



THE EDUCATOR

Newsletter of the Arlington Teachers' Association

VOLUME 7, ISSUE III

DECEMBER 2016

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Fa La La La La APPR

In the following pages of this newsletter you will find articles pertaining to two very different aspects of the job of an educator:

APPR and the drive to spread kindness and joy to others. While it may be tempting to skip over the section about the new state regulations, unfortunately, if we do not fulfill those aspects of our job we will

lose some of the opportunities that we have to enjoy the others.

So, please, take heed of the testing and observation requirements that we must fulfill, but then turn the page and revel in the fun that was had at our annual children's holiday party and be inspired

by the awesome accomplishments and charitable feats of our colleagues.

Recently, teachers at the Arthur S. May School

Let us fight the onslaught of negativity in the news and elicit the humanity in all whom we encounter this holiday season, and beyond. (And, hey, that must count toward part of the Danielson Rubric too...)

organized a massive "shoe box" gift drive to benefit Dutchess Outreach. Arlington High School educators have spearheaded an effort to sponsor 33 district families for the holidays. In addition, our annual dress-down day before Thanksgiving raised \$1748 for the Children's

Home of Poughkeepsie.

There are many other holiday gift, food, and clothing drives going on at all of our schools, augmenting the little things that we always have on hand to give students in need.

An act of kindness does not have to be material, like buying a gift; it can just be spreading the innate tolerance that we exhibit in the classroom. Let us fight the onslaught of negativity in the news and elicit the humanity in all whom we encounter this holiday season, and beyond. (And, hey, that must count toward part of the Danielson Rubric too...)

-Sam Falk, editor



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Trivia Challenge

Answer the question below correctly and you could be the proud winner of ATA gear!

What is the average annual snowfall for Poughkeepsie?

Last month's winner, selected at random from among the correct responses received, was **Aimee Oxford** from UVMS. She correctly identified **1863** as the year when Thanksgiving was first recognized as a national holiday. She will be the proud owner of ATA gear.

Submit your answer to the above trivia question to rmchugh@acsdny.org by December 23. The winner will be randomly selected from the correct submissions.

New APPR System Starts Now

During the first week of December, the ATA and the District reached an agreement on the few APPR details that were negotiable under the new state education law (3012-d) enacted in 2015. The following is a short summary of how the new system compares to the old. We urge you to read all of the details in the copy of the full agreement that will be provided to you by the District soon.

Old APPR System (3012-c)

20% state provided growth score or locally developed analogue
 20% locally assessed measures of student performance
 + 60% "other measures" (PGP and observations)

 Composite Score (and HEDI Rating)

New APPR System (3012-d)

All educators receive two HEDI ratings; one based on student performance, the other on observations. The combination of results using the state-provided matrix determines overall HEDI rating.

New Student Performance Category

- Requires the use of a state-provided growth score, if available; otherwise requires the use of a student learning objective (SLO).
- No additional local component.
- Back-up SLOs must be in place in case there are not enough test results for SED to generate growth scores.
- In 2015 a four year moratorium on the consequences of using the 3-8 ELA and Math Common Core state assessments in teacher and principal evaluations was enacted. Teachers will receive both a "transition" score using an alternate SLO and an "advisory" score generated with state test results.
- The HEDI rating for the student performance category will be determined using a scale provided by SED.

New Observation Category

- Danielson rubric categories will now be scored as 1, 2, 3, 4 (or 1, 2, 4, 4 for the unannounced observation.) Both the announced and unannounced observation scores will be calculated as an average of the subcomponent scores.
- The unannounced observation will be done by an independent evaluator only in the event that it becomes necessary. (We are confident that a yearly waiver from this requirement will be received from SED.)
- Danielson categories to be observed during the unannounced observation are now preselected to always be 2a (Respect and Rapport), 3a (Communicating With Students), and 3c (Engaging Students).
- The announced observation will count as 90% of the final observation score and the unannounced will be 10%.
- After the weighted average score is calculated, the HEDI rating for the observation category will be determined using the following scale:

HEDI Rating	Score
Highly Effective	3.5-4.0
Effective	2.5-3.49
Developing	1.5-2.49
Ineffective	0-1.49

Ask Greg: Your APPR Questions Answered

ATA 1st Vice President Greg Nieman has been at the helm of the ATA's APPR negotiating team since its inception. Here, he ponders your potential questions regarding the newest set of regulations, and how he would answer those questions.

What is this "matrix" that I keep hearing about?



		OBSERVATIONS			
		Highly Effective	Effective	Developing	Ineffective
STUDENT PERFORMANCE	Highly Effective	Highly Effective	Highly Effective	Effective	Developing
	Effective	Highly Effective	Effective	Effective	Developing
	Developing	Effective	Effective	Developing	Ineffective
	Ineffective	Developing*	Developing*	Ineffective	Ineffective

Now that APPR ratings are only composed of two categories: Observations and Student Performance, there is no more tallying of numerical scores for your overall rating. You just take your HEDI rating for each category and apply them to the matrix created as part of the new state law. Where they intersect is your overall HEDI rating.

Wait—I really don't have to do a PGP? Why Not?

Really, you don't. The newest state education law, 3012-d, prohibits "use of professional goal-setting as evidence of teacher or principal effectiveness" as part of APPR.

What if I was already observed this year? Do I have to do it again?

Nope. Since the new system still uses the Danielson rubric and has an announced and an unannounced component your scores will just be recalculated so that they are in line with the new system. There's nothing else you need to do.



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These photos and many more can be found on the ATA's website at www.arlingtonteachers.com

2016—2017 ATA Officers

President	Bob Maier
First Vice-President	Greg Nieman
Second Vice-President	Steve Hertzog
Treasurer	Dave Cordella
Chief Negotiator	Robert McHugh
PR Committee Chair	Kristine Jackson
Community Action Co-Chairs	Brendan Lawler Betsy Marshall
Welfare Trust Chair	Ron Higgins
Communications Chair	Sam Falk
Senior Building Representatives	
	ASM — Erica Dunn
	BES — William Mueller
	NES — Nicolle McMorris
	VFES — Pam Goetz
	OPS — Christene Way
	Traver — Diana Judge
	JDWR — Chris Greco
	TIS — Sue Ramsden
	LMS — Shared
	UVMS — Jim DeBonis
	AHS — John Filor
	AHS — Noreen Mills Martin

What's Going On?

"What's Going on" is a monthly feature of The Educator. It highlights noteworthy accomplishments by ATA members. Do you know of a colleague who deserves recognition? Let The Educator know by emailing sfalk@acsdny.org. We can't know what's going on at all of your schools without your help!

Congratulations to the following ATA members for their contributions to the Arlington community and beyond.

Arlington High School

Drama teacher Sarah Combs has published her first book, a young adult novel entitled "Theatre Ghost". It can be purchased online and at local book stores.

Social Worker Paula Dante is volunteering to be an interviewer for a non-profit organization called Thru My Eyes that makes legacy videos for people diagnosed with terminal illness. This service is for afflicted individuals who want to have something for their children to watch and re-

member them by in future years. If anyone knows of people who need this service or who would like to donate to the cause, their website is www.thrumyeyes.org.

This year's annual Spirit of Giving campaign is helping to provide holiday gifts for 33 Arlington families in need. English teacher Katie Nixon, business teacher Kelliann Hogan, social studies teacher Kathy Bellino, and guidance counselor Connie Weber lead the effort to determine the family's wants and needs and then display them as ornaments on a tree in the main office. They recruit faculty, staff, and students to donate and wrap the gifts. The gifts are distributed to the families along with food after school the day before winter break.

Arthur S. May School

Physical Education teacher Chris Keenan was recently named the Southeast Zone Elementary Physical Education Teacher of the Year by the NYS Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and

Dance.

For the second year in a row, faculty, staff, and students are filling shoeboxes with different items that are needed and giving them to Dutchess Outreach to distribute to families in need. This year the effort is being led by kindergarten teachers Lee Ann Eckhardt and Anna Leigh, 2nd grade teacher Kendra Rogers, 3rd grade teacher Melissa Maggiacomo, and speech and language pathologist Allison Whitted.

Overlook Primary School

English as a New Language teacher Sucheta Baichwal will complete her second master's degree in December at SUNY New Paltz for Literacy. She began the program in August 2015. Since 2011 she has been volunteering at the Newburgh Armory on Saturday mornings tutoring adult English Language Learners. She has also initiated the Arlington Adult Continuing Ed program to include learning English as a Second Language classes beginning in January.

Children's Home Receives ATA Donation

On November 22, ATA members came together to support the Children's Home of Poughkeepsie, a local organization that supports some of our own students. The Children's Home was established on January 21, 1847 and has grown over the years, maintaining its focus on serving the less fortunate youth in our community.

Currently, the Children's Home serves boys and girls from birth to age 21. Of the children looking for adoptive families, the average age is about 15 years old. The home offers services such as group

emergency foster care, a young mother's program, a supervised independent living/ transitional living program, as well as a new facility service dog program. Mental health needs are addressed through play therapy, as well as group and individual therapy. Parenting skills are offered, and youth transitioning out of the program are given independent living skills. Studies show that within five to nine months of receiving services, the number of high risk behaviors of youth decrease dramatically.

Unfortunately, the govern-

ment only subsidizes 92% of the cost of running and maintaining the Children's Home of Poughkeepsie, so extra funds must be collected through private organizations and fundraising efforts. ATA membership was able to donate \$1,748 to this cause. Your donation went to children's activities, special services to families, enhanced services to youth transitioning to independence, and facilities maintenance. How amazing that we were able to contribute to such a worthy cause!

-Kristine Jackson, PR Chair

Beekman Educator Embodies the Spirit of Giving

While the holiday season motivates many people to reach out to those in need and donate to deserving causes, we all know that charity should not just be a wintertime activity. Beekman Elementary School's speech and language pathologist Christina Gibson also makes use of her time off from school in the summer to help the less fortunate. This past summer she spent the month of July in a Red Cross refugee camp in Lavrio, Greece teaching English to refugee children from Afghanistan and Syria. According to Gibson, "I typically go on short-term mission trips over the summer through my church or various Christian organizations. This summer the refugees were on my mind so my husband and I searched for a way to help. We found an incredible Christian organization called Operation Mobilization and were able to work with them for dates when we could travel to Greece to work with the refugees."

Gibson and her group stayed in apartments in Athens and travelled an hour south each day down to the camp. Gibson describes the camp as, "...better than most. Across southern Greece there are approximately 25 different camps each with around 1000 people. This camp in Lavrio, which is a port of Greece, was originally created as a refugee camp over 100 years ago. It was a basic cement block-design with individual rooms for families along the outside and an interior courtyard. This camp was overflowing, so families who did not have a room had created tented areas from sheets suspended in the air from trees to the building with tents underneath for privacy within the courtyard. There were two separate sections, one for Syrian refugees and another for Afghani refugees. There was an office for the Red Cross headquarters and staff, a small coffee room, nursing station, and a

small room used as a classroom. This was where we taught English to the children."

Gibson is passionate about the plight of the refugee. "The people I met were well educated, incredible people who had faced tremendous difficulty and were seeking to rise above the evil all around them. They gave up all they had for the opportunity to simply start life over. I find it very upsetting when

media portrays these people that deserve our sympathy in a negative light, making false assumptions when they deserve compassion," she states.

She has many heartbreaking stories to share about the families that she met in the camp. One particular person who impacted her deeply was a young mother of two young children. She had fled Syria with her parents, and due to financial limitations had been forced to leave behind her beloved husband. She was in her second trimester with her second child when she

boarded the raft to Greece. "When our eyes met as she told me her story I could not keep the tears from streaming down my cheeks," Gibson remembers, "But as I held her hand, I know we entered into the deeper reality of what connects us as people walking through this life. It is this deeper reality that matters and that I seek to remain centered up-



Photo courtesy of Christina Gibson

Beekman Elementary School's speech and language pathologist Christina Gibson spent the month of July teaching English to refugees at a camp in Greece, seen here.

on."

The most rewarding part of the experience to Gibson was the deep awareness that came over her that all people are simply people. "I too get easily caught up in labels- but there is so much more to people," she states. "All people crave to know that they are seen, heard, and loved. It was my honor to spend time with each person I got to meet, and to truly seek to see them, hear their stories and to leave them knowing that they are not alone- no matter how brief our time together may have been."

Those who may not be able to travel to a refugee camp in person can still help by donating to organizations like the Red Cross or Operation Mobilization itself through its website at <https://my.omusa.org/give>. Gibson and her husband hope to be able to return to Greece next summer and will be collecting materials to support the English classes offered in the camp. They have also attended meetings about the planned settlement of refugees in Poughkeepsie and will be spreading the word about how we can help out refugees in the Arlington area.

"It was my honor to spend time with each person I got to meet, and to truly seek to see them, hear their stories and to leave them knowing that they are not alone- no matter how brief our time together may have been."

-Christina Gibson (BES)

Dates to Remember

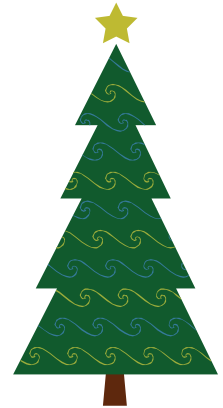


DECEMBER

13th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., Traver
26-30th—Winter Recess - No School

JANUARY

2nd—Winter Recess - No School
10th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., LMS
16th—Martin Luther King Day - No School
17th—ATA Executive Council Meeting, 4 p.m., AHS Room 1432
24th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., ASM
24-27th—Regents Week



FEBRUARY

1st—Deadline for June 2017 Retirement Decisions
14th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., VFE
20th—Presidents' Day - No School
21st—ATA Executive Council Meeting, 4 p.m., AHS Room 1432
28th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., CAO



Announcements

Stay informed!
Like us on
Facebook or check out
www.arlingtonteachers.com
for forms, photos,
calendars, and more.

The staff of
The Educator would like
to wish all ATA
members a happy and
healthy
holiday season.

Don't Forget To Register!

New York State Law now requires that all teachers register in order to maintain their Professional or Permanent certificates.

Make sure to go to <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/> by the end of your birth month to register.