



AGENDA and MINUTES

Pizza & PBL:

A Community Discussion About Project-Based Learning in our Region

Wednesday, January 9, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library, 400 Eau Claire Street, Eau Claire WI

- I. Introductions and Updates (6:00 p.m.)
 - A. Welcome and Announcements (Anna Rybicki)
 - B. Project-Based Learning Overview (Andy Brown & Ali McMahon)
 - Think Pair Share
 - traditional project at end of unit, but project-based project is poised at beginning
 - more student driven, multiple subject areas, questioning, research,
 - C. Introduction to Initiative for New Directions in Education (Erica Zerr)
 - Personal story –same teacher and class members for three years—important because parent at home with addictions. Developed curiosity and love of learning. INDE started three years ago by parents motivated to explore alternative ways of learning for children.
 - Summer of 2017 proposal to ECASD for LRNA
 - INDE & Mondovi in communication regarding Anthony Acres Charter School
 - Aligned with Artic Zone—can we expand to all our schools
 - We believe that education can and should be as diverse as the learning styles in the district
 - D. Mondovi - Anthony Acres Charter School Update (Tim Nordin)
 - grant to be submitted in 2019 for 2020 opening
 - plan to serve 80-90 students in grades 6-12, four classrooms public charter, access via lottery
 - PBL meets Place
 - placed-based, uses natural resources, 30+acres

- Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math (STEAM) curriculum, PBL as the engine
Opportunities for projects on campus as well as with community
- organic farm, forestry, water resources, En Plein air arts!
- Grant awards announced May 2019
- Anthony Acres Community Advisory Group
- Community Discussion Monday evening 6-9

E. Little Red Nature Campus Update (Anna Rybicki)

- Secondary Charter, PBL Hands-on Learning
- District-wide nature extension campus—open space up as a resource to all district children
- ECASD sent to LEAP
- Approved LRNC for development by ECASD

F. EauZone Update (Andy Brown)

- group of teachers and parents working to establish PBL zones in all three middle schools
- EauZone proposed, teachers interested from all three schools
- LEAP committee is revitalizing the process for projects
- EauZone will meet later this month, may postpone planned fall 2019 opening

II. Dinner and Discussion

Three adjectives that describe your ideal school:

- Active, diverse, inclusive engaging
- *untethered, fun, safe, engaging
- *support, special education
- *supportive, active, hands-on, collaborative, involves team choice
- *over-scheduled, under-driven by father
- *collaborative, innovative. Relative
- *personal, community-created, special education side
- *flexible, hands-on, authentic (take real world and twist it)
- *We are all parents, this would be good for our kids

III. Project-Based Learning in Practice (Andy Brown and Ali McMahon)

- PBL has the process as the important emphasis, not the product

- Student-directed with teacher guidance, requires collaboration, student choice
- Based on real-world experiences/problems
- Learning is continuous
- Typical unit in curriculum with project at the end—Andy did this for ten years and then was ready to quit. Now is excited to teach with PBL
- Game design example, presenter, research, check-in, discussion, models, more RX, check-in, creating and building and running,
- Culminates with an authentic audience—community members, friends. Is this project going to make a difference? Culminates in launch night.
- Models: Launch books and launch cycle for teacher-directed projects: Spencer and Juliani
- Students own two, teachers own one (Content, Process, Product) Andy and Ali have added Learning Environment
- Examples: Create a garden at Northstar—tasked students with how to get there. Soil expert invited to come in, developed schedule.
- Moved to Quarter Projects: Eighth graders have developed skills; sixth graders need more direction (maybe own one and a half). Shark Tank example
- Passion Projects: Based more on student interests—e.g. three sixth graders designed and modeled and built their own toboggan. Soup feed for teachers raised money for a project in Africa
- “What do I want to Create, Change, or Communicate”
- Student running up wanting to identify the five most haunted houses in the world
- Teachers do assess learning at points and identify areas needing more work
- Buck Institute: Concept Circles for Essential Project Design Elements and Project Based Teaching Practices (www.bie.org)
- Teacher Role shifts: still a lot of preparation, once going teachers act more as coaches on the side as well as celebrate and assess learning.
- Launch Cycle—John Spencer and A.J. Juliani
- Example: Film Festival
 - look, listen, and learn
 - Ask a ton of questions
 - Understand the process or product: student research
 - Navigate ideas—kids are constantly working on time mgt, planning time, meet priority goals
 - Create a prototype
 - Highlight and fix
 - Launch to an audience: authentic audience, for a film project, bring in experts and have a film fest at Micon Cinemas
- Questions? Are they really prepared for high school?
- Parent at Parent/Teacher Conference: “She’s never more excited about school”

- Parent at Parent/Teacher Conference: “He’s never been more in tune with himself and what he needs to do”
- Parent at Parent/Teacher Conference: “Family time at home is enriched because we have more time together and more to talk about”
- Many parents in tears about the changes in children during parent teacher conferences
- Example of student who moved to Illinois but still skyped in 5th period and attended game night with group near end of term: drove up from Illinois with his mother
- Resources:
 - Buck Institute
 - Most Likely to Succeed
 - Innovative Schools Network
 - Will put whole presentation on Web Site

V. Questions and Answers

- Beth—Special Education PTA, (SEPTA) info on district web site. How are IEPs incorporated into the zone?
We have 70 kids and around 10 have IEPs. Learning environment seems to work well with children with special needs. Can plan extra time with special education teachers.
- Curriculum—do you incorporate all subjects in curriculum or do you add curriculum (such as online learning for math skills).
We tried an online math curriculum but not all students were self-directed. We moved to a one-hour math class as part of the day.
- How do you incorporate the state learning standards into curriculum?
We use Google Drive for organization. ECASD has CANVAS database. We created our own “Power Standards” that covers common core. Students submit projects to CANVAS. Each student has their own learning sheet or portfolio to track mastery level. Goal is to have all standards tackled more than once across middle school.
- Megan from Wildlands, in high school you can just share the standards with the students and assess projects for coverage.
We do look at time as a measure. We rewrote standards so the students could understand them.
- How do students do when they must make the transition from the project-based learning environment of middle school to the traditional system in high school?
Megan: we do work with them to prepare them to navigate the different system in a traditional school. Some do go to a less traditional high school.
Ali: In 5th grade, they spend 4 or 5 days with us. In 7th grade they pick up foreign language. By 8th grade they only spend 3 hours a day in the zone.
- Montessori Parent: part of what we are building is adaptable kids. Kids are as much a part of the change as the schools. This will eventually change schools.
- Is the Arctic Zone open to all children? Do children in the district of the charter school have an advantage for admission?

Only available to Northstar students. First year 25 families opted in. Second year had to cap it at 50 with a waiting list and a lottery system.

Past year the number interested fit the cap, no need for lottery.

For public charter, must be open to everyone with a lottery system. Also, there is a commitment to continue to serve returning children in subsequent years. No admissions advantage to children graduating from another charter.

Anthony School—current discussion is to open with 30 students, 6th and 7th grade to start, and then grow from there.

- Any plans to talk with UWEC and their education and special education programs? How can we prepare teachers for these teaching environments?

We are growing our capacity, and this can be added to our list. We will have a 501(c)3 and we plan to grow into giving more children the opportunity to experience PBL.

VI. Wrap Up

Look to the INDE website for resources and slide show, which has a slide of PBL resources including books and websites.