

TPS SUPERINTENDENT BULLETIN

Here for you 860-335-2455



UPDATE FOR 5/2/2016

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SUPERINTENDENT NOTES FOR THE WEEK

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Program Offering

Tim Hollister, who lives in Bloomfield, lost his 17 year old son Reid in a car crash on Interstate 84 in 2006. In the years since, Tim has become a nationally-known advocate for safer teen driving. In 2013, he published *Not So Fast: Parenting Your Teen Through the Dangers of Driving* (Chicago Review Press).

Now, Tim's writing and speaking have gone in a new direction, with his recent publication of *His Father Still: A Parenting Memoir* (Argo Navis/Perseus, 2015), a candid account of parenting a challenging and rambunctious teenager, and the obligations of a parent after a tragedy. Tim will give a presentation about both books, entitled, "Every Parent's Challenge: Freedom vs. Protection" on **Tuesday, May 3 at 6:30 pm. in Conference Room A.** Copies of his books will be on sale at the event.

This event is free, but registration is required. To register, call the library at 860-871-3620 or visit tolland.org/library.

SAVE THE DATE: TOLLAND HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE WORKSHOP

Come to learn about, and discuss the Tolland High School Schedule!

May 18, 2016 at 7:00 pm-Tolland High School Library



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Some Potentially Useful Research

High usage of mobile devices may be linked to depression and anxiety, according to research by University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign psychologists. They surveyed more than 300 university students about their mental health, their cellphone and Internet use, and their motivations for using electronic devices. Findings showed that people who described themselves as having addictive-style behaviors toward the Internet and cellphones scored much higher on depression and anxiety scales. The researchers found no relationship between cellphone or Internet use and negative mental health outcomes among participants who reported they used these technologies simply to alleviate boredom ([Computers in Human Behavior, May](#)).

Parents are more likely to give children with social and emotional difficulties mobile devices to calm them, according to an exploratory study conducted at Boston Medical Center. Researchers interviewed the parents of 144 healthy children ages 15 months to 36 months from low-income families about how likely they were to use a smartphone or tablet in different situations. The researchers found that parents were more likely to use devices to pacify children who were perceived as frequently showing difficult behavior than children who did not frequently show such behavior ([JAMA Pediatrics, online Feb. 29](#)).

"Putting on a happy face" for kids may undermine parents' well-being and parent-child bonds, finds research conducted at the University of Toronto. In one experiment with 162 parents, investigators asked participants to recall past caregiving experiences. When parents recalled suppressing negative emotions and amplifying positive emotions while caregiving, they reported experiencing lower authenticity, emotional well-being, relationship quality and responsiveness to their children's needs ([Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, March](#)).

Where we live affects our visual categorization of mixed-race people and attitude toward them, finds a study led by New York University psychologists. They asked participants to rapidly categorize the race — white or black — of computer-generated male faces that were shown one at a time on a computer screen. The faces were on a spectrum from black to mixed-race to white. The researchers found that white participants who lived in areas with less exposure to mixed-race people made abrupt and varied shifts in category boundaries between black and white faces. They also found that such responses predicted reduced trust of mixed-race people ([Psychological Science, online March 14](#)).

Our brains prioritize rewarding memories over others, strengthening them by replaying them when we are at rest, suggests research by University of California, Davis, neuroscientists. They used fMRI to scan the brains of volunteers while they answered simple yes-no questions, such as, "Do these objects weigh more than a basketball?" Participants were told they would receive either a large or small reward for correct answers. In a recall test, participants fared better at remembering objects that were associated with a high reward. In addition, when the researchers looked at participants' brain scans at rest after giving their answers, they found the same pattern of activity as when subjects were doing the high-reward task. The authors suggest that the participants were replaying the rewarding memories, helping to fix the memory in place ([Neuron, Feb. 11](#)).

Bullied children who had low birthweight may be at higher risk for mental health problems as adults, according to research conducted at McMaster University. Scientists interviewed people who had extremely low birthweights, as well as those with normal birthweights. The participants were born between 1977 and 1982, and were interviewed at ages 8, 22 to 26 and 29 to 36. The low-birthweight participants who reported being bullied as children were nearly twice as likely to develop a mental health problem such as anxiety, depression or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder by the time they were in their 20s, compared with their normal birthweight counterparts who had been bullied. By their 30s, the low-birthweight participants who had been bullied as children were nearly three times more likely to have developed anxiety disorders such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, social phobia and panic disorder ([Pediatrics, March](#)).

College psychology classes lack courses about disabilities, according to a review of undergraduate course offerings from U.S. colleges and universities. Worcester State University and Oregon State University researchers analyzed the titles and descriptions of nearly 700 college psychology courses from 98 top-ranked undergraduate psychology programs. The researchers found that all 98 colleges offered a course on psychiatric disability, but only eight offered courses that covered physical disability, even though physical disability is more common ([Teaching of Psychology, January](#)).

Young adults with hostile attitudes or who don't cope well with stress may be at increased risk for experiencing memory and thinking problems decades later, according to research by scientists at the National Institutes of Health and various universities. More than 3,100 young adults answered questions assessing their personalities and attitudes, ability to cope with stress, and memory and thinking abilities. The researchers measured the participants' cognitive abilities again 25 years later and found that those with the highest levels of hostility or ineffective coping skills performed worse on memory and thinking tests compared with people who had the lowest levels of those traits ([Neurology, online March 2](#)).

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Standard ways of screening for depression risk may not work as well among blacks as among whites, according to research led by University of Michigan scientists. The study's 3,300 participants, all in the United States, took a standard depression screening test that asked questions about their emotions, sleep, appetite and energy levels. Fifteen years later, researchers conducted more detailed interviews to assess the participants' mental health. Researchers found that white participants whose answers on the initial screening indicated a risk for depression were more likely to have major depression at the time of the later interview. There was no such association for black participants, even after the researchers corrected for differences in the participants' social, economic and physical health status (*Frontiers in Public Health, March*).

Sleep apnea changes brain function, finds research from the University of California, Los Angeles. Scientists examined levels of the neurotransmitters glutamate and GABA in the brains of 14 patients with obstructive sleep apnea and 22 healthy controls. Participants with sleep apnea had higher levels of glutamate, which generally excites neural processes, and decreased levels of GABA, which generally inhibits them. These changes could alter the effectiveness of brain function, including the regulation of mood (*Journal of Sleep Research, online Feb. 4*).

Winners of 2016 T-shirt contest are:

- First place: Caroline Marcroft 4th grade
- 2nd place Anna Maria Pope 6th grade
- 3rd place Reid Babcock 2nd grade



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Tolland Middle School Students Named National Finalists in the Bright Schools Competition

THREE TMS Bright Schools Competition TEAMS were named among 50 National Finalist Teams in the Innovative STEM Competition for Students in Grades 6-8

Tolland, Connecticut—**April 11, 2016**—Sara Carey, Mary Singer, Grace Kavanagh, Max Miller, Alex Reinard, Kate Reinard, Sara Clokey and Madison Kolb, along with coach/teacher, Stephanie Cassidy, of Tolland Middle School in Tolland, Connecticut have been named national finalists in the inaugural Bright Schools Competition™. The competition is a collaborative effort of the [National Sleep Foundation](#) and the [National Science Teachers Association](#) that encourages students in grades 6-8 to explore the correlation between light and sleep and how it influences student health and performance. TMS Teams: **Blue Light Affects Sleep, Colored Light Effect on Sleep and Save Your Z's** were each one of 50 national finalist teams, chosen from among 170 teams, made up of nearly 550 students from 63 schools. These three TMS teams were the only finalist teams chosen from the state of Connecticut. On May 2, 2016, first-, second- and third-place national winning teams will be announced. The complete list of the national finalists can be found at <http://brightschoolscompetition.org/>.



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Links and other information of potential interest

[Hartford Yard Goats - Tickets](#)

[Tolland Junior Women-Paint Night Fundraiser](#)

[Kids taking action on climate change](#)