RSU 1 Proficiency Based Learning Vision and Practices: Putting Learners First

With the change in Maine state law from a once required to now optional proficiency based learning (PBL) diploma, the RSU 1 administrative team sees this as an exciting opportunity to solidify and communicate our beliefs around what makes excellent teaching and learning. It allows us to maintain the components of the old requirements that benefit students and teachers, and shed those we do not (and never did) support. Therefore, given this leeway to customize our approach, we will not be moving to adopt the MDOE's new PBL requirements. Rather, we choose to continue to improve our current RSU 1 systems based on the below vision and practices related to teaching and learning in order to do what is in the best interest of all of our students.

We believe in a learner-centered classroom where students are known as individuals, are asked to do rigorous and relevant work, and receive more than one opportunity to grasp and show what they know.

Practices and systems that support this vision statement:

- Students will be supported in their learning through strong student-teacher relationships, exemplary classroom teaching, and access to a wide variety of learning opportunities.
- Classrooms will be focused on students as workers and teachers as supporters, instructional leaders, and coaches as students learn best by doing, applying, and discussing, not just listening.
- Students will be given more than one opportunity to show what standards they know as reflected in our school-based retake policies at the middle and high school levels and multiple opportunities for demonstration of proficiency at the elementary levels.
- Focus will be put on making student work relevant to real life, whenever possible, and rigorous in pursuit of a more focused, meaningful, deeper understanding of the learning standards.
- Our teaching and learning approach will adapt to all unique learners and their individualized programming needs in support of their growth, achievement, and graduation.

We believe that the most effective learning for students happens when thoughtful and ongoing curriculum preparation, assessment development, and instructional execution occurs.

Practices and systems that support this vision statement:

- Teachers will continue the excellent work already underway to development curriculum, assessment, and instruction that is aligned to content standards in order to keep classrooms focused on authentic learner understanding and specific content area growth.
- Assessment design will be focused on the creation and implementation of formative and summative assessments with accompanying rubrics and grading guides to ensure teachers have an accurate understanding of what students know so they are able to check and adjust their instruction to best meet the needs of each learner.
- Administrators will continue to frequently visit classrooms and provide teacher feedback to support the development of effective teaching practices in each classroom.

We believe that when students graduate from RSU 1 they must feel prepared for and supported in whatever path they have chosen, and we, as a staff, must feel able to guide and verify this preparedness.

Practices and systems that support this vision statement:

- Teachers will primarily base grades on what is understood by students, and more minimally on what work has been completed or what effort has been put into an assignment so grades represent the learning of the content standards that has taken place.

- Grade tracking and reporting systems will be built to accommodate what is best for each grade level of learner and will likely and purposefully look different across grade levels spans (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12) in order to do so.

- While they will look different, commonalities across disparate grade tracking and reporting systems will exist as each will transparently illustrate what students understand and have learned and will offer a system that is user-friendly and appropriate for students and families of that age group.

- The current high school transcript and diploma model will remain intact and not be replaced by a PBL transcript and diploma in order to best support a smooth transition beyond the walls of RSU 1.

- The district will continue to expand and improve our offerings for and support of both career and college readiness pathways for all types of learners.