

KATM Bulletin

Kansas Association of Teachers of Mathematics

October
2020

Happy
Fall
from
KATM!

A Message from our President

Letter From the President:

Welcome to Fall 2020. What a fall semester it has been so far. This year has brought new challenges you never even thought you would be facing. Remember to celebrate your successes as you work through the challenges of teaching mathematics in a pandemic.

As an associate professor and Director of Professional Development Schools at Emporia State University, I have the honor and privilege of working with our preservice teachers each semester. Their growth in teaching and learning mathematics each semester is amazing to observe. They learn so much from their mentor teachers while student teaching. I want to encourage you to know you are making a difference every day in many students lives whether it is an elementary student, middle school student, high school student, or even university student teacher.

As you may have heard already, our spring face-to-face conference has been cancelled. However, we do want to help serve the needs of mathematics teachers in Kansas. Please take a few minutes to complete this [survey](#) to help us support you.

<https://forms.gle/t4seLHp6qygQ6a3j6>

You can find us on Facebook at Kansas Association of Teachers of Mathematics or on Twitter @KATMwebmaster.

Join us as we work to make our mission a reality: fostering an engaged community to advance effective practices in teaching and learning mathematics throughout Kansas.

Dr. Sara Schwerdtfeger
KATM President 2020-2021

Dear Kansas Math Teachers,

Greetings! Well, it's hard to know what to say this year. It's certainly a year unlike any year that any of us have ever been through. In so many ways, I think we all feel like first year teachers again.

Each of us has our own reality this year. Some teaching in person, some remote. Some of us are teaching full time in person, some hybrid and some full remote. Some of us have already changed from one model to another this year.

When I was decorating my classroom this year, I couldn't find all of my usual posters that I usually hang up (still can't quite figure out where they are). The only poster I could find said this, "The happiest people don't have the best of everything. They make the best of everything."

Personally, I have adopted that as my motto for the year. This is certainly not the school year I would have chosen, but I can choose each day to make the best of it for my students. I'm hoping each of you is also able to make the best of this year.

Sincerely,

Jenny Wilcox

Look for information about upcoming events in your KATM zone!

What's your favorite teaching tip? What burning questions do you have?

Post them to our Facebook page!

The past few months have been incredibly hard for most of us in the education field. Change is almost never easy and we have experienced some big changes in education. Author Allen Tappe stated, "change will happen whether you like it or not. Positive change, however, requires choice. You can choose to accept natural change or you can choose to fight it. The power to choose is yours. The responsibility for choice is yours. You have no one else to blame for the way you choose to respond to life. It is your deal."

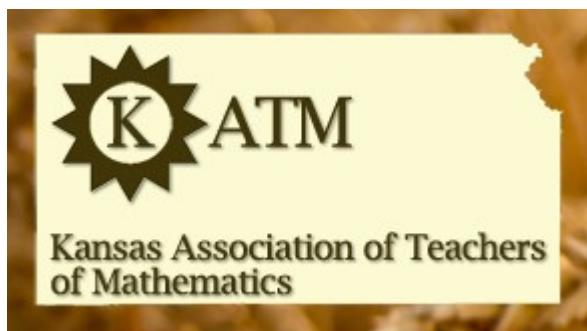
I have been super proud to watch many of my colleagues take on the changes we are having to make with a growth mindset and positive attitude. These characteristics are what we must continue to model to our students in every area of education, math included. I wanted to just encourage each of you to keep up the great work! We are using our mathematical practice of *make sense of problems and persevere in solving them* in a real world problem right now. Don't give up!

Nikki Meier, VP Elementary



[Click here](#) if you're interested in joining in conversation with other Kansas math teachers in our Facebook groups. Invite your friends too!

[Click here](#) to get information about applying for the Capitol Federal scholarship. It is awarded to a KATM member each year! Check out the note from our recipient from last year on the next page!



[Click here](#) to join KATM! Or let a colleague or friend know about KATM.

KLFA Update September

Dr. Randy Watson, Kansas Commissioner of Education, provided an update on Kansas education initiatives. He began with the KS Board of Education Vision, “Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.” Currently the greatest challenge is some students have not been in a face-to-face classroom since March, which is especially challenging for some of our most at-risk students. Metrics used by the state to measure “success” of our education system include a five-year graduation rate, the five-year success average (determined as a high school graduate receiving a license or certificate to be used in the workplace or enrolling in a post-secondary institution program within five years of graduation), averaged to achieve the five-year effectiveness average. This data is then partnered with a predictability range that considers three factors shown to have the most impact on success rates: cumulative poverty, student mobility and chronic absenteeism. Current data show improvement is occurring, but Dr. Watson cautioned that the current pandemic will slow down the postsecondary progress. You may access Dr. Watson’s presentation here: [Dr. Watson’s Presentation](#).

Dr. Watson also gave an update regarding COVID-19 and Kansas schools. Almost 1,000 educators, health care officials, physicians, school board members and KSDE staff volunteered their time to create a living document, [Navigating Change: Kansas’ Guide to Learning and School Safety Operations](#). This document provides guidance to local school districts and communities and is updated regularly. There are goals for all stages to maintain a strong learning environment while keeping students and staff safe. Included are grade banded instructional competencies focusing on continuous learning with social-emotion learning embedded. These competencies are flexible and were created to support educators throughout the state with our new normal of various options of instruction. There are three learning models; on-site, hybrid and remote. *Within Navigating Change there is gating criteria developed by KDHE, University of Kansas Medical Center – Wichita Pediatrics, Kansas Academy of Family Physicians and Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.*

A legislative update was provided by Mark Desetti, KNEA and Leah Fliter, KASB. They noted that there were multiple pro-public education Republicans that were defeated in the primary, but there are many other pro-public education candidates running in these areas. Due to these losses the 2021 legislative session will be challenging. Getting out the vote is extremely important for the November election.

The **US Census** is in full swing and will continue until September 30. Kansas receives federal funding, including federal education funding, based on the census so it’s extremely important to promote completing the 2020 Census. ALL people residing in Kansas should complete the census. Educator resources and posters can be found [here](#).

Jeanette Nobo, Assistant Director for Teacher Licensure and Accreditation, provided an update on the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) work. She noted that during this challenging time of COVID-19 there needs to be regular communication between district leadership teams building leadership teams, educators, staff, students, community and families on expectations. KSDE has extended the deadline to complete the 2019-2020 KESA visits and these visits can be either in-person, with social distancing, or virtual. Schools need to continue to examine data and explain what the data shows for the system. KSDE has also made numerous enhancements and updates to KESA. There has also been an appeal process developed and implemented. KSDE will continue to offer monthly KESA updates via zoom for the 2020-2021 school year. Her presentation can be found [here](#).

Book Launch: *Building Thinking Classrooms in Mathematics*

Will M Dunn, President Elect

In 2016 the research of Dr. Peter Liljedahl at Simon Fraser University began to circulate online in an obvious way. An established presence in the domain of Canadian education already, Dr. Liljedahl was now sharing a distilled version of his research in the form of 14 specific points. Quickly, the research turned into observable practice in Canada, the USA, and beyond. Its popularity does not appear to have waned. Now, his book *“Building Thinking Classrooms in Mathematics”* will make it accessible to any who want it.

The 14 points Dr. Liljedahl presents provide a framework for educators upon which they can outline a comprehensive plan of interconnected learning. Each single piece supports the others, and the compounding results return more than each individual investment. Roughly, the points are outlines as:

- “Good” tasks
- Visibly randomized grouping
- Vertical, non-permanent surfaces
- Verbal instructions
- De-fronted classrooms
- Teacher question responses
- Mindful notetaking
- Developing autonomous learners
- Manage “flow”
- Level to the bottom
- Use “check for understanding” problems
- Communication
- Evaluate what you value
- Report based on data

You can read fuller descriptions of each point as described by Dr. Liljedahl himself in an article for *edutopia.org* at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/yy5zwbzi>.

Multiple sessions on Building Thinking Classrooms have been presented at the KATM annual conferences in the last few years. With the book out more sessions will certainly come. If you’d like to learn more now, I would be happy to discuss it with you (Email: wilddunn@katm.org or Twitter: [@WillMDunn](https://twitter.com/WillMDunn)) or you can find Dr. Liljedahl on Twitter ([@pgliljedahl](https://twitter.com/pgliljedahl)) and by the hashtag #thinkingclassroom.

Of course, popularity is not an acceptable justification upon which to build educational practice. To read the research yourself, order the book through Corwin at <https://tinyurl.com/y3t6epo3>.