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# Highlights

Athol-Royalston Regional School District

## New Commissioner of Education Speaks in Western Massachusetts

Jeff Riley last week visited western mass to hear directly from local school committee members and superintendents about the state of schools in the area. He also gave a preview of his agenda which included:

- Closing Achievement Gaps
- Getting more common planning time for teachers
- Seeking stakeholders ideas about how to move beyond the school reform era



## Beth Szostkiewicz Craven Selected as New Principal of RCS

After a long and meticulous search, the Athol-Royalston School District is proud to announce that new principal of Royalston Community School will be Beth Szostkiewicz Craven. Mrs. Szostkiewicz Craven comes from South Hadley Public Schools where she has been a science teacher, department chair of the science department and on two occasions has been a long-term building administrator substitute due to the death of an administrator. During the site visit in South Hadley the teachers and administrators spoke of Mrs. Szostkiewicz Craven as a team player, someone who asks if you need help and is serious about being supportive. In the district she is known for her work in helping the teachers to adapt to the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) and working to help teachers to better understand the state frameworks in ELA, math, and science. Mrs. Szostkiewicz Craven is excited about joining the team. She will be setting up times to be in the district to meet all teachers, students, parents and community members over the next two months.

## Superintendents Schedule

4/9/2018

- ARMS Visit
- Operations Meeting

4/10/2018

- AHS Visit
- ACES Visit
- 

4/11/2018

- Principals Meeting
- RCS Visit
- Caps Collaborative
- Public Relations
- School Committee

4/12/2018

- Superintendent Breakfast
- UA Meeting

4/13/2018

- Facilities Meeting
- Technology Meeting
- ELL Directors

## Picture of The Week

Athol-Royalston Teacher's Collaborate!



Teacher collaboration is essential for these reasons:

- Creates better instruction
- Expands teachers toolkits
- More consistency in instruction
- Stable expectations for students
- A greater sense of accountability

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Author of “Creating Cultures of Thinking” and “Making Thinking Visible” are the same?

**Ron Ritchhart** has been a researcher at Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education since 1994. His research focuses on understanding how to develop, nurture, and sustain thoughtful learning environments for both students and teachers. His interest in “cultures of thinking” has led him to conduct research in such areas as the intellectual character, mindfulness, thinking dispositions, teaching for understanding, creativity in teaching, and the development of communities of practice.

Ron's research is classroom and school-based, believing that teaching is a complex art and science that must be understood in context. A strong theme of learning from best practice runs throughout much of Ron's work. On many of the projects on which Ron has worked, he has produced videos of best practices related to teaching for understanding, creative and innovative teaching, and the use of thinking routines.

## Making Thinking Visible Interpretation and Justification Routine

The interpretation and justification routine helps students describe, what they see or know and asks them to build explanations. It promotes evidential reasoning (evidence-based reasoning) and because it invites students to share their interpretations, it encourages students to understand alternatives and multiple perspectives.

This is a thinking routine that asks students to describe something, such as an object or concept, and then support their interpretation with evidence. Because the basic questions in this routine are flexible, it is useful when looking at objects such as works of art or historical artifacts, but it can also be used to explore a poem, make scientific observations and hypothesis, or investigate more conceptual ideas (i.e., democracy).

In most cases, the routine takes the shape of a whole class or group conversation around an object or topic, but can also be used in small groups or by individuals. The two core questions for this routine can be varied in a number of ways depending on the context: What do you know? What do you see or know that makes you say that?

Teachers should make a chart or keep an ongoing list of explanations posted in the classroom. As interpretations develop, note changes and have further discussion about these new explanations. These lists can also invite further inquiry and searches for evidence.

## This Week in Review

### Facilities

- MSBA vote passes. Project to begin late June early July at High School
- Review of entryways underway to see how the district can secure them better.
- ACES school floors to be waxed over vacation.
- The playground at RCS will begin construction soon.
- Summer school for grades 3, 4, 5, will take place at ARMS this summer.
- New dishware at the high school approved and will be installed this spring.



Athol High School Field Hockey team receives sportsmanship award!



### Food Service

- Recognition of food services high feeding numbers for breakfast will take place at the Statehouse in May.
- Summer feeding program has received an additional \$12,000.00 to support more students this summer. New sites will be introduced for families to pick up lunches. At least one will be in Royalston.
- Be aware if you need to use the school kitchens for an event you must hire a certified food service person.

### Technology

- MCAS computerized for all students at ACES, ARMS, and the high school.
- Two new laptop carts delivered to the high school for use by the science department. The goal for the 2018-2019 school year is to purchase at least two more chrome book carts.
- A study of technology use in the district will be done soon to assess the use of equipment throughout the district.
- All administrators in the district will be trained in the use of Google Docs this summer. This will allow the sharing of documents so that edits can be made and comments can be given.

