



**Memo**

To: UMFK Faculty & Staff  
From: Scott Voisine  
Date: 5/15/03  
RE: Promising Futures Grant Project with MSAD #27

Please find the attached copy of the Promising Futures grant project being developed by MSAD #27 in partnership with this campus and the community. I will be making a brief presentation about this program and UMFK's role in it at the full faculty and staff meeting being held on Monday, May 19. I am providing all of you with a copy of the proposal to help you get acquainted with the structure of the program prior to my presentation.

## Gates Promising Futures Grant Application

### M.S.A.D. No. 27

**The Vision** – This section of our application is designed to give the reader snapshots of what students, parents, teachers and administrators, University staff and the business community will be doing to participate in and support the restructured high school of 2008.

**The Dates** - The week of March 17, 2008

**The Setting** – Community High School is located on Pleasant Street in Fort Kent between Fort Kent Elementary School and the University of Maine at Fort Kent. Fort Kent is located on the Maine and New Brunswick border in northern Maine. A student can literally walk from Pre- K through college on the same street. Three hundred-eighty students in grades nine through twelve attend the high school from the communities of Fort Kent, St. Francis, St. John, Wallagrass, New Canada, Winterville and Eagle Lake. Students from Allagash and the unorganized territories attend on a tuition basis. Students in grades eleven and twelve may elect to attend the St. John Valley Technology Center in Frenchville for part of their program of studies. The school district covers a radius of sixty miles. The community is transitioning from an economy that relied heavily on traditional potato farming and lumbering. Potato farmers are transitioning to broader agribusiness and the lumber industry once owned and managed by local citizens is now owned and managed by ‘people from away’. Tourism and service industries are the fastest growing segments of the economy. The largest employers are the University of Maine at Fort Kent, MBNA, Northern Maine Medical Center and M.S.A.D No. 27.

**The School and School Organization** – The school itself is a well-maintained structure originally built in 1940. Various expansions were added until 1968. Students in grade nine and ten occupy one section of the building and students in grades eleven and twelve the other. The school is organized into two instructional teams, one for grades nine and ten and one for grades eleven and twelve. Twenty-seven teachers, two administrators, two guidance counselors and a full time clinical social worker, a full time librarian, a technology coordinator, six educational technicians and sixteen support staff meet the needs of the students. A curriculum with many interdisciplinary units and numerous opportunities for place based learning is offered to all students. A team of teachers with administrative support and student and parent input develops the curriculum and does instructional planning. The school operates on an eight plus one schedule. For eight weeks instruction of the Learning Results takes place in flexible instructional groups. The “plus one” week is devoted to job shadowing, internships, service learning and post secondary experiences. Enrichment and opportunities for skill building are also provided for students. The week allows students to apply classroom learning and practice skills in the community that are calculated to allow students to demonstrate the attributes described in the Guiding Principles of the Learning Results. The staff uses the week for any or all of the following: 1) to plan the upcoming eight week block, 2) to review assessment data from the previous block, 3) to meet with other school teams, 4) to meet individually with students to discuss progress on their personal learning plans, 5) to connect with the students they are coaching, 6) to accompany students who are doing service learning projects, 7) to connect with parents, and 8) to engage in professional development.

**The Students** – On March 17, 2008, the day begins for Sam when the alarm on his school supplied PDA wakes him up at six. Because Sam lives a one-hour drive from the school he is spending a few nights with his “adoptive” family in Fort Kent so that he can participate in several activities at the school. Because family is unable to provide transportation to and from school for after school activities he has been “adopted” by a family closer to the school. Sam is a senior this year. After breakfast, he logs onto his PDA to check his schedule for the coming week. He finds the following entries: 1) a team meeting with teachers and administrators to discuss planning for the upcoming “plus one” week, 2) a job shadowing experience in a local business, 3) a meeting with his academic coach and peer review team to prepare for his senior exhibition, 4) a meeting with his coach to review his progress on his personal learning plan, 5) an auditing experience in two college classes, 6) an appointment to post work from his science class on the bulletin board of his class community partner, and 7) a meeting with a community member to develop a business plan for a business he is exploring. In addition to the scheduling function of his PDA, he also uses the device to proofread a report he has downloaded from a computer at school. He reviews some math problems that the school on-line tutor has helped him with the night before. He reviews notes he has downloaded from a science class. He attaches a keyboard to the PDA and drafts thank you notes to his peer review team and to draft an agenda for an upcoming meeting. He uses his adoptive family computer to log onto the Web to check teacher assignments in all of his classes, to communicate with his family, and to confirm his job shadowing appointment. He hot syncs the information to his account on the school computer. While he is getting ready for school, he listens to a novel that he has downloaded from the public domain. Before

student developing a business plan. In addition to Sam, the family has a daughter in the eighth grade. He confirms attendance at parent, student workshop that is part of a required semester long course for all eighth graders. The course is designed to help all students develop a personal learning plan and ensure a successful transition to high school.

**The University:**— The University staff prepare for the following activities during the “plus one” week: 1) course auditing by fifteen high school juniors and seniors, 2) placement testing for five juniors who are concerned about being prepared for the academic work at the college level, 3) preparation for a component of a semester long course co-taught by high school and university faculty that is designed to assist students and parents in transitioning to post secondary education, 4) hosting a joint university student/government and high school student government workshop, 5) final planning for a “College Day” for all sixth graders and their parents in May, and 6) recruiting college student coaches for high school juniors.

**The Community and Business** – People’s Heritage Bank, Daigle Oil in Fort Kent, Northern Maine General Hospital in Eagle Lake and the Maine State Warden Service in Allagash are among the businesses and agencies that have signed on to be partners with student classes. During “plus one” week, the chief financial officer at the bank will review the business plans of several students and award matching start up funding for two student businesses. The chief loan officer will participate in a Business Roundtable for junior students that is part of the junior transition course. The chief teller will be hosting two students in a job shadowing experience. The bank manager will write feedback letters to two students whose work is displayed on the office bulletin board. The office

leaving he checks the Community Calendar his class maintains as a service learning project. When he leaves for school, he is prepared for the activities for the coming week.

**The Teacher** – Mr. Smith is a member of the ninth and tenth grade team. It is the “plus one” week at school. He checks his school supplied PDA before leaving for school and he finds the following entries: 1) the agenda for a team meeting to begin planning instruction for the next eight weeks and to review assessment data for the last eight weeks, 2) a staffing to review the personal learning plans of two students at risk, 3) individual meetings with the ten students he has coached (mentored) for two years, 4) attendance at a job shadowing assignment with two students, 5) a meeting with representatives of local business to collect authentic job tasks to used in curriculum and assessment during the next eight weeks, and 6) a workshop with the English faculty at the University of Maine at Fort Kent to discuss performance standards for English Language Arts and, 7) an ATM assessment development workshop with teachers from area schools. He uses the PDA to prepare data to enter into Power School, the student information system, to respond to e-mail for parents, and to review student entries on a bulletin board discussion group topic of the week.

**The Parent** –Sam’s father logs on to Power School to check on Sam’s progress in each of his classes and sends him and e-mail congratulating him on being up to date on all of his assignments. He confirms meetings at school to review Sam’s personal learning plan, to serve on a review panel for another student’s senior exhibition, and to lead the Parent Advisory Group in giving input on the eight plus one plan for the following instructional period. He checks the school web site where volunteer needs are posted and volunteers to transport a student to a job shadowing experience and to be part of a team to coach a

communication and participation, analysis of student assessment data, review of personal learning plans, planning for instruction, personalized coaching coaching and student and parent participation in planning and decision making. CP 1, 2 and cp 4, 13, 14

- Ongoing reinforcement and celebrations of learning will take place with special celebrations during the “plus one” week. CP1
- Reorganization of the staff to create an instructional team for students in grades nine and ten and another team for students in eleven and twelve. The teams will work together to plan an rich, varied and flexible learning experience designed to assure that students demonstrate mastery of the Learning Results. The teachers will work with administrative support, and student, parent and community input. CP 3, 5 and cp 7,9
- The physical space will be reorganized to allow each team to operate in designated area of the building. cp 10
- All students will successfully present a senior exhibition to demonstrate their mastery of the content standards and guiding principles of the Learning Results. cp 8

**Goal 2: Preparation for post secondary**

- Develop and deliver a transition course for all eighth graders and parents co-facilitated by high school and middle school staff. The will include a variety of early high school experiences and will conclude with the development of a personal learning plan for every student. CP 2,4 and cp 5,6

manager of Daigle Oil will serve on a review panel for a senior exhibition. Two students will participate in internships at the company. At Northern Maine General, the personnel manager will meet with a group of students interested in doing a service learning project at the nursing home. The public relations officer will provide an internship experience for two students interested in a career in public relations. The manager of the nursing home will arrange a comprehensive job shadowing experience for a group of students interested in a health care career. The education director will work with school health staff on delivering a health fair for students at the school. The Maine Warden Service head ranger will meet with a group of students to discuss a service learning project involving snowmobile safety signage and a project to map deer yards in a section of state forest land. Employees at all of the businesses will post opportunities for job shadowing, internships and volunteer options on the school web site.

**Specific Restructuring Strategies:** In this section we will describe specific strategies we intend to implement and to link those strategies to the Core Principles “CP” and Core Practices “cp” of Promising Futures and the goals of the Gates Grant Program. The complete set of strategies supports a vision that is fully aligned with the Promising Futures ideas and with the priority areas of the Gates reform initiative.

### **Goal 1: Vision for Learning**

- Reorganization of the school calendar into an “eight plus one” concept with eight weeks of instruction including interdisciplinary units and one week of enrichment, skill building, a variety of experiences for students to interact with the community including job shadowing, internships, place based and service learning, participation in University classes and activities, family



- A Community Corps) class (similar to Americorps) will be offered to respond to the community needs for volunteer worker. cp 15
- An Entrepreneurship program will be established to support students who are interested in starting a business. cp 15
- Learning experiences will be available in each of the eight communities that send students to the high school. CP 5
- Senior exhibitions will include a community component. CP 5
- Community members will be visible in the school on a regular basis. CP 5

**Goal 4: Use of technology to promote learning**

- All students and staff will use a school supplies PDA to manage communication and support learning. CP 2
- Students and parents will access teacher and student data and instructional material through the web based student information system. cp 7
- The principles of Universal Design where technology is used to make the curriculum accessible to all learners will be adopted.
- All teachers will use technology as an integral part of instruction.. CP 2
- The ATM system will be used to expand the curriculum during the school year and to provide summer learning opportunities. CP 2
- The ATM system will be for adult learning and communication. cp 13

**Goal 5: Equitable and personalized learning for all**

- Develop a personalized learning plan based on interests, skills and aspirations for each and every student. CP 2 and cp 6

- Develop and deliver a transition course for all juniors and their parents that will be co-facilitated by school staff, University and Technical College staff and community members. The curriculum will include a variety of early college experiences and conclude with the development of a post secondary plan for all students. CP 2,4 and cp5,6
- Partner with the University of Maine at Fort Kent and Northern Maine Technical College to deliver a variety of early college experiences including course shadowing, pre-college assessment, mentoring by college students, shared student government activities, participation in college course activities, development of summer learning experiences for high school students including a summer community, student theater program. CP 2,4 and cp 6

**Goal 3: Connect students with life, work and culture of their communities**

- Each and every student will participate in place based learning (learning experiences located in the community). cp 3
- Each and every student will participate in service learning (projects that are designed to address a community need). cp 3
- All classes will have a community/business partner where they will display their work. cp 3
- Each and every student will participate in job shadowing. cp 3
- Authentic tasks from business will be collected and used as part of curriculum, instruction and assessment. cp 3
- Student activity missions will be redefined to include a community connection component (a plan to give back to the community).CP 5

and forestry to one where farming and forestry are changing and tourism and service industries are emerging as the economy of the future. High school graduates and graduates of the University of Maine at Fort Kent are leaving the area to find work. Families with young children are also leaving because the economy does not provide sufficient opportunities in positions that allow them to make a living wage. Students provide most of the work force for the local fast food restaurants and for the local supermarkets. MBNA provides employment for many college students. There is shortage of certain professions such as nursing and social service workers. Even though the population is decreasing, there will be a need for teachers in the near future. In the past, individuals could make a good living in the woods or in farming without post secondary education. Even though parents tell their children that they need to be prepared for something different, some students are not convinced. There are still a significant number of high school students who would be the first in their family to attend college. There are special challenges for first generation students that we hope to address through our eighth grade seminars for high school planning and our junior seminars for post secondary planning. The proximity of the University of Maine at Fort Kent (literally across the street) provides opportunities for post secondary enrollment that are available no where else in the state.

Students do not seem to be aware of the opportunities that are available for them. We hope that by providing early and ongoing experiences in local and area businesses, students will see more possibilities for the future. By using authentic job tasks as part of the curriculum and assessment, we hope to help students understand the relevance of what they are learning and the need to be able to transfer knowledge to accomplish a

- Provide every student with an adult coach for all four years of high school. CP 1 and cp 1, 2
- Develop a personalized post-secondary plan for each and every student. CP 2
- Develop a personalized transition plan for transition to high school for each and every student. CP 1 and cp 2,6
- Establish an “Adopt a Family” program to allow students who live in the remote regions of the District to fully participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. CP 1 and cp 1
- Socratic seminars are used in all classes to help students engage in and understand the content of the disciplines. CP 2 and cp 3
- Organization of gender specific study groups in literacy to address the gap in achievement between males and females. cp 4
- Older boys will coach younger boys in literacy activities. cp 4
- Successful males in the community with high levels of literacy will be connected with male students. cp 4
- Staff and students participate together and share leadership of literature circles and study circles. cp14
- A student advisory committee works with staff and community in developing learning opportunities that are based partly on student interest. cp14
- Every student develops a senior exhibition based on interest to demonstrate achievement of the Learning Results. cp 8

**6. Community factors:** As previously stated, the communities that make up M.S.A.D. No. 27 are transitioning from an economy based primarily on traditional potato farming

variety of tasks. Feedback from business owners and community leaders will reinforce the relevance of their work. Technology based businesses will be particularly important in the future. Students will learn that technology is integrated into every profession. The course in entrepreneurship will give students experience in developing an idea into a business. Just as “out of the box” thinking is important for this application, “out of the box” thinking will be critical to the survival of our communities.

The citizens of the communities we serve have a history of supporting a variety of educational reform initiatives. In 1990 a group of forty plus school and community members called the Future Education Planning Compact conducted a thorough needs assessment, developed a vision that is still in relevant today, and developed over forty goals for the system. The vast majority of the goals were implemented. The community has also participated in New England Association of Schools and Colleges elementary and secondary accreditation activities. Whenever we are able to develop a compelling argument that our plans will improve learning and opportunities for students, the community has been supportive. The communities also have a history of rallying around initiatives that are good for the community. Volunteers plan organize and staff several major events including the CanAm Crown of Maine Sled Dog Race and national and international biathlon competitions. Non profits groups of citizens built and maintain the local ski area, Lonesome Pines, and the local golf course. The communities have been recognized state wide and nationally for their volunteerism. We believe that this proposal will help us harness that energy in this effort to restructure the educational experience and increase opportunities for our young people.