

Mid-year CIS Update

Name: Steve Ex

Department: Social Studies

School Board Goal: Education will reflect 21 st century learning.
Initiative: ASD Social Studies: School Business Partnerships (SBP)
Signals of achievement: High school students and teachers participate in opportunities to engage with community, statewide, national and international organizations. This includes speakers, events, competitions, and related activities. Organizations currently include Bridge Builders, Anchorage Youth Court, Institute of the North, Alaska World Affairs Council, Commonwealth North, and World Trade Center Alaska. Over time, innovations within these current partnerships and the development of new partnerships will also signal achievement.
Who collaborates with you to make this happen? Tam Agosti-Gisler of SBP, Karen Reeves, contact people from each of the above-named organizations, the high school social studies curriculum committee, and high school social studies teachers are the primary collaborators.
How does this incorporate Cultural Proficiency, Technology Infusion (especially Web.2.0), Data engaged instruction, other? These organizations all involve multicultural connections, albeit in various ways. An obvious example is the youth branch of Bridge Builders. The World Affairs Council brings in speakers from and about numerous places on the globe. Tech infusion is the communications piece of this puzzle, ranging from ASD Facebook to World Affairs Council podcasts posted online. 21 st century skills from global literacy to collaborative learning and exploration of complex problems are benefits of student engagement in these real world activities.
Progress to date: Six partnership agreements have been negotiated and agreed to this school year. Communication tools have been coordinated between SBP (Agosti-Gisler), ASD Communications, and ASD Social Studies along with the six entities. Student participation in various activities has occurred and is expected to increase as communications and word of mouth publicity increase.
Next steps: Improve communications as described above. Receive feedback from schools as to success, innovations, and areas of need for improvement. Work with partners to innovate and refine student opportunities.
Comments:

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School Board Goal: All students will graduate from high school college and career ready (indicator "I" most directly connected)
Initiative: Elementary Social Studies, Grades 4, 5, and 6
Signals of achievement: Pilot approved by Board and underway. Pilot teachers communicating with curriculum coordinator and each other as to progress. Vendors of piloted materials responsive to ASD needs over time during pilot and subsequently. Committee exploration of various "supplemental" materials opportunities in support of core materials being piloted. Recommendations to Board for purchase of instructional materials. Plan and implementation for professional development beginning during pilot and significantly ramping up with 2010 ASDSA and thereafter. Development of more comprehensive curriculum guides, recognizing that they are "living documents". District-wide implementation fall 2010.
Who collaborates with you to make this happen? Pilot teachers from around the district, elementary executive director, principals, CIS executive director, Indian Ed, ELL, SpEd, CREC, vendors, and other ASD departments in less direct ways and over time.
How does this incorporate Cultural Proficiency, Technology Infusion (especially Web.2.0), Data engaged instruction, other? Curriculum coordinator is working to understand how to effectively incorporate cultural proficiency in curriculum guides, in materials selection, in professional development. Engaging students in inquiry based history, geography, civics, and economics. Google Docs for curriculum design, Ning for collaboration pertinent to pilot, and other ideas potentially used for "signals of achievement" identified above. For example, the jigsaw puzzle of instructional materials will likely require a wiki. Coordinator is considering a blog as ongoing communication with the larger groups, that would allow greater collaboration while keeping email to matters between fewer individuals (often just two). Project Clio and ANUAH produce some data. It's important to avoid over-burdening teachers with surveys, but an instrument designed to acquire useful data, albeit qualitative, reflecting evidence "on the ground" might be advisable.
Progress to date: Board approved pilot in all three grades is underway. Social Studies School Service established a Ning (being used by a decent number of pilot teachers) with an eye toward developing a professional learning community around this project and into the future. Initial "outreach" by coordinator into the various areas delineated above has occurred. Much remains to be accomplished!
Next steps: Plan for and juggle the above components.
Comments: 1) The most significant challenges in making this happen are time and availability of collaborators. 2) Indicators for many Board goals exclude golden opportunities connected to citizenship and social studies. The goals themselves make great sense, but the indicators in some cases seem limited in ways that disconnect with social studies and preparing citizens. The 21 st century skills goal indicators, for example, are limited to technology. The technology component is critical. Other aspects of a 21 st century education should not be ignored.