



University of Pittsburgh

# THE FORUM

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TRI-STATE AREA SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL

*Seeking ways to increase organizational capacity in schools through problem solving, technical service, and staff development so all students will be better prepared to make contributions to both our democratic society and the world community*

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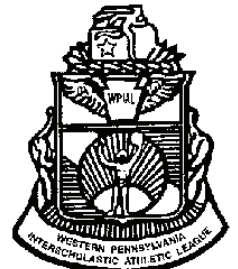
## Tri-State Workshops

### Annual NCAA Update



Tri-State, in cooperation with the University of Pittsburgh Department of Athletics and the Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League, is pleased to once again host the Annual NCAA Update on **October 7**, at the Petersen Events Center in Oakland. We encourage athletic directors, high school principals, guidance counselors, and coaches to attend this informative morning workshop. The workshop has been approved for 2 hours of Act 48 credit.

Featured speakers Zac Saunders, Assistant Athletic Director for Compliance and Sport, and Amy Badorf, Director of Eligibility and Compliance, will present on recent changes NCAA rules for initial eligibility, NCAA Eligibility Center requirements, non-traditional coursework, recruiting, charter and cyber schools, and other hot topics. Tim O'Malley, Executive Director of WPIAL, will be in attendance to discuss his organizations bylaw updates and AD issues. A second session will be led by Pitt's Chief Enrollment Officer Marc Harding, and Director of Strategic Planning and Operations Kellie Kane. The two will discuss the changes/updates for the SAT exams and give an overview of the ACTs.



With yearly changes and adjustments to the NCAA eligibility rules and regulations, it is important to stay up to date to ensure student athletes are in compliance and able to continue to participate. We are pleased to be able to host this important workshop in conjunction with Pitt Athletics and WPIAL. For more information on this workshop, or to register, visit [https://tristate.pitt.edu/?page\\_id=47](https://tristate.pitt.edu/?page_id=47). ♦

### Legal & Policy Issues—New Session Added

The 2014-2015 Legal & Policy Issues Facing School Administrators workshops series kicks off on **October 23** at Westminster College.

The newly extended full-day workshop will feature three morning presentations by Dr. Joseph Dimperio, JD, Dr. Chester Kent, JD, and Dr. Lawrence Korchnack and a new afternoon session led by Ira Weiss, Esq., and Jocelyn Kramer, Esq., from the law offices of Weiss Burkardt Kramer, LLC. Topics include zero tolerance issues, sexual misconduct and disciplinary changes, insight and issues into the new evaluation system, and gender bias.

Visit [https://tristate.pitt.edu/?page\\_id=58](https://tristate.pitt.edu/?page_id=58). The workshop has been approved for of Act 48 credit. ♦

# Tri-State Research Brief

## Opportunities for Class Discussion in English and Language Arts

Professor Sean Kelly, PhD, & Laura Northrop, University of Pittsburgh

Frameworks for the evaluation of teaching stress the importance of classroom discourse in creating an optimal learning environment. When teachers communicate with students, do they encourage students to think deeply about classroom content? Do students have an opportunity to share their ideas in class and to connect new material to what they already know? Do teachers provide opportunities for free exchanges of information, where students can “try out” explanations and interpretations in a supportive environment? Questioning and discussion practices play an important role in fostering student engagement and conveying expectations for in-depth thinking.

In *Inspiring dialogue: Talking to learn in the English Classroom* (available since 2013 from Teachers College Press), Mary Juzwik and her colleagues report findings from their research on classroom discourse in beginning English teachers’ classrooms. As in prior research, Juzwik finds that generating productive classroom discussions—one’s in which student participation is widespread—is not easy, even when a teacher may have that as her goal. Rather, engaging, analytic discussions occur when teachers have planned for them, using a variety of “tools” or strategies to scaffold students into talking to learn.

During the 2013-2014 school year, Tri-State conducted a study of instruction in 6-8 grade English and language arts. In this research brief, we report results on teachers’ instructional activities, discussion strategies, and student engagement during 125 class sessions from 32 teachers in nine Tri-State Districts.

Teachers in the Tri-State area use a variety of instructional activities in their middle school classrooms, and often use more than one technique during each class period. In particular, teachers use a combination of question & answer, seatwork, and lecture in the majority of their lessons. Of particular note here is the use of question & answer as an instructional practice, as well as the prevalence of open-ended discussions. In the class sessions we collected data on, teachers report that approximately 65% of the lessons included student discussion.

Consistent with the research on talking to learn in *Inspiring dialogue*, Tri-State teachers report using specific strategies to generate discussion and to organize student participation during the discussion. Indeed, discussions were unlikely to occur without such planning taking place. Table 1 summarizes teachers’ use of various discussion strategies during the 2013-2014 school year; note that teachers often reported using multiple strategies simultaneously in a given lesson.

Several instructional themes are of interest in Table 1. First, although the traditional classroom set up of spaced rows of desks works well for lecture, and for monitoring seatwork, Tri-state teachers often took the time to re-organize the classroom space to facilitate discussion. Having students sit where they can see one another helps students to take each other’s’ ideas seriously, and helps the teacher to step out of the “expert

**Table 1: Percentage of Discussions Using these Strategies:**

| <u>Discussion Strategy</u>   | <u>Percent</u> |
|--|----------------|
| Having students write to prepare to participate                            | 67%            |
| Having students work in pairs or small groups                              | 43%            |
| Having students sit where they can see one another (e.g. in a circle)      | 40%            |
| Talking with students about norms and expectations for discussion          | 35%            |
| Having students do drama activities, role playing, or a talk show          | 16%            |
| Having students prepare for and lead a class discussion or debate          | 14%            |
| A system such as “Four Corners” or “Stand and Deliver” with specific rules | 7%             |
| Using student-passed objects or other tokens to choose the next speaker    | 2%             |

evaluator” role. Second, it was not uncommon for teachers to shift roles entirely, asking the class itself to take charge in a debate or drama activity. Third, 67% of discussions were facilitated by pre-writing tasks, which can be a highly effective way to give students time to develop their own thoughts in preparation for whole-class or small-group discussions. For example, having students respond to a question, idea, statement, or quote in a writing prompt requires advance preparation, but is likely to improve the quality of discussions about texts. Finally, Tri-State teachers occasionally relied on specific tools or techniques to promote an orderly, respectful discussion, such as a pass-toy, which puts students in charge of the flow of discussion.

In addition to instructional content and methods, teachers were also asked to describe the level of student engagement during each lesson. During discussions, teachers report that students were eager to participate in the discussion (85%) and that participation was evenly spread across all students in the class (83%). More generally, teachers report that students in the Tri-State area are mostly engaged in their English Language Arts classes. However, there is some evidence that English lessons elicit higher levels of concentration than enjoyment; teachers describe 31% of lessons as having “a great deal of student concentration,” while only 23% of lessons are described as having a great deal of student enjoyment.

Many Tri-State English and language arts teachers are currently working to align their lessons with new content standards. Within this context, we believe that “talking to learn” can be an engaging and efficient method of helping students to understand and practice effective argumentation, a core goal of new content standards (Juzwik et al., 2013). Planning for rich classroom discussions should be a continued emphasis among Tri-State English teachers. ♦

Juzwik, M. M., Borsheim-Black, C., Caughlan, S., & Heintz, A. (2013). *Inspiring dialogue: Talking to learn in the English classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press

## Local Education News & Events



### GREEN & HEALTHY SCHOOLS ACADEMY

An Initiative of Green Building Alliance

#### Introducing the Green & Healthy Schools Academy

The Green & Healthy Schools Academy (GHSA) is committed to providing inspiring, engaging, healthy, and high-performing places of learning for all students. We do that by working with schools and districts on a variety of levels to inspire, educate, and support action towards green and healthy schools. GHSA is aligned with the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools program, which seeks to create learning institutions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that reduce environmental impact, provide healthy learning environments for students and teachers, and prepare students for college and career pathways. Our efforts are structured to help schools excel in these three areas and beyond. These programs include: School Sustainability Culture Program, Healthy Schools Technical Assistance, Healthy & High Performing School Design Technical Assistance, and Green Apple Day of Service. Please visit our [website](#) to learn more or emails us at [schools@gbapgh.org](mailto:schools@gbapgh.org) to find out how we can help you!

#### Green Schools Success: Chartiers Valley Middle School



*CV MS students pose with the wind turbine*

Over the course of 2013 and 2014, Chartiers Valley School District completed the design, installation, and startup of a small wind turbine at Chartiers Valley Middle School in Collier Township. The turbine is located prominently at the edge of the school property overlooking I-79, and provides enough renewable and locally produced energy to power the LED marquee sign that faces onto the interstate. The project was part of the school's Gateway to Technology program and a collaboration between

school administrators, engineering teachers, and municipal officials. Collier Township officials were involved in the project, which ultimately saw the purchase of a Skystream 3.7 wind turbine with the help of a Great Ideas Grant from the Consortium for Public Education. The turbine is a part of the Gateway to Technology curriculum at Chartiers Valley and offers a real-life learning opportunity for the middle school students. It is also partially the result of the school's participation in GHSA's School Sustainability Culture Program from 2012 to 2014. Hopefully the turbine will be the first of several projects aimed at improving the health and performance of CV's schools and we congratulate them!

#### Green Apple Day of Service is Back!

The Green Apple Day of Service is a national initiative that promotes service projects that give parents, teachers, students, companies, and local organizations the opportunity to transform all schools into healthy, safe, and productive learning environments. Projects are small and short-term, typically one to several days, and are intended to draw in the community for school improvement collaboration. GHSA is coordinating the Day of Service for Western Pennsylvania and has developed a number of projects on energy conservation and air quality to make it easy for schools to participate. Schools can also create their own project ideas and be provided with limited assistance via GHSA. Visit [greenandhealthyschoolsacademy.org](http://greenandhealthyschoolsacademy.org) to find out more, and spread the word in your school and community!

#### Upcoming Events

Throughout the year, GHSA will host workshops that focus on green and healthy schools:

- October: Basics of School Energy Conservation
- November: Healthy and High-Performance Cleaning Programs
- January: Cost-Effective Strategies for Good Indoor Air Quality
- February: Healthy HVAC Practices
- March: Designing Schools to Promote Health

Our Inspire Speakers Series features national and local experts on various topics focused on sustainability. These events take place on the second Thursday of each month from October – December 2014 and March – May 2015 from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Kaufmann Center. Learn more at [go-gba.org/inspire](http://go-gba.org/inspire).

Visit our [website](#) to find out more about these and other educational events!

# Tri-State Workshops

## Sociology for Social Studies Fall Workshop—October 20-21



This fall, high school social studies teachers from selected Tri-State districts will participate in a two-day professional development event at the University of Pittsburgh. The Pitt Sociology for Social Studies Fall Workshop is designed to help social studies teachers incorporate sociological concepts and

skills into the curriculum. Day one of the workshop offers presentations by nationally recognized sociologists on core ideas in the discipline and opportunities for engaging classroom projects in sociology. On day two of the workshop participating teachers will share existing lesson plans and units, and receive hands-on training in how to incorporate sociological concepts, methods, and data into their curriculum. All workshop activities are presented with a clear focus on the new C3 Framework Sociology Standards for High School developed by the American Sociological Association and the National Council for the Social Studies.

A primary goal of the workshop is to reinvigorate secondary school educators' interest in disciplinary concepts and skills from sociology. Why sociology? As a discipline, sociology has several attributes that support student learning in social studies. Sociology seeks to elucidate the relationship between our private experiences, thoughts, and behaviors, and the groups, cultures, organizations, and institutions to which we belong. Students find exploring this "two-way connection" between the self and society an engaging addition to their learning. Sociology asks students to examine the role of social structures in generating and ameliorating social problems. In so doing, it complements traditional emphases on the individual in the high school study of history, encouraging students to question how social institutions have developed over time. Sociology also encourages the application of robust research methods in social studies. Yet, importantly, sociological methods are notably diverse in the disciplinary skills they build on; teachers can design projects that use surveys, interviews, experiments, observations, and other approaches, individually or in combination with one another, to allow students to explore how their social world works. Many students find sociological inquiry attractive because this diversity of methods cultivates a "multiple-ability orientation" towards social studies.

The workshop will take place at the University of Pittsburgh on October 20th and 21st. Workshop activities will include:

- ◆ An overview of resources for high school sociology: Contexts; Teaching Sociology; and ASA's Web Resources—Margaret Vitullo & Jean Shin (American Sociological Association)
- ◆ The sociological perspective and methods of inquiry—Christian Caron (University of Toronto)
- ◆ Social structure: Culture, institutions, and society—Nicholas Rowland (Pennsylvania State University-Altoona)
- ◆ Sociology in literature: Primary text and film resources for social studies—Kathryn Felty (University of Akron)
- ◆ Social relationships: Self, groups, and socialization—Jessica Collett (University of Notre Dame)
- ◆ Stratification and inequality—Wynne Wright (Michigan State University)
- ◆ Guided urban hike of Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh—John Weidman (University of Pittsburgh)
- ◆ Data resources for high school sociology: Where to get it and what students can do with it?—Sean Kelly, University of Pittsburgh
- ◆ Integrating sociology into traditional social studies subjects: Student-centered activities to meet C3 goals (Adam Rossi, Burrell High School; Michael Lovorn, University of Pittsburgh)
- ◆ Breakout sessions on lesson unit development to meet C3 standards

The 2014 Pitt Sociology for Social Studies Fall Workshop is made possible by a grant from the American Sociological Association and National Science Foundation. The workshop is chaired by Sean Kelly (Administrative and Policy Studies) and Michael Lovorn (Department of Instruction and Learning) and supported by an organizing team of: Diane Kirk (Administrative and Policy Studies), Adam Rossi (Burrell High School), John Weidman (Administrative and Policy Studies), and Melanie Hughes (Department of Sociology).

If you are interested in participating in the workshop please contact Michael Lovorn ([mlovorn@pitt.edu](mailto:mlovorn@pitt.edu)) to see if any openings remain. ◆

To learn more about the workshop visit:  
<http://www.education.pitt.edu/AboutUs/NewsEvents/ViewDetail/tabid/1152/ArticleId/338/New-Workshop-on-Incorporating-Sociological-Skills-into-Social-Studies-Teaching-Set-for-Fall-2014.aspx>

To learn more about the C3 Standards for Social Studies visit: <http://www.socialstudies.org/c3>

To learn more about resources for high school sociology (some resources available only to ASA members, high school teachers can join for a low rate) visit:  
<http://www.asanet.org/teaching/resources.cfm>



# Education News Round-Up

## [Governor Corbett Calls on State Board of Education to Conduct a Public Review of Pennsylvania's Academic Standards](#)

*Pennsylvania Department of Education*

Sept. 8 – Harrisburg – Gov. Corbett today announced that he has asked for a continued public review of Pennsylvania-specific academic content in English language arts and mathematics standards from Kindergarten through 12th grade. This is the final phase in his nearly three year effort to permanently roll back the national Common Core plan implemented by his predecessor, Gov. Ed Rendell.

“Though Common Core began as a state-led initiative to ensure our public schools met the educational standards needed in the 21st century economy, the process has been overly influenced by the federal government,” Gov. Corbett said. “Common Core has become nothing more than a top-down takeover of the education system. It is nothing more than Obamacare for education.”

## [State committee to hold hearings on Corbett's Common Core announcement](#)

*York Daily Record, ydr.com*

The state House Education Committee will hold two hearings on Gov. Tom Corbett's recent announcement that he wants review of the state's academic standards, according to a news release.

Corbett recently said he wants continuing review in order to "roll back" the Common Core.

From 9 to 11 a.m. Sept. 24, acting education Secretary Carolyn Dumaresq and Jennifer Branstetter, policy secretary, were invited to explain Corbett's position. From 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Oct. 14, members of state groups that represent school boards, school administrators and teachers have been invited to discuss the effects of Corbett's recent announcement, the release says.

The hearings will take place in the Majority Caucus Room, Room 140, at the Main Capitol building in Harrisburg, or they can be watched online at [www.paulclymer.com](http://www.paulclymer.com) or [www.pahousegop.com](http://www.pahousegop.com).

## [School districts need relief from outdated, complex PlanCon process](#)

*Pennsylvania School Boards Association*

Representatives of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association joined with Rep. Seth Grove (R-York) today to call for the General Assembly to pass legislation that will simplify the school construction reimbursement process during a news conference at the State Capitol. ...

## Child Protective Services Law

### [Child Protection Services Law Amendments Change Requirements for Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse](#)

*The Hospital & Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania*

Several pieces of legislation recently have been signed into law in Pennsylvania that change the requirements for mandated reporting of suspected child abuse.

- ◆ Child abuse education and training—[Act 31 of 2014](#)
- ◆ Mandatory reporters—[Act 32 of 2014](#)
- ◆ Responsibilities for reporting suspected child abuse—[Act 33 of 2014](#)
- ◆ Whistleblower protection—[Act 34 of 2014](#)

### [PSBA Webinar on Child Protective Services Law](#)

Thursday, Sept. 18, 1 p.m and 7 p.m.

Join PSBA's Katherine Fitz-Patrick, Esq for **Amendments to the Child Protective Services Law**. This informative webinar will help you navigate Pennsylvania's new laws that provide strengthened protections regarding child abuse.

HB 2124, sponsored by Rep. Grove, establishes Accountability and Reducing Costs in Construction Process (ARC Con), an efficient approval process that replaces the PlanCon requirements with just five benchmark steps. Under the new ARC Con process, paperwork is streamlined, an online database makes all aspects transparent, and school districts are reimbursed in the order their completed paperwork is received. In addition, school districts will be able to submit paperwork electronically, reducing time and costs for school districts and PDE.

### [FCC approves E-Rate modernization plan](#)

*American School & University*

A proposal to modernize the nearly two-decade-old federal E-Rate program for schools and libraries was approved Friday, dedicating \$2 billion in reserve funding to improve wireless access in the classroom over the next two years.

The vote is a move Federal Communications Commission Chairman Tom Wheeler said will affect 10 million students next year and begin to close the Wi-Fi gap in many schools and libraries.

## Tri-State Area School Study Council Calendar of Events

### Annual NCAA Update

October 7, 2014, Petersen Events Center

### Legal & Policy Issues Facing School Administrators in 2013-2014

October 23, 2014, Westminster College

### Sociology for Social Studies

October 20-21, 2014, University of Pittsburgh

### 66<sup>th</sup> Annual School Board and Distinguished Educator Banquet

March 2015, Edgewood Country Club

### Enhancing School Governance and Management

March 2015, Edgewood Country Club

### 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Dr. Jean E. Winsand School Leadership Institute for Women in School Leadership

April 2015, Edgewood Country Club

### 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Dr. Samuel Francis School Law Symposium and Special Education Workshop

June 17, 2015, The University Club

## Executive Committee Meetings

Edgewood Country Club, Noon-2pm

September 17, 2014

December 10, 2014

March 11, 2015

June 25, 2015



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*The Forum is a publication of the Tri-State Area School Study Council. Your comments and suggestions of topics for future publications are always welcome.*

*The information in The Forum is for the general knowledge of the reader. For more specific information, rely on the advice of your solicitor.*