

PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

A Message from Dr. Terri H. Mozingo, Chief Academic Officer

Welcome to the twenty-sixth edition of the *Pursuit of Excellence Newsletter*. This version will update you on the latest developments in a variety of key areas including: (1) Trends, Focus Areas, and High-Priority Projects Involving the Department of Curriculum and Instruction; (2) Gizmos Challenge; (3) New Teacher Forum; (4) Teaching and Learning Framework; and (5) 5:1 Ratio.

Thank you for your continued support! Have a great weekend!

The Dawn of System Leadership

Part II: Gateways to Becoming a System Leader

(By Peter Senge, Hal Hamilton, and John Kania)

Re-directing attention: seeing that problems “out there” are “in here” also—and how the two are connected.

- Continuing to do what we are currently doing but doing it harder or smarter is not likely to produce very different outcomes.
- **Real change starts with recognizing that we are part of the systems we seek to change.**
- The fear and distrust we seek to remedy also exist within us—as do the anger, sorrow, doubt, and frustration. Our actions will not become more effective until we **shift the nature of the awareness and thinking** behind the actions.

In their book *Leading from the Emerging Future*, Otto Scharmer and Katrin Kaufer describe three “openings” needed to transform systems:

1	Opening the Mind	Challenge Our Assumptions
2	Opening the Heart	Be Vulnerable and Truly Hear One Another
3	Opening the Will	Let Go of Pre-Set Goals and Agendas and See What is Really Needed and Possible

These three openings match the **blind spots** of most change efforts, which are often **based on rigid assumptions and agendas** and fail to see that transforming systems is ultimately about transforming **relationships among people** who shape those systems.



Re-orienting strategy: creating the space for change and enabling collective intelligence and wisdom to emerge.

Ineffective leaders try to make change happen. System leaders focus on **creating the conditions that can produce change and that can eventually cause change** to be self-sustaining.

As we continue to unpack the prerequisites to success in **complex collaborative efforts**, we appreciate more and more this subtle shift in **strategic focus and the distinctive powers** of those who learn how to create the space for change.

We are all on a steep learning curve in understanding this gateway of creating space for change, but it seems to be crucial not only in initiating collaborative efforts but in what ultimately can arise from them.

Today as we research and observe **effective collective impact initiatives**, what stands out beyond **the five conditions** is the collective intelligence that emerges over time through a **disciplined stakeholder engagement process** - the nature of which could never have been predicted in advance.

Systemic change needs more than data and information; it needs real intelligence and wisdom.

System leaders like Baldwin and Winslow understand that **collective wisdom cannot be manufactured or built into a plan** created in advance. And it is not likely to come from leaders who seek to “drive” their **predetermined** change agenda. Instead, system leaders work to create the space where people living with the problem can:

- **Come together to tell the truth;**
- **Think more deeply about what is really happening;**
- **Explore options beyond popular thinking;** and
- **Search for higher leverage changes through progressive cycles of action and reflection and learning over time.**

Knowing that there are **no easy answers** to truly complex problems, system leaders **cultivate the conditions** wherein collective wisdom emerges over time through a ripening process that gradually brings about **new ways of thinking, acting, and being.**

**Next Issue: Part 3 - Article from the Stanford Social Innovation Review (Winter 2015)*

ACPS 2020 Strategic Plan Goals

1. **Academic Excellence and Educational Equity:** Every child will be academically successful and prepared for college, work and life.
2. **Family and Community Engagement:** ACPS will partner with families and the community in the education of Alexandria’s youth.
3. **An Exemplary Staff:** ACPS will recruit, develop, support, and retain a staff that is best for Alexandria’s students.
4. **Facilities and the Learning Environment:** ACPS will provide optimal and equitable learning environments.
5. **Health and Wellness:** ACPS will provide access and support that enables students to be healthy and ready to learn.
6. **Effective and Efficient Operations:** ACPS will be efficient, effective, and transparent in its business operations.

Gizmos Winter Challenge

The Gizmos Winter Challenge is an ACPS contest that is being supported by Explore Learning. It is open to ACPS teachers who use Gizmos (grades 3-12 math and science teachers) and will run **from February 1, 2019, through March 22, 2019**. All teachers who use Gizmos during this time frame will be entered to win great prizes including a Kindle Fire! **See the flyer below for more details.** Any teachers in need of a Gizmos account can use the [directions here](#) to create an account or contact appsupport@acps.k12.va.us.



Are you ready to "Pop" into 2nd Semester with Gizmos?

Open to all ACPS teachers!

Top 4
District-wide Gizmos Users will be rewarded in the **4 categories** listed below:

- Most Improved Usage
- Most Student Logins
- Most Teacher Logins
- Highest Overall User (Total Student & Teacher Logins)

How to Win:
Continue to use or start using Gizmos in your lessons this winter. Usage during this time frame will be evaluated for the winter Gizmos contest.

Prize Package Includes:
All teachers who use Gizmos during this time will be entered into a drawing to win a Kindle Fire!
A Cool Gizmos SWAG Bag for each Category Winner

Winter Challenge Dates
Starts: February 1, 2018
Ends: March 22, 2018

For questions, contact
Kay Bennett
Kay.Bennett@explorelearning.com

New Teacher Forum

Teachers with **0-3 years experience** are invited to **VASCD's New Teacher Forum at the Lord Fairfax Community College, Warrenton Campus, on February 13, 2019, from 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.** For more information on this forum, please click on the following link:

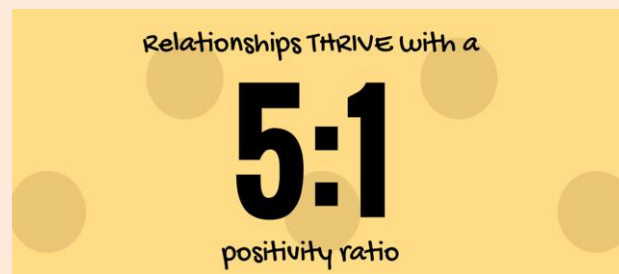
<http://vascd.org/index.php/home/events/new-teacher-forums>

For any **questions on these events or inquiries regarding professional development**, please contact Dr. Debra Lane via email (debra.lane@acps.k12.va.us) or at 703-619-8020.

Teaching and Learning Framework

As teachers continue to work together within their **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)**, please ensure that they are using the [Teaching and Learning Framework](#) as part of their discussions. This framework provides some key indicators for what is expected during **Planning, Teaching, Assessing, and Adjusting** instruction. This instructional framework is based upon effective strategies developed by Robert Marzano's framework, which aims to help teachers improve instruction by identifying the most impactful teaching strategies.

5-to-1 Ratio for Educators



Relationships THRIVE with a

5:1

positivity ratio

The **5-to-1 Ratio** is a practice in which **educators increase the number of positive interactions with students** as compared to negative interactions. Teachers and educators throughout the school day **share numerous interactions** with students. Research shows that it is **crucial for teachers to increase their positive to negative interactions with students** to best support and sustain constructive student-teacher relationships. Plainly stated, **for every one negative interaction** (i.e., punishment, criticism, and so forth) **there should be five positive interactions** (i.e., friendly conversation, nonverbal acknowledgment, praise, and so forth). It is important to note that this is not just about complimenting students. Though compliments are one form of positive interaction, it is about **forming positive relationships in general** through all kinds of interactions.

*Submitted by Arnecia Moody, Lead School Social Worker and Adapted from Stephen Ottinger, Clay Cook and Kevin Haggerty at the University of Washington College of Education and Social Development Research Group in collaboration with the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction ©2015

Your Feedback is Valued!

Do you have any topics of interest that you want featured in the Pursuit of Excellence? If so, please email [Sahar Wiltshire](mailto:Sahar.Wiltshire).

*Please note: all Pursuit of Excellence newsletters are posted on [Canvas](#). Log in with your ACPS Google ID to access these newsletters.