



F.O.N.T.

Focus on New Teachers

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Linda McCoskey, Editor and FFT Secretary

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BUILDING SKILLS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

What differentiates the Mayfield Innovation Center from traditional classrooms is evident not just in the virtual reality technology, the 3-D printers, or the open architecture that make the two-floor, 30,000 square foot building seem less of a secondary school than a Google satellite office. It is also the words emblazoned on the wall of the Computer-Aided Drafting and Design Lab, a quote attributed to Curt Richardson, the founder of OtterBox, which makes consumer electronics accessories: "Failure is a part of innovation, perhaps the most important part." Failure being celebrated? In high school?

This is not a typical school. This school is in a district of 4,300 K-12 students east of Cleveland, Ohio and is a striking example of an educational approach that could make traditional methods as outdated as chalk and blackboards. Mayfield's model is described as project-based, team-centered, career and industry-aligned learning.

Project Lead the Way is an Indianapolis based nonprofit that is one of the prime progenitors of this educational philosophy. Its mission statement reads: "We believe all students, beginning at a young age, need access to real-world, applied learning experiences that empower them to gain the skills they need to thrive in college, career, and beyond" At programs like Mayfield's, where eleven teachers have completed Project Lead the Way's certification since 2014, that means access to state-of-the-art technology and partnerships with local organizations to provide these experiences.

These include the Cleveland Clinic, which collaborated with the high school in a six week project in cardio-pulmonary education. Eighty seven students in grades 9-12 were assigned cases that required learning the anatomy of the heart, as well as advanced medical technologies addressing heart disease. Working in teams of five or six, the students used materials like balsa wood and foam board to create three-dimensional models showing specific problems in the heart. They then became immersed in sophisticated virtual reality simulations that allowed them to see a stent being inserted into an occluded artery. During the process they were mentored by their own teachers and also by staff from the hospital. Hospital staff were dazzled by the Innovation Center, a \$3 million dollar facility opened in 2015 and paid for by a bond issue.

Keith Kelly, superintendent of the Mayfield City School District, said the center was "about getting kids involved in inquiry, solving problems, in partnerships, in authentic projects that interest them." It is not just schools that are driving this. The project-based approach to education involves industry and colleges as well.

For example, the Pasadena, CA Unified School District is a district in which 65% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch prices. It has nine "career-themed" academies for its high school students. These are learning environments that simulate various industries and professional settings, and include an app development lab, a credit union, a digital film studio, and a courtroom. All are supervised by teachers working with advisory boards and mentors from local industry, including McDonnell-Douglas, Caltech, Kaiser Permanente, and Saatchi. Superintendent Brian McDonald calls it a "linked learning" approach-linking core academic content with a strong set of career technical education course and work-based learning opportunities.

Toyota has a number of initiatives aimed at funneling students into careers with the automaker via partnerships with 256 high schools, summer internships, specialized degree tracks, and part-time employment at the college level, and, for those who finish the pathway, jobs with the company. Toyota is a model for other industries. If the skills gap is to be solved, schools and employers must work together.

- DID YOU KNOW?**
- FFT Officers election will be held on Thurs., May 9
 - Building Representative elections will be held on Thurs., May 23.
 - Alternate FFT Building Representative elections will be held on Thurs., June 5
 - The Budget Vote and BOE Vote will take place on Tuesday, May 21.

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100 Broadhollow Road
Suite 104
Farmingdale, NY 11735

Office Hours:
8:30AM-4:30PM
(631)249-0773

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[http://
www.farmingdaleteachers.org](http://www.farmingdaleteachers.org)

Building Skills Outside the Classroom continued

While many of these innovative programs are STEM-oriented, one partnership between higher and secondary education in Massachusetts seeks to address a different problem: a shortage of nonwhite teachers in the classroom. As students continue to diversify in terms of race, language, and ethnicity, teachers are still about 90% white. Lasell University's "Pathways to Teacher Diversity" is a part of a statewide effort supported by a Gates foundations grant. It is a partnership with four school districts in the state intended to encourage more high school students of color to pursue careers in education. Research has shown that when nonwhite students have a teacher of color, they do better. An orientation meeting for the Pathways program attracted 160 students from the four districts. The first group of twelve students is getting college credit for an introductory teaching course; an additional twenty-six are being mentored by Lasell students. The long term goal is to get these students to return as certified teachers to K-12 schools like the ones they attended. School districts are seeking more diversity in their teaching force.

In 1972, City-as-School High School was established in New York City by the Board of Education as a "school without walls". The alternative school's prospective students were invited to "see the city as your curriculum" and to "imagine yourself" in various glamorous-sounding professional settings. Today, most of the 600 students who attend this school spend about two days per week in traditional classes at its Greenwich Village campus. For the other three days, the students are involved in internships with one of 300 organizations, from the Metropolitan Museum of Art to Marvel Comics. The founders hoped to foster real-world context for what the students are learning. The practicality and applicability of education are still the goal, as innovative school programs and their partners seek to reimagine the educational system in the 21st century.

Another sign in the Mayfield Innovation Center displays a quote by Thomas Edison: "There is a way to do it better. Find it."

Excerpted from The NY Times article Beyond Classroom Walls, April 8, 2018.

Important Information

NYSTRS

Have you set up your New York State Teachers' Retirement System account through NYSTRS.org? As a new teacher, you should check your amount of credited service. Don't wait until you are further along in your career. Find out now! It will save you a lot of headaches later on. Did you know that if you worked at Jones Beach in the concession stand, as a lifeguard at a public pool, as a counselor in a school camp, or in the library at a NYS public university, you may have earned credit toward your retirement? Check it out!

Tenure Workshop

On Monday, June 10, from 4 pm to 6 pm, there will be a Tenure Workshop at the NYSUT Nassau Office in Woodbury. The purpose is to inform newly tenured or soon to be tenured teachers and teaching assistants about the limitations of tenure and their rights conferred by tenure. Recent developments regarding the tenure process will be addressed. The workshop will also explore how disciplinary procedures operate and how NYSUT provides assistance and representation for you should you face any disciplinary action. This is an important and valuable workshop. You can register at <http://www.event.com/d/lbqflf>. Registration deadline is Friday, June 7.

Edited by Linda McCoskey
FFT Secretary