

Room 211 Session II

Facilitator: Doug Robertson

Name of Presenter(s): Sally Loughlin, MSAD #51

Topic of Presentation: MSAD #51 – Ideas for starting change

Started in science and then I taught...

I'm looking forward to it but I need some ideas.

Well we will listen to you. What do you do?

Um, I'm in the insurance business and it isn't something _____ and I am here...I'm in the University of Southern Maine's Engineering School, I am the chairman of the advisory council.

...the kids must really...

Oh, that is why you chose this one.

No I didn't, I just _____ change.

And Mike Ashley do you want to introduce yourself to the room.

Sure. I'm Mike Ashley and I work for the Maine Commission for Community Service and Valerie and I have been talking over the table about opportunities that we have for funding Americapro programs and how they might be useful for your district and our district.

I'm Doug Robertson with the Maine Board of Education. I am with the career and technical education part of the department. I work with agriculture and natural resources. I also work with Anita on stem work, stem committee work in the department and a bunch of different things but this is the main thing and right now I am trying to help for this room. I will just be taking a few notes of some of the major things that happen. If any body needs to use slip charts I put a couple up there and you can just use some of the markers and us that. And we will be trying to break a little bit before the close about 10 minutes or so before we have to stop so we can pull together any last ideas and there are some closing questions. We did something like that in the last session and just see if those are helpful for some things.

The rest of us were...are all from SAD 51 and most of us were...we ended up working together in the hall where we started this morning just saying what...what can we do, what do we think we can do and people shared where they were coming from because we have elementary through high school and a variety of subjects. (all laughing).

But if you haven't been to a (background noise) that we are recording the session too and somebody is going to transcribe all the notes and I am just going to try to take some main points for a backup if you want a record.

I'm Dirk VanBuren and I am with MSAD 51, I am the technology support leader and I think just to kind of frame for Sally what we did and I can of frame this as kind of the hard questions and the head questions and we hadn't gotten to the hands-on questions of what we think we can do to make a starting point. So we kind of started earlier about what do you want to do, the bigger picture like where is our vision, what are some of the things that we think that we could get to and now we are starting to really start fine-tune, as Sally put it the candy corn; analogy like what are some of the things you actually could bite off and do tomorrow.

So where...so since I wasn't there what was some of the big things that came out and maybe we can add to them.

It would be great if Dan or Beth or Donna or Dirk if somebody wanted to share what you took from that.

Well I think it was vocabulary was one of the things. A common vocabulary across curriculum, science having a common vocabulary, math a common vocabulary, literacy a common vocabulary and how from a technology standpoint the common technology tools that across the different curriculums, the expectations of what kids should know.

You are being recorded just so you know.

Oh, we got that but I think that was so cool.

So common vocabulary, common technology, and...

Others weigh in some.

The last thing we were talking about how that teachers next year (background noise) therefore thinking and looking at how they handle, not really _____, talking about _____ thinking and sort of putting ourselves through higher level thinking.

(unable to understand)

Are we on the same network?

Yes we are.

Colby network.

We have a group of elementary through high school administrators and teachers and we would go back and forth between stem and science framework and then the challenge of

all the common core coming out of at one, so we focusing on the reasoning, problem solving, argumentation, evidence using models and communication. Really all those common course standards join together and we were talking about how we engage teachers in truly thinking about it and so we wondered about teachers doing cognitive self-assessment and making a choice about an area they wanted to grow in and extend themselves and providing people professional time to do that work and then sharing how that connected to the classroom. We...I think a lot of things are being pushed on teachers right now and I think the fragmentation and the message may seem overwhelming and so we were really looking for some coherence...that was one of the conversations that were going along. We are over here because we thought we would be sitting alone in this room and we didn't know anyone else that wanted to join us and I would like to hear what starting change means and where we are coming from.

Because change happens from outside, they are still comment to me about innovation comes from outside _____.

Well I think if we are going to say that it comes from outside then we in the district need to start making a data base of businesses that have in town that we can call on to use.

For...

We don't have any of that sort of thing.

Male: For, for, uh, you know, I think Ms. Allen might have some for her health class and maybe have a few for science but I am thinking we need like the whole town data base of what business people are there and what they do and what they are willing to offer our school or what they can provide to our school as we get bigger into stem.

We need _____ for students _____ outside the school day...

No we had the technology at our school to do video conferencing and that sort of thing, so if this insurance man here and I will let you talk in a second is, you know, 100 miles away he might do a video conference with the classroom and tell that classroom about his job or what he does and that sort of thing. He would never even have to set foot in the school but we could still tap his resources.

You are in SAD 51.

Yes.

_____. My kids graduated from that school system and my wife is a retired educator and my sister is a Liberian/technician in Washington State and my mother is 87, immigrant, I'm and immigrant does reading help for little kids; 5,6,7, 8 year olds. So we came from...my mother is from Astoria, run over by the federal war of the Russians and so education...we lost everything, so education is a big thing. You can loose everything but you can't lose your education. I got involved through fund raising about 10 years

ago. Rich Patten asked me to help out with, I led a capital campaign of the School of Engineering, _____ and so I have been at this and I'm very much interested. I was...the last session was stem at elementary schools. I personally think that that is where we have to focus. Places like Cumberland in north Yarmouth, I think...you probably have some of the best kids in the state of Maine as far as being prepared to go to school. the school system where my sister teaches and where my mother works, I mean the stories my mother tells me I just can't believe. You know what these little kids go through and just to get to school and the fractured families and, oh my God, how are we going to deal with these. And speaking with Dean Anderson of the Engineering School what he is concerned about he says, is his population, the pool that he can get to come and have engineers and scientists and IT guys is narrowing. The pool isn't very great so my concern is well, lets change that. What are we going to do to change that. How do we get...and I don't have the answers. How do we get these youngsters in third grade and fourth grade interested?

Well don't they already have the interest, that poll wasn't it 78% and then by 8th grade it was down to 40?

It strikes me that one of the big challenges and one of the reasons that number goes from 75% of kids who express interest down to 40% by the time they get to high school. If the school isn't that engaging, doesn't seem very real and you know kids are particularly in that late elementary to middle school when social issues and group issues start to take precedence developmentally, school seems like an extra burden, a set of chores that aren't particularly interesting. Why is...and what seemed cool about being an astronaut when I was in 4th grade was a whole lot different than when I am getting my science curriculum in 7th grade, and in many cases you talk to kids in middle school and they are much more excited in being in their tech ed class than they are about being in a traditional science class. the hands on activities and project-based learning and opportunities, and from where I sit in the service learning is enormously powerful rating to help students become engaged, not just in their education but also in their community and so it pays a couple of dividends. I love the idea of having that strong connection between the community and the school and I think that service learning is a way to foster that. But having that data base and that connection, there are some tools already out there, you can go to Volunteer Maine and post that you need a biologist to come in and talk to your kids or whatever, schools never use that. The highest users of volunteers in the state are the least likely to use the state-wide volunteer dating site.

What is that?

Volunteer Maine.

Are you talking about service learning outside the school day?

Or in the school day. I mean if you look at the commission _____ of mass customization of education I mean one of the things is breaking down those paradigms

about the regular school day. If you can have students engage in a meaningful learning activity that is tied to their curriculum, does it _____.

No, I am just trying to figure out if this is scrunched, if you wanted to add this to the already compacted school day or if you see this going outside of school hours.

Well I see some really amazing projects occur during the school day and going back to that community connection and if you talk to Jed Bloom who is the service _____ coordinator down in Sanford, he is very concise about his vision for what happens with the Sanford schools and the community. When the schools have a need they contact the community and when the community has a need they want to look at the school because the school has kids that want to go out and do that work. The high school is a tough one to get into for service learning it is a roller coaster. Up in Lincoln, you know way up north of Bangor traditional high school civics class, group of kids studying a _____ issue. We are going to read about it, take some sides and debate it. 1910. And the kids asked the teacher, can we add a topic; and their topic was they didn't feel the town had as good a perception of the kids as they had in the past. The merchants downtown were chewing them out and nobody came to basketball games. Their solution they came up with was; can we as a group of students go to the town and offer to do some service that will improve our image. They went and met with the town fathers, select people, and the town came up with ideas of things that they needed and the kids picked one. They have been working on that for a couple years. They were mapping all the cemeteries and the kids were mapping them because the plot map showed plot to plot but now who was in it. A lot of people come to Lincoln and ask where is Mrs. so and so buried. The only guy who knows is an 87-year-old funeral director and he is not a reliable data source. And sometimes the guy who mows the lawn may recognize a name. Weekends the town offices are closed and no one...the kids they learned how to grid out, how to map, they get in their bus during their block scheduling and go down to the cemetery and created a data collection tool, the local volunteers do the data entry, the towns SoftWear management. Now the kids in the tech lab at the high school think it is so cool that they are doing this project they are now working on developing GIS mapping to overlay _____ so you could zoom in from Google Earth and troll over the different plots in you know, and this is all grown out of a group of kids that our town doesn't like us as much as they could and a couple of teachers that said, lets run with this and figure out how...

And what age group was that?

That was high school juniors, you now the _____ ones.

And we do...because of a couple things we have a service, we had service learning, we still have service learning...

We do.

What are we doing.

We only had one semester of that.

Well okay, what were they doing?

run the office...but last semester we did a couple of food drives, we did signs for one company, we did some mentoring for other kids in the district. I can't remember...

I'm use to a lot of different...

A class of 16 is probably like 15 maybe 20 different things going on at once.

That sounds to me more like it was driven by community service as opposed to service learning as an instructional methodology in which you have an isolated subject which you can elect to use in services is a whole lot different than all your elementary school teachers and students doing a science project where they collect data on water quality and share it with the DET or research community needs and go out and find _____. And there are some wonderful models and great projects around...

We had some from time to time going back and picking _____ Jan Treadwell...

Oh we did the manhole covers in town one year...

And they did the town forest...

They did the town forest management plan.

Yea, so that is exactly right. What you are saying it put them through the systematic thing...she did it while she was with the kids as part of course it was a fairly small part.

So Tricia, you are switching from math and writing to math and science...

Just science.

Just science. What kind of community do you work in?

It is a small district, like right now our schools are K-8 school and last year we combined the high school and have 7-12, very small. Our class sizes range from next year the 7th grade will be like 45 to this years 8th grade has 60. And so there...we don't have a lot of teachers to get...I mean this is the first that I have hard of stem. I have never heard of it until I was Maine Math and Science and Alliance site and could see that this was there, so I was like, Oh, this is something that I might want to be aware of.

_____ Mane (all talking)

So this is all new to me. I had no idea that it was such...

Are you in Piscataquis County?

Yes.

Does anybody know what the population of Piscataquis County is?

I don't even know

Less than 20 thousand...

And a lot of people are moving out because there is no work there. It is a mill town and even one of the biggest mills, I mean _____ they have been everywhere else.

I am sorry, our 7th grade teacher had to leave and get her kids off the bus because it would be really interesting, you know, Calvin's point about communicating with each other, for our community to get to know your community. What do you think your kids are interested in?

They like hunting and fishing and snowmobiling and...

Camping?

...and camping...

Snowmobiling?

It is so hard to listen to some of these 7th and 8th graders who like get all excited that they went and stayed in a camper. It is like okay, you know, it is not that big a deal but to them it really is because they...this population doesn't have a lot of experience, I mean most of them have never been out of the state. So it is kind of...

...that project where you take New York City kids and you bring them to Maine.

Fresh air.

Well I'm thinking take your kids and bring them to (all talking)

It would be an idea.

Well you have a wonderful opportunity because you are going to teach all of the kids and you have some freedom...

But I just don't even know where to start. I mean where do you start with all of the ideas you can take. Is there a particular source where I can start with to be able to...that is what I don't know and...

Are you still going to teach math.

No just science.

Do you know what the teacher in 8th grade or 9th grade or 10th grade what the kids need to really come in strong with or do you have...does that help at all.

It does and the person that is actually teaching, actually two of the science teachers for high school are here today, so...

What about retiring?

As far as people retiring...

Like I taught 7th grade science and I knew I was in trouble and so I got an electrical engineer who had retired and he came in and taught...he taught the things that I couldn't teach the kids so I was more of a helper in my own room. But you might have with the mills and people an awful lot of good background.

And is that the big focus of stem, is to try to get others to come and help, is that what the big...

My idea is that there is businesses out there and I come from the business world now working on the education side and how do we get these kids ready to be our next wave of employees, or entrepreneurs or whatever it is, are they going to be able to get out in front of people, are they going into work settings and be productive and be in whatever field they choose. And I look at the model, Michael what you were saying is part of that partnership in kids, you know, wasn't interested in being an astronaut anymore. Think of the old model. Kids went to school they were told, you know, you are going to go to college because you are going to get a job. That isn't true anymore so part of the stem, the jobs that they want, I mean it is not a guarantee anymore in their minds that the college experience isn't like giving them the ticket, the golden ticket that I am going to be astronaut, if I do the right courses I am coming out with that golden ticket to be that thing. So now you wonder is it a disconnect between partnerships with the community and what we are trying to make those connections. So if you almost build the connections prior to going off to the college you almost have a partnership steering you through the college path.

I think a real cultural shift when I got out of school...I remember my husband went to work the first day and he said, I have to be doing this for twenty more years. And he chuckles, you know, about that. And it is just, you know, and I was in graduate school at the time and I said, oh my God. So I was sitting there trying to figure out what I was going to do in science and did I want to do it. I went to the people in placement. I didn't talk to the people who normally place your jobs, I went to the person who use to take the people who came back after 5 or 10 years and said, I don't like what I am doing anymore. We talked about it and there were many things and I forget names all the time but her

name I will never forget Linda Stanchill. She said to me, Julie plan for change every five years. It could be a tiny change but plan for change and it is _____. Okay I have been in high school for 31 years, and say well what did you do. Well no I have gone from teaching low level biology to honors biology to low level chemistry to honors chemistry and every thing in between and now I am in literacy because you just do stuff to keep yourself fresh and I think that is what you are talking about; project based and getting out there and being real.

I think that there is a huge skill set that comes along with project based learning and whether it is _____ learning or not kids coming up today aren't going to get that that one job. If you look at the Department of Labor statistics you are going...

Twelve jobs out of 35.

Right and not just different jobs within the same area...

No, very different.

No, they are going to have whole different careers and so that adaptability and understanding of how systems interact and how the world works is a critical component that we sometimes sanitize out of our kids in school. And bring kids out into the community and by bringing the community into the school whether it is physically or electronically it is a different understanding of how the world they are going into. I worked with kids with visibility doing transition for a number of years and these were kids that quite frankly started school with great aspirations and had it washed out for a whole host of reasons within the school and having an opportunity to talk to them about what their dreams are and what was going to happen after school and even just taking them to a college campus and having them recognize for the first time that it looked kind of like their school and that wow, this was familiar enough and I can do this. When you have transitions periods at U-Maine Augusta and the kids would come in and have never been exposed to what...they have these grandiose ideas about what the college was going to look like and be like and suddenly it became, oh yea, it is a commuter school and I can go to community college, I can go to one of the tech schools and be successful. And it was always remarkable to me about how eye opening it was. You know the kids in Guilford; you guys were one of the earlier adopters of the laptops, actually way ahead of the rest of the state. So you have a group of teachers that have been doing that longer than almost anybody else and yet to take that opportunity to work with the laptops, I mean share your kids experience. I mean what kids go through in Lincoln and Guilford and up country areas. It is very different than what happened in Cumberland. One of the challenges that Cumberland has with installations is the businesses is that it is a bedroom community, you know, so you don't have that concentration of businesses. We have a mill town, the one that one in _____ and that is a different experience than what happened if everybody leaves Cumberland to go work in Portland. And can you get kids to do job shadowing or things like that in Cumberland because there aren't that many jobs to shadow that are near enough...

Two walk.

Yea, to get kids in the door. When I was in 5th grade we actually had a _____ that I grew up on Cape Cod and they had too many kids for the school building, literally. so they developed a program where 10% of the kids were not in the building everyday and what they did was that you signed up, they took 10% of the kids and you spent a week working in a local business. And you did that five times during the year. They had five weeks out of the school year where you worked in the library, you worked at McDonald's, a graphic institution and local architects. People in the business community volunteered to basically host and mentor kids and run them through what that business did. Kids worked in the local banks, it was great. I learned more about how the world works than...

Yea you know in terms of organizing that now there would be some issues. We did apply though in Lincoln Middle School in Portland back in 1997 and we had kids all over the city doing interesting stuff. You know basically their parents provided the transportation, the businesses had _____ and we were able to make it work. It was just a great opportunity to get kids out to the community and what are the challenges that you always get in middle school is well how does this apply to the rest of my life. Well put them out there and show them and whether that is through doing that water quality work with the local environmental agencies, land trusts, or doing it as a job shadow or internship type program. I think there are great opportunities to break those walls down and get kids outside of the school building and where it doesn't seem real to them, especially today.

We are going to close pretty soon _____ to be back to the closing of the building but the guide enclosed with the questions they have to pick and choose from. I am wondering if it makes more sense to just stick to question #2 about the partnerships and see if in fact we can have a discussion on that topic if people have ideas. What would the partnership look like to support the _____ to support students, what would be some of the characteristics you would be looking for?

I'll start...finding someone to come in who is living the dream in their fashion or whatever with passion and get in front of kids to say this is what I did for school and now I am living in my mind the dream. So the kids see that happening, that being connected to their schooling, now even if it is unrelated to what they might have done in college but now they are doing something that they are very passionate about and just relive.

I think an internship office, a two-way street internship office...I am thinking of my son who is going off for a month this summer and there was an office that made arrangements in both directions. You know, educational changes and all and I am not thinking just for the kids, because something I picked up across the hall in the pre service one, the University of USM and Farmington, a comment about getting kids or teachers to go to some of like, the bio labs up on Mt. Desert, up there, they were saying gee we would take pre service students and give them a weeks experience. If you did that with teachers their enthusiasm would go and the kids could be enthusiastic and some coordination, you say

oh well guidance or high school should do that or guidance and middle school. (unable to understand).

Yea, everything and so _____ volunteer coordinators does our school have.

Oh, there gone.

And there were some individuals that were really good about that but to really access...

There is another Ameripro program right there. We can bring in the Ameri-programers, put volunteer coordinators in the high school and came from Ameripro.

But ____ individuals really active on individual enthusiastic people and it could be in any area.

When you said two-way street is that the students and teachers you are talking about (too low to understand)

As two-way street in that it gets...it goes out and seeks people to be willing to have interns and then goes out and finds the student actively put in those places and really do a clearing house kind of idea but...

Opening the door so they can give back to their community which gives back to the school by opening their doors to interns and then...

that is pride in our community...You know a high school kid was interested in rural school education. Go work with them for a week.

We do that with our seniors...

We are building that data base...

Right but the content areas you could do it. So if I have a third grade teacher who is unhappy in math, some place you know we could...(laughter) I mean that would be _____ that they would get an enthusiasm for something they enjoyed doing.

Because I think that is the only thing that keeps us going in our jobs is enthusiasm for the kids and our topic.

So if I take anything that I have learned today and I want to use it tomorrow, where do you start?

Probably not in the classroom.

The consortium web site has a free download for their latest book on ETS learning so service learning in the science field and it is full of middle school examples of projects that kids have done.

(unable to understand)

It's free, it's free. If you go to the kid consortium and the lady, Fran Rudolf the head of it is right there in Augusta. But they have a web site...I downloaded it at lunch time because you told me about it and it is free like a 50 page book full of examples and there is, like Mike talking about service learning examples, because you might get some really good ideas there and will get a good network of people...because to me it sounds to me like your kids, their aspirations in doing real life work, your science probably can be applied to any type of project you can dream up and you will probably find really good examples there.

(coughing) probably the last few years on kids with citizens science doing their projects and they have been...groups of students being in their school and lots of composting projects and conversation projects, change in bacteria, race streams, doing research on carbon footprints. The kids in middle school have done some really amazing work.

And make your kids use their technology to communicate to these people with the other projects and find out...that might be a fun way to do what you have to do.

(unable to understand) association.

Um, I'm not a part of it but I am rather familiar with it and.

And then my favorite thing is I think everybody has a higher sense of self and they might be really great help to 4th graders who are struggling or 3rd graders who are struggling.

Okay, there is a readers research book this summer called "Redirect" and they say, you know those pregnancy programs, they have more statistically how it works getting kids to do community services. And how do you really get people to be the people they aspire to be? And that is scientifically based. The book is called "Redirect" and it has a case study in every section is a different section, but it just jumps out at you that if your 7th graders were doing something fabulous for somebody else, they would be the best part of themselves.

Oh we have to go back.

Thank you very much. (all talking)