye last week. I had just finished reading the newest book by Paul Tough, [Teaching Your Child to Succeed](#) and I was struck by the simple message that both offered and yet one that is all too often forgotten as we look for answers to fix our "broken" system of public education.

In the NY Times article, David Kirp wrote "As someone who has worked on education policy for four decades, I have never seen the likes of this. After spending a year in Union City, NJ working on a book, I believe its transformation offers a nationwide strategy." What did Mr. Kirp observe that impressed him so? First, there is a prekindergarten program which enrolls almost every three and four-year old in a setting that focuses on the "cognitive

and non-cognitive, thinking and feeling; ...the line vanishes." The belief is, from pre-K to high school, the students must become thinkers, not just test-takers. In Union City the instructional core consists of the "skills of the teacher, the engagement of the students and the rigor of the curriculum." Building character and getting students to think is every teacher's mission. As one teacher stated, "I don't ask them to memorize 1, 2, 3 – I could teach a monkey to count." In Union City, there is learning by doing, not by rote.

## CHARACTER

Paul Tough urges parents to develop their children's character because it is central to success, as educators in Union City have discovered. The chapter headings – How to Fail, How to Build Character, How to Think, How to Succeed – provide a road map to success that is built on scientific research. Tough's investigations into current scientific research showed that character could be taught. Self-control, grit, zest, social intelligence, gratitude, optimism and curiosity are contained in the list that Chris Peterson, coauthor of [Character Strengths and Virtues](#), developed.

I highly recommend that you read Paul Tough's book and reflect upon research and ideas that he has included in this "instruction manual" for educators and parents alike.

### References

Tough, Paul . (2012) *How Children Succeed*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing.

Kirp, David (2013) The Secret to Fixing Bad Schools. *New York Times*; February 9, 2013.

## What is Quality Differentiated Supervision?

Robert L. Williams, Ph.D.  
Chair of PASCD Supervision and Evaluation

In my work with superintendents and principals across the Commonwealth concerning the mandates of Measuring Teacher Effectiveness, I often ask administrators "why does your school district want to pursue a differentiated supervision model?" My second question is usually "what is the reason for the expediency of putting the plan in place" or frankly "what is the rush?" To my dismay the reply has been "so that we do not have to formally observe every teacher every year."

I had advocated to PDE Secretary of Education Dumaresq and her team to have differentiated supervision as an option within the Measuring Teacher Effectiveness legislation. My intent in doing so was never to have this option in order to simply make life easier for administrators. If done correctly, differentiated supervision would be a process where administrators work collegially with teachers in a side by side relationship with the goals being collegial learning, reflective conversation, and dynamic professional growth. Rather than spending time rating proficient and distinguished teachers, administrators would spend time fostering a climate of inquiry in a data-driven professional setting. Administrators spend time in the classroom collecting data, if using a clinical supervision option, in an area the teacher has targeted for growth, and then having reflective conversation concerning the data and the implications for classroom management, instructional delivery, or student learning.

Another differentiated supervision option would be peer coaching. Peer coaching involves teachers working in a collegial relationship to collect data with one teacher serving as coach while the

peer teaches and then analyze the data and reflect upon it both individually and collegially. The roles then can be reversed so the other peer has the opportunity for someone to collect data for analysis. The reflective conversation that comes as a result of the data analysis is very powerful in positively affecting teacher instructional practice and ultimately student achievement. These are just two of the many options that can be part of a quality differentiated supervision program.

My message is that it takes time to build a dynamic differentiated supervision program. If a district develops a plan quickly to lessen the observation load of administrators, most likely the teachers will view it negatively in that it is more work for them in order to create less observation work for the administrator. The sole purpose of differentiated supervision is provide dynamic *differentiated* professional development where the teacher needs to grow. I would encourage your district administrators to consider participating in the PASCD Differentiated Supervision Academy. It can be hosted in a local school district or through an IU. For more information concerning this academy, please contact Robert Williams at [rwilliam3@verizon.net](mailto:rwilliam3@verizon.net).



## News from Emerging Leaders

*Thoughts from an Emerging Leader...*

### I - it Culture and the PSSA

Concetta Lupo

Mark Twain once said, "Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect."

I came across this quote as I was on social media looking for resources to help children increase their score on the latest version of PSSA. I stopped, re-read the quote, and started to contemplate. I was looking for academic resources to help children score higher on a test. Is that my only goal as an educator and as an administrator? Given the School Performance Profile and its impact on my evaluations am I focusing all of my time and effort on the test? Am I (and are many of us) on the side of the majority? Sadly I know I am and truly believe many of us are; not because we believe in the side of the majority, but because the PSSA and the impact on our SPP score frightens all of us. As educators we are judged based on a thin slice of our academic achievement and educational success; we are being evaluated and appraised based on a minimal amount of information. As a result I believe that, selfishly, we want to teach children exactly what they need for the test to help our SPP score and evaluations, not necessarily to help the children become passionate, successful, and zealous learners.

As teachers in our current educational system many of us are treating people as objects. In many classrooms, the students are thought of as test takers instead of as children. According to Brené Brown in *Daring Greatly*, "When we treat people as objects, we dehumanize them. We do something really terrible to their souls and to our own." (Brown, 2012) This is absolutely

true. Based on my own action research being conducted in my building the data shows children in classrooms do not feel like they are loved and/or cared for as individuals. The students understand their assignments and assessments are reviewed and discussed by their teachers. They are occasionally asked to self-assess and reflect on their performance on the assignments/assessments but are rarely asked about their interests or creativity. Teaching children based on PSSA assessments, School Performance Profile criteria, and professional evaluation ratings have changed the connections between teachers and children to an "I-it relationship". "An I-it relationship is basically what we create when we are in transactions with people whom we treat like objects – people who are simply there to serve us or complete a task." (Brown, 2012) At this point in time, based on our current educational system, our task in education is to improve test scores.

The "I-it relationship" has not only developed between teachers and students, but also between administrators and teachers. Teachers are being judged based on the scores from the children in their class. Percentages of students advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic are the quintessential data. In many schools teachers are considered only as those who are to serve the district and complete the task of increasing test scores. An educator's ability to connect with, inspire, and motivate children to learn is not considered as an asset unless it increases test scores. Administrators hold teachers accountable for academic achievement using only the PSSA data as evidence. Pressure is applied and staff members have focused incredible amounts of time and effort to help the children take the assessment seriously and have them try their best. I have seen schools wearing PSSA spirit shirts. I have heard current songs with lyrics re-written to sing about the PSSAs. I have

seen posters all over the building, heard PSSA cheers, watched children chew gum, and eat yummy snacks to encourage performance on these tests. While all of those were cute and funny, how did they increase the children's academic achievement? The obsession on PSSA scores has negatively impacted our objective goals, the instructional strategies, and the passion for educating and positively impacting a child. Test scores have become an albatross around the neck of children, teachers, and administrators.

So here is the question. How can we, as administrators, excite and provoke a shift in the emphasis for our educational system?

PSSA assessments are important. But can we look at the data in more detail? Can we review each child's performance and make sure they have had a year of academic growth, regardless of their level? For example, if a child in fourth grade begins the year reading on a first grade level but ends the school year reading at a mid-second grade level, the child has shown more than a year of growth based on the teacher's instructional strategy, effort, and focus. However, the child will still score in the below basic area on the PSSA in fourth grade. In my opinion it will be more effective and efficient if school districts received detailed data for each individual child. Our goals are to meet the needs of every child and help them achieve a year of academic growth from the day they start in a public school district to the day they graduate and go on to college. All we really want to do as teachers is give the children a love of learning. We want children to accept who they are, understand their strengths, needs, interests, and creativity. These are the reasons we all became educators. We just need to go back to our passion and focus on children as individuals instead of test scores. Students are not just test takers. They are children, not test scores. I agree with Brené Brown who suggests

that, "...we stop dehumanizing people" (Brown, 2012). In our profession, we need to stop dehumanizing children by teaching to the test, and instead help them embrace their individuality, and love learning.

Brown, B. (2012). *Daring greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead*. New York, NY: Gotham Books.

Dr. Concetta Lupo is a 2014 PASCD Emerging Leader and serves as principal of Blue Bell Elementary School, in the Wissahickon School District. In addition, Dr. Lupo is also adjunct faculty at Gwynedd Mercy University for the graduate and doctoral programs. Dr. Lupo has been in the field of education since 1997 and has taught students at every level from K-12. She has served as a reading specialist, union representative, staff developer, curriculum developer and supervisor, and director of federal grants, as well as principal. She is a happily married mother of two young sons and is deeply concerned and passionate about the educational system in the state of PA and the country overall. Dr. Lupo can be contacted at [Concetta.lupo@outlook.com](mailto:Concetta.lupo@outlook.com).



## PASCD Member Spotlight

Testimonial for PASCD  
Tracy P. Hinish, D. Ed.



2015 marks my 31<sup>st</sup> year in education. My experiences have been numerous and diverse as I have served as an elementary teacher, a building principal, and an intermediate assistant executive director. In all these capacities, PASCD as a statewide organization, has provided me with current professional development and valuable networking opportunities through national, state, and regional events. In the past I have regularly attended the state conference, and I have also had the good fortune of attending some of the national curriculum conferences. These have been excellent professional development experiences for me that have promoted innovative and invigorating ideas.

PASCD historically attracts committed educators who are dedicated to enhancing children's lives. Having served on statewide and regional committees for PASCD, it is obvious that PASCD is a resourceful organization that serves all levels of educators. I have been a member since I started my teaching career and will remain a member as long as I am employed in the field of education.

## PASCD Online Leadership Academy

### Earn 30 Act 45 Credit Hours

Curriculum Leadership 101 is designed for administrators who are interested in the development, implementation and evaluation of curriculum, instruction and assessment in the district. This is an Act 45 approved professional development opportunity worth 30 Act 45 hours.

Curriculum Leadership Academy is a program designed to provide in-depth learning and networking opportunities that develop curriculum leadership. Curriculum design, development, implementation, and evaluation have become complex processes in today's schools. New school leaders assigned curriculum leadership duties are often placed in such roles without all the prerequisite knowledge and skills. The PASCD Curriculum Leadership Academy was designed to help these educators gain a deeper understanding of how to get started. Strategies and techniques to be successful, resources that are available, and how to continue to improve in a variety of areas of curriculum leadership will be addressed. A list of upcoming Curriculum Leadership Academies are listed below.

### Target Audience:

- Central Office Administrators, Principals, Assistant Principals, Educational Leaders interested in curriculum development.

### What is the Format of the Online Curriculum Leadership Academies:

- PASCD's Online Curriculum Leadership Academy allows participants to work at their own pace asynchronously in our online learning management system (Blackboard). Participants will respond to discussion board posts, review relevant presentations, and submit job-embedded assignments.

### Upcoming Online Curriculum Leadership Academies:

- Winter session begins on Saturday, February 28th and ends on Sunday, April 12th. [Click here to register](#)  
Registration ends on Friday, February 20th.
- Spring Session begins on Saturday, April 4th and ends on Sunday, May 17th. [Click here to register](#)  
Registration ends on Friday, March 27th.

### Unit and Lesson Overview:

#### *Unit 1: Developing and Revising the Curriculum*

- Lesson 1: Curriculum Leadership
- Lesson 2: Curriculum Cycles
- Lesson 3: Standards Aligned System (SAS)

#### *Unit 2: Implementing the Curriculum*

- Lesson 1: Best Practices in Curriculum Design
- Lesson 2: Communicating the Curriculum
- Lesson 3: Staff Development
- Lesson 4: Technology

#### *Unit 3: Evaluating the Curriculum*

- Lesson 1: Data
- Lesson 2: Evaluation Cycle
- Lesson 3: Self-Assessment

### Costs:

\$400 for PASCD Members  
\$465 for non-PASCD Members  
For more information, please contact our executive director Dr. Richard Nilsen, [rnilsen\\_pascd@comcast.net](mailto:rnilsen_pascd@comcast.net)

## Meet the PASCD Emerging Leaders

Nicole Avon, Mars Area School District, Physics Teacher

Melanie Berlin, Mastery Charter School Mann Elementary, Kindergarten Teacher

Kristen Craig, Mariana Bracetti Academy Charter School, English Curriculum Coordinator, K-8 and Reading Specialist

Christian Ehrhart, Spring Grove Area School District, Teacher

Christine Fleming-Hirshka, Hatboro Horsham School District, Gifted Support Specialist

James Gallagher, Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Colleen Hinrichsen, Mars Area School District, Elementary Teacher

Lisa Hoffman, Quakertown Community School District, Supervisor of Curriculum and Professional Development

Rebecca Hoffmann, Mars Area School District, English Teacher

Megan Howard, Girard School District, Elementary Teacher

Concetta Lupo, Wissahickon School District, Elementary Principal

Jessica Shupik, Bensalem Township School District, Curriculum Coordinator and English Teacher

Jennifer Ward, Haverford Township School District, English Teacher

Geri Capreri Wilkocz, Souderton School District, Teacher/Literacy Specialist

Felix Yerace, South Fayette Township School District, Teacher