Place-Based Education Committee Meeting Notes

Thursday, January 21st, 2016 (5:00-6:00 p.m.)

* In attendance- Betsy Stacey, Miranda Nelken, Seth Andrews, Tom Sintros, Liza Lowe, David Sobel, Jenna Carroll, Katrina Farmer, Verna Delaver, Walter Huston, Samantha Sintros, Deb Ganley, Jen Pepin
* **Welcome**: Name tags and sign-in sheet
* **Announcement** from Miranda- Through support from UNFI, schools can sign up to tour the OCAC boardwalk at KMS for naturalist-led investigations with a Harris Center staff person, it is first come first serve. Contact the Harris Center for details.
* **Ice Breaker:** Who are you and what kind of support/inspiration are you looking for from this group?-
  + Generally people were looking for connections with other educators and resources for teaching place-based related topics in the Keene area.
  + They were also interested in Professional Development
  + There was talk of sharing the concept of Place-based ed with the greater public.
  + People coming from organizations such as the Historical Society and the Cheshire Children’s Museum want to know how they can share their resources.
* **Review Working Definition of “Place Based Education” (please see other side)** Note- Generally those in attendance agreed with the text, though there was talk of adding something about the fun and joy in this type of education.
* **Discussion of Professional Development needs for Place-Based Education projects.** 
  + We divided this discussion into the following categories; What, When, How/Who, and Boundaries and concerns. People wrote notes on large paper posted around the room. Notes are listed below
    - **Who:** Nature Journaling with AA, Montshire Museum, Nature Writing for Science that supports ELA standards, Cheshire Children’s Museum, Monadnock Conservancy, Sustainable Schools Project
    - **What:** PBEd. training that meets math standards in Middle School, training that meets art standards for MS, crash course in understanding recent changes to curriculum, PBEd training supporting common core standards, developing units, PD that has a support component- in the classroom, Monadnock Conservancy can offer guided hikes on Cheshire COunty properties of historical, nature or cultural experience, Franklin Pierce University can offer Forest Ecology, Wetlands, and Mammal Programs.
    - **When:** 2 days in the summer, designated district Professional days, week in the summer, before school- prof. days in AUgust, weekends (ie 4 Saturdays), Long weekend with follow up of support, weekdays- not summer, Summer early (June/July)
    - **Boundaries/Concerns:** Teachers saying “It is just one more thing!”, Showing the relationship between PBE and standards and academic achievement, general issue of not having enough teachers on the committee, Are designated district PD days actually available? , What/Who resources are we missing at this table (on this committee), PD has to fit into official Prof. Dev. Plan., Can PBEd Professional Development come from the SAU?
    - **Notes-** There was an example given of a 5 day workshop where each day teachers went to a different place (like a museum or other educational organization) and learned about a different aspect of the region. In this case the focus would be the Monadnock region. It could be called “Learning Keene” or something like that. The info would be historic, cultural and natural in content. There would be time to create lesson plans and projects, many local educational organizations would be involved and at the end the lesson plans would be received by everyone in the group. Credit hours would be given for the time, perhaps college credit eventually, though that is more expensive.
* **Share ideas and make decisions about a shared google folder where information, curriculum and contacts around PBE can be housed and be made accessible to all PBE committee members.**
  + The attendants to the meeting had mixed feelings about the concept of sharing resources and contact information through a website or shared google folder. This conversation centered around how to get the word out in general, there were lots of suggestions about writing articles for newspapers such as the Keene Sentinel, Shopper and the Parents Express newspaper.
  + We also discussed some specific resources such as the tracking and fur kits at NH Fish and Game in Keene and the “Wonder Boxes” that the Historical Society has.
  + Committee members expressed that there is a great need a point person or coordinator position for someone who can work part time to really make this happen. This person could be a tangible help to educators who really want to do more of these PBEd lessons but need help and connections. There was a suggestion that the Christa McAuliffe grant might work for something like that or perhaps there is something else from the NH Charitable Foundation.
  + The conversation also related to our concern that there were not more teachers in attendance. It came up that there was some confusion about the Place-Based Education Committee. Some people felt that it was implied that the committee directly related to the OCAC trail at KMS as opposed to teaching about your “place” where ever you are. If this is the case, we may need some rebranding so that potential committee members recognize it is not just about the OCAC boardwalk.
* **Plan for next meeting - May, 2016? - Miranda and Betsy remember that people chose May over April, does anyone else remember it differently?**
* **Announcements**
  + The Cheshire Historical Society is hosting a Civil War Comics Camp this summer for more information contact Jenna Carroll at [dired@hsccnh.org](mailto:dired@hsccnh.org)
* **The meeting was over at 6:15 pm.**

**Please see below for a question from John Thomas of Harrisville, you can contact him with feedback Thomas, John <jthomas@sau29.org**

**Christa McAuliffe Sabbatical Grant Proposal**

**There is a need to be sure EVERY student fully engages with his or her learning. The foundation for student engagement and motivation is established for children in grades K-2. The strength of that foundation varies from school to school and even classroom to classroom. In my experience if a student loses interest in school, it is typically seen by third grade. Children are naturally curious, so we must be sure the school day is full of experiences that engage and intrinsically motivate students. They need to begin to learn how to collaborate, communicate, and put forth the effort necessary to be successful. They must begin to realize the interconnectedness of the world around them. To do this, I believe the key is interdisciplinary units that have a clear set of learning goals built around compelling topics that fully involve ALL academic areas as well as the social emotional curriculum. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) lend themselves to strengthening the interconnectivity of learning through a collaborative process. The problem is the CCSS are relatively new and the NGSS are in the process of being adopted. So educators need help in this process.**

**When I have been successful in planning and implementing an interdisciplinary hands-on unit, I have seen incredible success in motivating and engaging ALL students in grades 1 and 2. But I have found that there is a dearth of examples of this type of unit in the early grades.**

**The goal of this project is to create a library of engaging, interdisciplinary, standards-aligned K-2 units. The project/problem-based units will have an eye towards Next Gen Science Standards and the Common Core State Standards. Each unit will include a focus on integrating Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math(STEAM), social studies, ELA (reading, writing, and speaking), math, technology, art, music, PE, and social emotional learning when possible.**

**The units will include elements with linkages to common civic and natural aspects of New Hampshire life where applicable. As a result, the work of place-based education will be integrated into each unit in a way that demonstrates the types of connections educators can make to their local community and natural surroundings. I will also include prompts to help educators make the place based connections to their local and regional communities.**

**Engaging students in the grades where recess is the preferred activity takes creative hands-on units integrated units. I’ve personally witnessed how this meaningful work can engage students so much they forget it is time for recess, snack, or even the end of the school year! This sort of extensive integrated unit work requires an educator take a considerable amount of time and planning, especially given the young age of the learners. This is time most teachers simply don’t have due to the increasing demands of education today.**

**John**

**John Thomas**

**First and Second Grade Teacher**

**Harrisville Wells Memorial School**

**Harrisville, NH**



Place-Based Education Committee

A concise statement of why we meet:

The Place-based Education Committee shares a commitment to engaging students in real-world curriculum and problem-solving by connecting children, families and adults to the rich natural and cultural heritage of our unique corner of the world. **Working collaboratively, we will share resources and form connections between educators and experts.**

Place-based Education - possible working definition:

Place-based education promotes learning that is rooted in what is local—the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of a particular place. It is often hands-on and project-based and always engaging and related to something in the real world.