

# RSU #16

September 2009

Shout out to the  
Dancing Queens! The  
Magnificent Matron  
Margaret and Her  
Minot Mustang Mamas!

## News From the Schools

### Minot

Minot is pleased to welcome 26 new students in addition to our 35 new kindergarteners. The renovations to our building over the summer are spectacular. All are welcome to visit and see our improvements!

### Elm Street School

The Tri-Town Pre-K Program opened its doors to thirty-four four year olds on September 8th. Two classrooms, one at Elm Street School and the other at the Head Start building in Mechanic Falls, will be taught by four early childhood educators. The program is a collaborative effort between RSU 16 and Head Start.

### PCS/Whittier

The staff of PCS and BMWMS have united to form the Knowledge League of Poland! Ask any of us about our Super Hero names!

### PRHS

The High School staff is grateful for the fabulous freshmen the 3 middle schools have sent us. You all did a super job getting them ready. Thank You!

### Adult Ed

Adult Education is back in full swing! We have already welcomed 31 new and returning students who are setting goals and achieving dreams! FMI: 345-3217.



**WE GOT YOUR LAPTOPS!**

RIGHT HERE!

*RSU 16 Tech Director Linda Chaisson looks over the five hundred (500!) laptops that will soon be woven into the fine tapestry of education that is Poland Regional High School*

## FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

### The Impact of Good Teaching

A recent ASCD article quotes three interesting statistics on good teaching:

- Students who have highly effective teachers for three years in a row will score 50 percentile points higher on achievement tests than students who have the least effective teachers three years in a row (Sanders and Rivers, 1996).
- Giving a class of disadvantaged students five consecutive years of instruction by highly effective teachers could close the achievement gap between those students and privileged peers (Hanushek, Kain, O'Brien, and Rivkin, 2005).
- The odds of a child being assigned highly effective teachers five years in a row are 1-in-17,000 (Walsh, 2007).

The article goes on to make the case for improved professional development and a career ladder for teachers. "Over the course

of their careers," she writes, "teachers should have opportunities to take on more complex assignments that don't necessarily take them out of the classroom. And they should be compensated for taking on expanded roles..."

In a sidebar within this article, the author suggests criteria for teacher evaluation systems, including:

- Evaluation should "differentiate levels of performance, tightly align feedback with professional development, and demonstrate that teacher performance is validated by student performance."
- "Teacher evaluations should have meaningful summative (quality assurance) and formative (professional development) functions."
- "Evaluation systems should drive effective instruction, not just measure it."

Continued on next page ...

## OTHER BITS AND PIECES

### The Assessments Are Coming! The Assessments Are Coming!

This isn't news to you, but an appreciation. Between NWEA, AIMSweb benchmarking, and the NECAP, we are up to our epiglottises in assessment. NWEA and AIMSweb are excellent tools for us to gauge student achievement and respond quickly in the classroom. The NECAP also supplies valuable info, if not in such a timely manner. Yes, having this State required assessment in October is a challenge.

Still, we have been entirely up to the challenge! Teachers -- both in preparation and administration -- have been extraordinary, doing everything to get through these with as little stress on the kids as possible, helping them do the best they can. As the saying goes, "A kid can't achieve more than they're able to, but there are a million ways for us to help them achieve less than they're able to." So, thanks for helping our kids achieve everything they're able to.

*From Adult Ed*

Adult Education's Learning Center at the Mechanic Falls Municipal Building is busy days and evenings with adults and young adults (at least age 17). Students begin anytime and work at their own pace to achieve goals, such as learning to read, high school diploma or GED diploma, college and career prep, computer literacy and helping your children with mathematics. Most academic classes are free, while there is a modest fee for enrichment classes: see [mechanicfalls.maineadulted.org](http://mechanicfalls.maineadulted.org) or call 345-3217.

### Study Groups

Anyone interested in leading a study group around an education related book of interest to you, please let Gary Chapin ([gchapin@rsu16.org](mailto:gchapin@rsu16.org)) know. There is some grant money available to acquire books and pay honoraria to group leaders!

## SAC Meetings!

**It's taken longer than I'd like, but the first SAC meetings have been scheduled.** SAC meetings are scheduled on a five week cycle, the four content areas plus the certification team. They meet on Wednesdays, from 3:30 to 5:00. SAC meetings are held in the new conference room of the Elm Street School.

**September 30:** Math

**October 7:** ELA

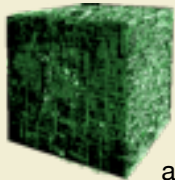
**October 14:** Social Studies

**October 28:** Certification

**November 4:** Science



## Technology Integrators!



Amy Tucker and Gigi Lee have been working hard k-8 throughout the district, helping teachers utilize technology in labs and in classrooms. Amy's technology web site (<http://moodle.umeedu.maine.edu/login/index.php>) is an embarrassment of riches. Most teachers in the district have already been registered by Amy. Go to the web site and log in with your username and password, *both of which are set at your first initial and last name*. K-8 teachers have received a 6-page introduction with information about logging in and orientation information. 9-12 teachers will receive this shortly. If this process doesn't work, contact Amy Tucker ([adtucker@rsu16.org](mailto:adtucker@rsu16.org)).

In October, the Integrators will be expanding their influence into the high school! If you have any technological needs, **k-12**, do feel free to contact Amy or Gigi ([gglee@rsu16.org](mailto:gglee@rsu16.org)). Both are tremendously skilled, experienced, and eager to provide pathways and remove barriers. Thanks!

## Certification

Welcome to all teachers. Renewal of your certification is your responsibility; don't wait until the last minute to gather your 90 hours. There are building representatives in each school to assist you. Maureen Downs at Elm Street School, Sue Madden at Minot, Karen Fancher at PRHS, Sheryl Walters at the BMWMS, Gail Files and Lynda Parker at PCS. They are waiting....

### The Impact of Good Teaching

... Continued from previous page

"Highly Effective Teachers" and "Using Teacher Evaluations to Drive Effective Instruction" in ASCD *INFObrief*, September 2009 (Vol. 15, #3, p. 2-3), <http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/infobrief/vol15/issue3/toc.aspx>.

In summary, our schools are changing rapidly and the need for highly qualified teachers and effective evaluations to support and develop teachers is absolutely necessary. Our students need the best teachers and our teachers need the best support available to help them address the rapidly changing needs of students. Our discussion and your input on important ideas and research in education will continue as we move through the school year. Thank you for everything you do for students!



-- Dennis Duquette

# Curriculum: Four Big Things

At the September 14 meeting of the RSU16 Board of Directors, I gave them an overview of curriculum work being done in the district. I reported to them that there are Four Big Things going on in the RSU16 Curriculum World.

- 1) Becoming RSU16: Much of our effort this year will be spent on simply merging our separate good practices into one best practice. This will involve district-wide meetings, report cards, curricula, etc. Teachers probably won't have to think a lot about this, but the administration does.
- 2) Technology: The headline might read "500 Laptops Coming to the High School," but the push is to integrate technology throughout the district, k-12. We've got two integrators, Gigi Lee and Amy Tucker, and, recently,

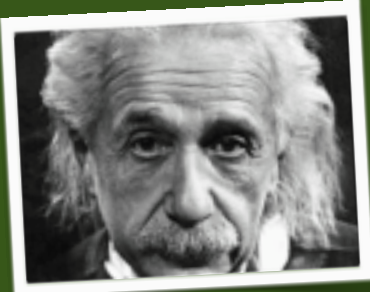
expanded their impact areas to the High School. Seek them out!

- 3) Curriculum Review: The faculty and SACs are going to begin a process of comprehensively reviewing and revising our k-12 curriculum. A thorough review hasn't really been done since 2003. Since then, the MSLRs have been revised. More importantly, we need to take a look at our curriculum and ask, "How's it going?" Are we achieving what we set out to achieve? Is this still the best plan for our kids?"
- 4) Standards-Based Practice: While working on uniting our report cards, we'll have the conversations about which standards we should assess and report on, how we should assess and report on them, and what to do about kids who aren't meeting the standards. That's a big job in itself!

## A Slam! Bash! Bam! Education Extravaganza!



Over at PCS, the staff has vowed to use their powers only for good! **Their super-powers, that is!** Able to teach small children with a differentiated lesson plan -- that's the Knowledge League of Poland!



"Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts."

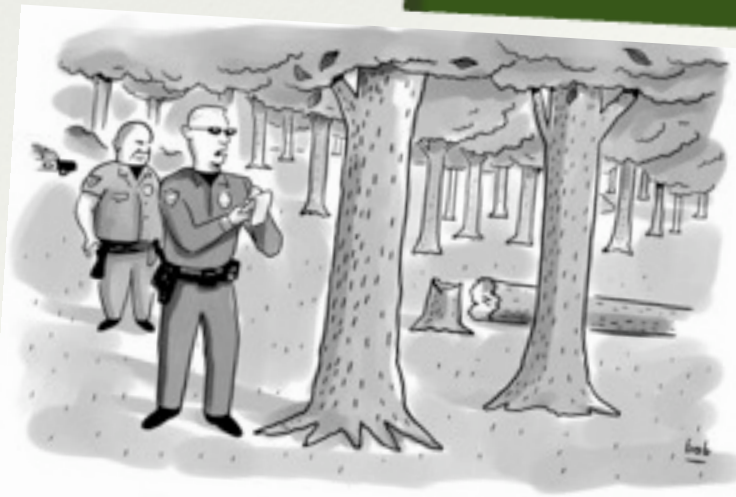
Note tacked to the wall of Albert Einstein's office

"We cannot command the wind, but we can adjust our sails."

- Author unknown

## THINK ABOUT IT

### Out of the Box



"Did anyone hear anything?"