

# TAKING HOME THE BEACON



Volume 2 Issue 1 September/October 2017

# COACHES CORNER

BY AARON SHELBY

Welcome to the new school year! The instructional coaches and I invite you to read our monthly professional learning newsletter, *Taking Home the Beacon*. It is our hope that you are able to use the information as a beacon, or guiding light, in thinking about your instructional practice. We are looking forward to publishing this newsletter each month with contributions from YOU!

The TLC would like to welcome Ms. Mary Beth Akers to the team. She is joining us from the elementary school where she taught 4th grade for two years before becoming an instructional coach. She has years of experience in teaching, coaching, and administration. Check out her story on page 5 of this newsletter. We are very excited to have her as part of our learning community!

As you peruse this issue, you will notice articles from your instructional coaching team, the curriculum and PD offices, in addition to the media center. Each article has ideas and strategies you can use while thinking about planning for your students in order to give you the most up to date information in the world of education.

Our continued hope is that *Taking Home the Beacon* is another way for the community to share the good work that BBS is doing to support our students along their educational journeys.

Sincerely,

Aaron Shelby

# THE BIG FOUR: SPOTLIGHT ON COMMUNITY BUILDING

BY MONA YACQUB

## Community Building

**Strategy:** Salt and Pepper

**Strategy Descriptor:** This quick icebreaker activity is fun, excellent for energizing your team and letting them get to know each other. It doesn't take up a lot of time and requires a few simple materials like a pen, tape, and small sheets of paper. Recommended group size can range from 6-40 people.

As facilitator, come up with pairs of things such as, salt and pepper, shadow and light, peanut butter and jelly, Mickey and Minnie Mouse, and so forth. Separate the pairs and write only one of them per piece of paper. (Salt on one paper, pepper on a completely different paper). Tape one paper on the back of each person, making sure they can't see it. When you say go, everyone must walk around asking yes or no questions in order to find out what word they have taped to their backs. Once they figure that out, they'll be able to find their other pair. The two will sit down and learn three to five interesting facts about one another.

Optional step: have the pairs introduce their partners and the interesting facts they learned about them.

This exercise will encourage communication and creativity among the participants. Learning how to ask the right questions will be a challenge. It will also encourage teamwork as interacting with the other team members is necessary

# THE BIG FOUR: SPOTLIGHT ON COMMUNITY BUILDING

BY MONA YACQUB

## Community Building

**Strategy:** Stranded

**Strategy Descriptor:** Let your team members imagine that they have been stranded in the classroom and the doors are locked . Let them know that knocking down the doors or breaking the windows is not an option. Give your team 30 minutes to decide on 10 items in the classroom they need for survival; ranking them in order of importance. The goal of the game is to have everyone agree on the 10 items and their ranking by the end of the 30 minutes.

# TEACHER SPOTLIGHT: MARY BETH AKERS

BY TAHANI HASHEM



## **Tell us a bit about your background:**

My name is Mary Beth Akers and I have been in education for 31 years. I taught kindergarten through sixth grades during my teaching career. I was an assistant principal for 6 years and a principal for 3. I am from Reno, Nevada in the United States of America. I came to Kuwait because I love to travel and I wanted the experience of teaching abroad. I love being with children in the classroom and find that teaching is my true calling. I find that children are very funny and clever when it comes to their learning experiences. I could write a book about the things students have said to me over the years. Humor definitely has a place in learning. I try to use humor in my teaching as often as possible. Students love the opportunity to “let their hair down” in class and an occasional giggle or two is a great ice breaker or stress reducer. I find that humor allows me to not be so serious all the time. It allows the students to see that I am human and that I love to laugh.

## **What teaching and learning goal are you most excited to achieve by the end of this school year?**

I think my learning goal for this year is to acclimate myself to hearing and understanding the Arabic accent my students have in their speech. It is not always easy to understand English Language Learners, especially when their speech is accented so heavily. I am used to working with students of another language group, so I am having to really listen and learn from my students. I so appreciate the opportunities they have offered me to assist me with learning a few vital Arabic phrases. I am feeling much more comfortable with my students and understanding their speech.

## **Do you have any inspirational words and/or specific sites, organizations, strategies, or links that you'd like to share with other teachers?**

If I have any inspiring words for other teachers it would be to not sweat the small stuff and to choose your battles. It is so easy to get wrapped up in the daily grind of teaching that we sometimes forget to take care of ourselves. Teaching is hard, of that there is no doubt. However; make sure you are careful to choose which battles you wish to undertake. The small stuff will solve itself. Take care to address those larger issues that may threaten your daily peace of mind. Always remember, as a teacher, you are here for the students.

# EDIVATE UPDATE: GETTING STARTED WITH EDIVATE

BY AARON SHELBY



## Getting Started Guide

### Welcome!

Welcome to Edivate—the new PD 360—the latest in online professional learning from School Improvement Network.

### Login

1. In your web browser, type **www.edivate.com** in the address (URL) box and press **Enter** (Windows) or **Return** (Mac).
2. Type your *username* and *password* in the corresponding boxes.
3. Click **Log in**.

Edivate recommends content based on your user profile. Update your profile with your most current information.

### Update Your Profile


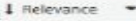
1. On the Navigation bar, click the *My Profile* tab.
2. Click the pencil icon to open up the *My Personal Information* section, enter *first name*, *last name*, *email address*, and *bio* in the corresponding boxes.
3. In the *My Personal Information* section, click the *camera* icon below the default user picture.
4. On the dialog box, navigate to the picture you want to use, select it and click **Open** (Windows) or **Choose** (Mac).
5. Click the pencil icon to open up the *My Background* section to update your *primary role*, *grades* you teach, and *subject* from the corresponding lists.
6. Click **Save**.

### Upload/Change Your Profile Picture

# EDIVATE UPDATE: GETTING STARTED WITH EDIVATE

BY AARON SHELBY

## Access Library

1. Click Resources icon  > Library.
2. Type in a topic and search or select the Browse all Library Content button.
3. Apply any of the following filters to narrow your results:
  - In the Grades filter list, click the *grade levels* for which you want to view content.
  - In the Subjects filter list, click the *subjects* for which you want to view content.
  - In the Topics filter list, click the *program topics* for which you want to view content.
  - In the Types filter list, click the *types of resource* for which you want to view content.
4. From the Sort By list, in the top right corner , click how you want videos in the library to display—whether by Release Date or A-Z (alphabetical by title).
  -
5. Browse the video library and do any of the following:
  - Click the preview image to play a video you want to watch.
  - View the segment description below to see a brief synopsis of the video.
  - Click the add to queue icon to add the video to your queue. (Your queue is found on your home screen.)

**Note:** When you select multiple filters, the system applies all of the selected filters simultaneously. For example, if you click 12th in the Grades filter list and Math in the Subjects filter list, only videos categorized for both 12th grade and math will display. Click x near the name of each list or the Clear All button to remove the filters that have been applied from that list.

## Join a Group

1. Type your *search terms* in the Search box and press Enter (Windows) or Return (Mac).
2. The Search Results page displays. Click Groups under the Types filter to narrow your search results to groups only.
3. Browse your search results. Click the preview image of the group you want to join.
4. The group's Wall page displays. Review the group's description and goals on the right side of the page to confirm you want to join the group.
5. Do one of the following:
  - To join a public group, click Join on the right side of the page. The group's page displays all of the groups to which you belong, including the group you just joined.
  - To request membership in a private group, click Request on the right side of the page.
  - To leave the group's Wall page without joining the group or requesting membership, click the Back button on your browser to return to your search results, or click the Home icon.

# CURRICULUM

BY CAROL ALAWADI

Inspiration and good vibes can come from anywhere, and that's exactly what I found out today! I was getting ready to eat my olive and haloumi sandwich from Caribou, and as I began to unwrap the foil, I started reading the simple tidbits printed on the wrapper. So, I'm sharing the ones I especially liked with you today.

- Do something that scares you
- Technology is good, but people are better
- Be the first to enter and the last to leave
- Give your change
- Become a beekeeper
- Max out your passport
- Dance to your own rhythm
- Buy your BFF a coffee
- Laugh so hard you cry
- Sing out loud
- Pick up the check



- Be the ruler of your own life
- Hold hands, not grudges
- Run your feet, not your mouth
- Only look back if it makes you smile
- Don't blend in
- Fear quitting, not failing
- Be a BFF
- Smile first, ask questions later
- Sleep under the stars
- Grow older without ever growing up
- Spin the globe then pack your bags
- When in doubt, daydream
- Read poetry
- Do it for love, not for profit

Like I said.... Good thoughts can be found ANYWHERE... even on a sandwich wrapper! Enjoy!



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY LYNDA ABDUL RAHEEM



Dear Teachers,

Welcome back! What a busy month we have had! I hope you all had a wonderful vacation. For those of you who are new, I am Lynda Abdul Raheem, your Professional Development Coordinator. I am really looking forward to working with all of you this year. Please take note of all the exciting PD information and opportunities available this year.

BBS is growing into a true Professional Learning Community (PLC). We are proud at the number of individuals who are coming forward to take a leadership role in the school by mentoring or sharing their expertise with other teachers through presentations or general assistance. This is embedded PD that takes place during the school day. You don't have to have a PD Day to get professional development at BBS.

## Near East South Asia Council of Overseas (NESA):

NESA is our main conference provider. Get online at [www.nesacenter.org](http://www.nesacenter.org) to see what they have scheduled for this year. Mr. Aaron Shelby is our new NESA Representative. The next notification will be about the **NESA Winter Institute that is coming up in late January. Please take care to read his memos immediately as they are "time-sensitive" and deadlines are very strict.** If you attend a conference you are required to share that information with staff. We would like the community to benefit from what you have learned. Contact Ms. Sana, [sana.dakhel@fawsec.com.kw](mailto:sana.dakhel@fawsec.com.kw), for information on how to apply for funding.

## "On-site" Master's Program - Buffalo State, SUNY:

Soon we will be starting our "on-site" master's program through Buffalo State, SUNY. This is a Master of Science in Multidisciplinary Studies with an emphasis in Special Needs or Educational Leadership. **Anyone who would like information on our program should let me know as soon as possible. The first course open to new teachers begins in mid-October.**

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY LYNDA ABDUL RAHEEM

## Professional Development Early Release Days:

This year we do not have any full day PD Days due to the unusual holiday schedule. So our full school professional development takes place on Early Release days. This means we have to be very deliberate and focused in our offerings. We will have workshops in Inclusion, Technology Integration and Assessment each month to keep us all on the same page and moving forward in these areas as required by our Strategic Plan and Accreditation recommendations. By visiting different aspects in each of these topics we will gain a greater understanding and depth of knowledge to move forward with a unified approach as a school. Most of the information we will present during these workshops were determined by the results of the 2017 PD Needs Survey that you submitted last spring. So during our early release days, we will be focusing on the areas that 50 or more teachers identified as important for each topic.

## Annual Professional Development Requirements:

We are continuing to track our individual PD experiences using our PD portfolio and the new PD Dashboard that will be completed soon. For more information contact Ms. Sana [sana.dakhel@fawsec.com.kw](mailto:sana.dakhel@fawsec.com.kw) Remember there is also lots of PD available on request throughout the school year provided by the Instructional Coaches and the IT Coaches and Facilitators. So if you need help with other topics not included on Early Release days, please use these experts to assist you.

## Arabic Lessons and English Lessons:

Finally, we have had some teachers ask us if we could offer Arabic or English lessons after school a day or two a week. **Anyone interested in participating in this, please let me know.** If there is enough interest, we will pursue it.

Thank you all for the amazing work that you do and the difference you make in the lives of children! Best of luck in the start-up of our new school year!

Sincerely,  
Lynda

# BBS MEDIA CENTER

BY LINA CHOUCAIRI

*We are born makers. We move what we're learning from our heads to our hearts through our hands.- Brown, 2015.*

The Middle School Media Center (MSMC) is moving its resources to the High School Media Center (HSMC) where both collections will be merged in order to provide the previous MSMC space to the Makerspaces. It will gradually hosts the tools, materials , and supplies that will be used by our ES, MS, and HS students. Makerspaces will empower our BBS students with curiosity, risk takers, responsibility, creativity, optimism, and so many positive experiences.

We already started the move and we will keep you updated about the project.



# AROUND BBS

BY AARON SHELBY

*Click Me*



AP Psychology students attended a collaborative class with Ms. Alexis, Psychology teacher, and Mr. Jawad, Statistics teacher, about how to conduct research.



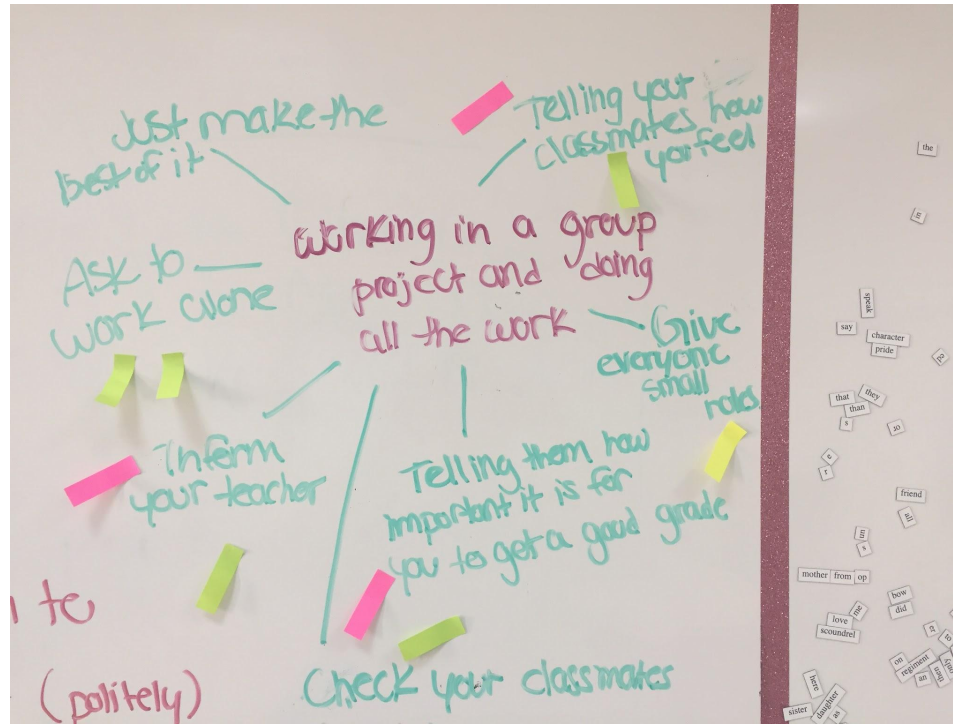
Students in Ms. Suha's Graphic Programming class using a Tribes strategy to demonstrate their understanding of script/code writing.



ES students celebrating the Islamic New Year.

# AROUND BBS

BY AARON SHELBY



Ms. Candice's grades 9 & 10 Public Speaking class used the Tribes "Brainstorming" activity to develop ideas for resolving issues. This is the end result for one group attempting to solve equity of group work.

Students in Ms. Katherine's 6A English class building a tower using the Tribes "Tower Building" activity.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

BY AARON SHELBY

- TLC Open House September 27 (8:30am-3:00pm)
- Twitter #tlcbbschat October 1 and October 15
- Twitter Workshop October 1 and October 15 at 6:45am
- BBS PD Early Release Day October 17
- NESAs Fall Training (Bahrain) November 3-4

# CONNECT WITH THE BBS TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTER

Website: [tlcbbs.com](http://tlcbbs.com)

Twitter: [@tlcbbs](https://twitter.com/tlcbbs)

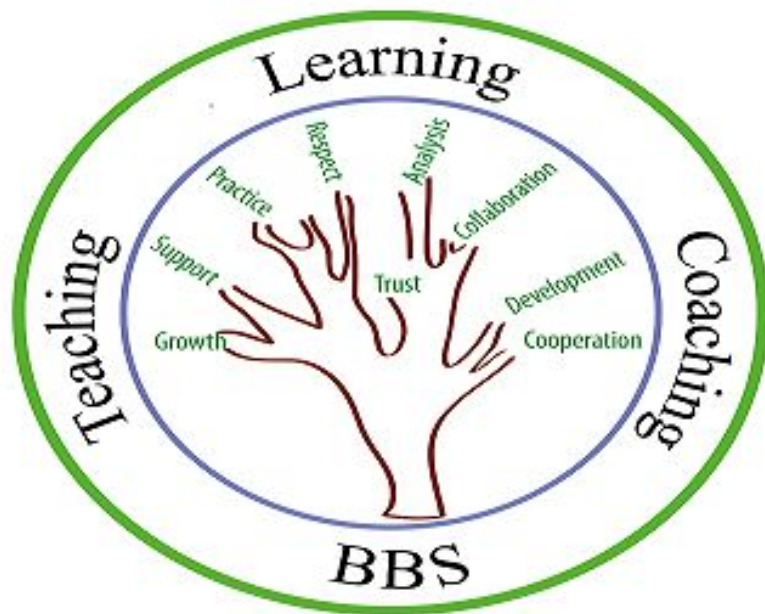
Edivate: [edivate.com](http://edivate.com)

- [BBS Teaching and Learning Group](#)

Email

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