



University of Pittsburgh

THE FORUM

Volume 21, Issue 1

Fall 2015

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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

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
4302 WW POSVAR HALL
230 S BOUQUET ST
PITTSBURGH, PA 15260

PHONE - 412.648.3907
PHONE - 412.648.7175
FAX - 412.648.7185

TRISTATE@PITT.EDU

TRISTATE.PITT.EDU

Tri-State Workshops

Social Media and Educator Ethics

Attorneys from **Weiss Burkardt and Kramer LLC** will present a topical and informative workshop focused on social media issues and educator ethics on **October 8** at the Edgewood Country Club.



The presentation, "Developing a Social Media Student Contact Policy and Addressing Issues of Educator Ethics", will focus on recent cases and will seek to help school districts better educate administrators and teachers on the proper use of social media. Visit https://tristate.pitt.edu/?page_id=453 to download the flyer and registration. ♦

Principal Leadership Institute Workshops

The Principal Leadership Institute, in cooperation with the Tri-State Area School Study Council, is pleased to invite all member districts to participate in the Principal Leadership Institute Workshops for the 2015-2016 school year.

The series, made up of four workshops focused on **Inspiring Leadership, the Technology Movement, Instruction and Learning, and Legal Issues**, will seek to foster a strong network for participating administrators and provide a strong professional development experience.

The first workshop will be held at South Fayette Intermediate School on **October 29**. The workshop fee is \$500 per principal leader for four programs. The deadline to apply for the program has been extended to **September 30**. Visit https://tristate.pitt.edu/?page_id=469 to download the application. ♦

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 20**, at the Petersen Events Center in Oakland.

New this year will be a panel discussion session on NCAA Initial Eligibility and Recruiting at the Division I Level. Speakers include University of Pittsburgh Coaches, Athletics Staff, and NCAA Eligibility Associate Director Donna Hedges

We encourage athletic directors, high school principals, guidance counselors, and coaches to attend this informative morning workshop. For more information on this workshop, or to register, visit https://tristate.pitt.edu/?page_id=47. ♦

Tri-State News

Executive Committee Update

Tri-State welcomed five new members at the back-to-school committee meeting on Wednesday, September 16. The new members are each from a different county and helped to better balance regional representation on our Board. We welcome these new faces and are so pleased to have them join the committee.



Matthew Curci, Apollo-Ridge, Armstrong Co.
John Mastillo, Blacklick Valley, Cambria Co.
Heidi Ondek, Quaker Valley, Allegheny Co.



Gennaro Piraino, Franklin Regional, Westmoreland Co.
Tracy Vitale, Seneca Valley, Butler Co.

Tri-State Staff Changes

Jeff Arthur has left Tri-State to join his brother in his new ticket brokering business. Jeff started his career as a student worker in Dean's Office of the School of Education in fall 2006. After graduation, he worked in Administrative and Policy Studies before moving to his position as part of our administrative support team in 2010. He will be greatly missed and we wish him the very best in his new position.

Amanda Mitchell has assumed Jeff's finance and contract responsibilities in addition to her existing role as communication and events manager. Our office hours will remain the same—8:00am-4:30pm—as will our contact numbers and email. ♦

ED News Round-Up

PSBA's Budget Coverage

www.psba.org/issue/budget-2015/

The Pennsylvania School Board Association has created a wonderful resource for news and updates on the state budget.

School of Education Dean Announces Retirement

Alan Lesgold, dean of the School of Education and a member of the University of Pittsburgh's Council of Deans since 2000, will step down as dean in August 2016. Under Lesgold's leadership, the School of Education has embraced long-term strategic planning, successfully redesigned key programs to meet student needs, and continued to foster research of impact among its faculty.

Report Highlights Epidemic of Chronic Absences

from Education News, 9/8/15

[Read the full report here](#) *Attendance Works*

A new report suggests that significant education achievement gaps present across the country exist due to the increasing frequency of chronic absenteeism, especially among low-income and minority students.

While school districts typically focus on students who skip school, the report, put together by nonprofits Attendance Works and the Healthy Schools Campaign, argue that [absenteeism rates among kindergartners are almost as high as among high school freshmen](#). According to the report, 1 in 10 kindergarten students misses about 18 days of school – almost an entire month – each year.

Teacher's Blog Disparaging Students Is Not Protected Speech, Appeals Court Rules

from Education Week, 9/8/15

A federal appeals court has ruled that a Pennsylvania teacher who disparaged students and parents in personal blog posts was not protected by the First Amendment from dismissal by her school district.

Pennsylvania sees rise in homeless students

from the Pittsburgh Post Gazette, 9/15/15

The number of homeless students attending public school in Pennsylvania increased by 18 percent between the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years — an increase more than double the national average of 8 percent, according to statistics reported by the U.S. Department of Education.

Title IX Update: My Summer Experience with Pennsylvania's Equity in Interscholastic Disclosure Law

By, Emily Szopinski*, Summer Intern at the Women's Law Project

Before my freshman year of college, I had never even swum in the ocean. Because of lacrosse, I have been able to travel all across the country and visit both oceans in the same season. My experiences from playing lacrosse in college have been amazing and have truly shaped my college experience. In my time playing lacrosse I have put in hard work, had many leadership opportunities, and had so much fun that I would not trade it for anything.

I am so grateful that lacrosse has granted me so many opportunities over the years, but I know that not all girls have the same chances that I did. After working extensively with athletics data during my internship with the Women's Law Project this summer, I learned that high schools, middle schools and junior highs in Pennsylvania are lacking so many athletic positions for girls it would often take the creation of three or four new girls' teams to give girls the same number of athletic opportunities that boys have. As lacrosse had such an impact on my own life, the huge number of girls who are denied the opportunity to be a part of a team is incredibly troubling.

In 2012, Pennsylvania passed the Equity in Interscholastic Athletics Disclosure law which requires all public high schools, middle schools, and junior highs across the state to report a range of data about school athletic programs, including the number of athletic positions offered to boys and girls. This data is supposed to be publicly available and accessible, and should allow parents, students and community members in Pennsylvania to see if their school districts are providing equal opportunities for each gender. If properly enforced, this law should make the athletic programs of schools more transparent and allow students and families to see when girls are not being granted equality in athletic programming. Having this type of legislation when I was in high school would have been crucial when, at times, I felt our school was treating girls' athletics unfairly.

The enforcement of this important bill has been appalling, however, and the publicly available data is by no means accessible. Put into spreadsheets with thousands of rows, most of which are empty, the data is nearly impossible to read or easily interpret. Without trying to pull relevant information out of large and hard to read spreadsheets and individually calculating each school's disparities, there is no clear way to determine whether or not a school is providing equal opportunities for boys and girls.

Additionally, the Department of Education failed to post the data from the 2013-14 school year in a timely manner, despite several requests from the Women's Law Project. After they were posted nearly nine months late, the data was presented in the same complicated and unreadable format as the previous year. And what data we were able to pull out and analyze after much effort shows a real problem: Pennsylvania is missing thousands of athletic positions for girls. Countless schools across the state have massive Title IX violations and are not being held accountable.

The passage of the Equity in Interscholastic Athletics Disclosure law was a huge win for women and girls in Pennsylvania. It created a tool that I wish I had in high school. Allowing residents of Pennsylvania to check on their schools to ensure that they are providing equal opportunities to boys and girls is a great step towards gender equality. And while Pennsylvania took an important step in passing the law, the state's failure to timely and effectively convey the reported data to the public is a disservice to the girls of Pennsylvania.

I have been incredibly lucky to be a part of so many great teams, and I believe everyone has the right to these same opportunities. Participation in sports can have such a positive influence on a person's life, and providing these opportunities to young girls is essential. Providing athletic opportunities to girls allows them to grow up with confidence and enjoy the fun of being a part of a team. It is vital for girls to be granted equal opportunities, and providing the proper tools to ensure athletic equality is essential to the wellbeing and future of young girls. ♦

** Emily was a summer intern with the Women's Law Project during the summer of 2015. She is a junior at the University of Pittsburgh studying political science and sociology. She is the president of Pitt's women's club lacrosse team and has been playing lacrosse since 7th grade.*

Women's Law Project Western Pennsylvania
401 Wood Street, Suite 1020, Pittsburgh, PA 15222
(412) 281-2892, infopitt@womenslawproject.org
www.womenslawproject.org

Green & Healthy Schools Academy

An Initiative of the Green Building Alliance

The Green & Healthy Schools Academy is helping to cultivate inspiring, engaging, healthy, and high-performing places of learning in Western Pennsylvania.

Green Schools Conference & Expo – March 31 – April 1, 2016 - Pittsburgh, PA

Mark your calendars—the national green schools conference is coming to Pittsburgh in 2016! It is the only national-scale summit devoted to healthy and high-performing schools, so don't miss this opportunity to have your staff attend while it is right here. Green & Healthy Schools Academy will serve as the local host and it is our goal to make it the most engaging, inspiring, and experiential green schools conference to date. You can visit <http://greenschoolsconference.org> in the weeks and months to come to see updates on educational sessions being offered, including several from schools in our area. We hope to secure funding to significantly reduce the registration cost for local educators.

Green & Healthy Schools Workshop Series

If you weren't able to attend any of our Green & Healthy School workshops last school year, fear not, you can still catch up! In upcoming months, we will post several of our prior workshops as webinars on our website. We also plan to host an additional two or three workshops this school year in partnership with the Western Pennsylvania School Facility Directors Forum. If you have any suggestions of topics you would like to learn about, please feel free to contact us or complete our short online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GHSAWorkshops>.

Find Service Learning Projects through GADSIX!

We believe service learning is an excellent model for creating innovative, informative experiences that bring together both a hands-on and educational lesson, while positively impacting communities. That is why we developed the Green Apple Day of Service Idea Exchange (GADSIX!) to engage students and communities in creating engaging, inspiring, healthy, and high-performing places of learning that are essential to cultivating 21st century citizens. GADSIX! is a collection of over a dozen service learning projects, created in partnership with regional nonprofits, that are available to schools at no cost! To view the complete list of projects available this year, visit <http://go-gba.org/GADSIX>—then let us know how we can help make your project a success! You can contact us directly by email (schools@gbapgh.org) if you would like to learn more.

School Sustainability Culture Program Information Session

In the Summer 2015 Tri-State Newsletter, we described our School Sustainability Culture Program as a learning community and leadership development program that helps schools create thriving students, schools, and communities by integrating sustainability into their culture, facilities, and curriculum. We are recruiting for the cohort of schools to start in October 2016 and plan to host a breakfast informational session in late January 2016. This will be an opportunity to learn more about the program, speak with current and past participants, and ask any questions you may have. The exact date and location are still to be determined, but if you are interested in being notified about it, please email schools@gbapgh.org.

Share Your Successes

We would love to highlight an outstanding or innovative program at your school! We're eager to find and share successes, so please contact us if you have an ongoing program on energy or water management, waste reduction, indoor air quality, outdoor education, experiential learning, or other model program. We can document it through a case study in this newsletter and on the Green & Healthy Schools Academy website. Contact us at schools@gbapgh.org so we can learn more about it!

Join Our Newsletter

We are ready to launch a regular email newsletter for Green & Healthy Schools Academy events, programs, and special opportunities. We hope you will connect with us and be part of our movement! Email schools@gbapgh.org or visit <http://greenandhealthyschoolsacademy.org> to sign up. We promise not to clutter your inbox and will only send emails approximately every one or two months.



Tri-State Area School Study Council Calendar of Events

Social Media and Educator Ethics

October 8, 2015, Edgewood Country Club

Annual NCAA Update

October 20, 2015, Petersen Events Center

Principal Leadership Institute: Workshop 1

October 29, 2015, South Fayette Township

Principal Leadership Institute: Workshop 2

December 3, 2015

Principal Leadership Institute: Workshop 3

March 3, 2016

67th Annual School Board and Distinguished Educator Banquet

March 17, 2016, Edgewood Country Club

Enhancing School Governance and Management with PASA and PSBA

March 18, 2016, Edgewood Country Club

13th Annual Dr. Jean E. Winsand School Leadership Institute for Women in School Leadership

April 6, 2016, Edgewood Country Club

Principal Leadership Institute: Workshop 4

May 5, 2016

18th Annual Dr. Samuel Francis School Law Symposium and Special Education Workshop

June 15, 2016, The University Club

Executive Committee Meetings

December 1, 2015

March 9, 2016

June 22, 2016



Tri-State Area School Study Council

University of Pittsburgh
4302 Wesley W. Posvar Hall
230 South Bouquet Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Phone (412) 648-3907

Phone (412) 648-7175

Fax (412) 648-7185

tristate@pitt.edu

<https://tristate.pitt.edu>

Director

Dr. Diane L. Kirk

Associate Professor, School of Education

Office Staff

Amanda Mitchell, Administrator

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.