



Spring 2022 Newsletter

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Welcome from the 3RT President

We are excited for the forthcoming year at Three Rivers TESOL! Our Board has recently shifted roles and added a new member. Here is our current list of Board members:

- Joe DiLucente, President
- Jason Litzenberg, Vice President
- Susan McKeever, Secretary
- Mike Burke, Treasurer
- Kathy Lipecky, Past President
- New Member: Susan Morris-Rutledge, Webmaster

In addition to supporting the landmark TESOL International Convention and English Language Expo, we look forward to planning several other events to connect our members across the western and central PA regions. To this end, we recently held the first-of-its-kind K-12 teacher networking sessions. We plan to continue supporting regional educators in their quest for professional learning and cultivating collegial atmospheres within our field. Please feel free to reach out to me at president@threeriverstesol.org with suggestions on how Three Rivers TESOL can better serve our English language teaching community!

Sincerely,
Joe DiLucente
President, Three Rivers TESOL Board

Resources for ELT Student Issues

- Jason Litzenberg

English Language Teaching (ELT) professionals of varying contexts and employment obligations (e.g., K-12, higher education, community outreach, administration, and so forth) must consistently pay attention to a range of issues that impact their students. Some fantastic resources for staying up-to-date on such matters are the weekly newsletters from Karen Fischer, [Latitudes](#) and immigration attorneys [Miller Mayer LLP](#); another source more specific to higher education that I also occasionally reach for is [Inside Higher Ed](#). You may follow the embedded links to the original sources. Below are three short reports on the central and constantly shifting issues of immigration and testing.

[Karin Fisher](#) recently reported that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has re-established a government advisory council for providing feedback and guidance on education-related issues. The 30-member panel consists of representatives from a range of professional areas relevant to the ELT field (e.g., K-12 educators, higher-education associations, HSBCs, and several federal agencies), although, as Fischer laments, international students are not directly represented. Some of the immediate issues to be considered by the panel include: Elementary and secondary education, processing times for work authorization and Optional Practical Training (OPT), as well as “future policy guidance for hybrid and online learning for

student-visa holders.” The visa changes are not only important to our field, but to the U.S. economy, as the changes help retain important talent and could add almost \$250 billion to the national economy (<https://www.fwd.us/news/>).

Also concerning immigration, [Miller Mayer LLP](#) recently reported on a proposed DHS rule change that “would provide ‘fair and humane treatment’ for noncitizens requesting admission to the United States or applying for lawful permanent residence from within” the country. According to DHS Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas, this change would ensure a “return to the historical understanding of the term ‘public charge’ and individuals will not be penalized for choosing to access the health benefits and other supplemental

government services,” including noncash benefits such the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), most Medicaid benefits, the Children’s Health Insurance Program, and housing and transportation

benefits. These changes are important in that they alleviate some of the causes of stress experienced by ESL student families and at least somewhat lessen the need for ELT professionals to act as advocates for their students and their students’ families. Such an environment can lessen socioeconomic pressures experienced by ESL students and provide more time for learning.

Finally, Scott Jaschik details in [Inside Higher Ed](#) a trend among colleges and universities to go “test optional.” Jaschick highlights how numerous Big 10 and Big 12



institutions have made permanent changes switching to test optional. A continuation of this development expanding to institutions outside of the Big 10 and 12 would be a welcomed change for international students applying from abroad, as they often do not have immediate access to SAT or ACT testing sites. Most international student applicants, however, will still be required to provide evidence of language proficiency (e.g., TOEFL, IELTS, a minimum of two years of U.S. high school, or an IEP affiliated with the host institution). The change would also be advantageous for domestic ESL students who are college-ready but may struggle with the language of standardized tests or be unaccustomed to such testing situations.

If you are familiar with any other resources of interest to ELT professionals, please consider sharing a similar brief report to the [3RT Secretary](#) for inclusion in a future issue!

Sources:

Latitudes:

<https://www.chronicle.com/newsletter/latitudes>

MillerMayerLLP:

<https://millermayer.com/news-and-insights/>

Inside Higher Ed:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/>

3RT Networking Report

- Susan McKeever

On March 2, Three Rivers TESOL (3RT) held a series of three consecutive networking sessions for K-12 ESL Specialists across the region to come together and discuss various topics of interest facilitated by 3RT board members working in K-12 Education and K-12 pre-service and Masters teaching programs. There was no lull in the conversations; attendees came to the table with topics of interest and questions in areas of need. The morning session covered current K-12 concerns with the social-emotional toll the pandemic has had on students and how to be adequately prepared to support the journey of multilingual

learners after experiencing trauma. The lunch hour session brought about different topics



stemming from students with limited and interrupted schooling (LIFE), creating ongoing professional learning and sustaining collaboration among professionals and advocacy with administrators. The afternoon conversation circled back to the growing need for professional learning in areas of SEL and supporting students who have experienced trauma.

A goal of these sessions was to provide a space for starting the conversations among educators. While solutions to each of the problems brought up may not have been readily available, the platform gave teachers the opportunity for open discussion and networking among peers. Overall, the sessions were an overwhelming success. The 3RT team looks forward to providing this collaborative space for future networking events!



Get ready!

“Big” TESOL is coming to PA!

When? March 22-25, 2022

Where? David L. Lawrence Convention Center; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

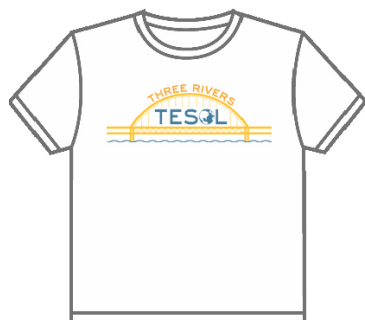
Registration information is available at: <https://www.tesol.org/convention-2022/registration>

This year is a hybrid convention – in-person registration includes access to the Virtual Convention!

View the **searchable schedule** on your desktop:
<https://events.rdmobile.com/Sessions/Index/14779>

OR

Use the **TESOL International App** through *Eventsential* app



Three Rivers TESOL t-shirts available!

Visit the 3RT affiliate booth in the Exhibit hall at the convention:

Wednesday, March 23, 1:30-3:30

Friday, March 25, 1:30-2:30