

Transforming Teaching and Learning: Living in the 21st Century

Last year my predecessor wrote his State of the Schools article on “Moving into the 21st Century”. He told of the significant changes influencing public education. His words are no less true today. State and Federal laws, the desire for greater equity and access, and education technology are neither shallow slogans nor just another passing bandwagon. They are part of the fabric that blankets our schools, students and community. Initiatives once thought by some to be fleeting trends now guide decisions at every level.

Educators in Lisbon are committed to implementing Maine’s *Learning Results*. The system of the *Learning Results* requires more than curricular revision and local assessments aligned with State standards. Full implementation means a new way of thinking about teaching *and* learning. It assumes that all students be given the opportunity and support to meet high standards. It says to those inside and outside our schools that success is the expectation for all children. Educators in Lisbon are making progress, both in what we teach and how we teach. Curriculum continues to grow stronger and more closely aligned with State standards, local educational outcomes and our Local Assessment System.

The Guiding Principles that underpin Maine’s *Learning Results* work together with standards in the content areas to create productive citizens who are well equipped for college, career and community. Our schools should reflect these principles where students are engaged in meaningful, challenging work and have a sense of purpose and pride. Simply put, our schools must be communities that understand, value and promote each student’s potential. Realizing and living these beliefs is, in many respects, more challenging than writing curriculum documents. I believe Lisbon educators are well prepared for this next step.

Much as these documents reflect change, so too do our actions. Teachers have professional meetings five times each month. With this they continue their work on curriculum, assessment, defining benchmarks for student achievement, and analyzing data to understand strengths and goals.

Technology was once an omnibus term used to describe the era in which we now live. Today it is an integral part of school, and for most educators technology is now more friend than foe. Technology is utilized in teaching, for students to show their learning, and as a tool to communicate between and among teachers, students and parents. Now any parent can receive up to date information on student progress, attendance and behavior through an Internet based parent viewer.

Because our modern world is steeped in technology, it follows that schools should embrace technology – in a variety of ways – to ensure our children are adequately prepared as workers and community members. Lisbon schools have many successful examples for this. The laptop initiative for seventh and eighth graders continues to positively impact students’ learning and academic interests. Lisbon High School utilizes computers for a reading lab to strengthen reading skills and support classroom literacy instruction. Fourth graders at Lisbon Community School are exploring GPS technology while mapping their local physical environment.

Our schools are making significant gains in preparing children for the adult world that will meet them. This is a direct result of strategic planning, targeted training and development, a dedicated faculty and staff, and strong support from our community. We can look to future challenges knowing that we have the skills and support necessary for success.

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