

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

It has been great to work with all of you over the fall.

Usually this time of year we take a break from support group on Tuesdays. We have discovered over the past seven years that folks are just too busy to squeeze one more thing into the schedule. So, we will go on break for the month of December.

Now, if you have something you have to work on before the break please feel free to let us know and we can be there.

Also, don't forget that we are available to help you with classroom projects.

We will help you design and implement a classroom project. We have done projects ranging from Power-Point presentations to

web based projects.

The goal is to have students actively using technology in the classroom.

Even if you have no idea where to start call us. We would love to help you design something that helps you in the classroom and gets the students actively using technology.

Happy Holidays!

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## TEACHING ONLINE

I found this video online and it really made me think. Can you teach music over the Internet? How? Can you teach with Youtube? Nir-

vana? Piczo? Audacity? Billboard? Newsfeeds? Can you teach in a way that is engaging for the learner? Find out how Learning music in an online environment

What does it mean to be a learner-centered teacher of music in a technology-mediated context? The video is a knowledge mobilization outcome that is part of of a collaborative inquiry in (cont Page 4)

## ADHD RESEARCH

I found this article on the American Medical Association site. Food for thought!

Children with ADHD face extra challenges. They have a hard time paying attention and focusing, especially when they're not interested in what the teacher is teaching.

Research has indicated that the classic symptoms of impulsivity and inattention could be caused by a disruption in the transmission of dopamine - a chemical in the brain that helps cells to communicate.

Dr. Nora Volkow, of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and her col-

leagues, theorizes that faulty dopamine transmission is actually to blame for the underlying struggle many patients have completing tasks when there is no immediate reward on the horizon.

"Dopamine is considered a neurotransmitter that is crucial for our ability to perceive rewards and to be motivated in our behavior," Volkow says.

Featured this week in the Journal of the American Medical Association, the study compared what's called the dopamine reward pathway in the brains of 53 adults who had ADHD with 44 adults who did not, using images taken at Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York.

"There was a lower concentration of dopamine markers in the brain

of individuals with ADHD, specifically in the areas of the brain that are involved with reward and motivation," says Volkow.

Researchers say the findings help explain why ADHD patients have such a hard time focusing on tasks they don't find interesting.

The study reinforces the concept that creating ways to make school and work tasks seem more rewarding to patients with ADHD can help them succeed.

<http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/302/10/1084?maxto-show=&HITS=10&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=&fulltext=ADHD&searchid=1&FIRSTINDEX=0&resourcetype=HWCIT>

## MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE

Here are some great sites to use in the classroom!

### Office of Scientific and Technical Information

<http://www.osti.gov/sciencelab/middleschool.html>

### Middle School Science (teacher created)

<http://www.middleschoolscience.com/>

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### Baltimore Public Schools

<http://www.bcps.org/offices/LIS/curric/middle/sci.html>

### Homework Spot

<http://www.homeworkspot.com/middle/science/>

### Virtual Middle School Library

<http://www.sldirectory.com/teachf/scied.html>

### Online Physics for Middle School Teachers

<http://www.pa.uky.edu/sciworks/intro.htm>

### Middle Web

<http://www.middleweb.com/CurrScience.html>

### Middle School Portal

<http://msteacher.org/science/default.aspx>

By **Michele McNeil**

[http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/06/01/33standards.h28.html?  
tkn=MZPFC8YHbdfRQIlwiZMZGGUqTOjGIq1XXUYo&print=1](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/06/01/33standards.h28.html?tkn=MZPFC8YHbdfRQIlwiZMZGGUqTOjGIq1XXUYo&print=1)

There is a move afoot to develop what is being called Common Standards. Currently, they are in their second revision. However, here is a basic background article to provide some needed information.

Forty-six states—representing 80 percent of the nation’s K-12 student population—have formally agreed to join forces to create common academic standards in math and English language arts through an effort led by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

The four states not on board, were Alaska, Missouri, South Carolina, and Texas.

“This is a giant step,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, who has been pushing states to adopt common, rigorous standards. “It would have been unimaginable, this kind of thing, just a year or two ago.”

The groups plan to pursue their aggressive timeline of getting college- and career-readiness standards—those things students should know by the time they finish high school—in draft form for states and eventually the public to review in July. Grade-by-grade standards—which the organizers are also calling “learning progression standards”—are set to be done in December.

Working groups composed of representatives from the Washington-based group Achieve, the New York City-based College Board, and ACT Inc., the Iowa City, Iowa-based organization that administers the college-entrance test of that name, will develop the standards.

Both the NGA and the CCSSO plan to create a “validation” committee made up of independent national and international experts in content stan-

dards to review and comment on the drafts. The experts will be nominated by states and organizations, but ultimately chosen by those two organizations.

Once the standards are agreed to, it will be up to the states to get them adopted. The signed memo stipulates that the common core must represent at least 85 percent of a state’s standards, and that the common core needs to be adopted within three years.

The memo also spells out that the governors’ association and the state chiefs’ council will convene a “national policy forum” to facilitate the sharing and coordination of this standards effort. The forum will include the Alliance for Excellent Education, the Business Roundtable, the National School Boards Association, the Council of the Great City Schools, the James B. Hunt Jr. Institute for Leadership and Policy, and the National Association of State Boards of Education.

A primary goal is to eliminate the patchwork of academic standards across the country that result in students in the same grades learning different things in different states. The effort also is intended to devise a more rigorous common set of academic targets, and then internationally benchmark them.

For states that are forging ahead, there could be a financial payoff.

Chiefs and governors have their eyes on federal economic-stimulus money in the \$4.35 billion Race to the Top fund, authorized as part of the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which Secretary Duncan will dole out in the form of competitive grants to states. Mr. Duncan and President Obama are pushing for voluntary common content standards.

# CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ALBANY

## DECEMBER HOLIDAYS



*Community Technology Initiative*

If you would like to contact us:  
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[http://  
webhelp.albany.k12.ny.us/  
Instructional](http://webhelp.albany.k12.ny.us/Instructional)

Many elementary teachers cover the various December holidays so here are some sites to help!

### **Education World**

offers ten lessons about December celebrations, observances, and activities from several cultures. Included: A Hanukkah game, a Kwanzaa recipe, and an activity that involves students in diagramming similarities and differences in holiday celebrations!

[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/lesson213.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson213.shtml)

### **Holidays Around the World**

This site covers all the holidays imaginable!

[http://www.worldbook.com/wb/Students?content\\_spotlight/holidays](http://www.worldbook.com/wb/Students?content_spotlight/holidays)

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## TEACHING MUSIC ONLINE (CON'T)

which Andrew Mercer(the teacher profiled in the video) and Andrea Rose, School of Music, Memorial University are participating

[http://focus-on-  
e.learnhub.com/lesson/1124-  
teaching-music-online](http://focus-on-e.learnhub.com/lesson/1124-teaching-music-online)

### **December Holidays and Celebrations**

Teacher created

<http://www.suelebeau.com/december.htm>

### **Holidays: A Sampler from around the world**

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3211>

### **Great December Holidays**

<http://www.tburg.k12.ny.us/mcdonald/December%20Holidays.htm>

### **AtoZ Teacher Stuff**

<http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/Themes/Christmas/>

