



Virginia Middle School Association Newsletter

FEBRUARY, 2013

Liz Phillips, Editor

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NEW DIRECTOR IN REGION TWO



Alex Bergren, principal of Princess Ann Middle School in Virginia Beach was selected as the new Region Two Director of the Virginia Middle School Association. Mr. Bergren, a graduate of the Virginia Beach school system, is excited about bringing focus to his region's middle schools. We welcome his enthusiasm and leadership in Region Two.

PROBLEM-SOLUTION OF THE MONTH

If you have the best suggestion or solution for this middle school problem, send an email to the editor! There's a \$10 Starbucks gift card in it! Deadline: February 28, 2014.
editor.vmsa.newsletter@gmail.com

No bullying and random acts of kindness themes get extra attention during the month of February. Tell us what you and your students do to promote happiness and kindness in your middle school.

DIGITAL LITERACY LINKS AND APPS TO EXPLORE

As the result of Digital Literacy Day on February 5, teachers shared a plethora of websites and applications with each other. Here are some for you to explore—in case you didn't get an opportunity to do so on that specific day.

Class Charts

www.classcharts.com

—This website offers classroom management icons and notes-keeping resources so you can track student skills on your computer or mobile device. Free.

The Art of Problem Solving

Artofproblemsolving.com

—PreAlgebra and Algebra video clips on how to do specific math operations. Videos are free to view.

Padlet

padlet.com

—This app gives students and teachers a means of collaborating on a whiteboard space. It makes a great KWL or exit slip activity to go with any lesson.

Word Tamer

Wordtamer.co.uk

—This website is a flip where a teacher can assess what students know about elements of plot through their writing craft.

REGION SIX NEWS: ROANOKE COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOLS EMBRACE 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Submitted by Dr. Ken Nicely, Region 6 Director

Middle schools in Roanoke County are accepting the challenge articulated in *This We Believe* to engage students and teachers in active, purposeful learning using multiple approaches. Using the district's Digital C-Change strategic framework as a guiding document, teachers and school leaders from Cave Spring, Glenvar, Hidden Valley, Northside, and William Byrd Middle Schools are collaborating to re-imagine what learning should look like for young adolescents and how learning is measured beyond state multiple choice assessments. The central focus is on "deeper learning" defined as learning that is engaging and purposeful; this approach echoes the language of the 16 characteristics of successful middle schools found in *This We Believe*. Deeper learning embraces the schools' responsibility to develop the "C's" of 21st century skills: collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and communication. The idea of a "C-Change" reflects this emphasis.

Each middle school has created a C-Change Professional Development Team that works together to develop short-term and long-range plans. Instructional coaches and technology integrators support the efforts of teachers to engage in reflective practice and take risks to learn from each other. This job-embedded approach to professional development keeps the focus on meaningful change and growth in individual classrooms and professional learning communities. This summer, the teams will come together as part of a Summer PD Institute to develop and train to implement rubrics to measure each of the 21st century skills. Principals have observed that these middle school teachers have a renewed sense of purpose that they hope to sustain over a long period of time.

MIDDLE SCHOOL REMINDER FROM VIRGINIA PTA

Submitted by Debbie Kilpatrick, Virginia PTA Vice President of Membership

On May 16th, 8th grade grads totally OWN Busch Gardens. Ride cool coasters, rock out to hot DJs and live entertainment and see animals up close! Experience thrill rides under the stars during this safe and fun event. 8th grade grads from all over as far as the eye can see. They'll have a total blast! Come and join the fun!

Flyer Link: <http://origin.library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1101641155271-960/BG+2014+8th+grade+grad.pdf>



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FEBRUARY



philipmartin.com

FEBRUARY Interesting Days of Significance

Interesting Tribute Weeks in February

- Children's Authors & Illustrators Week (2-8)
- International Coaching Week (2-8)
- Just Say No to PowerPoint Week (2-8)
- Random Acts of Kindness Week (9-15)
- National Pancake Week (22-28)

February Celebrations

- American Heart Month
- Black History Month
- Canned Food Month
- National Children's Dental Health Month
- Library Lovers' Month
- International Expect Success Month
- Youth Leadership Month

5	National Pancake Day
	Digital Learning Day
7	Bubble Gum Day
9	National Stop Bullying Day

9	Read in the Bathtub Day
	Autism Sunday
11	Make a Friend Day
15	National Gum Drop Day
16	Do a Grouch a Favor Day
17	Random Acts of Kindness Day
20	Love Your Pet Day
21	Card Reading Day
22	Be Humble Day
23	Tennis Day
24	National Tortilla Chip Day
26	Tell a Fairy Tale Day
27	Polar Bear Day
	No Brainer Day
28	National Tooth Fairy Day

SPECIAL DATES FOR FIRST FEW DAYS OF MARCH

Music in Our Schools Month National Nutrition Month National Peanut Month

2nd Week: National Bubble Week

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| 1 | Peanut Butter Lovers' Day | 6 | National Frozen Food Day |
| 2 | Old Stuff Day | 9 | Panic Day |
| 3 | National Anthem Day | 10 | Middle Name Pride Day |