

PREP

Penobscot River Educational Partnership

Curriculum Coordinators' Meeting

November 15, 2010

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Attending: Sandra Cookson, Beth Clifford, Ellen Almquist, Owen Maurais, John Mugnai, Mary Giard, Cathy Menard, Pam Kimball, Judy Pusey, Donna Oliver, Lynn Silk, and Donna Vigue (Michael Wittmann attended the first part of the meeting, and Maureen Montgomery joined us for a portion of the meeting as well.)

Old Business

Michael Wittmann provided an update on the Maine Physical Sciences Partnership. There have been many changes this month. Based on feedback from participants, there has been a shift to more of a focus on PD activities during the collaborative meetings. The original plan to evaluate curricular materials will be occurring during designated sessions and by individuals working independently. During the last evening session, the participants were introduced to instructional materials and saw them being modeled by an individual. The conversations were focused on practical application at the classroom level.

The next evening meeting will take place on December 1st in the cafeteria of the Orono High school. The following meeting will be in the Orono High School library on December 16th.

Inverness has sent out a survey to all of the participants in the partnership to gather background information regarding when content is instructed as well as information about the teachers themselves. The participants have been asked to return the surveys before the Thanksgiving break.

Principals and curriculum coordinators have been invited to attend a breakfast on Tuesday, November 30th. The event is intended to provide the principals to find out more about the project and to get a better sense of what the teachers are involved in. It will be held at the Wells Conference Center from 9:00-10:30AM. Parking will be available in the Dunn Lot, and passes will not be required as the lot has been reserved.

Teachers and curriculum coordinators are invited to attend a meeting on Saturday, November 20th at 428 Aubert Hall on the University of Maine Campus. It will take place from 10:00-3:00PM. Michael has already gotten responses indicating a great deal of interest. The event will introduce people to the evaluation process based on AAAS's Project 2061 Guidelines which will be used to evaluate instructional programs and materials. The tool provides specific questions designed to guide reflection toward specific aspects of the materials.

Michael Wittmann will provide another update at our December 13th meeting.

Updates from Owen

Owen shared evaluations from the first two workshops that Diane Jackson. The results were positive for both sessions, but this was particularly true of the session entitled “*Hear, See, Do, Explain.*”

Sharon Greaney will be offering her professional development opportunities on Wednesday and Friday of this week. Owen is anticipating about 25 participants at each of these sessions.

There was follow-up conversation about PD opportunities for high school teachers. There was interest expressed in including the Common Core State Standards as well as incorporating writing in the content areas. (It was noted that there is a connection with the CCSS in writing.) Another thing mentioned was work on helping students understand how to engage with a variety of texts (fiction, nonfiction in a variety of content areas, etc.). The group discussed the concerns of having all teachers attend a single session. The sense is that content area teachers will respond differently if English teachers are present. The group decided that a separate session will be provided for English teachers that will focus on nonfiction reading. The group also decided that the sessions will be open to middle school teachers as well as high school teachers. The group discussed the idea of having a full-day session in February and a follow-up session in April.

Owen will also talk with a post-doc at the University to see if he might be involved as well. Owen asked about any high school teachers that might be willing to share what they are doing in the classroom. A couple of individuals in area schools were mentioned. Marcia Boody was mentioned as a possible resource as well.

At that point, Maureen Montgomery arrived. Owen shared some of the ideas the group had mentioned as possible areas of focus and mentioned a framework in which the sessions might occur. Owen asked Maureen for feedback for the content of the day and whether she might be involved.

Maureen commented that she has come to recognize that content area teachers, particularly high school teachers, are much more receptive and engaged if the material they are focusing on is specific to their content area. She also recommended that a very difficult nonfiction passage be provided to participants to read in order for them to get a better understanding of what students experience when facing challenging material. By having participants struggle with content, they will need to draw on a variety of skills in order to gain meaning from the material. Maureen also encouraged us to find ways to encourage teachers to move away from reviewing reading materials that have been assigned for homework as this tends to lead to students not reading the material that have been assigned. Maureen recommended having practicing teachers from the designated content areas present examples from their own instructional experiences to make this information come to life.

As the group was brainstorming teachers/facilitators from various content areas, the recommendation was made to check with other partnerships that might have teachers who

would be available to work with us. Owen will prepare a description of what PREP would be looking for and send it to Judy for her review. Once finalized, the request will go out to the appropriate partnerships and will be posted on the MCLA listserv.

Maureen mentioned the possibility of having all participants learn a common strategy or strategies that can be used across the content areas. This would provide added support for the teachers as they attempt these strategies and also would aid the students in having common experiences. Owen asked Maureen if she would develop a framework for literacy connections. Maureen will provide Owen with some feedback and Owen will get the information out to people for consideration. Owen asked Judy, Sandra, and Mary to follow-up with teachers from their districts to see what interest these individuals might have in facilitating sessions. The decision was made to have a planning meeting for those who would be interested in participating in this work. The specifics for the PD sessions will be determined at the planning meeting.

The group then discussed the challenges of offering too many sessions at one time. The decision was made to only focus on math and science. Anita Bernhardt at the DOE was mentioned as a good resource for science. Judy will contact Anita to see if she would be willing to be involved in this effort.

The group agreed that there will be 2 strands offered; one for science and one for math. Each strand will be provided with 2 sessions.

Donna Oliver and Deb Bird did a follow-up session relating to the mentor training that was offered last summer. Approximately 60 people participated in this activity. Donna distributed a list of the individuals who participated by school system. Donna will develop a cover letter that specifies the dates of the training and note the participants that meet the requirements for participating in the recertification process for the DOE.

Owen asked that individuals think about 3 or 4 desired outcomes for training sessions for Investigations. There will likely be a series of trainings next summer similar to those that were offered for Everyday Math last summer. One of the concerns mentioned is the tendency toward not maintaining fidelity to the program. We will revisit this topic in December and develop agreed upon focus areas for this series.

State Updates

Mary briefly reviewed information about the State updates. She e-mailed several applicable items prior to the meeting. Mary noted that an announcement came out this morning regarding nominations for Teacher of the Year for 2012. Information is available at the DOE website.

Mary also mentioned that she has heard some information regarding Paul LaPage's educational priorities. According to her sources, these include: putting a stop to brick and mortar projects and offering a 5 year high school experience. There was also some discussion as to who the next commissioner of education might be.

There was also discussion regarding the changes we might anticipate as we transition to a new administration. Concerns were expressed about the impending financial challenges.

MCLA

No update at this time.

New Business

The group discussed the PBIS High School Summit and how favorable the responses were from those who participated. The question was raised around the possibility of offering a similar experience next summer for those who were unable to attend the High School Summit. Owen will contact the participants from Summersworth to find out what their availability might be for a session at the end of the school year.

Other

Pam mentioned that all requests for placements for students have gone out to principals. She asked individuals to encourage principals to offer opportunities to those in need.

Judy raised a question about keyboarding and cursive writing instruction. There was a discussion regarding the necessity, or lack thereof, for offering cursive writing given its limited use in this day and age.

Sandra shared that she did research regarding best practices around keyboard instruction. She found that providing students with repeated opportunities for drill and skill practice is an important component of a quality program. When the question was raised about competency levels and assessments, Sandra shared that her system uses a checklist based on the 6 National Technology Education Standards at eighth grade. She will send a copy of the checklist via e-mail.

Cathy shared that her system uses trains students with Ultra Key at grades K-8 for keyboarding. They are finding that students are proficient in technology before they reach the middle school.

On another topic, Sandra mentioned that her system is looking at graduation requirements. In reviewing a number of policies, she noted that several systems restrict the number of outside credits that can be earned toward graduation to no more than 2 or 3. She is wondering what the rationale for the restriction is. After some discussion on this topic, many questioned why there continue to be such strict limitations on allowable credits. This question seems particularly relevant in light of the number of schools that are participating in Virtual High School.

Book Study

The group will outline a plan for reading *Teach- Make a Champion* next month. Joanie will assist us with this discussion as she has volunteered to facilitate our sessions.

December Agenda

Old Business

- Updates from Michael Wittmann
- Updates from Owen
- State Updates
- MCLA Updates

New Business

- Professional development for high school teachers for this year
- High school PBIS training for the summer
- Professional development for principals
- Summer training for those using Investigations

Meeting Dates for 2010-2011

Dec. 13th

Jan. 10th

Feb 14th

March 21st

April 25th

May 16th