



Curriculum & Instruction Newsletter

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Focus ...on teaching and learning in the APS

APS Curriculum Update

The Ayer-Shirley District Literacy Task Force completed the new District Literacy Plan K-8, including an action plan and timeline, in late June and submitted the plan to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by the June 30th deadline. Under the direction of Dr. Sandy Jones, Executive Director of the Hanson Initiative for Language & Literacy (HILL), the 17 member committee met over a 4 month period to establish needs, discuss beliefs and values, create a vision for the literacy program and develop goals designed to

bring the plan to life in classrooms in kindergarten through grade eight in both Ayer and Shirley. Office of Literacy staff member, Dot Earle, has reviewed the plan and commented, "This was one of the best plans submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education." The plan includes four long range goals addressing curriculum, assessment, instruction and family involvement. A call for committee members to join the District Literacy Leadership Team will begin in the fall. This team will expand the 'roadmap' for literacy im-

provement to include specific detail linked to each of the four priority goals in the plan. In the spring of 2011, the team will look ahead to defining action steps to bring the plan forward into the first year of the regional school district. An electronic copy of the plan will soon be made available on the Ayer Public Schools website and on the regional website. [Please visit www.ayer.k12.ma.us](http://www.ayer.k12.ma.us) > [For Staff > Curriculum & Instruction > Literacy Task Force > Ayer-Shirley District Literacy Plan.](#)

Upcoming dates to note:

- ◆ **September 22**
Full Day Professional Development (building based- PH, AHS)
- ◆ **October 5th**
Mentor meeting
Page Hilltop PD room 3:15
- ◆ **October 8th**
Full Day Professional Development (Ayer and Shirley)
- ◆ **October 21**
Blended Workshop Junior Great Books, PD room

Professional Development Highlights

3 Graduate Courses on site in Ayer:

- **Best Literacy Practices July 12-16**
- **Social Studies Literacy Connections**

July 21-22

- **A Strengths-Based Approach to**

Learning August 16-20

Merged Middle School Professional Development-up to 5 days of PD

Curriculum Research & Development Program

24 projects

33 teachers (several teachers completed more than one project)

Curriculum Open House

August 9-10th

11 new teachers attended



MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Update

In May 2010, the Massachusetts legislature passed An Act Relative to Bullying, Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010. Resources for parents and teachers are located at www.massdoe.edu/ssce/bullying/ including the full text of the legislation and several documents relating to prevention and intervention strategies. The law mandates that each district submit a bullying prevention plan to the DESE no later than December 31, 2010. The plan is to include an annual written notice provided to all school staff, evidence-based age appropriate instruction on bullying prevention for students and a training plan for staff including faculty, paraprofessionals, custodians, bus drivers, cafeteria workers and parents. The Ayer Public Schools pledge to continue to address social responsibility in the curriculum. Current efforts to provide evidence-based curriculum for our students include high school advisory groups, Developmental Designs for the Middle Level in grade 6 and Second Step curriculum in the elementary school. Several staff and administrators attended professional development institutes or workshops on the topic this summer. Additionally, the K-12 guidance department has begun to look at a tiered approach to behavior to provide support to meet the needs of all, some and few.



CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION RESOURCES

Pod casts now available at Rubicon Atlas via iTunes
<http://www.rubiconpodcast.com/>

Keep up on the latest developments in education, technology and curriculum mapping. Watch the latest pod casts, check-up on previous episodes and receive future Rubicon pod cast episodes via iTunes.

Visit
<http://discoveryeducation.com/>

Discovery Education has recently added new content to its online library of digital media (including material to support teaching and learning about issues surrounding the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico). Partners new to Discovery Education include the BBC, Smarterville/Reading Rainbow, and CBS News.

Check out
www.grockit.com
www.knewton.com
www.studyisland.com

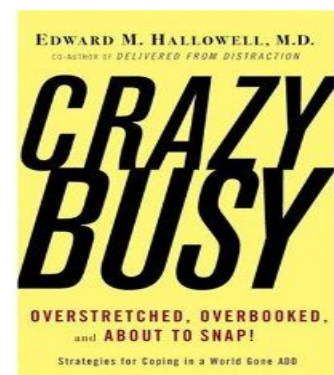
Web-based test prep solutions are gaining ground. The August issue of *the journal (Transforming Education Through Technology)* highlights three online test prep services (see links above). Administrators are reporting an increase in the number of students taking AP exams as students become more familiar with online test prep, boosting confidence and competency levels.

RECOMMENDED READING

Ayer Education Foundation, in partnership with the Ayer Public Schools, to host best selling author, Dr. Ned Hallowell on **Wednesday, September 15th at 6:30 pm in the Ayer High School Auditorium. Admission is free!**

SAVE THE DATE

A graduate of the Tulane School of Medicine and Harvard College, Dr. Hallowell is a child and adult psy-



chiatrist and the founder of the Hallowell Center for Cognitive and Emotional Health in Sudbury, MA. Dr. Hallowell is considered to be one of the leading researchers and national presenters on the topic of ADHD.