



# Regional School Unit #34

## Alton, Bradley, and Old Town

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October 16, 2011 – Report to the Board

### **What's going on in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment? A few activities from the last few weeks:**

- Beginning investigation as to whether we can deliver Title I services through a *Schoolwide Program* rather than a *Targeted Assistance Program*, in the interest of providing a more flexible system of interventions and shifting time from paperwork to services.
- Inventing a budget/expenditure coding scheme with our business manager to save lots of time in future years on matching general ledger records to NCLB reporting categories.
- Beginning this year's evaluation cycle for staff in Chapter 104 and Title IA/IIA programs.
- Homeless Liaison Training
- Working to improve test administrator understanding of allowed accommodations for the NWEA.
- Grade-level and district-wide meetings for K-12 Art, K-12 Music, K-12 Health/PE, K-12 Guidance/SW, Grades 5-6 transition, Grade 7 ELA, Grade 7 Math, Grade 1 Math, Grade 3 Math.
- Initiating 4 book studies to fit with our November 10<sup>th</sup> Poverty In-Service.
- Continuing work with Trish Kelley on a solid framework for the Teacher Evaluation Committee. The next several months will see the committee putting the pieces together and refining; we anticipate a draft for review/feedback in early 2012.

### **Important Education News:**

The Commissioner announced that Maine will seek a waiver of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements from the federal government. The state will likely submit this waiver application in mid-February. A successful waiver would [eventually] change the state's requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and school improvement. The state would develop and use different accountability systems, under the guiding phrase "ambitious but achievable". There are other implications, including use of student growth data in teacher and administrator evaluation. Many more details and guidelines will be available once the state completes its waiver application.

### **Chapter 104 Services**

This month's report focuses on staff experiences at the New England Conference on Gifted and Talented Education. This annual conference is an important event

*Every student deserves to make continuous progress in school.*

for our staff, as they bring back many ideas for their work with students K-12, in all subjects.

Highlights:

- A curricular overview from the Renzulli Academy for Gifted & Talented (Hartford, CT). Several of the tools we use extensively (e.g., Project M<sup>3</sup>, Rosetta Stone) are used at that school. The academy, like our district Chapter 104 program, uses the Schoolwide Enrichment Model as its guide.
- A session regarding using modular origami to teach geometry.
- A session on calming techniques for twice-exceptional children.
- Strategies for integrating tougher vocabulary (Are you ebullient or dour? Loquacious or taciturn? Unostentatious or vainglorious? Motley or Monochromatic?)
- Interventions for challenging behavior as a result of asynchronous development. An interesting thing to look out for – even in highly verbal students, language *processing* can be an issue, especially accessing words related to *feeling*.
- A session on suicide prevention for gifted students with high levels of perfectionism.
- Strategies for helping to address misconceptions about the purpose of GT services for students. "...imagine that hill. It was not placed on the landscape to make the prairie feel flat. It was not raised to make the sky tremble. Its job is to be a hill. We do not know why, but we know a hill-less world would be unbearable." (author unknown)
- Several of Saturday's sessions involved the voices of Chapter 104 students. A student's poem (unfortunately I missed the author's name):

*All the time I just sat there  
Sat there  
Waiting for something to happen  
My teachers should have ridden with Jesse James  
Should have ridden with Jesse James  
For all the time they stole from me*

Respectfully submitted,  
JD