School Board Regional Meeting

Brunswick

April 2, 2019

Discussion Notes

School Districts in attendance:

Brunswick, MSAD 75, RSU 5, Region 10 CTE, Lisbon, West Bath

Topics Discussed

**Public Engagement:**

***Question / Issue:***

***How have others successfully engaged community in proficiency based learning conversation?***

* Hear from / listen to teachers at Board workshops
* Administrators brought in staff to talk about what is working
* Casco Bay High School used videos of students interacting with teachers within lessons and projects; videos are powerful and links can be set with school webpage to direct people to the videos
* Students advocating for how and why it is making a difference for them
* Review steps; sometimes have to go backwards to go forwards – revisit decision to implement 1-4 grading structure

***Follow up question: Are there ways in workshops to describe / clarify myths?***

* Find a way to answer questions
* Parents often want a quick look-up page to answer the question “just tell me how my student is doing!” (not the full in-depth grading and reporting structure of the grading program).
* Lisbon started with younger grades and moved that work into the high school – implemented one year at a time; they also have a similarity of appearance of all report cards – to help understanding by parents; only had one person with questions
* Has there been concern with “top ten”?
* Made move to Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude and Summa Cum Laude – doesn’t limit the number of students in any one category; students choose speakers for graduation
* Question and Answer opportunities work in informal meetings
* Surveys sometimes work, but they can also lead to misinterpretation
* Host pizza lunches by the principal with students – seek student voice
* Re PBL grading, be sure to provide a pathway to a “4”
* PTO attendance by the superintendent for Q & A
* Concept of “re-assessment” can be challenging: can lead to “grade grubbing”; can put demanding expectations on staff (when students continually want to improve their individual scores); capacity of staff needs to be considered as well

***Question/Issue: Engagement of local legislators regarding hot topics in Augusta***

* What’s been effective?
* Texts to cell phones of legislators work
* Invite legislators to local Board meetings
* Strengthen personal relationships with them
* Schedule meetings with surrounding school boards
* Cross party lines and speak with both D’s and R’s
* Spend time in session
* Find common ground – common interests
* Invite them to a Legislative Breakfast – will happen in the Western Maine Region in October
* Get to know the Committee Clerk – send messages to him/her to schedule a meeting or get a message to the legislator
  + Email clerk
  + If chaperoning page in the Legislature – get to spend some extra time with the legislator
* As a Parking Lot item – schedule a combined Regional Meeting with local legislators
* When speaking with legislator, be clear you are speaking as an individual, unless you have explicitly been given OK through a vote of the school board to be speaking for the Board

***Question / Issue: District Facebook Page***

* Who has them?
* How are they managed – teacher in tech dept with stipend to manage page
* Mostly informational – to push out information
* Principals submit, with CO approval
* Frequency varies
* Lisbon gets information to a parent who posts school info on a Community Page
* MSAD 75 – comments are allowed; working now to create positive public relations, sharing good news with information being posted; trying to be more frequent with posts
* Region 10 uses Instagram posted by the Administrative Assistant
* Policy for FaceBook page recommended – working with Elek Miller of DW
* Younger audience (parents of younger students) frequent users of Instagram
* RSU 5 – have building FaceBook pages – working to provide uplifting presence, sharing good news of schools and district
* General caution – watch what you post
* Also, be careful boosting ad campaigns
* Be sure to keep policies updated
  + Social media / bullying
  + Involvement of SRO with District
  + Cell phone use at schools

***Question / Issue: Finance - Collaboration***

* Brunswick – experiencing a large homeless student population – up to 93 students; looking for possibilities for collaboration with:
  + Transportation
  + Special education
  + Sharing itinerant staff (maybe through a Regional Service Center)
  + Software purchases – through Technology Directors
* Lisbon – has benefitted by conversations with neighboring superintendent(s)
  + Online AP courses – use of Tandberg machines
  + Day Treatment shared special education program
  + Shared Curriculum Director services
  + Shared transportation
  + Summer programming
  + All above call for important give and take between districts
* Bus garage is resurfacing from an older initiative; maybe include a regional bus wash facility
* Adult Education – RSU 1 now partnering with Brunswick and MSAD 75 – Merrymeeting Adult Ed – common Director, programs in a variety of sites in different districts

***Question / Issue: Recruitment (Administrators / Teachers)***

* RSU 5 – multiple applications for 2 assistant principal positions (50 & 35)
* Salaries are an issue as neighboring districts have difficulty keeping up
* #’s for positions typically are 10-15, versus 20-25 in the past
* Major benefit to recruiting/grooming administrators from within the district
* 16 administrator positions have turned over in Brunswick; high school principal position really hard to fill – fewer strong applications than other positions; Director of Special Services also very hard to find qualified candidates; there were 27 applicants for the Asst. Supt. vacancy
* In Lisbon, high benefits for staying longer (longevity) are built into contracts; also they pay 100% of single insurance
* Frequent turnover of administrators 3-5 years for principal; 2.5 years avg. superintendent
* Language teachers – great difficulty finding them
  + Suggestion of contacting consulate in Boston for French / Spanish teachers –
  + Caution expressed of turning teacher over every 2 years with the above process
  + Can use Tandberg classes
  + Also Virtual High School

***Question / Issue: Other***

* Spring vacation schedule: Has anyone considered combining February & April into a single week vacation – response… never going to get past February basketball week – with travel and student time away from school
* Brunswick PreK – planning and going to be implementing
  + Ways to avoid the “1st day cling”
  + Ready-Set-Go / working with Bath WrapAround Care for before and after care
* Jane Scease – housing for high school homeless students – looking for host homes; not for everyone (all students in program) but host families are needed

**Next Session Ideas**

* New Board Members training (regional)
* Training for Board Chairs – help groom incoming leaders