Learning about the Environment Makes Rigorous Education Come Alive

SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS

In the educational system:

- K-12 students are disconnected from place and community
- Student achievement and retention needs improvement

In the community:

- Long term conflicts between natural resource stakeholders

WHAT RESEARCH SHOWS

Student learning improves through:

- Incorporating environmental education
- Integrated curriculum and instruction
- Performance-based and inquiry-based learning
- Research-based professional development and education best practices for teachers

PEI GOALS

- Improve teacher practice and student achievement.
- Through performance-based learning, help students to become socially and scientifically literate citizens adept at decision-making.
- Use rigorous research and assessment to guide environmental education.

PEI ASSETS

Partnerships with educators, resource agencies and professionals, universities and school districts.

Research and Assessment Program including integrated standards, exit performances, WASL-like assessments anchored in EALRs, twenty technical reports.

Networks and clearinghouses for coordination and communication.

Professional Development Program: intensive ongoing technical support and evaluation for schools

PEI STRATEGIES

K-20 teacher seminars guide teachers through an examination of their teaching practices and help them develop field investigations for their students that focus on learning outcomes.

School district coordination tailors the PEI approach to each school district.

Curriculum development is based on educational research and school district needs.

Assessment of student learning is tied to the student-learning context developed for each school district.

Universities and school districts are linked through graduate student research and teacher preparation and pre-service practice.

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

- Coordinated services to schools
- Improved teacher practices
- Improved student test scores
- Decreased disciplinary problems
- Increased relevance of school
- Learning about the environment connects math, science & social studies
- Students learn by doing

MID-TERM OUTCOMES

- Environment-based education is incorporated into the school system
- Students apply subject-area knowledge through culminating projects that contribute to community
- Rigorous K-12 field investigation contributes to real science and social science questions
- School becomes "life experience" rather than abstract

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

- Resource agencies, industries and communities benefit from informed contributions to resolving long-term environmental issues
- Quality of life issues involving economy and environment are addressed by environmentally literate citizens