

## Elementary Principals Meeting Monday, December 15, 2014

### Précis

#### Updates

- SED [Update](#)
  - Social Studies
  - Odds and ends

#### Meeting Topics

- **PBL for Principals**
  - Resources from presentation:
    - [Slides](#)
    - Administrator courses [overview](#)
    - Entry Event [letter](#)
    - PBL school [rubric](#)
    - PBL essentials [checklist](#)
  - How can leaders support their teachers as they plan and implement deeper learning?
  - Work backward, beginning with the end in mind. What do we want our graduates to know, be like, and be able to do?
  - One way to re-orient our instruction to better prepare students for their future (rather than the adults past) is Project-Based Learning (PBL).
  - Instead of thinking about projects the way we used to use them, as fun and creative projects that some students might do at the end of some units, PBL projects are the authentic and relevant glue of learning in the 21st Century.
  - Planning a PBL unit means integrating students-based planning with the real world. In a PBL unit, real world problems are the content for learning the standards. Students learn the content through the project. PBL is the unit.
  - During PBL, students are taught how to and subsequently expected to manage their time. Quite frequently, high school graduates report their struggle to manage their time in college. Managing a project in PBL means learning to manage times – breaking up a larger project and its due date into smaller components with their own timeline. In traditional classrooms, most of the deadlines come from the teachers. Some students meet the deadlines; others do not. In PBL, however, we teach students how to manage their time on their own work and their collaborative work. Often, technology is an important component of this as students use email, calendars, and collaborative tools, such as, Google Drive, to manage their project and manage their time.
  - Businesses continue to report the 4Cs (communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creative problem solving) as the skills they most seek in their employees. In a PBL unit, all of the 4Cs are deliberately and necessarily included. Students conduct a great deal of research into the problem, thinking critically to understand it. Toward the end of a unit, student teams communicate their creative solutions to the problems to our authentic, public audience. Rather than the teacher as the audience of the student work, engineers, government officials, scientists, and architects are the audience.
  - During a PBL unit, students work collaboratively to construct answers to significant questions. The teacher is a facilitator who helps the students by

guiding rather than dispensing answers. While students are working on the project, they are also engaged in a variety of learning opportunities during which they learn about the necessary and relevant pieces that contribute to the larger project.



- With authentic problems and authentic audiences, the meaning and relevance of school becomes clear to students and never again are words “why do we have to learn this” heard in school again.
- The data about student achievement documents scores on state tests that are at least equal to if not better than traditional approaches. Beyond this, the data about readiness for and persistence for college are considerably higher than traditional educational experiences. Students who regularly learn through PBL are “doers” who are ready for whatever they face.
- How do leaders support PBL in their school? These are some of the steps:
  - Development of a shared vision
  - Understand the present reality
  - Consistently communicate the benefits of deeper learning
  - Create an action plan
  - Launch PBL, with teams of teachers being trained and receiving coaching
  - Celebrate success, reflecting on projects and planning for subsequent projects and training
- Later in the school year, 400 level courses to support leaders in PBL and deeper learning are scheduled:
  - 401: Bringing PBL to Scale
  - 402: Creating a Supportive PBL School Culture
  - 403: Teacher Evaluation in a PBL Classroom
- **Regional Vision and Project Based learning**
  - [Innovation Tech](#) is up and running
  - New Tech High School @ Hartnett plans are proceeding for a September 2016 opening.
  - PBLNY 2015 is August 3-5, 2015
  - PBL 101 cohorts being added
  - PBL 400 level courses will be available in the late winter

- **Topics for February and May meetings**
  - February: Revisiting Retention Research and practices
  - May:
- **Roundtable**

**Future meetings (and locations)**

- Thursday, February 24, 2015 (Revisiting Retention Research and practices)
- Thursday, May 7, 2015 (topic TBD)