

Math Murmurs



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*The Official Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of Mathematics in Massachusetts
an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics*

A Message from the President, Steve Rattendi

A few weekends ago I had the opportunity to return to Hamilton College where I earned my Bachelor's Degree. Hamilton has had a spike in the number of mathematics majors since I was last there making mathematics one of the most popular majors at the school. I was invited back to speak with some of these students about my chosen path as a teacher.

Of course, in thinking about the visit, I faced the challenge of determining what I should say.

Do I tell them about all the work I bring home at night and on the weekends? Do I tell them about how I almost chose to leave the profession in my third year? Do I tell them about all the demands that are placed on teachers from people not even directly involved with educating children? Do I tell them about the issues students face that make it difficult to sometimes keep them awake in



class? Do I tell them that the main reason I love summer vacation is because I need it to recuperate from the academic year?

Do I tell them about the power teachers can have by simply and genuinely asking a student how they are doing? Do I tell them about the unique opportunities I have had to collaborate with wonderful colleagues? Do I tell them about the joy of watching the "light bulbs" go off as students "get it"?

Do I tell them about how I wouldn't have chosen a different path regardless of the salary offered? Do I tell them about how I get up every weekday morning and do what I love to do each and every day?

In the end, I told them all of it – the positives

President's message continued on page 2

Nominate an awesome K-6 Teacher for a Presidential Award

submitted by John Bookston

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN

The 2014 Awards will honor mathematics and science (including computer science) teachers working in grades K-6. Nominations close on April 1, 2014.

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) are the nation's highest honors for teachers of mathematics and science (including computer science). Awardees serve as models for their colleagues,

inspiration to their communities, and leaders in the improvement of mathematics and science education.

Since 1983, more than 4,200 teachers have been recognized for their contributions in the classroom and to their profession. If you know great teachers, nominate them to join this prestigious network of professionals.

For more information, please go to: <https://www.paemst.org>

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Dates to Remember

Conferences

ATMIM Winter Conference
Boston College
Thursday, January 9, 2014

ATMIM Spring Conference
Hopedale Jr-Sr High School
Saturday, March 29, 2014

Due Dates

Massachusetts Hall of Fame
for Math Educators
Nominations February 1, 2014

ATMIM Student Scholarship
Nominations February 14, 2014

Father Bezuska Achievement
Award for Educators
Nominations February, 15, 2014

"Like us on Facebook to stay updated on upcoming ATMIM events!"



Nominate a High School Senior for an ATMIM Award

submitted by Alison Mello

In the spring of 2014, the Association of Teachers of Mathematics in Massachusetts will award \$500 to several graduating seniors from Massachusetts high schools. The awards will be determined on the basis of outstanding achievement and/or service in the field of mathematics. Each student must be nominated by a member of the mathematics department of his or her school. Most of the awards are open to any member of the class of 2014. One of the awards will be presented in memory of Anne Elliott Smith (a mathematics teacher at Buckingham, Browne, and Nichols School in Cambridge, a former member of the ATMIM Board, and a 1985 Presidential Award winner) to a high-achieving high school girl. At least one awards will be presented to a vocational school senior.

Each secondary school in Massachusetts is strongly encouraged to nominate a student. More information and official forms can be downloaded at www.atmim.net **The deadline for nominations is February 14, 2014**

President's message continued from page 1

and the negatives. Things in life that are worth doing rarely come without a cost. In my opinion, teaching is definitely something worth doing! At the same time, it is up to us, as current teachers, to let prospective teachers know the full story.

Our responsibility doesn't end there. I also believe it is our job as educators to help those just starting off in their careers. Whether we take on the formal role as a mentor, provide thoughts and advice over lunch, or just ask the simple question, "how is your day going", we have the knowledge, experience and empathy to provide guidance to those most in need of it.

The same holds true for ATMIM as an organization of mathematics educators. This year, Neelia Jackson, a former President of ATMIM, has accepted a position as Liaison to Post-Secondary Education Programs. Her aim is outreach to those training to become new teachers and those that are training them. ATMIM's spring conference will include special sessions for teachers fairly new to the profession. Please encourage your newer teachers to attend.

In the end, however, it is not what I or what ATMIM does that gets new people into and keeps them in the field of education. It is the relationships formed with students and colleagues. Please take a moment to check on a new teacher or two in your building, and while doing so, invite them to attend an ATMIM conference with you!

ATMIM Member Presents in New Hampshire

ATMIM President-Elect Donald Cameron traveled to Plymouth State University on Saturday, September 14 to conduct a day-long six-hour professional development institute for New Hampshire high school mathematics teachers. The institute, conducted through the New Hampshire Impact Center was titled "Teaching Advanced Algebra in Accordance With the Common Core Standards." The primary goal was to encourage the participants to explore how to help students develop their problem solving skills; to use differentiated instruction in presenting algebraic ideas; and to

adhere to the standards for mathematical practice. Donald also participated in a four-hour session the night before—a session conducted by Dr. Natalya Vinogradova, an Associate Professor of Mathematics at Plymouth State University and Director of the New Hampshire Impact Center. For Donald, this was a thoroughly enjoyable experience where he learned just as much from the participants as he taught them. Although Donald teaches in a college preparatory private school that is not required to practice the Common Core Standards, the more Donald becomes involved with and

learns about the Common Core Standards the more he believes that this a critical and exciting step in bringing a necessary and fundamental change in the way mathematics is taught and learned. He is grateful to his colleagues at ATMIM and particularly the members of the ATMIM Board for welcoming him to ATMIM three years ago and encouraging him to explore the wonderful, though challenging, changes that are impacting public school education.

New Teacher Column

submitted by Kaitlyn Aspell

Perspective from a first year teacher... I tried to write an article for the first issue of murmurs this year, but as I sat down to write it I became really overwhelmed by all the other things that I needed to do. I am sure everyone can relate to the endless amount of work that teachers do on a daily, weekly, and yearly basis. But for this issue I wanted to focus on the big three things that I learned so far in the first couple months.

1. You will never get everything done... I don't mean this in that I show up unprepared or never grade tests, but I have to prioritize. I would love to get my grading done faster so that my students could have their tests back the next day, but that's not possible if I want any sleep at all. There are days that I choose to do more grading than lesson planning, and then

days that I choose lesson planning over grading. Every day after school, I make a list of all the things that I would like to get done before the next morning. It starts off realistic and soon turns into a massive wish list. At the end of the day I add what I did not accomplish to the next day's list and hope to get everything done...by the end of the term?!

2. Lessons do not always go as planned... I think this is universal and that I should probably should have known this beforehand, but I am still learning a lot. Some of my better lessons have not gone at all as planned. They usually happen when I plan one thing, and my students ask a question which shows they need something completely different. Lesson planning is one of the hardest tasks, and at this point I am doing my best to stay a little ahead.

But I am told that each year it will get a little easier...I hope.

3. It's okay that I try new things... This applies to a lot of my first year so far. On one of my worst days, one my colleagues told me to cut myself a break. He told me that I should allow myself to try new things and that my students will adjust. He said my students will constantly look for consistency, but as a new teacher I need to allow myself to make changes and that's okay.

Even with all the work and the lack of sleep, I am still having a lot of fun (most days) with the challenge of teaching mathematics.

New teachers: please consider submitting an article for a future issue to john.bookston@gmail.com

Join us on a Winter's Evening in the New Year!

Conference Theme: New Methods and New Ideas for a New Year
Keynote Speaker: Tim Whiteford, St. Michael's College, VT

Conference Schedule:

3:30 – 4:00 Registration

4:00 – 4:45 Session #1

5:00 – 5:45 Session #2

6:00 – 6:40 Dinner

6:45 – 7:30 Keynote Address

\$45 for ATMIM Members - \$65 (or less depending on membership options) for non- members

Speakers include
Elementary School

Katherine Marin, Westwood Public Schools

Jill Milton, Norwood Public Schools

Glen Sherman and Benjamin Geiger, Cambridge Public Schools

Jennifer Shore, Newton Public Schools

Middle School

Darren Burris, Boston Collegiate Charter School

Sheri Flecca, Newton Public Schools

Peg Kenney, Boston College

Ellen Metzger, Lincoln Public Schools

High School

Ross Bensen, Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School

Don Cameron, The Brooks School

Talitha Oliveri and Lisa Lopez, Hopedale Junior/Senior High School

Steve Yurek, Lesley University

***REGISTER NOW ***

PARCC Update

submitted by Mark Healy

Commissioner Mitchell Chester recently provided policy recommendations for the implementation of the PARCC Assessment in Massachusetts. The following summary provides the key pieces of information from his recommendations.

School Year 2013-2014

- Approximately 15% of students in Massachusetts will participate in a field test of the PARCC Assessment in 2014. Classes chosen to give the Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) in ELA or Math will administer it between March 24 and April 11. Classes chosen to give the End-of-Year (EOY) Assessment in ELA or Math will administer it between May 5 and June 6. Some classes will implement the assessment in paper form and some will implement online. Superintendents have been made aware which schools were chosen.
- Schools participating in the field test will be given further instructions on how to choose classes to participate. Classes will not be chosen by DESE, but by the school.
- Schools asked to take the PBA assessment were given the opportunity to not take the MCAS Assessment this year. Students taking only the EOY will still be required to take the MCAS. The MCAS windows are March 17-31 for ELA and May 5-20 for Math.
- More information about the PARCC Field Test in Massachusetts can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/parcc/2014FieldTest.pdf>.

School Year 2014-2015

- Each school district will be given the choice to either administer the MCAS or the PARCC Assessment.
- The PARCC Assessment will be offered in both paper-and-pencil and computer-based formats.
- The graduating classes of 2017 and 2018 will not participate in PARCC in 10th grade and will still be required to pass the MCAS for graduation (these are 10th grade students in school years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016). The Grade 10 MCAS in ELA and Math will not change in format or content from what it is today.
- For accountability, the DESE will adopt a "hold harmless" policy for districts and schools that choose to implement PARCC. This means that they cannot go down in their accountability.

School Year 2015-2016

- The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will vote in the Fall of 2015 to fully implement the PARCC Assessment. If passed, there will then need to be a vote about the use of PARCC in Grade 10 to qualify for Competency Determination.

General PARCC Technology Updates

- PARCC released updated technology requirements in September (version 3.0): <http://www.parconline.org/Technology>. You can find technology requirements and availability for the field test at <http://www.parconline.org/field-test-technology>.

Do Your Colleagues Know About ATMIM?

Submitted by Neelia Jackson

What can you tell your colleagues about ATMIM? The Association of Teachers of Mathematics in Massachusetts would like to be a resource for first year mathematics teachers and pre-service teachers. You can help by sharing our website link, www.atmim.net, with colleagues, your alumni or the education department of your college or university.

ATMIM board members are available to visit local college or university classes to speak briefly on ATMIM's mission. Share contact information with neeliajackson@gmail.com.

One goal is to have new members attend ATMIM conferences, especially encouraging pre-service teachers to attend the Spring conference where we are planning special workshops for them. Our ultimate goal would be to initiate a student chapter of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM).



2014 Sontag Prize in Urban Education & 2014 Acceleration Academies

Who is eligible to apply for the Sontag Prize in Urban Education?

- Any teacher, grades K – 12, is eligible to apply.
- We are accepting applications from across all subjects.

How do I apply?

- Interested applicants can fill out an application at <http://www.lawrence.k12.ma.us/sontag-about-us>.
- Educators will be selected based on recommendations, past performance, and student achievement data.

What are the benefits of being a Sontag Prize winner?

- New winners receive a \$3,000 honorarium in recognition of their achievement.
- New winners, along with their peers from inside and outside the district, also receive a weekend of intensive **professional development at Harvard University February 15 – 16, 2014**.
- All Sontag Prize winners are asked to teach in the Lawrence Public Schools Acceleration Academies.

What are the Acceleration Academies?

- Acceleration Academies are intensive weeks of academic support offered during school vacations.
- The primary focus of the February Academy is ELA, while the focus of the April Academy is Math.

When are the Acceleration Academies? When is the Professional Development at Harvard?

- **Saturday and Sunday, February 15 – 16: Harvard PD/Celebration for NEW Sontag Prize winners**
- **February 17 – 21:** February Acceleration Academy (English Language Arts focus)
- **April 21 – 25:** April Acceleration Academy (Mathematics focus)

Which students are invited to participate in the Acceleration Academies?

- Principals and their teams select the students from grades 3 - 12. We aim to serve students who will benefit from an extra 25 – 30 hours of rigorous instruction.
- Acceleration Academies use data to target individual student needs in small group settings. The goal is to have a 10:1 student to teacher ratio.

How are Acceleration Academies structured?

- The typical day is 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. The day resembles a typical LPS day with the exception that teachers work with one small group of students exclusively. Teachers are given time off for lunch and planning time.
- There is no fixed curriculum; however, we will provide student-level data and resources to ensure that every minute counts during the Academies!

Questions? Please contact: Sara D'Alessandro at Sara.D'Alessandro@lawrence.k12.ma.us

Geoboard for the iPad

submitted by Susan Weiss

A really nice program for the iPad is geoboard found at <http://www.mathlearningcenter.org/apps>. It is great for all grades. For the upper grades you can use the geoboard to explain the meaning of Pick's Rule. With this program, you can make different shapes and then fill in the sections to demonstrate how to find the area of a larger shape. I also used the NCTM worksheets. Go to <http://illuminations.nctm.org> and type in Pick's Rule) For lower grades, the geoboard is great for fractions by making triangles of different colors. Since fractions can be tricky, I would like to suggest using tangrams. <http://www.grabarchukpuzzles.com> has lots of tangram puzzles and many other logic spatial relationship puzzles. A great way to use the iPad for advancing geometrical concepts and logic is using both of these programs.



ATMIM Member Ginny Blake Makes A Presentation to Brooks School

submitted by Donald Cameron

On Friday, November 22, ATMIM member and high school mathematics teacher Ginny Blake from the Lincoln-Sudbury School presented a two-hour workshop on using the free and downloadable computer software called Geogebra to the mathematics department at Brooks School in North Andover, MA. Her presentation started with the pedagogy surrounding the use of computer software in the teaching of high school mathematics. She emphasized that while computer software is a wonderful demonstration tool for a teacher, it is important that the students also have access to the software so they can use it for the process of discovery and learning. She then took the department through many examples that involved Algebra, Geometry and Calculus skills. Along the way, she clearly illustrated the use of the tools and menus that make Geogebra

such a superb piece of software. ATMIM President – Elect Donald Cameron, had invited Ginny to do the presentation after having worked with her in ATMIM's Presenter Development Program. As Donald said to Ginny later, her presentation was very well received and every member of the department was grateful for instruction on how to get started in using the software in teaching their own classes. As the ATMIM member who oversees the Presenter Development Program, Donald was very pleased to have ATMIM members reaching out to each other to share ideas and knowledge. The more we do this type of sharing, the better teachers we become and most importantly, the better learners our students become. Many, many thanks to Ginny.

Nominations Sought for the Father Bezuska, S.J. Achievement Award

submitted by Steven Rattendi

ATMIM is seeking nominations for the the Rev. Stanley J. Bezuska, S.J. Achievement Award for Mathematics Teaching and Learning award. This is an award to honor the commitment and excellence of teachers of mathematics in levels PreK – 16.

The nominee should be an outstanding teacher of mathematics or mathematics education both within their school, district, or institution of higher education and the ATMIM community of members.

Award Criteria:

15 years of teaching mathematics PreK – 16, demonstrated excellence in stimulating students in their mathematics learning, history of presentations at ATMIM events, and current ATMIM board members are ineligible

The deadline for nominations is February 14, 2014. For details on nominating individuals for this award and for a listing of past recipients, visit www.atmim.net and click "Educator Awards."

The Massachusetts Hall of Fame for Mathematics Educators

submitted by Joe Caruso

During the 2000-01 academic year, the Board of Directors of the Association of Teacher of Mathematics in Massachusetts voted to create the Massachusetts Hall of Fame for Mathematics Educators to honor outstanding colleagues in their midst. Charter members were inducted in 2001.

New members are selected from a group of nominees by members of the Hall of Fame.

Requisites

1. The educator has been involved in mathematics education in Massachusetts for a minimum of 20 years.
2. The educator has a distinguished record as a teacher of mathematics in Massachusetts.
3. The educator has made an extraordinary contribution to the advancement of mathematics education.

Criteria for Evaluating Nominees

Describe the impact the nominee has had on schools, school systems, or universities by:

- A. Introducing or participating in the development of new programs, or modifying existing programs in mathematics education.
- B. Conducting workshops and giving presentations locally, regionally or nationally.
- C. Authoring published mathematics or mathematics education articles, books or programs.
- D. Providing services to professional organizations.

E. Demonstrating leadership in mathematics education at the state, regional, or national level. (Previous math education awards or citations received by the nominee should be listed here.)

F. Demonstrating a continual search for knowledge.

(Note that to be eligible for nomination, a nominee need not have achieved outstanding work in all of the above categories.)

Nomination Requirements

Nominations are encouraged and should come from mathematics educators across the state. Nomination materials must include the following:

- Name, address, phone, and email address of the nominee.
- A two-page detailed description (provided by the nominator) of the ways in which the nominee meets the criteria cited above.
- The nominee’s detailed, annotated resume.
- Two reference letters in addition to the detailed nomination.
- Posthumous and emeritus nominees are accepted.

Nomination and reference letters should be sent to jcaruso@framingham.edu or jlhopital101001@aol.com by Friday, February 14, 2014.

Hall of Fame Committee
 c/o Joseph Caruso
 Framingham State University
 100 State Street
 Framingham, MA 01701

ATMIM Board of Directors

For contact information please visit <https://atmim.wildapricot.org/>

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