

## ***Bright Futures: Core Practices 1 & 2 "Meeting Plan"***

<http://www.maine.gov/education/ml/>

*Bright Futures: A Framework of Twelve Core Practices for Maine Middle Grades Schools Developing Full Academic, Personal and Social Potential for Maine Young Adolescents*, the Report of the Commission on Middle Level Education, has recently been published by the Maine Department of Education. In 2009 - 2010 there will be a series of free webcasts focusing on this document. Information about the webcasts can be found at <http://www.maine.gov/education/ml/>. Each webcast will explore several of the 12 Core Practices and have an accompanying "meeting plan" that school leaders can use or adapt to facilitate faculty meetings, conversations, or study groups looking at the Core Practices.

### **Meeting Plan # 2 Core Practices**

- 1. Students have access to curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory and is organized and executed to maximize accessibility for all students.***
- 2. Teachers use research-based instructional practices in their classrooms that are effective in increasing the learning and achievement of young adolescents.***

This meeting plan is interactive in nature therefore it makes sense to hold it in a space where participants can be at tables working with one another. Facilitators might want to consider grouping participants randomly so that groups are mixed across grade level, curriculum, and teams.

#### **Materials**

- Full text of Core Practice 1 and 2 for each participant. They can be viewed or downloaded at [www.maine.gov/education/ml/](http://www.maine.gov/education/ml/)
- Chart paper and markers
- Consensogram charts made up ahead of time
- Stick on dots or small stickie notes

#### **Step 1:**

Share the purpose of the meeting with the participants:

- Identify what *Bright Futures* says about effective middle level curriculum and instruction
- Think about our own individual instructional practices in relation to *Bright Futures*

- Identify where our school's curriculum and instruction are relative to *Bright Futures*
- Identify possible areas of curriculum and instruction we would like to explore more deeply as they relate to *Bright Futures*

## **Step 2: Access prior knowledge/attitudes with a consensogram.**

A consensogram is a statistical survey that measures an entire group's perception of effort, commitment, or understanding through visual representation. It allows individuals to view their responses in relation to the entire group and unearths the voices of the silent participants. By using the consensogram before exploring the Core Practices, the facilitator will accomplish several things.

1. Focus all participants on the subject at hand and prepare them for thoughtful conversations around curriculum and instruction.
2. Give everyone in the room voice to express their thoughts about curriculum and instruction at the school.
3. Identify possible topics for further study as the school works collaboratively to provide the best possible learning experiences for their students.

### **WHEN TO USE:**

- To find out needs, attitudes, and/or knowledge of the staff
- To build consensus
- To focus the staff
- To explore multiple perspectives
- To assess staff's understanding of a given topic

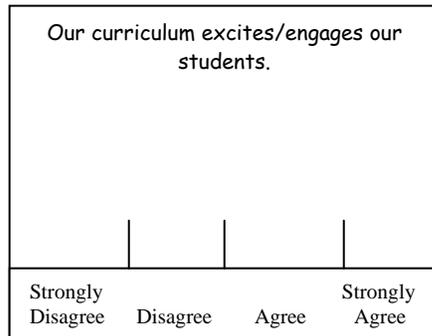
### **HOW TO USE:**

- Identify an important issue
- Determine what information the group wants to obtain from this process
- Create 3-5 statements about different aspects of this issue
- Decide how you will assess
  - 1-4 scale
  - Agree-disagree continuum
  - Sometimes-never continuum
- Create charts—one per question

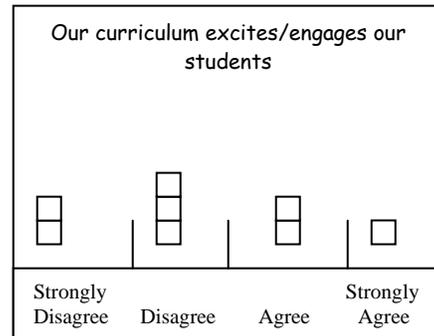
### **Suggested charts using an agree/disagree continuum for this meeting:**

- Our curriculum excites/engages our students.
- My colleagues are as knowledgeable about research-informed instructional practices as we would wish our doctors to be about the latest diagnostic and treatment options.

- My colleagues use research-informed instructional practices.
- On a daily basis, students receive feedback on their progress so they can continue to improve their skills and understanding of the curriculum.



Sample Chart



Sample Chart with Stickies

- Give everyone individual stickies or sticky dots—one for each question.
- Each person puts his/her stickie over the descriptor that best fits his/her opinion. The group is creating a bar graph.

Now the facilitator leads the participants through a data based discussion using their own data. **\*\*\*Hint\*\*\*** Build in some think time for participants by having them respond in small groups to which ever questions (sample ones below) are used to move along the conversation. "Turn to your neighbors and talk about..." This strategy provides rehearsal time for participants to put together their thoughts before sharing them with the entire group. It also models good classroom practice.

- Having made the chart with their own data, participants can look for trends, correlations, or construct a hypothesis and develop ways to prove or disprove it, etc.
- The facilitator should be prepared with questions that will help people reflect on what the consensogram data shows. Below are some sample questions:
  - What jumps out at you?
  - What surprises you?
  - What patterns do we see?
  - What questions come to mind?
  - What confirmations do we see?
  - What's clear about this data?
  - What's not clear about this data?

#### Questions for next steps

- What other questions should we ask?
- What other information do we need?
- What resources do we have? Do we need?

**Step 3: The facilitator transitions the group from looking at their thoughts about curriculum and instruction at their school to exploring what the two *Bright Futures Core Practices* actually recommend.**

**Process:**

- Jigsaw strategy
- Divide group into triads. Stay away from larger groups than 3 because it becomes too easy to be a passive participant in groups of 4 or more.
- Half the groups will read and discuss Core Practice # 1 (curriculum) and the other half will read and discuss Core Practice # 2.
- Introduce the Core Practices by explaining that they have 4 parts:
  - Rationale
  - Essential Elements
  - Scenario
  - Phase Outs
- Each group will report out (put on chart paper or use LCD projector) to the entire group using the following template:
  - 3 ideas in the Core Practice that resonated with us
  - 2 questions we have
  - 1 possible practice we think we ought to explore as a staff
- The facilitator floats through the groups as the "read and discuss" process progresses. When the groups are done, the facilitator allows each group\*\* to report out.
- The facilitator should ask the participants to look for commonalities and differences among their consensograms and the reports on the Core Practices.
- As the meeting comes to a close the facilitator should explain what will happen with the information gathered today. It important that participants know the point of the work.

\*\* If there is a large staff, the facilitator should consider an extra step. Have Core Practice 1 and Core Practice 2 groups meet together to share their charts and then synthesize their ideas for the other group. This process would save on repetitive report outs.

