

FIRST MONDAY

Together We Are...Making a Difference for Children!

AN UPDATE FROM DR. DEBBIE HARRIS ROLLINS

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Windsor, North Carolina

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Progress, Not Perfection

Recently I noticed a bumper sticker proclaiming "**Progress, Not Perfection.**" It momentarily caught my attention, but I promptly forgot it. That is until just this morning when I read an e-article that began with that same slogan – "Progress, Not Perfection." Now, anyone who knows me will tell you that I do not believe in superstition. I do believe, though, in paying attention, and when 'things' (ideas, thoughts, quotes, etc.) cross my path twice, I ask myself if there is a message for me. Couple this saying with the many email messages, phone calls and notes I received from BCS employees asking me if I used to write a newsletter entitled **Every Monday Matters** and why don't I write that for Bertie County Schools instead of **First Monday**. Well, the answer is, "Yes I did write a newsletter," and I think there is a message here for all of us.

First, what happened to **Every Monday Matters** and why don't I write that for BCS? Absolutely nothing – every Monday still matters – but only if **YOU** make it! Every Monday Matters cannot be my mantra; it has to be a philosophy, a practice, a belief embraced by all. Monday remains one of the most wasted days of the week – especially in schools and classrooms. I will also remind you that every school year typically has about 35 Mondays. As it stands now, we have only about **19 Mondays** remaining in this school year. Before I continue writing and you continue reading, a couple of questions should pop into your head. **One** – Wow, about 15 Mondays have passed already; did I make them matter for my students? **Two** – How will I make the next 19 Mondays matter for my students?

You see, the **Every Monday Matters** mantra has to belong to **YOU** because **YOU** are in the classroom every day and **YOU** make the difference for students. Oh, the rest of us are important. Bus drivers have to transport students safely, Nutrition services has to feed students nourishing meals, Custodians must keep facilities in good repair and clean and Central Services and Principals must sit around and make up stuff for you to do (kidding). But the rubber meets the road in the classroom. **YOU** make the difference. **YOU** must make every Monday matter. What happened to the newsletter? I returned to graduate school (yes, again) and so have very little if any 'free' time which is when I used to pen **Every Monday Matters**. What happened to making Mondays matter? **THAT** is a question for **YOU** to ask **YOU**rself and **YOU**r colleagues.

But back to "**Progress, Not Perfection.**" Have you ever heard that if Christopher Columbus had invested one cent into a fund that yielded compound interest in 1492, that account would now be worth over **\$95 billion**? The moral is that 'baby steps' work. Just because you can't change the world (or yourself, or your spouse, or your child or a particularly challenging student) does not mean that you ought not make the incremental changes that can accomplish a tremendous amount. A roughly translated quote from an ancient sage reads, "He who grabs all is left with none." How aptly that describes our typical involvement in effecting positive changes.

As humans, we tend to reach for the stars. Thus, our failure to achieve those fantastic expectations results in discouragement. Let's try a new strategy, a strategy of progress. How differently would the atmosphere of your household radiate if you cut down on the number of times you raise your voice – without altogether pledging to eliminate any and all shouting? The same goes for a classroom. What can you do a little more of and a little less of to effect great change? Can you teach all day, every day from bell to bell? Can you give less homework but more meaningful and intentional homework? Can you better organize materials so time is not wasted distributing them? Like Columbus's proverbial penny, little changes add up to great transformations. And how do you know the desired change is occurring? You continuously assess the situation, in the case of your classroom – the learning. Yes, this is the perfect segue into **NC FALCON** and **formative assessment**. Every day, all day long you should be teaching and assessing. If you haven't begun the NC FALCON modules, do get started – navigating through them AND implementing the new learning. You'll be amazed at the learning.

So, **Every Monday Matters**? Yes. If **YOU** make it.

Tools, Tips, Resources & Opportunities

- ✓ **December 31 is the Deadline to Apply for National Board Certification** - A low interest loan program is available for every candidate as are the three days of release time and the 12 percent pay increase for those who achieve certification. Teachers may apply for National Board Certification by visiting www.nbpts.org.

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BERTIE

BY THE NUMBERS

455

Total Number of Employees in BCS

71%

District Goal for Percent At or Above Grade Level in Reading

2,874

2011-2012 student enrollment K-12 as of December 1st

5,769

Number of miles BCS buses travel each day

9

Total number of BCS Transportation employees

202

Number of Out-of-School Suspensions (1-10 days each) since school opening

2,323

Number of lunches served daily in BCS

Tools, Tips, Resources & Opportunities CONTINUED

- ✓ **Renewal Credits** - During the 2011 session, the General Assembly reduced the number of renewal credits required for a teacher to renew a Standard Professional 2 license from 15 to 7.5. At the August State Board, members requested a task force be created to consider options for renewal credits. The State Board approved the following Task Force recommendations at its November meeting:

- 1 renewal credit for literacy
- 1 renewal credit in the specific academic subject area and
- 5.5 general credits (as determined by the LEA).

Credit is no longer given for teaching experience. In addition, teachers who complete National Board Certification may earn the 7.5 credits. Those who are in the 10-year National Board renewal cycle may earn 2 credits (1 for content and 1 for literacy).

Principals and assistant principals earn 3 credits focused on the school executives as instructional, human resources and managerial leader. The remaining 4.5 credits may be general credits.

The Board's policy (TCP-A-005) addressing renewal requirements is available online at <http://sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us> (click on NCSBE Policy Manual Table of Contents then the link for TCP series). Questions may be directed to Lynne Johnson at lynne.johnson@dpi.nc.gov.

- ✓ **Commemorate Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day with Verizon Thinkfinity Classroom Resources**- The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor took place on Dec. 7, 1941. Share this important historical event with your students through the use of primary sources and interactives from Thinkfinity that are available online at <http://thinkfinity.org/pearl-harbor> . For example, in a lesson on World War II, students will use an interactive timeline and primary resources from the Smithsonian's History Explorer to understand the act that defined a generation and led to the U.S. involvement in World War II. Other resources allow you to share the image of an actual World War II poster, listen to the stories of the men and women who built the Liberty Ships that supported the efforts of World War II, and use an interactive Venn Diagram to compare the Pearl Harbor attack to the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.
- ✓ **Strategies** - "What children learn depends not only on what they are taught but also how they are taught, their development level, and their interests and experiences.... These beliefs require that much closer attention be paid to the methods chosen for presenting material..." *Saskatchewan Education, 1988*. Learn how to teach the students you serve. Visit Learning Strategies Online at <http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/de/pd/instr/index.html> for some old and new ideas and check out the Glossary of Instructional Strategies at <http://www.beesburg.com/edtools/glossary.html>. Finally, refresh yourself on Marzano's Nine Strategies That Work (<http://www.middleweb.com/MWLresources/marzchat1.html>) then implement some new practices in your classroom this week!
- ✓ **Spring Online Professional Development Courses Open for Enrollment** - Teachers can hone their instructional skills by taking a professional development course from North Carolina E-Learning for Educators. All online courses for spring are open for enrollment. Offerings include the Carolina On-line Teacher (COLT) program as well as Moodle training, content-area courses, and courses designed to help teachers work with special populations. Each course was created using a researched model of effective professional development and the online format allows participants to work at a time and place most convenient to them. All courses are aligned to the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards. For more information, including registration, please visit www.learnnc.org/courses/.

DECEMBER IS... a time to make learning fun!

- Read a New Book Month
- Made in America Month
- Universal Human Rights Month
- Art & Architecture Book Month

Other happenings this month...

- 1 December
 - First Drive-In Automobile Service Station
 - First Black Woman to Edit a Major US Newspaper
 - World AIDS Day
 - Rosa Parks Day
 - Eat a Red Apple Day
- 2 December
 - First Artificial Heart Transplant
 - Monroe Doctrine Declared
 - Pan American Health Day
 - National Fritters Day
- 3 December
 - First Co-Educational College
- First Successful Heart Transplant
- International Day of Disabled Persons
- Telescope Day
- 5 December
 - Blue Jeans Invented
 - Repeal Day: 21st Amendment Ended Prohibition
- 6 December
 - 13th Amendment to the Constitution Ratified
 - Microwave Patented
 - US Border Patrol Founded
- 7 December
 - Pearl Harbor Day

It's All About the Integration

A BRIGHT IDEA

How can YOU integrate your NC Standard Course of Study objectives with one (or more) of the events listed for December while incorporating one (or more) of the strategies found at Instructional Strategies Online so that EVERY student's learning style is honored and learning needs are met and learning is actually fun? Find strategies at <http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/de/pd/instr/alpha.html>.