

Viola Rand and Alton Elementary Schools

October 13, 2019 Report for the RSU34 School Board

Education Leaders Experience

This year, I consider myself very fortunate to be involved in this program which is made possible through generous support by UNUM in partnership with the Maine Principals Association and Educate Maine. There was a two day kick off event at Sugarloaf on July 28-30. This was an information and activity packed whirlwind affair that involved becoming acquainted with educators from across the state. Throughout this school year, there are six once a month commitments to visit businesses around the state. The first such event was on October 4. We started the day at the Foster Innovation Center at UMaine, followed by a tour of the Advanced Manufacturing and Composites Center. Just before lunchtime, we travelled to Cianbro Corporation in Pittsfield. They hosted lunch then ran us in three groups through short training sessions like the ones they provide to employees in their "Boot Camps". We calculated crane boom capacities, experimented with models of cranes rigging to learn about options for various loads and then wired lights in series and parallel, figuring and measuring amperage each way to see if we were accurate. We learned that Cianbro has become a big outfit with jobs in 40 states at this time. They are lacking huge numbers of workers across their many jobs. This shortage has lead to their paying for training for new employees. This deal can continue right up through master level certificates. This day in our part of Maine was fascinating. There is a lot of amazing R&D happening at the university that will impact the business climate in our state. Next month, we will journey to Jackson Labs, which promises to be just as eye opening. This partnership experience is designed to connect Maine's leaders in education and business. We need to create a climate that entices new businesses and we need to provide a work force that will be sufficiently ready to take on these new challenges. Demographic is a little encouraging. The challenge to retain our youth to live and work in Maine is an important one. It is time to turn around the aging demographics and see the state of Maine thrive.

Calendar

October 9

Viola Rand Fire Safety program

October 10

VRS and AES students attended the Cirque Mechanics show at the Collins Center

October 11

Progress Reports went home

October 15 & 22

Viola Rand Parent Conferences

October 18

Alton Elementary Fire Safety programs

October 19

Halloween Fun Day @ VRS 1-3 PM

October 22 & 24

Alton Parent Conferences

October 25

AES Halloween Telescope Night 6-7:30 PM

October 11 Inservice Day

Staff from Alton and Bradley met at the Viola Rand School on Friday to kick off some serious planning for a more comprehensive approach to Social Emotional Learning in our schools. Maddie Mellor and Lisa Erhardt presented a session at the March 8th Inservice day at Bangor High School about Asa Adams School's journey along this path. When I heard them speak about the SEL experience for their staff and students, I was excited about the ways in which they streamlined many of the things we are doing to make a more comprehensive approach. They presented the same information to my staff and they were equally motivated. Heather Forbes' talk on that same March day was inspiring for those ACE's students we work with daily. Creating trauma sensitive schools was a large part of my personal professional development last year as I attended three days of training provided by Cassie Yackley. She is an amazing source of information and motivation.

Providing SEL instruction and making it part of the culture of the school will go a long way toward meeting the needs of our most challenging and needy students. We have developed a plan for the rest of the year and identified things we will start implementing now in preparation for a full roll out next fall.

Cirque Mechanics

On Thursday, all students from Alton and Viola Rand were offered the opportunity to attend the show 10:00 AM show at the Collins Center for the Arts. I was excited for the students to visit this new venue. We have taken students to the December matinee at the Penobscot Theater for many years. It is important to offer students opportunities to visit the university and see the many opportunities that exist there. The Collins Center is a beautiful facility and the show was one that appealed to everyone. It was fast paced, physically impressive and humorous. Many students watched in awe as they had never seen anything quite like it. Then things got even more interesting when classmate Lucas Doty's dad was selected to go up on stage! Jon was a great sport as he "climbed up, swung on a trapeze and kept up with a real character ". It was not a quick trip up in front of the audience. Jon performed for a good ten minutes. There were lots of pictures taken to record this unexpected event!

