



# Puget Soundings

Newsletter of the Puget Sound Council of the Teachers of Mathematics

Winter 2010

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## President's Message

A New Year, A New Goal: **Going Green**

Greetings fellow PSCTM members! It's the start of a new year; a time for new goals, new adventures, and creating new memories. Many people set goals for themselves as a new year unfolds. We too have a new goal. We recognize so many of us get our information electronically. Keeping this in mind, we have decided to Go Green. This will be the final printed newsletter sent out to our members. You will continue to receive the PSCTM newsletter with great lesson ideas, informative articles, and updates on events and opportunities. The newsletter will be delivered to you on line. The choice is yours; you may choose to print a hard copy or to retain the copy electronically. Please be sure to keep us informed if you have a change in your contact information so we are able to keep you up-to-date.

Best wishes to you for a happy new year!

*Traci*

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## Fall Dinner Report

Greta Bornemann, the Director of Mathematics for OSPI, gave a lively two-part talk as our Fall dinner speaker. In her first segment, she gave us a preview of where the OSPI stands with the new assessment and an overview

of the timeline for it. See the notes from the timeline, below:

Changes for 2010 Testing:

**MATHEMATICS MSP (Gr 3-8)**

Alignment to Standards	2010 Math MSP aligned to new (2008) standards Standards set by State Board in Summer, 2010
Test Length Shortened	Gr 3-5: Single testing session of ~75 minutes Gr 6-8: Single testing session of ~90 minutes
Reduction of CR item	No 4-point items No more than 25% of points from 2-point items
New Item Types	Introduction of 1-point “Completion” items in 2010
Later Test Window	5 week window for online math tests (May 3 – June 4) 2-1/2 week window for paper/pencil math tests (May 12-28) 2010 score reports delayed due to std setting
Online testing	Online testing voluntary in Grades 608 in 2010 Online testing voluntary in G. 5 and 4 in 2011 and 2012, respectively

**MATHEMATICS HSPE (High School)**

Alignment to Standards	2010 Math HSPE aligned to old standards End-of-course tests aligned to new standards begin in 2011
Test Length Shortened	Total testing time ~120 minutes May be given in one or two sessions (single-day testing)
Reduction of CR items	No 4-point items No more than 25% of points from 2-point items
Test Window (No late window in HS)	Paper/Pencil test given April 13 Student score reports to districts before June 10
Online Testing	No online testing with HSPE until 2011 Online test for comprehensive test; EOC is paper/pencil in intact classrooms

**Mathematics Timeline:**

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
<b>Academic Learning Standards</b>	Revised learning standards for K-12 mathematics are adopted (July 2008)	Newly revised math standards should be implemented in K-8 as well as Alg 1 / Int 1 classes	Full implementation of new high school math standards	Continue	Continue

<b>MSP</b>	Last administration of K-8 WASL (April 2009)	MSP aligned to newly revised standards (April 2010)	Continue	Continue	Continue
<b>WASL</b>	Last administration of 10 <sup>th</sup> Gr. WASL (April 2010)	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade HSPE aligned to old math learning standards (April 2010)			
End-of-Course HSPE			EOCs in Alg 1 / Int 1 and Geom / Int 2		Class of 2013 required to pass EOCs or
Comprehensive/ Re-takes	WASL re-takes available in April and August	HSPE available as a re-take in April and August	Comprehensive test of new standards offered as a re-take in April and August (Students passing math courses before 2010-11 can use Comprehensive test)		Comprehensive test

The second part of Greta’s talk was an introduction to an article in the October, 2007 ACSD magazine called “The Perils and Promises of Praise,” by Carol S. Dweck. Ms. Dweck’s article includes the following key passage:

*Many [educators] believe that (1) praising students’ intelligence builds their confidence and motivation to learn, and (2) students’ inherent intelligence is the major cause of their achievement in school. Our research has shown that the first belief is false and that the second can be harmful – even for the most competent students.*

The article supports this thesis with research statistics and offers the suggestion that intellectual ability is something people can develop through effort and education. In the group discussion after we read the article, many came to the conclusion that praising effort and accomplishment are likely to have better long-term results than praising ability.

*Joyce Frost*

## Washington Comprehensive Assessment Program (WCAP)

I was selected to participate on the WCAP Mathematic Performance Level Descriptors Committee by OSPI. I attended a meeting on September 24-26 where I worked with other teachers from around the state. We reviewed the mathematics standards and student work. We then started writing descriptors showing what student work should look like at the Proficient Level and Basic Level for each of the Math

Standards in Grades 3 – 8. I worked with a team of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers from around the state writing Mathematic Performance Level Descriptors for grade 3. In October 2009 the Tests for Spring 2010 will be built. During the Winter of 2009 and 2010 teachers from across the state can be trained on the PLD's. This will be an on line training with 2- 90 minute sessions. Clock hours will be available for all teachers who wish to participate. In April 2010 teachers will use the PLD's to provide ratings of students if they did the on line training. In July and August of 2010 our committee and other teachers from around the state will participate in Standard setting events including:

- Grade-level panels
- Articulation panel
- Policy Panel

August 10, 2010 - SEE sets Achievement Standards and reviews all recommendations:

National Common Standards will be coming sometime between December and March. 85% of our state test will eventually be tied to these standards. There may be a 3 or 4 year time frame for this, however.

It is rather unclear at the moment. I have enjoyed my work on this committee and look forward to the next meeting.

*Diane Lustyk*

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## Clock Hours Now Available!

SEATTLE SCHOOLS APPROVES CLOCK HOURS FOR PUGET SOUND COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF MATHEMATICS MEETINGS.

We are pleased to announce that you can now earn three clock hours for attending the meetings and participating in the evening's activities of the Puget Sound Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Seattle Schools has agreed to offer one clock hour for the program part of each PSCTM meeting for a total of three clock hours per year. And there is only one catch. Seattle requires that you earn a minimum of three clock hours. So you will need to attend all three meetings – what a sneaky way to get you to come to all the meetings. But you can earn 3 hours each year. The cost to you is only \$2 per hour (or \$6 for all three – I am good at multiplication). When we submitted the request for next year, we provided the PD department with the programs for this year and they granted clock hours for 2008-2009 as well. So, if you attended all three of the meetings this year, and want to get 3 clock hours, bring your checkbook with you. (Or you can mail the form in later.)

*Art Mabbott*

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## Eldon Egbers Award: Recipient Report

Northwest Math Conference 2009

I'm one who wants to see and experience it all - if possible. But the title of the closing keynote left me feeling somewhat defensive and skeptical. Even though I was tempted to leave town early, with that guarded attitude and expecting to be totally irritated, I attended anyway.

In Peter Liljedahl's presentation, "Student Behaviour as Sensible Reflections of our Teaching", he addressed a list of student behaviors that have frustrated probably every teacher at one time or another during their careers. Behaviors such as: incomplete homework, students who avoid or won't work in class, cheating, skipping class, anxiety, boredom, helplessness, ambivalence, and a category he called "conceptually inept or procedural cling".

As teachers, we have ideas about the reasons for these behaviors – the student is lazy, doesn't care about the topic, hates me, hates school, etc, and sometimes we might even be right. But there are times when we fail to see our own part in the development of these behaviors. He addressed each one of the behaviors and gave a list of reasons why they might exist, and then he used another lens to make a different list as to why they might exist.

It was the look at behaviors through the second lens that made me glad I stayed. As a teacher, I can ask myself the questions. Have I made homework "unsafe" because I grade it? Have I created or enabled non-starters, non-workers, or helplessness by jumping in to save them or always having the last "right" answer, and all they have to do is wait for it? Have I stripped away the challenge of good conceptual questions so that all is left are procedures that bore some and leave others without understanding? The second lens was more about how my behaviors could result in their behaviors, and as I took notes, I realized there was no irritation, no defensiveness, just something to consider.

Liljedahl pointed out that these behaviors probably weren't learned just on one person's watch, but maybe we enabled them to continue, and/or reinforced their existence. His final comments were – if you assume the unwanted behaviors may be attributable to us, and address them, we can make a difference. By mitigating the misbehavior, we can increase positive behavior, and finally, always celebrate small victories.

This speaker's message applies to me on several levels. I believe in the importance and impact of instructional practices, and his list of behaviors all hit home somewhere within that realm. As a teacher, I reflected on my practice, and asked myself how it was, and how might it be better in the future. As a math facilitator, I currently work with other teachers dealing with these behaviors in their classrooms. These behaviors, through the second lens, bring me to the questions that I think are important and appropriate for sharing with those with whom I work. And I will.

*Linda Snyder*

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## Penewell Door Prize

Cynthia Henton was the winner of the Penewell Door at our Fall Dinner. She won \$100 to spend on her classroom. Cynthia Henton, after over 20 years at the elementary and middle school levels, has for the past two years worked as a School Based Professional Development Math Coach for Seattle Public Schools. Currently, she is working at Thurgood Marshall Elementary and also does district wide math trainings along with other math coaches.

"I enjoy working with students because each day is different and I just love it when we are working on something and I hear, "Oh, now I get it." My job also involves working with teachers to move their practice in new directions with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement in math." Cynthia has found that working with adults brings challenges and payoffs of its own, but the journey is definitely worth it. Congratulations, Cynthia!

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## TI Weekend Workshops

Come learn how to augment your students' conceptual understand using TI and other technology in your daily classroom routine. Even if you didn't attend last month, we'd love to have you. There will be plenty for you to learn that is not dependent on what we did in the first session.

Lynn Adsit and Kim Schjelderup will focus on both the TI-84 and the TI-Nspire along with some Smart Board/ActivBoard technology. And best of all, we will offer clock hours to those who attend our sessions-what more could you ask for?! Yup, coffee and snacks will be provided, too. Oh, and did I mention the workshops are FREE? So they fit nicely in your budget.

We can't wait to reconnect with many of you and to welcome the rest of you to these fun and engaging morning sessions. Our sessions are on selected Saturdays at Mercer Island High School from 9:00-12:00. Our Tentative Topic Schedule:

Feb 6	Statistics & Probability
Mar 13	Geometry
Apr 10	Functions
May 8	Odds and Ends

Please let Lynn ([ladsit@lwsd.org](mailto:ladsit@lwsd.org)) or Kim ([Kim\\_Schelderup@mids.wednet.edu](mailto:Kim_Schelderup@mids.wednet.edu)) know that you are planning to attend so we will have enough coffee and snacks. And please spread the word and share the attached flyers with any teacher/administrator/support person you think would be interested!! Sign up today!

*Lynn Adsit*

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## Recommended Web Sites

Instead of spending time in research libraries, teachers and students can now retrieve information on practically any topic from the web. Some of my favorite websites for getting a quick refresher are [www.mathforum.org](http://www.mathforum.org), [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org), and [mathworld.wolfram.com](http://mathworld.wolfram.com). Unlike a search in google or bing, I can count on pages at those sites to have been written by someone who understands the topic and can trust that links from those pages will not take students to places I would have a hard time explaining to parents.

Mathforum was started at Swarthmore in 1992 and moved to Drexel University in 2001. It has grown from a few energetic teachers and technology buffs to a funded organization supported by Drexel University, the Mathematics Association of America, the National Science Foundation, and a host of foundations and corporations. The Forum has a wealth of resources for teachers, students, and math enthusiasts. It has been named one of the 10 best websites for mathematics by a variety of reviewers. Materials from the Problem of the Week and the Ask Dr. Math features are now published as books, available on the website or at brick-and-mortar bookstores. I attended a session at the 2006 NCTM conference in Atlanta given by a professor from Texas who published on the Mathforum about the science of drag racing.

[En.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org) is an online encyclopedia with an amazing collection of articles. The quality of the pages can be a bit more hit or miss than at the other two sites, in part because it relies on volunteers to write and edit the articles. Like any general purpose encyclopedia, there are articles that may not be suitable for children, though not in mathematics. The sheer breadth of coverage is astonishing.

[Mathworld.wolfram.com](http://mathworld.wolfram.com) sets the bar for coverage of topics about mathematics. The articles are mostly written by mathematicians and are often shorter than I would like. I find the use of symbols and precision of description are very helpful when I am trying to recall the details of a topic.

Good websites are a nice convenience, but when I want to learn about a topic new to me, I'm still most likely to visit the Math Library in Padelford Hall on the UW campus.

*Joe Frost*

## Dates to Remember

Mark your calendars for our PSCTM winter and spring dinners! Join us at Seattle School District's Stanford Center on **Monday, February 8, 2010**. Jim Prekeges (professor emeritis from Eastern Washington University) will be speaking on Pascal's Triangle and the many ways to generate this amazing set of numbers.

On **Monday, May 3, 2010**, Dr. Roni Stein (Seattle Pacific University) will be sharing "Dimensions of Culture That Count in Math Classrooms". More details will be included in the usual upcoming Winter and Spring Dinner flyers. Invite your friends and colleagues!

*Joyce Frost*

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## PSCTM Communications

As was announced on page one, we will be publishing future issues of *Puget Soundings* in electronic form only. **If you are unsure whether we have a current email address for you or if you would like to request a printed copy**, please contact me at [rbschnabel@att.net](mailto:rbschnabel@att.net).

Also, if you would like to contribute a lesson plan, a web site review, or a book review to *Puget Soundings*, please email it to me at the same email address.

Also, check out our web site [www.psctm.org](http://www.psctm.org)

*Barbara Schnabel*

