



VISION *Maine people will be among the best educated in the world!*

educating me

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inside

FOCUS:

Improving High Schools

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This is the third issue of *Educating Me*, a publication produced periodically to keep Maine people abreast of issues, ideas and trends in education.

See inside for more information about your local schools. (Pages 8 & 9)

<http://janus.state.me.us/education/profiles/profilehome/htm>

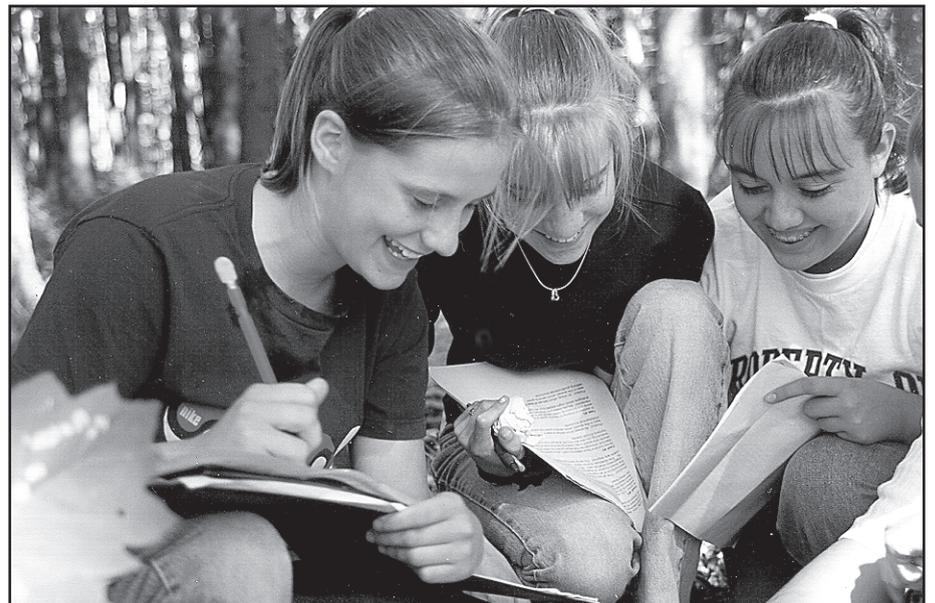
New School for a New Millennium

Sixty sophomores and three teachers at the Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School left the highly buffed linoleum floors and bright classrooms of their modern school behind and set out for the thickly wooded forest just beyond the expansive parking lot.

One English teacher, one history teacher, and one science teacher worked with the students for hours to find and identify the plants contained in one square-meter. But this project was more than mapping plant species; the teachers will relate this study of nature to how great thinkers, such as Henry David Thoreau, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke, saw the natural world in relation to human nature.

“We don’t want the students to study the subjects separately; we want them to make connections in their learning,” said English teacher Brewster Burns. “We want the learning to be seamless.”

The school has made a commitment to this type of theme-based learning for all students. Until two years ago, SAD #17 high school students chose between attending a traditional academic high school or a technical school, but the District wanted to improve learning and raise standards for all students and decided to combine the schools. Two years ago, the new \$29 million Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School opened, housing all 1,200 students under one roof and eliminating the separation between the technical and academic high schools.



Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School students Cassie Martin, Leah Newton, and Heidi Nichols map plant species. This project connects nature to literature and science.

With this move came sweeping changes in the way students are taught. Teachers and students now are grouped into one of six smaller “schools,” regardless of their ability.

“Seven years ago, we began to work toward a vision that the high school and technology schools belong together,” said Brian Mazjanis, assistant principal of the school. “We wanted to keep the opportunities afforded by a large high school, but foster a small school feel,” he said.

Though the school is still working out the kinks, it is making strides toward creating smaller learning environments. Starting in their sophomore year, students enroll in one of the six schools: Arts and Communications, Business and Management, Design and

Construction, Engineering Technologies, Environmental and Power Technologies, or Life Science and Wellness. The freshman class is divided into small teams and the teams take the same core.

Mazjanis stresses that the schools don’t pigeonhole students into a career early on and, in fact, students can elect to change their school each year. “If a student enters the school of design and construction, it doesn’t mean they’ll be going into drafting. This isn’t about locking kids into things. The requirements for graduating are the same no matter what school a student chooses.” Design students must take math and science, but the curriculum may include construction projects as a tool for teach-

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Qualities of a good high school

Research on high-performing high schools shows that these schools emphasize a set of similar practices. Most of these practices are directly within the sphere of Maine high schools and a majority of these practices are low-cost or no-cost.

The following characteristics are present in high-performing high schools when compared to lower-performing high schools:

- A FOCUS on academic performance;
- STUDENTS report feeling safe in their schools;
- LENGTH of instructional year is approximately one week longer than average;
- FEWER TARDY students and fewer students absent on any given day;
- FEWER STUDENTS taking review and general math and general science courses, and more taking upper level courses;
- MORE STUDENTS have minimum homework requirements, and more students complete more homework;
- FEWER STUDENTS failing one or more courses;
- FEWER DROPOUTS and more graduates;
- MORE STUDENTS feel teachers both expect them to and help them to succeed;
- FEWER teachers teaching outside of their major subject area;
- PRINCIPAL observes new teachers more frequently;
- MORE TEACHERS holding advanced degrees;
- MORE POSITIVE parent-teacher relationships and more parents have a good, working knowledge of their schools.

Source: Dr. David Silvernail, Director, The Center for Educational Policy, Applied Research and Evaluation at the University of Southern Maine

“Ripe for Change”: Searsport Offers Students Options

On a crisp fall day, nine Searsport District High School students ambled through the picturesque coastal town of Searsport, bumping into one another and waving at passing cars. Accompanied by the school’s librarian, Ann Gallagher, the sophomores headed to a seaside park for half an hour.

As an advisor, Gallagher meets with the students for 30 minutes every other day. She hopes to build relationships that personalize school for the students. The school implemented advisor/advisee groups, a reform recommended in the Maine Department of Education’s report *Promising Futures*, in an effort to improve the high school learning environment.

A few years ago, after losing accreditation and weathering a rapid turnover of school district leadership, an energetic group of teachers at Searsport District High School (SAD #56) put their heads together and formulated a list of reforms.

“We were ripe for change,” said teacher Leslie Gregory. “We wanted to get kids to think more about school, and to get more focused on what direction they wanted their lives to take and less focused on their social lives. We wanted to raise the bar for expectations, academic achievement, and tolerance, and provide students with opportunities beyond the status quo,” said Gregory.

The staff began ambitiously with many ideas for reform, but realistically focused on four: elimination of tracking or grouping students by ability, advisor/advisee groups, portfolios, and personalized learning plans.

Heterogeneous Grouping

Eliminating tracking was the most controversial of the reforms instituted. The school’s goal is to group 75 percent of the classes heterogeneously by the end of three years. Heterogeneous grouping discourages stereotyping, said Jeff Shula, English teacher. “Tracking kids doesn’t give kids the opportunity to work with kids who may be different from themselves,” he said.

Students who spend their high school years in lower track groups experience low aspirations, diminished self-confidence, and limited achievement, according to *Promising Futures*. Classifying and teaching students by this one factor — ability — should be phased out, said the authors of the report.

Kathleen Jenkins, another English teacher, said tracking led to whole classes of students with behavior problems. Heterogeneous grouping “raises the expectations of kids who have little expected of them,” she said. “Now they get to see excellence by working with kids who are higher achievers.”

The new grouping also has brought changes in

teaching. No longer do teachers lecture at the front of the class and hope everyone understands the material. “When class starts I try to get kids out of their seats, responding to questions and looking up answers,” said Shula. Students work on projects in groups and, rather than giving the same assignment to the whole class, teachers choose books, with students, that are compatible with each student’s reading level. There are standard books in the curriculum that all students are offered, but if a book is too difficult, students are offered alternatives.

Students are asked to respond in class to a greater degree than before, and are given opportunities for other forms of expression, such as debating and sculpture, even in English class. “We don’t want our students to just regurgitate what the teacher says,” Shula said.

Class Advisors

Last year, the school began providing staff advisors for all 50 freshmen. Advisors remain with students for their entire high school careers.

Traditionally, not all students have received enough guidance about what courses and steps to take to achieve their career goals. *Promising Futures* recommends that students and teachers belong to teams that provide each student continuous personal and academic attention, and a supportive environment for learning and growing.

Besides the usual housekeeping tasks (for example, distribution of announcements, etc.) advisors keep track of report cards and discipline issues, and they help students fulfill graduation requirements. Each advisor is the point person for ten students.

Portfolios

Pulling up a computer file, science teacher Claire Guse explained the requirements for student portfolios; each must have a minimum of five entries each year from five different subjects and entries must meet some of the Guiding Principles of the Maine *Learning Results*. For example, a chemistry lab report would be accompanied, in the portfolio, by details of the experiment, a summary of what the student learned from the experiment, and a written explanation of how the experiment demonstrates two of the Guiding Principles — such as creative problem solving and working collaboratively.

In most high schools, a student is eligible to graduate when he or she has earned the required number of credits. *Promising Futures* challenges schools to assess students, not by credits earned, but rather by requiring students to *show* they have learned skills and acquired knowledge.

Guse and other teachers are working to train advi-

Promising Futures Core Practices



Teacher Leslie Gregory with senior Gerald Cross in the Searsport District High School's Performance Accountable Resource Center (PARC). The large room, equipped with computers and a full-time teacher, is one way the school personalizes learning for every student, said Gregory.

- EVERY STUDENT learns in collaborative groups of students with diverse learning styles, skills, ages, personal backgrounds, and career goals.
- EVERY STUDENT makes informed choices about education and participation in school life and takes responsibility for the consequences of those choices.
- EVERY STUDENT employs a Personal Learning Plan to target individual, as well as common, learning goals and to specify learning activities that will lead to the attainment of those goals.

sors to help students build portfolios. Despite the extra work, Guse praised the portfolio method of assessment. “With portfolios, students take a more active role in what they’re learning—they get more out of it, and the portfolios show the state that the school is meeting the *Learning Results*,” she said.

dropout rates, fewer discipline problems, and better planning for life after high school. “Instinctively, I know we’re doing the right thing. I worry about (my advisees) on weekends and all summer long. I feel better having contact with them,” said Gallagher.

Personalized Learning Plans

Advisors help students look to the future. “Students often get this feeling that their future is just going to happen,” said Nathan Curtis, language specialist at Searsport, and member of the Personal Learning Plan Team.

Too often, parents and students don’t have a voice about what students learn. *Promising Futures* encourages students, parents, and staff to share the responsibility for what, and how, a student learns.

Advisors ask students about their career, social, and co-curricular goals. Each student’s answers form the beginning of a personal transition plan from high school to work or post-secondary school.

“We want students to see what choices are available to them instead of waiting for opportunities to present themselves,” said Pam Reynolds, special education technician and member of the Personal Learning Plan Team. “It’s proven that people who are successful set goals – both by writing (them) down and sharing them with other people.”

While it’s too early to judge their effectiveness, Gallagher is optimistic that the changes at Searsport will result in outcomes that mirror research findings: lower

Traditional Practices

✓ 45-minute class periods, classes meet every day, teachers specialize and have little or no collaboration with other teachers.

✓ Students are tracked according to ability.

✓ Student performance is assessed largely on test grades.

✓ Contact with adults is limited to class time with each subject teacher, and no one, single, adult tracks individual students.

Recommended Practices

✓ 80-minute instructional blocks, where teachers collaborate and thematic units reinforce what others are teaching.

✓ Ability grouping is eliminated, along with the attitude that some students have more ability to learn than others, teachers use a variety of methods to reach a variety of learning styles.

✓ Assessments are varied, using test scores, student portfolios, and long-term assignments (for example, building an electric car).

✓ Students’ high school experiences are personalized with each student assigned an advisor who is assigned a small group of students. Through regular weekly meetings over the entire course of high school, teachers keep track of academic progress and discipline or social problems, and help students individualize learning and set goals.

Learning Results Guiding Principles



In a technology rich world,

I. A CLEAR AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR would:

- ✓ Use multimedia presentations.
- ✓ Create web-based presentations.

II. A SELF-DIRECTED & LIFE-LONG LEARNER would:

- ✓ Access learning opportunities at all skill levels.
- ✓ Individualize learning.
- ✓ Locate, retrieve, assess, and use information from a variety of resources.

III. A CREATIVE AND PRACTICAL PROBLEM SOLVER would:

- ✓ Problem-solve utilizing just-in-time learning methodologies.
- ✓ Organize information through spreadsheets and databases.
- ✓ Analyze data through charts and graphs.
- ✓ Create solutions to real-world problems.
- ✓ Present solutions through multimedia presentations and web pages.

IV. A RESPONSIBLE AND INVOLVED CITIZEN would:

- ✓ Take advantage of global communication.
- ✓ Use information responsibly in this Information Age.

V. A COLLABORATIVE & QUALITY WORKER would:

- ✓ Engage in collaborative projects and multimedia presentations.
- ✓ Collaborate with many individuals from various locations.

VI. AN INTEGRATED AND INFORMED THINKER would:

- ✓ Access information worldwide.
- ✓ Tap into a variety of resources.

He Shoots, He Scores!

Waterville teacher replaces textbook with web

Holding a high school physics class at 8:15 a.m. might seem like a good way to induce sleep. But Waterville High School students in this first period physics class not only sat with eyes open, they even laughed at their teacher's jokes.

Noticeably absent from student's desks were textbooks. Instead of sitting behind a desk, teacher Michael Gosselin taught students about vectors from a computer at one side of the room. Gosselin faced the computer and the students' eyes were fixed on what Gosselin calls his 'third child' – the physics website he built and projected for students to view on the classroom wall.

"Vectors are the bane of all physics students," said Gosselin. He loads an "applet," or computerized diagram, that shows a man (Bonzo) shooting baskets. Gosselin manipulates factors such as angle, velocity, and gravity to change the course of the basketball, until Bonzo finally scores.

Amidst the laughter at Bonzo's feeble attempts at scoring, students shout out suggestions to Gosselin on how to improve Bonzo's success rate. "Mr. Gosselin uses comparisons to what we see everyday. It clicks," said Dale Poulin, a student.

Gosselin eliminated the physics textbook, and let students tap into the educational potential of the Internet instead, by visiting pre-selected sites.

"This Internet version of the physics textbook helps students organize and retrieve vast quantities of facts and tie them together," said Gosselin.

Gosselin marvels at how much has changed in just a few years. "In 1997 I didn't even know how to do a web search," said the 30-year veteran physics teacher. "When the Internet hit the schools in 1995-96, it bothered me that kids were leaving me behind."

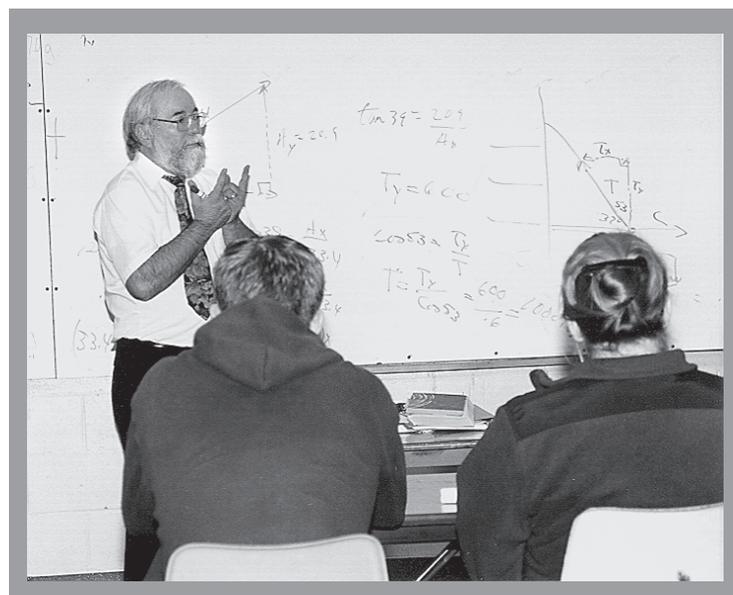
Gosselin conceived of this alternative while doing graduate studies in computer science at Thomas Col-

lege. During the 1998 ice storm, as a lucky beneficiary of electricity, Gosselin began marathon website design sessions. He eventually clocked more than 500 hours to complete the site. In 1998, he received his high school principal's blessing to toss the textbook.

On the web site, Gosselin outlines class material, and assigns reading and problems for students to complete before class. He lists links to other web sites for students who have difficulty understanding the material or who want to expand their understanding of physics. The web offers students the opportunity to discover new information with just a click of the mouse.

"If you still don't get it after reading what Mr. Gosselin wrote, there are two other web sites to read," said Poulin. "I'm learning more than I expected. I expected the physics class to be general, but when I started learning, I wanted to look up more information," he said.

Gosselin said the web approach might better serve some learning styles than a textbook. While there is no clear consensus on whether technology will improve student achievement, most education experts do agree that its value lies in meeting many different learning styles. "It's not the cure-all for every learning situation, but it's a different way to convey information and has more advantages than disadvantages over



Waterville High School teacher Michael Gosselin designed his own physics website for his students. Textbooks are no longer used by students in this particular physics class.

the textbook," he said.

The 25 percent of his students who don't have Internet access at home aren't disadvantaged, according to Gosselin. Students use school or public library computers after school, or work on a friend's computer. "It makes students more efficient with their time," he said.

Michael Gosselin's physics website is: <http://www.wtvl.k12.me.us/wshs/dept/science/physics361/intro/table.html>

Teachers may download files with detailed information about any project in the SEED catalog by visiting the SEED web site at www.mainecenter.org/seed



Learning Grows for Both Teachers and Students

Fresh ideas for using technology in the classroom

All Maine schools are now connected to the Internet, making the powerful learning tool available in urban and rural areas, but a U.S. Education Department survey last year found that only a third of public school teachers nationwide consider themselves prepared to use computers and the Internet.

Thanks to a multi-million dollar federal grant, Maine teachers have at their fingertips a book of curriculum ideas using assorted technologies.

With a \$6.8 million grant, the Maine Center for Educational Services in Lewiston introduced SEED (short for *Spreading Educator to Educator Developments*) in 1992. The program offers specific, technology-related activities to Maine teachers for use in the classroom. It also links technological neophytes with their more savvy colleagues.

SEED publishes a catalog of 50 projects for students of all ages using various types of technology, from computers to television. Maine teachers created all the projects. "Used properly, the Internet can enhance and transform learning and leverage greater student achievement," said Jenifer VanDeusen, Director of SEED.

One project, *Project Ask (Accessing Scientists to Kids)*, was designed by three teachers from the Jordan-Small School in Raymond; it has teachers find e-mail addresses of professionals whose jobs relate to the curriculum covered in class. Students submit questions, problems, or ideas to those people whose expertise interests them. The creators of the project hope to raise student aspirations and to help students understand the importance of higher education. "Today it is impossible to provide students with all the information they need. Integrating technology into the curriculum enables stu-

dents to learn how to find information for themselves," said Judy Dorr of Boothbay Regional Elementary School, and creator of a SEED activity.

Teachers may download files with detailed information about any project in the SEED catalog by visiting the SEED web site. For a stipend, the creators of each project agree to serve as a resource to other teachers.

The catalog contains another project from teachers Vincent Vanier and Tom Pennington of the Madawaska Middle/High School, that puts high school students on the air at a local cable television station delivering news and other programming. For this project, staff and students devised and assembled two Teleprompters for just \$102 — far less than the several-thousand dollar purchase price for one. Now students have eye-to-eye contact with their viewers, giving them a professional look. The SEED web site describes in great detail the design for the low-cost Teleprompter. Besides learning newsgathering and reporting skills, the student station became an important part of the local community. Students enjoyed being recognized for appearing on television. "Such encounters are immeasurable in terms of academic assessment and invaluable for self-esteem and social interaction. This project provides real life opportunities to make real life improvements in the lives of so many students," said the creators of this activity.

"These projects highlight basic teacher to teacher networking," said VanDeusen. "We're encouraging teachers to dip their toes in and to learn new things," she said. Once they have their feet wet, other teachers are there to help them learn to swim.

Computers by the Numbers:

Computer use by most Maine teachers is infrequent and mostly for basic applications such as word processing, not for classroom teaching. Powerful applications of computers are used to teach when a sufficient number of computers are available to students right in the classroom. These conclusions are drawn from survey responses of 3,600 Maine teachers, almost a quarter of the teachers in the state.

The survey found:

- Most teachers have individual access to a computer and the Internet in their classroom (80%) and at home (75%).
- Overall, teachers display infrequent use: about half of all teachers never use computers or only use them a few times per year. About two-thirds of all teachers use basic applications like word processing and email frequently.
- Most teachers do not use computers very much in their teaching or for more challenging or meaningful applications. For example, less than 10% of teachers use computers to solve problems and analyze data, or for demonstrations, simulations, or multimedia presentations.
- Access to multiple computers right in the classroom provides a tremendous boost in the amount of teaching using more complex computer applications as a teaching tool.
- Access to additional computers in a *computer lab* does not significantly affect teaching, but teachers with 15 or more computers in their classroom use computer-based demonstrations, multimedia presentations, Internet research, and computer data analysis at double, triple, even five times the frequency of teachers who have five or fewer computers in the classroom.
- Very few teachers have access to multiple computers right in the classroom. 20.7% have 2-5 computers in the classroom, only 4% have 15 or more computers in the classroom.

Computers — Today's Pencil

No longer just nice, but needed

With technology, Maine can overcome the barriers of geography and limited resources. If we seize the opportunity, we will have the best educated citizens and the most skilled work force anywhere — and Maine's future prosperity will follow.

— Governor Angus King

Technology is an essential tool for teaching and learning, as it has become an essential tool in the workplace.

— J. Duke Albanese, Commissioner of Education

Eighth graders at Piscataquis Community Middle School in Guilford are sporting a new look — bright blue and white laptop computers. In the halls, all 68 students carry the powerful machines, chock full of learning possibilities.

“Having each student equipped with a computer opens up so many possibilities. It makes a difference between occasional access and constant access,” said Crystal Priest, computer and technology teacher at Piscataquis Community Middle School.

The school took the bold step of purchasing the computers after a pilot study showed that unmotivated students became enthusiastic learners with the computer as a tool. “No longer did these kids sit in class with their heads in their arms,” said Principal Greg Bellemere. “These kids grew up on computer games, this is education in a mode they like. Interest is the key thing. You make learning fun and students want to do it.”

The Apple iBooks became part of the desktop in September after the school received grants from Guilford of Maine and other sources to buy 118 of the state-of-the-art computers: one for every eighth grader, one for every three seventh graders, and 25 for the fifth and sixth grade. Teachers received Apple Powerbooks and computer presentation equipment for every room for times when the teacher wants all students to follow along together.

Priest and Bellemere emphasize that these are only tools. Their power lies in what they do for the learning environment. Teachers who were once apprehensive about computers now say they can't teach without them. Instead of using paper and pencils, students reach for the laptops to research subjects on the Internet and to write reports. Teachers coax students into topics by tempting them with web sites. When a new topic raises questions, students pop in the WorldBook encyclopedia on CD-ROM.

“The first week of school for teachers was mind blasting, now it's normal procedure to use the computers in class,” said Priest. “Instead of looking at these laptops as an add-on, it's a different way of doing things.”

Teachers at Piscataquis Middle School rely on stu-

dents to help find web sites and offer computer-use tips to teachers. The result is that both students and teachers are growing in confidence.

Bellemere asked each eighth grade teacher to use the computer for at least one activity by the end of the year. All teachers had surpassed that by last November, he said. Though it is too early to say that computers have revamped the curriculum, the classroom is now a different place, said Bellemere.

After just two months, the school is so sure that equipping students with computers is the right thing to do that they are hoping to provide all seventh graders with laptops next year. “It has gone from nice to needed,” said Bellemere.

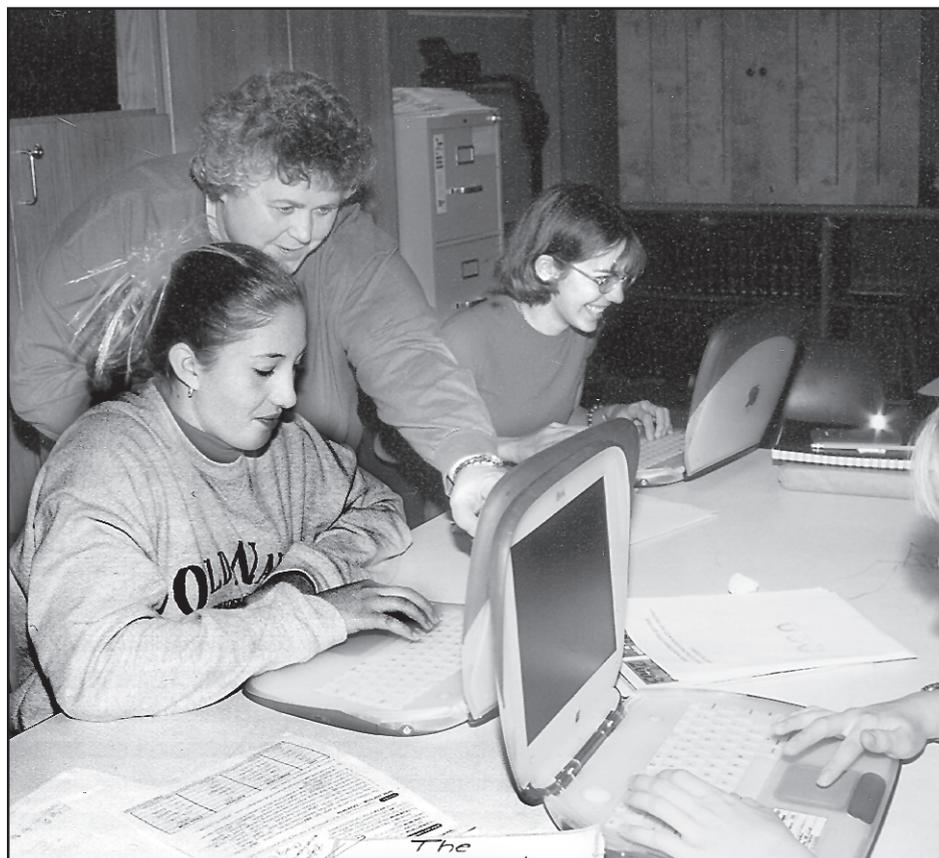
Doing things differently is exactly the message that Seymour Papert, MIT education professor and proponent of a computer for every student, tries to convey.

“We have to spend time developing the vision beyond simply improving what we're doing now,” said Papert.

He said sending students to a computer lab is not much different from sending them to a special lab to work with pencils and paper. “If a class has too few computers, students are learning only superficially from them,” he said.

Crystal Priest agrees that computer labs aren't enough. “We did a great job teaching students to use computers as a tool, but then we couldn't let them use them that way.”

Papert believes that in five years each student will have his/her own computer in the classroom, a direction he is eager for education to take. “People ask the



Piscataquis Community Middle School students Charley Bradford and Susan Kovach receive instruction on Apple iBooks from their teacher Ann Dall. The school received grants from Guilford of Maine and other sources to buy 118 of the state-of-the-art computers: one for every eighth grader, one for every three seventh graders, and 25 for the fifth and sixth grade.

Seymour Papert is a MIT professor and distinguished professor at the University of Maine. Today Papert is considered the world's foremost expert on how technology can provide new ways to learn. He has carried out educational projects on every continent, some of them in remote villages in developing countries. He has founded a small laboratory in Blue Hill, the Learning Barn, to develop methods of learning using the latest in technology. As an advocate for the learning of all students, he spends a large part of his time



working in the Maine Youth Center in South Portland, the state's facility for teenagers convicted of serious offenses.

The World Our Children Will Inherit

Our children will inherit a world where:

- workers will need to construct and use knowledge that doesn't yet exist and solve problems that are barely visible today;
- change is rampant — the knowledge economy is in our midst, globalization is challenging our roots;
- and the personal currency is education and knowledge.

question, 'But aren't you suggesting that students learn only about things they are interested in?' My response is that students will learn things in the context of something they are interested in," he said.

A physics textbook can be seen as one size fits all, said Papert. "But physics are connected to every aspect of life — such as sports and storms. Students can learn physics in the context of what they are interested in [by using technology]," he said.

At the Maine Youth Center in South Portland, Papert has seen technology change the course of learning for students who previously have failed in school. "My work at the Maine Youth Center in Portland is one of the

deepest experiences of my life. For the majority of the kids in the youth center, the education system has not worked for them," he said. "They need a different way of learning to break out of the cycle of failing repeatedly."

He works with 12 students at a time on projects that use technology more than pencil and paper. A recent project entailed building a motorized vehicle of Legos equipped with a programmable computer chip. The goal was to make a vehicle that could climb a steep ramp without tipping over.

"By seeing how their design fails, it leads the kids into other ideas and gets them thinking about equilibrium, stability, center of gravity, power and all the fac-

tors that go into it," said Papert. "I use failure to point the kids into an area to investigate." This is "knowledge on demand." Though students might learn about friction once in a certain grade, a project like this inspires students to learn about friction *now*.

The project is not all physics. Students write about what they're doing and record their building project using digital photographs and videotaping, and then store their archives in a portfolio.

One Maine Youth Center student was able to build a vehicle that could climb a 67-degree incline. "Amazing — I wouldn't have believed it," said Papert. He is convinced that some of his students are gifted and others are geniuses. "I have worked through building these machines before and I try to think ahead of time of problems that might arise. Many times these students came up with better ideas to solve problems than I did."

Using technology helps redirect learning from teacher-centered to learning-centered, where the teacher becomes a learner along with the students. "One of the beauties of using projects to learn is that there are so many ways to handle it — no two people handle the project in the same way," he said. Students learn from other good learners, said Papert.

For information on Seymour Papert's Learning Barn in Blue Hill, visit his website at: www.learningbarn.org

"These kids grew up on computer games, this is education in a mode they like. Interest is the key thing. You make learning fun and students want to do it"

— Greg Bellemere, Principal,
Piscataquis Community Middle School

"By seeing how their design fails, it leads the kids into other ideas and gets them thinking. I use failure to point the kids into an area to investigate. This is knowledge on demand."

— Seymour Papert

"Arguably, Seymour Papert is the most knowledgeable person on the planet regarding teaching, learning, and technology — and he's here in Maine coaching us!"

— J. Duke Albanese,
Commissioner of Education

What is the School Profiles Web Site?

The School Profiles Web site is a way the Maine Department of Education communicates to the public about public schools in Maine. By visiting the web site, users can retrieve information about schools in their community, as well as others around the state. This centerfold features information about the

Lewiston School Department as an example about the kinds of information that can be found on the School Profiles Web site. It is easy to search the web site and find information on *every school and district* in Maine. Log on to: <http://janus.state.me.us/education/profiles/profilehome/htm>

Financial Data Profile Lewiston School Department

Per-pupil expenditures. The school administrative unit's per-pupil operating costs for the 1998-1999 fiscal year are displayed in the following table. Most of the school unit's costs are represented by these amounts. However, most expenditures from federal sources are excluded, and some expenditures from state and local funds are also excluded.

	Elementary (K-8)	Secondary (9-12)
School Unit	\$3,992.38	\$4,458.80
Statewide	\$4,268.55	\$5,205.19

Local Property Tax Rate for Education (Mill Rate). Local property taxpayers pay for a portion of their school administrative unit's costs. The taxpayer effort to provide this local share of school unit costs can be described as a mill rate: the number of property tax dollars raised for each \$1,000 of taxable property. The school administrative unit mill rate for recent school years, and the corresponding statewide average mill rate, is displayed in the following table.

School Year		Mill Rate
1998-1999	School Unit	11.05
	Statewide	11.07
1999-2000	School Unit	11.32
	Statewide	11.29

Staff Data Profile Lewiston School Department

Staff Educational Attainment. An important contributor to a school administrative unit's capacity to provide the services needed to achieve Maine's Learning Results content standards is the educational attainment of its staff. The following table indicates the percentage of staff during the 1999-2000 school year who had earned a Master's or higher degree.

	Masters Degree	Certificate of Advanced Studies or Doctorate
School Administrative Unit		
Instructional Staff	36%	2%
Support Staff	89%	0%
Administrators	58%	29%
State		
Instructional Staff	33%	2%
Support Staff	84%	9%
Administrators	62%	25%

Teacher Salaries. For each local school system, teacher salaries are determined by negotiations between the school system and its bargaining units. During the 1999-2000 school year, the minimum and maximum salaries for teachers with a bachelor's degree are as listed below.

Minimum Salary	Maximum Salary
\$23,994.00	\$42,674.00

School Profiles on Web



Get Profile Data

Get Guidance

Go to School Profile's Homepage



Welcome to the Maine Department of Education

School Profiles

- Be a well-informed citizen
- Easily acquire lots of educational information
- Learn about your local schools
- Learn about other local schools in Maine

<http://janus.state.me.us/education/>

Education
Lewiston School Department
Leon J. Levesque

Mailing Address:

Telephone:

E-mail Address:

World Wide Web Address:

The Lewiston School Department provides for the education of students in the Lewiston School Department operates the

Farwell Elementary School
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Martel School
Montello School
Pettingill Elementary School
Thomas J McMahon Elementary School
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Personal Profile
School Department
Director, Superintendent

Dingley Bldg 36 Oak St
Lewiston, ME 04240
(207) 795-4100

ddupliissis@lewnet.avcnet.org

The education of pupils in the town of Lewiston.
The following schools:

Enrolled Pupils	Grades
344	K-6
232	K-6
258	K-6
825	K-6
317	K-6
467	K-6
711	7-8
1,298	9-12

Student Test Data Profile Lewiston School Department

MEA (Maine Educational Assessment) Test Scores. The MEA tests are administered annually to students in grades 4, 8, and 11 in all public schools, and in some private schools. The MEA test that was administered in 1998-99 has been redesigned to measure status in baseline performance against Maine's Learning Results content standards for Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, Visual and Performing Arts, and Health. By law, schools are not required to implement the Learning Results content standards until the 2002-2003 school year. In these preliminary years, the purpose of the 1998-1999 MEA testing is to identify areas that need improvement for schools as they review and modify their curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Fourth Grade

Percentage of Students in Performance Categories

	Average Scale Score	Does not meet the Standard	Partially meets the Standard	Meets the Standard	Exceeds the Standard
READING					
1998-1999					
School Administrative Unit*	537	10%	53%	36%	1%
State	539	8%	43%	48%	1%
1999-2000					
School Administrative Unit	538	9%	50%	40%	1%
State	539	8%	46%	44%	1%
WRITING					
1998-1999					
School Administrative Unit	532	14%	63%	23%	0%
State	530	20%	60%	19%	0%
1999-2000					
School Administrative Unit	533	12%	66%	22%	0%
State	532	12%	71%	17%	0%
MATH					
1998-1999					
School Administrative Unit	529	32%	47%	20%	1%
State	531	27%	50%	22%	1%
1999-2000					
School Administrative Unit	529	34%	42%	23%	1%
State	530	29%	48%	21%	2%
SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY					
1998-1999					
School Administrative Unit	522	46%	52%	2%	0%
State	525	30%	66%	4%	0%
1999-2000					
School Administrative Unit	525	37%	62%	2%	0%
State	526	32%	65%	3%	0%

*Lewiston School Department

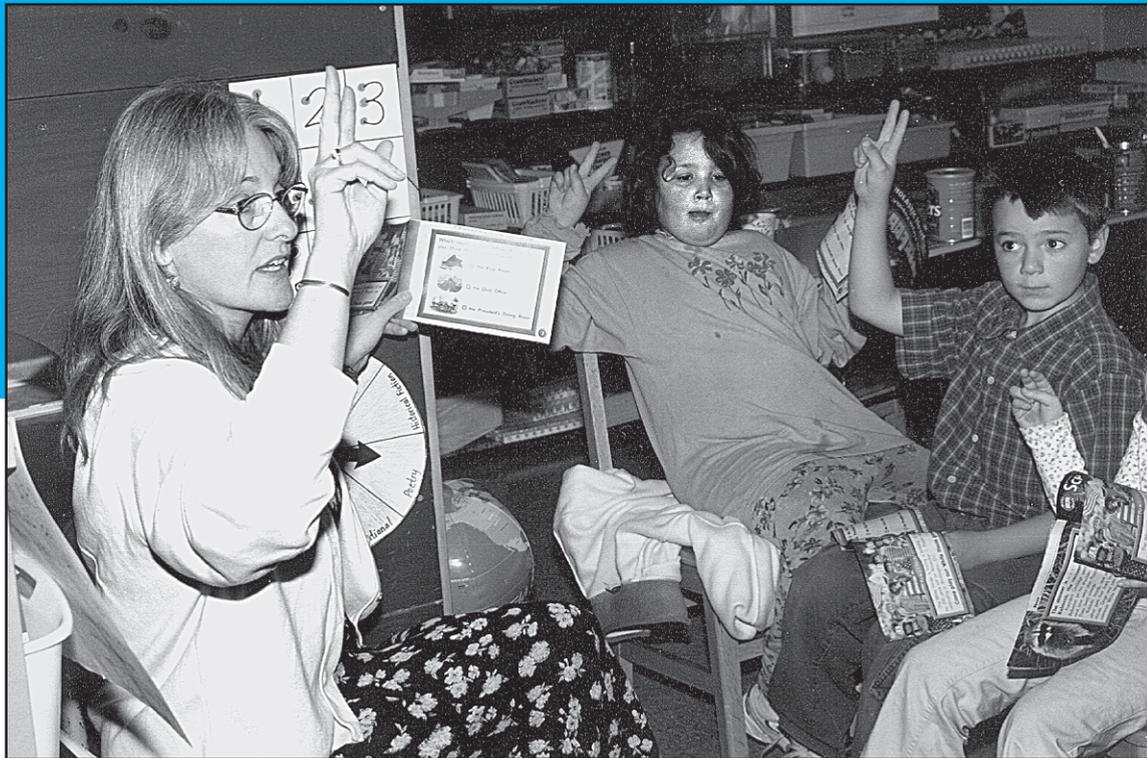
Other Student Data Profile Lewiston School Department

Graduation Rate. The Graduation Rate is the percentage of students that graduated from their high school, rather than dropping out sometime during their high school years. A separate graduation rate is calculated for each graduating class, such as the 'Class of 1999'. Graduation Rate data for the Class of 1999 is displayed in the following table:

	Graduation Rate
School Administrative Unit	79.41%
Statewide	87.36%

Intent to Enroll in Post-Secondary Education Rate. After graduating from high school, many students enroll in colleges, universities, and other institutes of higher education. An annual survey of high school seniors indicates how many graduating students intend to continue their education.

	Intent to Enroll Rate
School Administrative Unit	56.68%
Statewide	65.47%



Vinalhaven teacher Alicia Watts reads with students Ashley Wooster and Tyler Chilles.

Everybody knows everybody. We're able to meet individual needs because we know each other.

– George Joseph,
Superintendent of Schools, S.A.D. #8,
(Vinalhaven)

Island Schools: Havens for Community

“The frame of mind is different here,” said Gary Rosenthal, principal of Vinalhaven Island’s school. Rosenthal was talking about his students, all 206 of them, but he might have been referring to any group in the community. Faculty, administration, parents, community members — any one of them might be said to operate from a different frame of mind than most as they face the challenges and reap the rewards of island life.

Sun glints off waves in the ferry’s wake on an unexpectedly pleasant, 70-degree October day, making it difficult to envision living, working, and attending school here as anything but a nonstop holiday. But island life, by definition, comes with a certain isolation, which Rosenthal called the community’s biggest problem, but also its greatest strength.

Although there are 13 island schools in Maine, Vinalhaven, with a population of nearly 1300, is one of only three to offer classes for kindergarten through the 12th grade. Twenty-two full-time teachers and five education technicians serve just over 200 students, making it the largest of Maine’s island schools.

“There is a closeness, a tight-knit community, and a genuine concern for kids that transcends the walls of the school,” said Rosenthal. Vinalhaven residents don’t have the access to services and programs that mainland residents do. People pull together if there’s a need, he said.

George Joseph, superintendent of S.A.D. #8 (Vinalhaven), agreed. “Everybody knows everybody. We’re able to meet individual needs because we know each other,” he said simply.

North Haven, one of the other three islands with a K-12 program, has an even smaller population with 330 year-round residents and 80 students in the North Haven Community School. Students and teachers weave in and out of rooms and hallways that seem randomly connected, giving the school an open and informal feel. Average class size is just eight students. Students and teachers sometimes work in groups of two or three students, and at other times in a class, giving the school a rich learning environment.

As with Vinalhaven, the North Haven Community School relies on its community. When the school needed a new science lab, town resident and carpenter Roman Cooper stepped forward to build it. Last year, North Haven honored 98 volunteers — more than the number of students and almost a third of the island population of 330 people. “It’s what people expect to do — people want to help out,” said Barney Hallowell, principal of the K-12 school.

Some of the volunteers include celebrities who summer on the picturesque island, seven miles at sea. Broadway producer and Tony Award winner John Wulf directs the drama program and famed photographer Chester Higgins has instructed students on getting good images.

Three years ago the tiny North Haven high school population of 25 won a statewide one-act play festival.

Visitors to both schools can’t help but be impressed by the friendliness of these small schools. The administrators at Vinalhaven came from bigger schools and discovered that the advantages here far outweigh the disadvantages of size and location. They agree that many

issues confronting other schools today have little impact here. In a school this size, with many faculty members on staff for 20-plus years, student problems seldom go unaddressed.

However, lack of space and funds are just as much a problem on Vinalhaven as anywhere. Plans for a new school building received state approval last fall. The design will allow for bigger, more flexible spaces throughout the new school and create the physical divisions necessary for a middle school concept. In anticipation, Principal Rosenthal has begun a three-year phase-in of the middle school curriculum.

Beyond the Bake Sale

Like many schools in Maine who face a shortage of funds when it comes to enrichment activities, Vinalhaven and North Haven again look to the community to help supplement their budgets. Both schools are extremely fortunate to have generous financial support from the community for innovative programs and special events.

This year, the Island Institute, a Rockland-based organization, funded an integrated studies curriculum in English and Social Studies in Vinalhaven and funded a library and American Studies position in North Haven. The Island Institute’s aim includes the financial survival and enrichment of island schools so that their students don’t take an educational backseat to other Maine students. In Vinalhaven, two community groups also provide support. The School Enrichment Commit-

tee funds music and arts events, and part of the salary of the school's art teacher. In addition, their support brought the "Mud Mobile," a mobile pottery studio, to the island this fall. The Vinalhaven Land Trust provides money, staff and resources to the school for projects and curriculum dealing with the island's rich natural habitat and history.

When Barney Hallowell became the principal at North Haven Community School, no arts or drama programs existed. Outgoing state Senator Chellie Pingree, then-chair of the school board, conceived the idea of raising private funds to support the arts. The school raised \$13,000 the first year. Today, the yearly income from fund raising has risen to a whopping \$130,000. The money pays for drama, photography and music teachers. It also subsidizes educational and enrichment activities, like a three-day workshop with the Maine-based Atlantic Clarion steel drum band.

A vast array of guests helps reduce the isolation of island life and exposes students to a world beyond North Haven's rocky shores. Besides bringing in performers and educators, the school provides a rich variety of activities for students to attend off the island, such as the

annual AIDS conference in Bethel and a five-day field trip to the north woods.

With such a small student body, the staff is able to personalize learning. North Haven student and songwriter Noah Davidson spent a few weeks in Portland working in a professional music studio under the tutelage of the popular rock band the Rustic Overtones, thanks to a connection made through an island resident. "Students identify an activity and we seek out opportunities for them," said Hallowell.

At both schools, the relations between the community and the school are nearly seamless. Community members and parents turn out for meetings and school events almost without excep-

tion. For example, to counter the lack of cafeteria services, Vinalhaven parents of senior students stepped in, cooking and serving hot dogs and whoopie pies to students once a week.

Innovation, it seems, is a prerequisite for all involved with an island school. A visitor crossing from Vinalhaven to the North Haven school is likely to be escorted in a motor boat by the school's secretary, Jes-

sica MacDonald. Bus driver Paula Joyce sees the students to school and back each day, *and* serves as the year-book advisor.

Though these islands can appear picture perfect, life in the small red contemporary North Haven school wasn't always rosy. Nine years ago when Hallowell started as principal, students suffered from poor self-esteem and low aspirations. "One half to one-third of my time was spent on discipline issues," he said. To turn things around, staff implemented a conflict resolution and communication program that taught students to listen to and respect one another.

With the resilience and resourcefulness that characterize island life, the school rebounded and expanded its strengths. "When I started working here one community member said that every community needs something to be proud of. I didn't know what that was, but then it occurred to me that what this community likes to do is perform," Hallowell said.

Today, stage fright has turned to stage fever. A cast of 40 students and other residents of North Haven star in a local production, "Islands on the Road." The production will perform at the Farnsworth Museum in Rockland, and the cast has been invited to perform in New York City next year. The town is renovating an old building to serve as a performing arts facility.

Many of the faculty at both schools hold multiple teaching certificates. 1998 Maine *Teacher of the Year* Pete Peterson from Vinalhaven is certified to teach both math and English. He is also coach of the school's math team. Despite the small student body at the high school, Peterson has led the math team to stellar performances in competitions at both the state and national level.

The sign on Vinalhaven's Pam Merrill's door says "English, French and Humanities." One class period finds her reviewing vocabulary with seventh and eighth graders, another helping high school students complete an oil painting in the style of French Impressionists.

Despite the unique aspects of life at an island school, Vinalhaven is looking hard at its curriculum with an eye to conforming to the Maine *Learning Results*. Rosenthal is evaluating test scores and working with the faculty to develop assessment packages that better fit state guidelines. "Our goal," he said, "is to create a flagship school for the state." With a new building on the horizon, a committed staff, an involved community, and enthusiastic students, it looks like Vinalhaven might just do that.

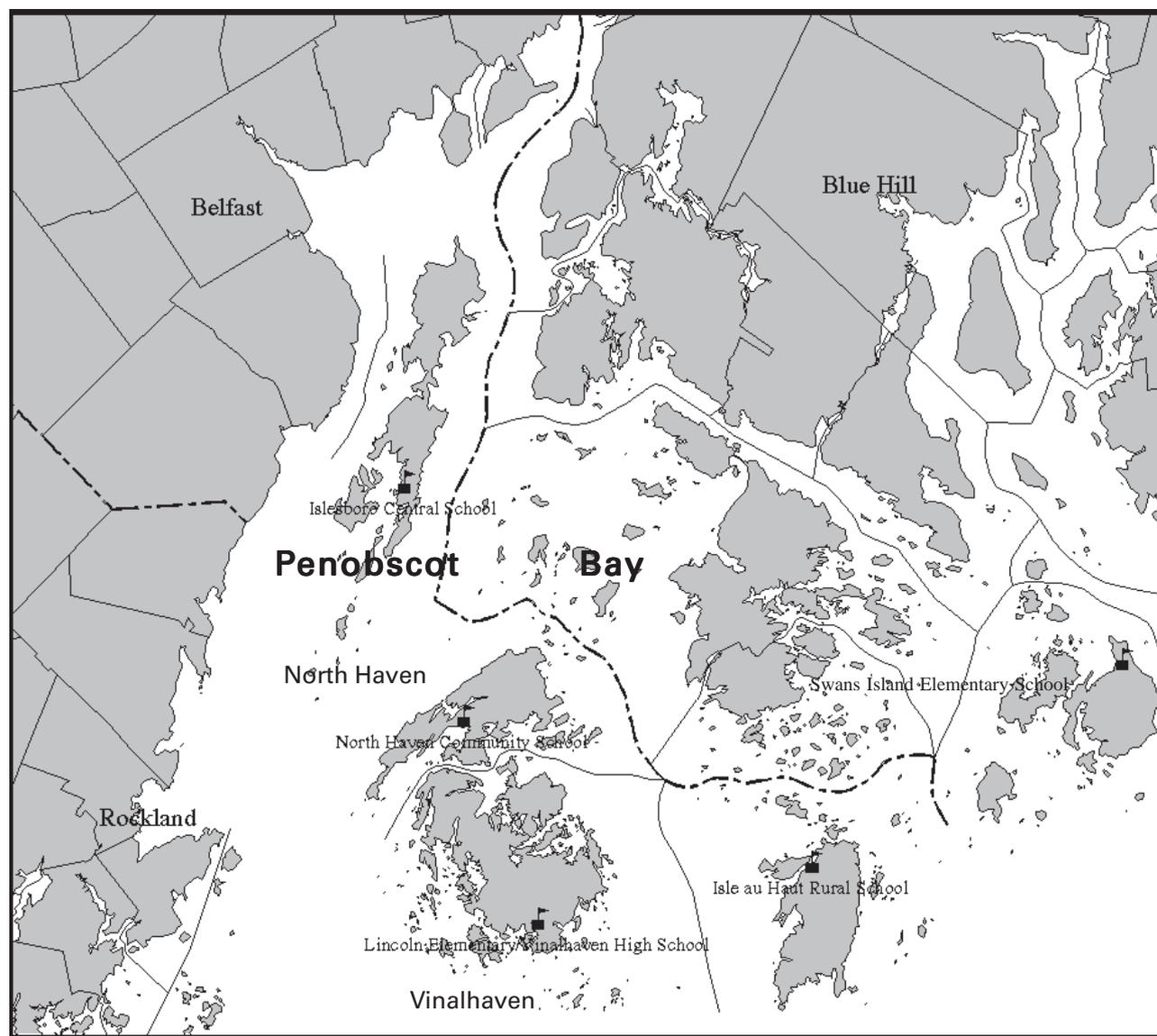
North Haven students do well on standardized tests and 80%, many more than the state average, go on to post-secondary education.

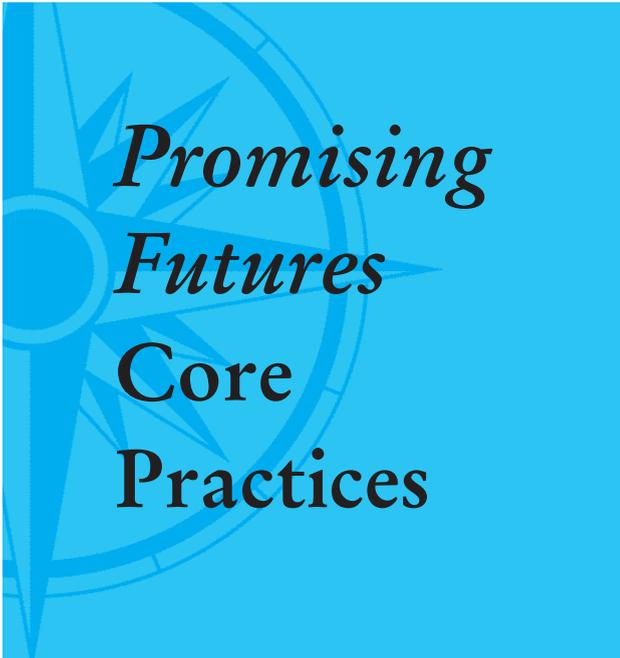
Moving off island is not always easy for kids who are used to being big fish in a small pond. But with small schools, strong community involvement, and a committed staff, students from these island communities are well-supported, whether they take the leap to the mainland or swim in waters closer to home.

"There is a closeness, a tight-knit community, and a genuine concern for kids that transcends the walls of the school!"

— Gary Rosenthal

Map courtesy of Larry Harwood, Maine Office of GIS





Promising Futures Core Practices

- EVERY STUDENT is respected and valued by adults and by fellow students.
- EVERY TEACHER tailors learning experiences to the learner's needs, interests, and future goals.
- EVERY TEACHER challenges learners both to master the fundamentals of the disciplines and to integrate skills and concepts across the disciplines to address relevant issues and problems.

OXFORD HILLS *continued from page one*

ing the subjects, whereas the school of Life Sciences and Wellness may use nature to do the same.

No longer do teachers have a fifth period biology class, or a second period history class. Each class is scheduled to meet 80 minutes every other day. Classes are scheduled for flexibility: teachers may elect to combine class time with other teachers in their “school” when presenting a unit, or to teach alone when they need to help students hone specific skills.

While many Maine high schools still assign students to classes based on their ability, Oxford Hills has eliminated tracking in some English, social studies, and sci-

ence classes. “Tracking comes down to behavior grouping, not ability grouping,” said Mazjanis. Tracking separates students who act out from more motivated students, he said. Heterogeneous grouping has eliminated many of the behavior problems that existed in some lower-level classes.

Teaching styles have changed to meet the needs of the diverse make up of the class. “Block scheduling helps to personalize learning — you’re not seeing the same students everyday,” Mazjanis said. “Teachers approach students where they are.” This means less lecturing, more hands-on projects, and assessing students in ways other than test taking. “Great teachers don’t stand up there

Preparing Students for Life

Almost since their inception, high schools have always done things the same way. When high schools were invented, back in the Industrial age, educators were preparing workers for the shift from agricultural work to factory work where specific, often repetitious skills were needed for mass production.

Today the work force is a much different place, yet high schools have fallen short in preparing students for the new economy.

“High school is the last chance we get to prepare our youth for independent life,” said J. Duke Albanese, Commissioner of Education.

At one time the average worker could expect to stay in the same job for his entire work career, but today’s worker will change jobs roughly every five years.

“We have to prepare students to be independent thinkers, collaborative workers, and in-

formed citizens,” said Susan Johnson, Center for Inquiry on Secondary Education.

In 1997, the Maine Commission on Secondary Education began to study the quality of education in the public high schools in Maine. Their final report, *Promising Futures, A Call to Improve Learning for Maine’s Secondary Students*, lists several changes schools should make to improve student learning and better prepare students for life after high school.

Both Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School and Searsport High School (SAD #11) have integrated these changes into their schools. Several other schools around the state are also taking up the challenge and reporting good results. This issue of **educating me** features schools and teachers who are meeting the challenge and preparing students for the new millennium.

and lecture,” said Mazjanis. (Since this interview, Mr. Mazjanis has left his position to join Falmouth High School; a move that takes him closer to home.)

There are changes in freshman year too. Freshmen are teamed with teachers, similar to the middle school model, and don’t choose one of the six schools offered at Oxford Hills until they reach the upper grades.

Freshman teachers take great pains to keep this sometimes-vulnerable group of students from falling through the cracks. Each team of teachers meets daily to plan lessons and talks about students. Each time a student’s name comes up for discussion, a check mark is placed beside the student’s name, said Diane Dupuise, freshman English teacher. “Three checks and we invite that student in for a conference,” she said. Negative attention-getting behavior, excessive distraction, frequent absenteeism, and poor grades are red flags. “If our conference doesn’t help put the student back on track, we call in their parents,” she said. Last year, her team made over 200 phone calls for just 70 students. With this type of follow up, the staff is more successful at keeping students on track than in previous years.

Strong communication among staff is a hallmark of the school’s overhaul. Incorporated into the modern, state-of-the-art school are separate areas for each team of teachers, with desks and meeting areas.

During lunch, team members Burns, history teacher Peter Toohey, and science teacher Bruce Little evaluate the morning’s stroll through the back forty.

“We didn’t model what we want them to do,” said Little. “That’s why they’re having a hard time doing what we expect of them.”

Between bites of sandwiches, the teachers decide to back up and demonstrate how to make natural observations to the students. “If we expect quality, we have to show them quality,” Burns said.

Such collegiality and camaraderie is good tonic for teachers. “Eight years ago, when I returned to teaching, I didn’t think teaching biology in a sterile environment was the best way to do it. I couldn’t believe, coming back into teaching after working in private industry, that we were still in the same boxes,” said Little.

“Each year I thought that I had some great classes, but then I realized that there was very little crossover across subjects, that students weren’t seeing the connections,” said Burns.

While the school is in the early phase of reform, staff already have noticed some changes. Student absenteeism is down 42 percent from the previous year, and some teachers think students are retaining more, and are more excited about what they’re learning.

“With three teachers focusing on the same content from different angles, students are hearing the same content again and again,” said Burns. “And working together makes sure that teachers are doing a quality job — it has to make the product better.”



Good Readers Begin With a “Solid Foundation”

Maine has much to be proud of when it comes to reading. The state’s fourth graders scored second, first, and fourth in the country in reading in 1992, 1994, and 1998, respectively, in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). But while many students are reading well, many others are still struggling to make sense of the written word. One in four Maine students has not acquired the levels of literacy that will support the kind of on-going, independent learning increasingly demanded in our world. A national report on reading, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, said that while “most children learn to read, many do not read well enough to ensure understanding and meet the demands of an increasingly competitive economy.”

In an effort to bring all children up to speed, this past November the Maine Department of Education released *A Solid Foundation: Supportive Contexts for Early Literacy Programs in Maine Schools*, a report full of ideas to improve literacy. Eleven Maine schools from different parts of the state who have had success at teaching reading and writing, as indicated by MEA scores, were studied and formed the basis of this report.

What the report found was that these schools did not adhere strictly to

one method of reading and writing instruction, but rather used a variety of strategies in their literacy repertoire. “Maine school reform efforts begin and end with results, not ideology,” said J. Duke Albanese, Commissioner of Education.

There was widespread agreement among teachers surveyed that no single method –whether literature based or

 “Maine school reform efforts begin and end with results, not ideology.”

– J. Duke Albanese

.....
 phonics based — will work for all students, and that several methods may be needed. Good use of these methods relies heavily on the teachers to become good diagnosticians to determine what reading strategies are needed at any given time. “There is no one best way to teach reading. The report does not aim to resolve ‘the reading wars’ that tout one method over others. The report discusses blending different methods, including phonics, basal readers, literature, and composition,” said Connie Goldman, one of the authors of *A Solid Foundation*.

With the emphasis on tailoring reading instruction to an individual child’s needs, it is imperative that teachers, both

How to help every child start early, finish strong

- Talk with infants and children frequently and in short simple sentences. Tell stories, sing songs, describe the world around them, and make connections.
- Encourage your child’s efforts to talk with you.
- Read aloud to your child for 30 minutes daily beginning when they are infants.
- Seek out child care providers who spend time talking with and reading to your child.
- Limit the amount of television.
- Set up a special place for reading and writing in your home.
- Visit the public library often with your child. Ask for guidance about books appropriate to your child.
- Be a good role model – read yourself.
- Show your child how reading and writing are needed every day, such as in cooking, shopping, and driving.

Source: *Start Early, Finish Strong*, published by the U.S. Dept. of Education

new and old, receive on-going support and training in literacy instruction, said the report. “There is no silver bullet for success. It takes many tools and a lot of hard work,” said Albanese.

Hard work is not only required of the teachers, but of the parents and community too. Educators at the national and state-level stress that parents are indeed their children’s first teachers. Parents and caregivers should read to children early on and often, and engage in conversations with children to help build the youngsters’ vocabulary. Once in school, parents must still be part of the picture in helping their children continue to develop literacy skills, said the report.

Regular assessments to determine how well students are reading and writing are crucial in helping schools and teachers decide what the next step is in teaching literacy. Specific assessment tools help teachers understand those strategies children are or are not using successfully. Individual observations, writing prompts, and standardized tests are some of the assessment tools teachers are encouraged to use.

.....
 “There is no one best way to teach reading. The report does not . . . tout one method over others.”

– Connie Goldman

.....
 This 87-page report is only one tool the Education Department is using to boost reading and writing skills. In January, a day-long conference is scheduled to help educators work with the report in greater detail and improve their own literacy programs. Also, a *Center of Inquiry on Literacy* has been created at the Education Department to provide expertise, resources, and training opportunities in reading and writing. Other programs such as *Read With Me* are providing books and help to parents of young children, helping them understand the importance of reading.

“This report’s invitation encourages discussion at the local level to build upon the successful practices already existing in Maine schools,” said Albanese. “A wide range of people – educators, administrators, parents, students, and community members — must work together to ensure that all children become literate.”

The Hallmarks of Ethical and Responsible Behavior

Core Values

A. Collectively identified core values are the cornerstone of all school and community efforts to create and sustain an ethical and responsible school culture.

Community Process and Participation

B. The entire community is welcomed and meaningfully involved in the process of value identification, standard setting, and the enforcement of standards.

C. Students' voices are welcomed and involved in the process of value identification, standard setting, and the enforcement of standards.

Adult Roles and Responsibilities

D. There is an active and genuine partnership between schools and parents.

E. All adults who interact with students, in and out of school, strive to model ethical and responsible behavior.

F. Teachers are authorized and expected to teach and model ethical and responsible behavior.

Integration and Inclusion

G. Efforts to create ethical and responsible behavior are an integrated part of the school's curriculum and culture and are not viewed as "extra".

H. Ethical and responsible student behavior is actively promoted and recognized.

I. Instilling and practicing ethical and responsible behavior is a life long endeavor that begins early and continues throughout students' school experiences and beyond.

J. Students apply and demonstrate principles of ethical and responsible behavior in the classroom and beyond the classroom.

Disciplinary Process

K. The disciplinary process is inclusive, impartial, consistent, and educational.

Outcomes and Assessment

L. Outcomes are assessed regularly.

Ethics is not a luxury or a choice.

It is essential to our survival.

— Rushworth Kidder,

Institute for Global Ethics

ETHICS *continued from page 16*

members.

To achieve these goals, the Commission for Ethical and Responsible Student Behavior was organized to create standards that will promote ethical and responsible culture in schools. Maine Commissioner of Education J. Duke Albanese characterizes the work of the commission as "The other side of academics." "We want to develop smart students who are *good* people," said Albanese.

.....
"Adults should not be hypocritical. We also need to be able to trust them."

— A High School Senior

.....
The Commission didn't stop with identifying students as part of the problem, but recognized them as part of the solution. The Commission trained 37 middle and high school students from across the state on how to interview members of their communities. Students interviewed sixty-five people ranging in age from eight to seventy. This project provided people, young and old, an opportunity to share their perspectives and concerns.

The students discovered and shared with the Commission the values most people share: respect, honesty, tolerance, courtesy, discipline, reliability, equality, responsibility, integrity, and open-mindedness. The

.....
"I think it is the teacher's role, to not necessarily instill their own values on the student, but to encourage students to have their own values."

— A High School Junior

.....
interviewees also said that Maine schools should play a role in educating successful, ethical, and responsible students. "My entire life I have been surrounded by older people, my parents included, who say one thing and do another. Many kids of my generation have had even less

AN ETHICAL PERSON IS . . .

- Respectful of others and self
- Honest in all academic endeavors and interpersonal relationships
- Compassionate in dealing with the limitations and sufferings of others
- Fair in dealings with and treatment of others
- Responsible for personal actions as an individual and a member of the community
- Courageous in the face of academic and ethical challenges

guidance than me. Parents aren't doing their jobs, so schools should step in," said one 17-year-old interviewee.

The student voices are compelling and indicate a need for transformation in our schools. What brings this point home even more clearly, however, is that these voices are not alone; Maine teachers, parents and other citizens also want the community's core values reflected in the daily operations of schools.

While the task of this Commission is to define statewide standards for ethical and responsible student behavior, the Commission stressed that the harder work must happen in every community. Citizens, students,

.....
"Teachers and other community members must serve as educators, mentors and mediators."

— A Teacher and Mother

.....
and educators must be involved in defining codes of conduct that reflect their expectations of attitudes and behavior, and the consequences of violating those expectations.

The Commission's report, **TAKING RESPONSIBILITY: Promoting Standards of Ethical & Responsible Student Behavior in Maine Schools and Communities** provides a framework schools should take in adopting standards for ethical and responsible student behavior. Adopting and enforcing these standards is a long-term process involving a change in attitudes, structures, and climate in our schools and communities. The Commission's approach emphasizes expectations and education, not simply more punishments and disci-

Continued on next page

What You Can Do to Help Grow Ethical and Responsible Children

Administrators

- Adopt a leadership role in the discussion and identification of community values and standards of behavior.
- Support teachers and staff in their tasks of teaching community values and modeling ethical and responsible behavior by making a strong personal and professional commitment to these values and standards.
- Promote meaningful recognition of teachers, staff, and students who exemplify community values and standards of ethical and responsible behavior.
- Develop partnerships with pre-schools, childcare providers, child advocacy groups, and pediatricians to ensure that parents recognize the significance of their role in fostering values and standards of ethical and responsible behavior during early childhood.
- Implement and enforce discipline policies in a manner that balances safety and inclusiveness by adopting restorative justice/discipline policies.

Teachers and Staff

- Model community values in all interactions with students, parents, fellow teachers, and other school staff.
- Provide students with meaningful opportunities to apply values and standards for ethical and responsible behavior – both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Ensure the consistent and equitable application of discipline policies everywhere in the school environment.

Students

- Recognize and act upon the potential to be a positive role model to others of all ages.
- Seek opportunities to lead not just academically or athletically, but ethically as well.
- Accept the consequences of personal actions.

Parents

- Model community values and standards of behavior in the home.
- Clearly communicate expectations and values to children.
- Do not make excuses for the unacceptable behavior of any member of the household.
- Listen to your children when they want or need to talk.
- Praise children, not only for achievement, but for ethical and responsible behavior as well.

Other Community Members

- Consider serving as a mentor to students or volunteering time and expertise to a school.
- Offer and promote opportunities for students to serve the community.

“Instructors of youth in public or private institutions shall use their best endeavors to impress on the minds of the children and youth committed to their care and instruction the principles of morality and justice and a sacred regard for truth; love of country, humanity and a universal benevolence; . . . and to lead those under their care, as their ages and capacities admit, into a particular understanding of the tendency of such virtues to preserve and perfect a republican constitution, secure the blessings of liberty and to promote their future happiness,” Maine Law, 1821, as amended.

20-A MRSA Section 1001(15): Adoption of student code of conduct. -Public Law 1999, Chapter 351

With input from educators, administrators, parents, students and community members, each school board shall adopt a district-wide student code of conduct consistent with the statewide standards for student behavior developed under section 254, subsection 11.

Commission on Ethical and Responsible Student Behavior:

Mark Eastman, Superintendent, S.A.D. #17; *Tom Ewell*, Maine Council of Churches; *Brian Flynn*, Teacher, Edward Little High School; *Suanne Giorgetti*, Principal, Benton Elementary School; *Prudence Grant*, Lisbon High School; *Nancy Hensel*, President, University of Maine at Presque Isle; *Jill Kaechele*, former principal, Scarborough High School; *Rushworth Kidder*, Institute for Global Ethics; *Jean Lebrecque*, teacher, Bonny Eagle High School; *Elizabeth Manchester*, Principal, Mt. Ararat Middle School; *George Marnik*, Facilitator, Maine School Leadership Network; *Barry McCrum*, Time-Warner Cable; *Elinor Multer*, State Board of Education; *Victoria Nute*, Student, Lee Academy; *Irving J. Ouellette*, Maine Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; *Russ Quaglia*, Director, National Center on Student Aspirations; *Peggy Rotundo*, Bates College Center for Service Learning; *Leigh I. Saufley*, Associate Justice, Maine Supreme Judicial Court; *Betsy Sweet*, Moose Ridge Associates; *Nelson Walls*, Executive Director, Maine Leadership Consortium; *Steve Wessler*, Director, Center for the Study and Prevention of Hate Violence; *Patsy Wiggins*, WGME-13; *Timothy Wilson*, P.A. Strategies; *John Wolfgram*, South Portland High School

For more information on the report, *TAKING RESPONSIBILITY: Promoting Standards of Ethical & Responsible Student Behavior in Maine Schools and Communities*, visit the web site at: <http://www.state.me.us/education/cep/homepage.htm>

Continued from previous page

pline, though concrete consequences and discipline have an essential role in teaching and maintaining responsible behavior.

The Department of Education has received a \$1 million, four-year grant to implement “The Character Education Partnership” in Maine schools. This year, the Department formed a Team of State Partners that includes: Comprehensive School Health, Student Assistance Teams, Safe and Drug Free Schools, and Learning Results program staff. Also included are the Attorney General’s Civil Rights Team Project, The National Center for Student Aspirations, The Center for the Study and Prevention of Hate Violence, and the Institute for Global Ethics.

Seven individual school districts and five groups of school districts are among the first recipients of the grant money. These districts were selected because they already demonstrate a commitment to character education. The grant is structured to provide the districts with the resources and technical assistance to build on that commitment, with the expectation that they will, in turn, share their lessons and accomplishments with other districts.

Fortunately, the problem of inappropriate student behavior is a challenge but not yet a crisis. With strong communities already in place, Maine has a head start in turning things around early and in helping its youth become good citizens.

The Good Stories in Education

Smart Students . . . Who Are Good People

“Being ethical is not an event—
it is who you are.”

—High School Sophomore

“You have to live them [values] in
order to enforce them.”

— A Business Owner and Father

- Maine was rated as the highest performing K-12 education system in the nation by the National Education Goals Panel (1999).
- Maine was rated as the best state in the nation in which to raise a child according to a July, 1999 report released by the Children’s Rights Council, a Washington, D.C. based national advocacy group.
- Maine eighth graders placed first in the nation in reading, and fourth graders placed fourth in the nation in Reading on the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
- Maine eighth graders placed second in writing on the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
- Maine eighth graders placed first in the nation in Science on the 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
- Maine fourth and eighth graders placed first in the nation in mathematics on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 1996.
- An advanced interactive television system (ATM) is currently being piloted in Maine and is arguably the most advanced interactive video, voice, and data technology available.

Taking Responsibility:

Character Education Coming to All Public Schools

Suanne Giorgetti, principal at Benton Elementary School, has watched the culture at the school change dramatically since adopting a values-based, proactive, and skill-building approach to education and discipline. These days, Giorgetti hears on a regular basis from teachers and parents about how nice it is to come into a school

“Educate both teachers and students that respect goes both ways and should be earned equally.”

— A 34-Year-Old Woman

where children consistently demonstrate respect not only for adults, but for each other as well. This was not always the case. There was a time at Benton when teachers were frustrated and discouraged by increasingly disrespectful behavior.

Giorgetti and her staff made a conscious decision to change their approach to dealing with unacceptable behavior. Rather than dealing with individual acts as they occurred over and over again, they took a systematic, three-dimensional approach to deal with the problem. This approach identified values, created effective

interventions, and taught conflict resolution skills on a school-wide basis. In the end, the school was effective in creating and maintaining an orderly, safe, and respectful environment for all.

Unacceptable student behavior has unfortunately become an issue which teachers and administrators are increasingly forced to confront in Maine schools. Though Maine is still among the safest places in America, teachers and students in our schools are telling us in increasing numbers that irresponsible, disrespectful or violent behavior threatens their sense of personal safety and undermines their ability to teach and to learn.

To help promote good student behavior in our schools, the Maine Legislature enacted a law in 1999 requiring the Commissioner of Education to adopt state-wide standards for ethical and responsible student behavior. In addition, the law requires all school districts to adopt a student code of conduct based upon the state-wide standards. Both the statewide standards and the local codes of conduct will include input from educators, administrators, parents, students, and community

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CORE VALUES

RESPECT

HONESTY

COMPASSION

FAIRNESS

RESPONSIBILITY

COURAGE

Source: *TAKING RESPONSIBILITY: Promoting Standards of Ethical & Responsible Student Behavior in Maine Schools and Communities*