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Educational Leadership Newsletter April 2017

Educational Leadership Department, University of Southern Maine

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From the Chair

We are just finishing another epic winter in Maine, big snow this year and to cap it off, a big celebration of our 50th anniversary of the Educational Leadership program, May 12 at Ocean Gateway. As you will see in the newsletter, you are invited to this very special event, which will be a rare moment to bring our program into a unique perspective, spanning the years 1967 – 2017. As a one who was there during “the 60’s” I can assure you our DJ will have some great dance music in the mix from the great dance days of rock-and-roll – the Kinks, the Animals, the Dave Clark Five, Traffic, the Beach Boys, Paul Revere and the Raiders, the Rolling Stones, the Beatles!!

We are busy with the final planning of our conference on Assessment for Learning and Leading, May 3 and 4. This is a chance for us to deepen our understanding and practice of assessment literacy. Jan Chappuis is our special guest, along with Rick Stiggins, who agree to come out of retirement (again) to spend the day with us. We will have a special panel presentation with Rick Stiggins and the Commissioner of Education, Robert Hasson, and other education leaders.

Finally, I spent Friday (March 31) as a judge for the KidWind Challenge with over 25 school teams in the competition. That was learning on display! A great blend of science, ingenuity, and design thinking. Many of the teams were tinkering with their wind turbines that morning, all trying to improve!

One last thing...congratulations to Dr. Anita Stewart McCafferty who has had a number of journal articles accepted for publication. She is the sole author on some, and has managed to keep Jody and me busy as co-authors as well. I am looking forward to a quieter weather time and some fun! Please join us for these two events! Jeff

Jeff Beaudry, Associate Professor, Educational Leadership Program
Co-director, Southern Maine Partnership
Twitter: @BeaudryJeff



On Friday May 12, 6 -10 p.m., the 50th anniversary of the Educational Leadership Program at the University of Southern Maine will be held in Portland at the Ocean Gateway facility, directly on the waterfront. It will be a time to celebrate with former classmates, faculty and friends of the program.

During the social hour, beginning at 6 pm guests will enjoy the music of the USM jazz quartet. There will be a program beginning at 7 pm and will feature brief remarks from USM President Glenn Cummings and the USM commencement speaker David Brancaccio. David was the host of National Public Radio's Marketplace Morning Report. He is also the author of the best-selling novel Squandering Aimlessly. Following the program, there will be dancing and a chance to connect with your colleagues.

Tickets are \$40 per person. Heavy hors d'oeuvres will be provided and cash bar will be available. We hope to see you there to celebrate the accomplishments of quality education, leadership, and collaboration with our learning community:

FMI: Jody Capelluti - joseph.capelluti@maine.edu

Please share this with your alumni colleagues and get this party started!

Sign up now from the Program Link: <https://usm.maine.edu/educational-leadership>

DATES TO REMEMBER

Ongoing Now: Summer and Fall 2017 Registration

Friday, May 12: 50th Program Celebration

Saturday, May 13: USM Commencement ~ Congratulations Graduates!

Monday, May 15: First Summer Session Begins



Educational Leadership Newsletter

Southern Maine Partnership Update: **Upcoming Event:**

Assessment for Learning and Leading Conference May 3-4, 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Abromson Center on USM Portland Campus

Like you, we have been working diligently over the past several years to improve our assessment literacy practices in order to help our learners (both student and educator) be successful during the learning process. Our focus has been on implementing high-impact teaching, learning, and leading practices in a proficiency/standards-based context. As such, much of our work centers around assessment *FOR* learning *strategies* but certainly also includes plenty of work around collecting evidence for a summative statement about learners' proficiency of rigorous and relevant standards.

We hold a strong belief that one and done professional learning does little to change professional practice or positively impact student learning. As such, we are committed to multi-year, multi pronged learning opportunities for educators around classroom assessment practices and balanced assessment systems. This conference builds upon several years of professional learning opportunities and promises to deepen understanding and practices of both novice and more proficient classroom assessment users. A strong focus of this year's conference will be in sharing successful strategies for leading this work (at the classroom, school, district, regional, and state level).

The conference is designed to be an active learning experience for all participants with incredible opportunities to network and share valuable resources with one another.

Who Should Attend: The primary audience will be preK-12 educators and leaders; however, we encourage higher education faculty, legislators, educational researchers, school board members, and other policy makers to also attend.

Cost: \$225 fee for full access to 2-day conference, including all keynotes, sessions, materials, lunch, and refreshments (\$125 for one-day only)

Register Now:

<https://conferences.usm.maine.edu/attendeonline/AutoLogin.aspx?page=new&event=1456&password=event>

We hope that you will join us for this incredible professional learning opportunity!

Anita Stewart McCafferty
Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership, USM
Co-Director Southern Maine Partnership
Email: anita.stewart@maine.edu
Twitter: [AnitaStewartMcC](https://twitter.com/AnitaStewartMcC) #assessmentliteracy #SMPmechat #PREPallchat



Educational Leadership Newsletter

Are you ready for Internship?

If you have not done so already, please notify Jody Capelluti at joseph.capelluti@maine.edu as soon as possible if you believe you are ready to start the Internship with the next group, which begins at the end of April. Faculty will review your transcripts and contact you to inform you of your eligibility.

Be sure to read the article provided at the end of this newsletter. Andrew Dolloff, Superintendent of Schools in Yarmouth Maine and a recent graduate of our Ph.D program has written a very thoughtful and informative piece on the status of our schools in Maine and the role district leaders play. Enjoy the article.

School of Education and Human Development
8 Bailey Hall
207-780-5316
sehd@usm.maine.edu
<http://www.usm.maine.edu/sehd>



Advising Questions? Educational Leadership Faculty:

Jeffrey Beaudry	207-780-5493	jeffrey.beaudry@maine.edu
Joseph (Jody) Capelluti	207-780-5077	joseph.capelluti@maine.edu
Thomas Edwards, Adjunct	207-780-5090	thomas.k.edwards@maine.edu
Anita Stewart McCafferty	207-780-5479	anita.stewart@maine.edu
ED Leadership Office	207-780-5316	bertalan@maine.edu



Educational Leadership Newsletter

Educational Leadership Program - Fall 2017

(The schedule below is subject to change; be sure to check MaineStreet.)

Location	COURSE	TITLE/ INSTRUCTOR	Days	Times	Instructor
Portland	EDU 600	Research Methods & Techniques	Tu	4:10-6:40P	Beaudry
Blended	EDU 600	Research Methods & Techniques On-campus dates are 8/31; 9/14;10/5,26; 11/216 & 12/7.	Th	4:10-6:40P	Beaudry
Online	EDU 600	Research Methods & Techniques			Madden
Online	EDU 600	Research Methods & Techniques			Staff
Portland	EDU 604	Curriculum Development	Tu	4:10-6:40P	Culbertson
Portland	EDU 659	Special Ed Law for School Leaders	Th	4:10-6:40P	Roberts
Portland	EDU 665	CAS Directed Study			Beaudry
Portland	EDU 667	Professional Ed Capstone (with EDU 699)			Beaudry
Portland	EDU 670	Introduction to Educational Leadership	M	4:10-6:40P	Stewart McCafferty
Portland	EDU 671	Organizational Behavior	Tu	4:10-6:40P	Sizemore
P-Other	EDU 677	Seminar in School Management **	W	4:00-6:30P	Capelluti
P-Other	EDU 685	Internship in School Admin ** Mandatory orientation to be held Monday, April 24, 4:00-6:30P	W	7:00-9:30P	Capelluti
P-Other	EDU 685	Internship in School Admin ** Mandatory orientation to be held Monday, April 24, 4:00-6:30P	W	7:00-9:30P	Stewart-McCafferty
P-Other	EDU 685	Internship in School Admin ** Mandatory orientation to be held Monday, April 24, 4:00-6:30P	W	7:00-9:30P	Capelluti
P-Other	EDU 686	Internship in Special Ed Administration Mandatory orientation to be held Monday, April 24, 4-6:30 PM.	W	7:00-9:30P	Capelluti
P-Other	EDU 687	Internship in Superintendency ** Mandatory orientation to be held Monday, April 24, 4:00-6:30P	W	7:00-9:30P	Capelluti
P-Other	EDU 688	Internship in Curriculum Admin ** Mandatory orientation to be held Monday, April 24, 4:00-6:30P	W	7:00-9:30P	Capelluti
Portland	EDU 699	Independent Study (combined with EDU 667)			Beaudy

**Instructor permission required; the program will register students & confirm via email.

If you have questions, contact Kerry Bertalan at

780-5316 For LTS-Scarborough cohort students only:

P-Other	EDU 670	Intro to Ed Leadership	Tu	4:00-6:30P	Edwards
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Maine's Public Schools:

Worth the Investment

A White Paper sponsored by Maine School Management Association

Andrew R. Dolloff, Ph.D.

January 3, 2017

Introduction

For most who live here, the State of Maine is the only place we want to call “home”. Small, close-knit communities, plentiful recreational opportunities, safe schools and neighborhoods, and generations of family and friends are the qualities that attract many of us to our native state. However, Maine is facing a crisis; our population is aging and declining, our economy is flat, and our workforce will not be able to meet the demands of our existing employers within the next few years. Attracting potential workers and business owners to Maine is a difficult challenge, as the data reveals:

- According to *Forbes* magazine, Maine ranks 49th out of the 50 states in our nation in terms of business climate¹;
- *Business Insider* places Maine’s economic strength 46th in the U.S. when considering measures such as unemployment, gross domestic product per capita, average wages, and house prices²;
- The Kaiser Foundation reports that Mainers earn 12% less than the U.S. average income, with residents in only ten states earning less³.

On virtually every economic or governmental indicator used to measure a state’s performance in comparison with others, Maine performs worse than the national average and is typically closer to the bottom than the middle. The result: a stagnant economy, a diminished workforce, a lack of new business, a population in decline.

There is one sector of the state’s economy, though, where this is not true – a vital sector that performs above the national average and should be a drawing card for new businesses, new workers, and new families. That sector is Maine’s public schools. On a variety of commonly accepted points of comparison, Maine schools perform above the national average – entering the top quartile in some instances – and Maine’s school districts do it with fewer non-instructional employees and for less money than most other states. The truth about Maine’s academic performance and locally-controlled schools should be celebrated, preserved, and publicized far and wide to attract young workers, business owners, and developers to our state, thereby bolstering and buoying Maine’s economy for decades to come.

Academic performance data

Maine schools score well above the national average on a wide variety of academic measures at various grade levels:

- Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), administered to students in all 50 states in grades 4 and 8, show Maine 4th graders performing above the U.S. average, ranked #14 in mathematics and #20 in reading. Eighth-graders performed slightly better, at #11 in mathematics and #14 in reading⁴;
- At the high school level, Maine’s graduation rate of 87.5% is well above the national average of 83.2%, placing the state #11 in the country⁵;

- In 2014, the Annie E. Casey Foundation ranked Maine's schools 14th in the U.S. using a matrix of academic measures⁶.
- A recent article in U.S. News and World Report ranked Maine's high schools #7 in the U.S.

These are not the marks of failing schools – especially in a state that ranks near the bottom of the nation on most other economic indicators. These are the marks of organizations performing better than the data would predict. One reason for this better-than-expected performance is the fact that Maine school teachers and leaders are not content with the current or past results; they do not consider beating the national average to be good enough, and they are continually striving to provide improved instruction and programming to Maine's students. The message has been sent to Maine's educators, consistently and forcefully, that they need to do better – and that message has been received. The result is an educational system that outperforms most others in the country.

We should recognize the excellence that already exists in our schools while focusing our energies on continual improvement. While Maine educators are rising to that challenge, the state has not celebrated the fact that its schools perform better than much of the rest of the country. Community leaders throughout Maine must realize that the data does not lie; Maine schools are doing quite well, comparatively. Telling that story to the public will not cause Maine educators to stop finding ways to innovate instruction, nor will it stop their effort to create greater efficiencies in our schools; it will simply encourage them to do so with a sense of accomplishment and optimism while at the same time encouraging prospective residents and business owners to consider Maine as a preferred place to raise their families and grow their businesses.

Expenditure data

Going beyond student performance comparisons, Maine's schools fare well when stacked up against the rest of the U.S. on financial measures:

- A recent study published by *EdWeek* ranked Maine public schools 14th in the nation when considering financial management as one key measure⁸;
- Despite popular political rhetoric claiming otherwise, Maine schools are the most efficiently operated in all of the northeast, including all six New England States, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. One would have to drive south to Virginia or west to Ohio before finding a state with lower per pupil expenditures than Maine⁹;
- According to a report published in the *Huffington Post*, Maine ranks 31st in per pupil spending while performing at #17 academically¹⁰;
- The National Education Association's 2016 "Rankings & Estimates" places Maine as low as 40th in the nation in per pupil spending, and 41st in governmental spending for education per \$1000 of personal income¹¹.

These rankings are not indicative of mismanaged schools with oversized administrations. Rather, the data indicates that Maine's culture of local control may in fact be an effective and efficient way to deliver instruction.

Leadership

Recently, a move has been afoot to reduce the number of school administrators in Maine. Currently, Maine School Management Association reports there are 92 full-time superintendents and 39 part-time superintendents in Maine, with just fewer than 190,000 students. A popular comparison put forth by some is the state of Florida, with 67 superintendents and 2.7 million students¹². The story that is not told, however, is the extensive organizational hierarchy that exists within Florida's schools, resulting in an administrative structure that far exceeds the size and complexity of Maine districts. Although there may be only one person with the title of superintendent, there are hundreds of others with titles such as Deputy Superintendent, Area Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, and Accountability Officer.

Take, for example, Broward County Public Schools (BCPS), a district of approximately 270,000 students covering the greater Fort Lauderdale region. It is true that BCPS has just one superintendent, but the district also has an organizational chart that is 17 pages long, with just under 1,400 administrators and more than 10,000 support staff¹³. When viewing this chart, it is clear that several layers of administration exist between the superintendent and the school principal, as opposed to the typical Maine school district, in which principals (and community members) report directly to the superintendent. Some of the administrative titles reporting to the superintendent in BCPS include:

- Chief of Staff
- Coordinator of Governmental Affairs
- Director of Legislative Affairs
- Chief School Performance Officer
- Director of Leadership Development
- Director of School Accountability
- Director of Service Quality
- Director of Coaching and Induction
- Strategic Partnerships Development Manager

No Maine school district includes these positions, or hundreds of others identified on the BCPS organization chart; they are positions created to perform work that, in Maine, remains the responsibility of the superintendent or one or two other central office administrators. The number of administrators and support staff in Broward County (11,751) approaches the number of instructional staff in the entire district (14,640)¹⁴. Clearly, BCPS recognizes that the work of leading the schools is complex and demanding, requiring many hands and much expertise. In fact, 44% of BCPS staff is classified as non-instructional personnel. By comparison, the typical Maine school districts of South Portland, RSU 14 (Windham/Raymond), and Yarmouth employ only 28% to 30% of staff in non-instructional positions.

A quick glance at another Florida district, Orange County Public Schools, reveals that the current superintendent previously served as Chief of Staff and Deputy Superintendent, providing oversight for various Area Superintendents – positions and layers that do not exist in any Maine school district. To believe that Florida has fewer senior-level administrators than Maine schools is to ignore the facts. The difference is that in Maine, as in many states, local control is a major consideration in how communities and schools are managed, and senior level administrators wear many hats, from Human Resources Director to Communications Manager to Accountability Officer; all positions that would be assigned to one or more persons for each community in a large, Floridian school district. The lesson to be learned

from Florida is not that one superintendent can effectively lead a district of 200,000 students; the lesson is that there is a great deal of administrative work to be done to efficiently operate a school district, and larger districts simply require more complex hierarchies to oversee the work. Here in Maine it is not only the quality of the work, but the relationships developed while completing that work, that make Maine schools more effective, and more efficient, than most others in the country.

Lest we forget the purpose of our public schools, it is important, also, to consider the same indicators of Florida's school performance that rank Maine schools among the best in the country at all levels. Florida's fourth graders, like those in Maine, score above the national average in mathematics, but by eighth grade Florida's performance ranks as low as 43rd in the nation⁴. A similar trend is seen in reading, where Florida's fourth graders perform above the U.S. average while their eighth grade students drop below the U.S. average (ranking 33rd). By the end of twelfth grade, Florida's 77.9% graduation rate ranks 41st in the nation⁵. These are not performances or trends that Maine residents will embrace for their own students. Higher percentages of non-instructional personnel and below-average performance for older students do not make Florida's model of mega-districts something Maine should emulate.

Local Control

There have been two major consolidation efforts in Maine in the past 60 years. The Sinclair Act of 1957 reduced by 40 percent the number of Maine school districts at that time, resulting in the regional districts with which most of us have been familiar for several decades. The Sinclair Act rewarded school units for consolidating, making construction and transportation funds available for communities electing to combine their small, local school districts into larger, regional districts. The success of the Sinclair Act is evidenced by the continued collaboration among the "School Administrative Districts" (or, S.A.D.'s) still in operation.

At the other end of the consolidation success spectrum is the school district reorganization law of 2007. This law sought to reduce the number of Maine school districts from 290 to 80. Rather than provide incentives for consolidating, as the Sinclair Act did, this law provided only penalties for those unwilling to join a larger district. In the end, the lowest number of school districts reached was 164 in 2011-12¹⁵, and that number remains in flux, as several consolidated districts have splintered in the

past four years. The difficulties faced by many of the newer, consolidated districts are a result of community disputes over funding, policy, and local control.

It is important that community leaders understand what they will give up if they accept being forced into a consolidated district. Community members will see their influence in their school's policies, curriculum, and funding diminished; locally elected officials will be stripped of their input into the budget process as the regional district simply submits its annual invoice to each town; and towns will begin fighting with one another – and with the regional school committee – as battle lines are drawn around the school funding formula. Experience has shown that projected cost savings will not come to fruition as collective bargaining agreements will be adjusted to the higher standard, not the lower, from the previously separate districts, and each community will share in the responsibility for others' pre-existing or developing concerns around facilities, technology, and curriculum.

Should Maine wish to adopt Florida's mega-district approach to school organization, we should do so fully understanding what it will mean for our students and our communities. It will not take long before school districts will create hierarchical structures similar to those currently in place in Florida. Simply put, the work needs to be done. The work can be done by one superintendent with 14 deputy superintendents and dozens of other administrative support personnel in a given county, or it can be done by 14 superintendents in that county working independently with their local communities and school committees – but, in the end, the work of financial planning, personnel management, instructional oversight, curriculum development, public relations, and performance accountability must be done. In Maine, the data show that the relationships and programming that are developed and refined in locally-controlled districts lead to better-performing schools. A move away from that arrangement will have its consequences in greater administrative overhead and diminished community input.

Conclusion

When one reads about failing schools in the national press, it is important to remember that the schools being discussed are typically found in large, urban areas of the country, with challenges far different from the schools here in Maine. Considering Maine's academic and financial data, the negative attention on schools seems particularly misdirected, as our schools out-perform the national average on a consistent basis.

If we want to sell Maine to potential business owners who will consider developments that grow our economy, increase employment, and raise wages, we should tell them about our safe, quality, locally-controlled public schools. If we want to preserve the efficiency, performance, and relational value of our schools, we should continue to promote regional cooperation while respecting the limited, local leadership structure that has proven to be more efficient than that of mega-districts found elsewhere.

It is time to look at the data and recognize that Maine schools are among the best in the country, with higher achievement and lower per pupil costs than most other states. It is time to celebrate our successes and acknowledge our efficiencies. It is time to advocate for Maine's public schools.

Sources

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