

## FALL/WINTER 2016-2017

### New England School Development Council Introduces Its Board of Directors 2016-2017

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#### **May 2016 NESDEC Annual Meeting**

*The Brain-Targeted Teaching Model*

**Dr. Mariale Hardiman**, author; Chair of the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies at Johns Hopkins University School of Education; and 2016 NESDEC Annual Meeting Guest Speaker suggests we bring relevant research from the brain sciences to educators using the Brain-Targeted Teaching Model (Hardiman, 2003). All too often educators' attempts to relate research to classroom teaching end up as overly broad interpretations of the science behind the ideas. In the classroom, this can result in well-intentioned, but nevertheless, misguided efforts to design and implement effective policy and pedagogy. The Brain-Targeted Teaching Model (BTT) originated as a school-based program in Baltimore,



Maryland and is now informing educators on an international scale. In her recent book, *The Brain-Targeted Teaching Model for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools*, Dr. Hardiman encourages educators to develop an understanding of the brain and the biological changes that result from learning. "It is time that policy and practices for schools of the 21st Century reflect a focus on the way students think and learn. The emerging field of neuro-education and the Brain-Targeted Teaching Model can be a linchpin in this work." (Hardiman, 2012).

#### **NESDEC in Cuba 2016**

*An Educator's Experience to Remember*

It's not every day that you get to travel to a country which has been largely off-limits to visitors from the United States for over fifty years. However, in February 2016, NESDEC, with the assistance of EF Tours, was provided the unique opportunity for a delegation of New England and New York educational leaders and officials to visit the island nation of Cuba. While in Miami prior to leaving for Cuba, the NESDEC delegation, made up of twenty-four educators from the Northeast, met with Miami educators who had relatives or other linkages to Cuba. In Cuba, the delegation visited schools and day care centers, and had the chance to speak with students, Cuban teachers, as well as a representative from the University of Havana. Making the visit even more special was that the delegation was in Cuba visiting the American Embassy when it was announced that President Obama would soon be travelling to the island shortly after NESDEC's visit. During the stay in Cuba, time was also provided to explore Havana and its numerous art and cultural attractions. And yes, it's true; in Havana, there are vintage American cars from the 1950's just about everywhere you look.



## **NESDEC “On the Road”**

*NESDEC is a comprehensive educational services firm offering assistance to school districts throughout New England. In 2015-2016, in addition to offering programs in our Professional Development Center at our Marlborough, MA headquarters, NESDEC conducted programs in several school districts.*

### **RSU 29, Maine**

In Regional School Unit 29 in Maine (Hammond, Houlton, Littleton, Monticello), with the leadership and assistance of Superintendent **Ellen Schneider**, NESDEC sponsored a workshop to assist neighboring Maine school districts in the transition to a proficiency-based education system. The professional learning event, entitled *Creating a Culture of Critical Thinking and Teaching Complex Reasoning*, was facilitated by Linda Laughlin, Executive Director of the Maine Cohort for Customized Learning. Source materials were provided by Dr. Debra Pickering. Through this project, teachers, and administrators worked together to build their capacity to develop classroom cultures supportive of critical thinking and continue to learn to explicitly teach critical thinking skills.

### **Leicester, Massachusetts**

Leicester Public Schools Superintendent **Judith Paolucci**, in association with NESDEC, brought together educators from several districts throughout Massachusetts to take part in a professional development activity, *Strategies for Successful Implementation of Restorative Practices: Leading the Change*. Restorative Practices represents a viable alternative to traditional discipline policies associated with high suspension rates and challenged school climates, and provides an effective strategy for re-engaging students and developing positive school culture. The professional learning activity was facilitated by Community Matters, a nationally recognized non-profit organization whose mission is to collaborate with schools and communities in creating safer environments in which all youth and adults can thrive.

### **Natick, Massachusetts**

Superintendent **Peter Sanchioni** collaborated with NESDEC to expand opportunities for educators through Natick Public Schools’ highly-regarded *Innovation and Learning Summit* and the *Natick Wellness Summit*. The *Innovation and Learning Summit* included over one hundred professional learning sessions facilitated by expert practitioners. The *Wellness Summit* was designed to nurture the interdisciplinary roles of educators. Attendees learned from neuroscientists, educators and psychologists the best practices and evidence-based research to creatively incorporate physical activity into school policy and teaching methods. Some of the wellness topics included: Stress and the Psychology of Performance, The Power of Sleep and Its Effect on Learning, Fitness-based Physical Education, and “Why Play Matters” (Tracy Gleason).

## **NESDEC at the MASS Summer Institute**

NESDEC collaborated with and supported the development of the **Massachusetts SEL-Ted Consortium**'s July 2016 presentation “Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers to Reach and Teach All Students: Social-Emotional Learning at the Center”, offered at the July 2016 M.A.S.S. Executive Institute at Mashpee High School.

The role of school leaders in promoting culturally-responsive SEL teaching practices within supportive school climates was the focus of the presentation. The SEL-Ted Consortium is especially interested in promoting the link between teacher education, new teacher experiences, and the role of school leaders. Following an opening framework for the discussion offered by the SEL-Ted Consortium Design Team – comprised of **Deborah Donahue-Keegan, Catherine Wong, Eleonora Villegas-Riemers, and Joy Bettencourt** – a panel of educators, principals and classroom teachers (all alumnae or mentors of alumnae from Boston College, Simmons College, Tufts University, and Wheelock College) offered their authentic experiences and insights in response to core questions. A lively discussion with participants topped off the session.

*The following educators were members of the panel:*

**Abdi Ali**, 5th and 6th grade teacher, Mission Hill School, Boston Public Schools  
**JoAnn Campbell**, Principal, Acton-Boxborough Regional High School  
**Donkor Minors**, ELA teacher, Putnam Ave Upper School, Cambridge Public Schools

*Participants via videotaped comments:*

**Mark Ito**, Principal, Wellesley Middle School  
**Rhea Brown**, Dean of Students, San Diego Cooperative Charter

The Massachusetts Consortium for Social-Emotional Learning in Teacher Education (SEL-TED) was created in the spring of 2011, as a branch of the Social-Emotional Learning Alliance for Massachusetts (SEL4MA). This consortium includes teacher educators from a range of programs in Massachusetts. The overarching goal of this group is to advocate for systematic integration of SEL research and practice in the state's teacher education programs – primarily in terms of PreK-12 teacher preparation, but also including the preparation and initiation of principals, school psychologists and social workers. **For more information, please visit: [www.seltedconsortium.com](http://www.seltedconsortium.com)**



*Pictured, from left to right: Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Catherine Wong, Donkor Minors, Abdi Ali, JoAnn Campbell, Joy Bettencourt, and Deborah Donahue-Keegan*

# OF INTEREST...

## Digital Skills for Children

In a recent article published in the digital newsletter of the World Economic Forum, **Yuhyun Park, Chair, Infollution ZERO Foundation**, identifies eight digital skills we must teach our children.

Children spend a considerable amount of time with televisions, computers, mobile phones and other digital devices. While the digital world contains a wealth of learning, social and entertainment opportunities, it also brings with it many risks like scams, inappropriate material and cyber-bullying.

To help parents and educators prepare children for the digital environment, Mr. Park suggests a set of social, emotional and cognitive abilities that can help an individual adapt to the demands of digital life. These digital skills can broadly be broken down into eight interconnected areas (Park, Yuhyun; World Economic Forum, June 13, 2016):

- **Digital Identity:** The ability to create and manage one's online identity and reputation. This includes an awareness of one's online persona and management of the short-term and long-term impact of one's online presence.
- **Digital Use:** The ability to use digital devices including the mastery of control in order to achieve a healthy balance between life online and offline.
- **Digital Safety:** The ability to detect cyber threats (e.g. hacking, scams, malware) to understand best practices and to use suitable security tools for data protection.
- **Digital Emotional Intelligence:** The ability to be empathetic and build good relationships with others online.
- **Digital Communication:** The ability to communicate and collaborate with others using digital technologies and media.
- **Digital Literacy:** The ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share, and create content as well as competency in computational thinking.
- **Digital Rights:** The ability to understand and uphold personal and legal rights, including the rights of privacy, intellectual property, freedom of speech and protection from hate speech.

"Above all, the acquisition of these abilities should be rooted in desirable human values such as respect, empathy and prudence." (Source: **Park, Yuhyun; World Economic Forum, June 13, 2016**)

## Demographic Trends and Countertrends

School enrollments in the six New England states are affected by regional trends, yet many individual school districts are experiencing their own unique patterns. The U.S. Census Bureau notes that New England has the highest median age of any region, thus most districts continue to experience fewer births than in prior years. Yet on the other side of the ledger, Zillow, the nationwide online real estate firm, has labeled Middlesex County in Massachusetts as one of the ten hottest real estate markets in the United States. Individual districts in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts are experiencing similar growth, both in employment and in new families moving into their schools. In some of these school systems, the number of "net move-ins" to kindergarten is proving to be a more powerful factor than the number of local births.

In the mid-2000s, the U.S. rate of home ownership soared as high as 69.2%, causing politicians to talk about an "Ownership Society". However, the "Millennial" generation is burdened by student loan debt, and many have also delayed life choices like marriage and parenthood, which are primary drivers of homeownership. Thus, in the second quarter of 2016, homeownership shrank to 62.9%, the same level as in 1965 – more than fifty years ago. Many New England graduates are moving to employment in the South and West, beginning their family formation in those states. The U.S. Office of Education reported that 2015-16 was the first year in which there was a majority enrollment of minority children in U.S. public/private kindergartens. Many districts in the six New England states are noting a rise in the number of English Language Learner (ELL) students, even in school systems with overall declines in enrollment – an outcome projected years ago by the U.S. Census Bureau, which is anticipating a "majority minority" nation by 2043.

NESDEC finds that many communities and regions are experiencing uniquely differing paths as they move beyond the real estate slowdown – some bouncing back quickly, others in slow-yet-steady improvement, and still other districts mired in the aftereffects of the 2008 Recession. In these changing circumstances, it would be prudent for a school leader to consider the long-term demographic outlook of the student body.

## **NESDEC Executive Searches 2015-2016**

*We congratulate the following school leaders appointed following NESDEC Executive Search Assistance:*

**Dr. David DeRuosi**

Superintendent, Saugus, MA

**Dr. Jennifer Fischer-Mueller**

Superintendent, Canton, MA

**Ms. Julie Kukenberger**

Superintendent, Scarborough, ME

**Mr. Sean McKenna**

Superintendent, Griswold, CT

**Dr. Brendan Minnihan**

Superintendent, Laconia, NH (SAU #30)

**Ms. Meredith Nadeau**

Superintendent, Newmarket, NH (SAU #31)

**Mr. Jeffrey Solan**

Superintendent, Cheshire, CT

**Mr. Michael St. Jean**

Superintendent, North Smithfield, RI

## **NESDEC Current Executive Searches 2016-17**

*Ben Bronz Foundation, Inc. (West Hartford, CT) –  
Executive Director*

*Brooklyn, CT – Superintendent of Schools  
Framingham, MA – Superintendent of Schools  
Groton-Dunstable Regional School District –  
Superintendent of Schools  
Killingly CT – Superintendent of Schools  
North River Collaborative, Rockland, MA –  
Executive Director  
Preston, CT – Superintendent of Schools  
Public Schools of Dover and Sherborn, MA –  
Superintendent of Schools  
Scituate, MA – Superintendent of Schools  
Sharon, MA – Superintendent of Schools  
Torrington, CT – Superintendent of Schools  
Wayland, MA – Superintendent of Schools*

**For more information, please call the NESDEC Search Office at 508-481-9444, email us at [search@nesdec.org](mailto:search@nesdec.org), or visit [http://www.nesdec.org/executive\\_search/currentsearches.aspx](http://www.nesdec.org/executive_search/currentsearches.aspx)**

## **NESDEC Planning Projects for 2015-2016**

We are pleased to have completed planning projects in the following districts:

**Blackstone-Millville Regional School District**

Facilities Review, Kennedy Elementary School

**Fitchburg, MA**

Demographic Study (with Architect)

**Grafton, MA**

Comprehensive Demographic Study

**Hampden-Wilbraham RSD, MA**

Demographic Analysis Update

**Melrose, MA**

Comprehensive Demographic Study

**Nashoba Regional School District, MA**

Demographic Study

**New Hampshire**

Title IX Review

**North Branford, CT**

Special Education Service Delivery Study

Capacity Analysis (HS Only)

**North Kingstown, RI**

Best Educational Use of Facilities Study

**Saugus, MA**

Cost/Benefit Analysis, Food Services Privatization

**Springfield, MA**

Long-Range School Facilities Master Plan

**Tewksbury, MA**

Special Education Service Delivery Study

**White Mountains RSD, NH**

Custodial and Maintenance Review

## **NESDEC Current Planning Projects 2016-17**

*Burlington, MA – Enrollment and Demographic Study  
Dover, NH – Strategic Planning  
FLLAC Educational Collaborative – Strategic Planning  
Framingham, MA – Comprehensive Demographic Study &  
Human Resources Audit  
Hebron, CT – Best Educational Use of Facilities Study  
Medfield, MA – Strategic Planning  
North Branford, CT – Strategic Planning  
Old Saybrook, CT – Strategic Planning  
Southwick-Tolland-Granville RSD, MA – Best Educational Use of  
Facilities Study  
Sudbury, MA – Comprehensive Demographic Study & Strategic  
Planning  
Sunapee, NH – Strategic Planning*



Member:



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