

Penobscot River Educational Partnership 2008-09 Activities

The Penobscot River Educational Partnership (PREP) is a school and University collaborative effort serving the Penobscot River Valley. The partnership has been in place since 1996 and supports member school systems in their provision of staff development, educational planning, provision of student support services and is currently initiating the provision of business related services. Focusing on efficiency and effectiveness has led to increased collaboration, trust and support to the member school units.

PREP partners include, Bucksport schools, Orland Elementary School, School Union 90 (Alton, Bradley, Greenbush, Milford), Indian Island School, Orrington, University of Maine (College of Education & Human Development, College of Business, Public Policy & Health, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences), Old Town schools, School Administrative District 22 (Hampden, Newburgh, Winterport) Union 87 (Orono, Veazie), SAD 63 (Clifton, Eddington, Holden), United Technology Center (Bangor).

The following is a listing of current initiatives involving schools within the PREP Partnership.

Executive Officers

This group meets four times yearly and provides overall direction for PREP Initiatives. The Executive Officers are comprised of school superintendents and the Dean of the College of Education and Human Development and the Dean of the College of Business, Public Policy and Health.

Curriculum Coordinators

This group meets monthly to provide planning, direction and support for professional improvement, student achievement and planning for improvement. They are also involved with their own professional development focusing on "Reframing Teacher Leadership."

Guidance Initiative

This is the fifth year of this groups functioning. Overall leadership has moved from the Mitchell Institute to a group involving guidance counselors and university faculty. This group meets five to six times a year. Members consistently speak of the support received from this community.

Professional Learning Community Development

Sue Card and Ellen Holmes are providing 8 days of staff development supporting the development of Professional Learning Communities. Sessions are provided for K-5 and 6-12 staff at both introductory and advanced levels.

Adult Education

Beginning this school year, Union 87 and SAD #22 are sharing the services of an Adult Education Director. SAD #22 is increasing outreach to their communities.

Teacher Preparation Committee

Representatives from school units and the University of Maine continue to refine a format to formalize communication and collaboration around a Professional Learning Community Format. Hundreds of candidates from the University of Maine are involved with PREP schools on a yearly basis. Enhancing communication and collaboration between the University of Maine and PREP schools provides for increased quality of programming for all individuals involved. SAD #22 and the College of Education are involved with a pilot process focusing on the development of a Professional Development School model.

Virtual High School Initiative

There is interest in continued planning for the use of technology to support the development of and access to on line courses. Old Town, Union 87 and SAD #22 are currently sharing 15 courses each semester during this school year. Gail Garthwait, a University of Maine Associate Professor in Information Technology, is assisting this committee with their initial effort.

Special Education Related Services Initiative

A psychologist, a certified psychological service provider and three speech therapists are providing evaluative and direct services to students served by the PREP partnership. They have been hired as employees. Speech services are being provided in schools where services were previously unavailable. Psychological services are being provided at a significant saving over the rate provided in a typical contracted services arrangement.

Physical Sciences Committee

Teachers from five school units have organized to analyze curriculum and instructional approaches utilized in the provision of Physical Science Instruction within their school units. Collaboration will help develop opportunities available to staff and students within this instructional area.

Staff Development

Throughout the school year, teachers and administrators in PREP Schools will have professional development opportunities in the following areas:

- Non-Fiction Literature
- Supporting Transitional Readers
- Adolescent Literacy
- Pre-Referral Planning in Reading, Behavior and Math
- Professional Learning Community Development
- Supporting Guidance Program Development

