



Regional School Unit #34

Alton, Bradley, and Old Town

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Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Highlights

- “Can the Engineering Cycle be Applied to Other Types of Change?” Our 8th grade team met recently to plan their next integrated unit of instruction. We were fortunate to be able to spend a solid chunk of time brainstorming ideas to draw together all of the standards we needed to address in an authentic way that connected to the students’ questions. Many ideas were left on the cutting room floor! That team’s work is a great example of our many professional teams that give and receive critique, share needs / praise / frustration, and result in great things for students.
- Later that day we had another great work session with the 7th grade team, working way ahead to further refine the Invention Convention unit. No matter how well last year’s plan worked, “There is simply no excuse for any school system to assume that the challenges of instructional improvement can be put to rest.” (Duke, 2010)
- What kinds of questions do pre-service teachers have about schools? Each year I visit a few UM undergrad classes to provide perspective from the field (and, selfishly, to recruit substitute teachers!). I ask for their questions ahead of time so I can prepare a visit that fits their needs. Here are questions from one of the classes this fall:
 1. How do you start making curricula? Is there a template? Do you just run with an idea?
 2. What do you think about “packaged” curricula? Are they effective?
 3. How do you decide what’s appropriate for each grade level?
 4. How responsive is the curriculum to student data? Year? More frequently?
 5. Who’s in charge of you? How much can you do on your own accord?
 6. Most important factor when choosing curricula?
 7. What are challenges you encounter when choosing curricula?
 8. What is the first thing you look at / change when you see assessments are low?
 9. Do you think common core has helped or hindered you in planning?
 10. What is your process for implementing assessments into curriculum?
 11. How do you coordinate / organize history classes in your district?
 12. Do you favor school starting at 8 AM or 9 AM?
 13. How do you create curricula that works for all teachers?
 14. Are teachers allowed to make changes to curricula?
 15. On average how long does it take to create curricula?
 16. What qualifications do you need for the job?

Respectfully Submitted,
Jon Doty

Every student deserves to make continuous progress in school.