

Minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> grade science collaborative meeting, UTC, 10/17/2008

Present: Mike Morton (Brewer), Pat Buchanan (Hermon), Danielle Johnson (Hampden), Marc O'Clair (Hampden), Ben Ewing (Bucksport), Beth Paradis (Nokomis), Jeff Owen (Orono), Ed Lindsey (Old Town).

- Lunch by culinary arts students. Pretty good.

### Business

- Descriptions of 9<sup>th</sup> grade science at represented schools were provided
- Beliefs about 9<sup>th</sup> grades science were shared
- Documents pertaining to the efforts at the represented schools were shared
- What individuals want from the collaboration were put forth
- A structure and purpose was agreed to
- Next meeting dates were set

Those present held in common:

- an understanding of the development of the human brain when human beings are 14 years old
- a belief that 9<sup>th</sup> grade science is an essential experience for students that should not be slighted within the culture of a school and which should not serve as a fill-in-the-curriculum-gaps course
- that the course should impart skills but not be lost to minutiae, and should deal in big themes and transferable thinking abilities and enduring essential learning
- that the new Maine Learning Results are helpful as is the work of Wiggins & McTighe

Teachers at some schools have done a lot of work on 9<sup>th</sup> grade curricula and feel good about the direction of the course. Some teachers feel the curriculum is undefined or poorly defined, and have ideas on how to move in a direction.

We agreed to a structure in which teachers will meet monthly. For a half day of release time (locations to be determined) alternating with an evening at someone's school. We agreed that creating something to try in the classroom

would be good. This trial could generate anecdotes to discuss, but even better would be to generate data.

The thing to think about for the next session is an atmospheric context for the big ideas of cycles and systems. We will meet at Hermon High School, Thursday, November 20, from 4:30 to 8:00 to develop this thing to try in classrooms. We agreed to bring some cash to pay Pat Buchanan who volunteered to round up some supper for us. The meeting after that will be at Reeds Brook Middle School, 28 Main Road South, in Hampden, kind of across from Hampden Academy, on December 5, from 7:30 to 11:00 in the morning. This is a change. We've learned that UTC is not available that morning.