

Board Report
RSU #38 - Adult and Community Education
January 2015



The Maranacook Adult Education Program is currently attempting to find a replacement class B vehicle for its Commercial Drivers License (CDL) program.

The current vehicle is in desperate need of a laundry list of expensive repairs and will likely only remain functional until the current class of students completes this semesters CDL training. A replacement vehicle will need to be secured, if we hope to continue to offer our CDL program to adults in our surrounding towns.

Through the past several years our CDL program has been largely successful because we have been able to run our CDL classes, charging students very little money, typically $\frac{1}{4}$ of the cost if taken elsewhere. With the costs of paying instructors, diesel fuel, insurance, state licensure requirements and vehicle repairs, most of the time our CDL classes barely break even.

With these low cost, however, comes opportunity. Opportunity for adults in our surrounding communities to receive training and secure jobs that would normally be outside their reach, were they to have to pay the larger costs associated with CDL programs offered by other instructional programs. Close to one hundred students have completed Maranacook's CDL program in the last 5 years and over 90% of them have gone on to secure employment in commercial driving, one of the most rapidly growing career fields in the United States.

A retired state of Maine vehicle purchased at state auction typically sells for \$4-5,000. This caliber of vehicle will provide our adult education program with years of reliable transportation and allow us to help well over another hundred local residents obtain quality employment.

To not affect our adult education budget, I am exploring several different options to secure the funding necessary to purchase a replacement vehicle for our CDL program; these include individual donations, monies from area businesses, non-profit foundations and grants.

The date for the spring auction at state of Maine surplus is set for March 27th from 1-2:00. If we can secure viable funding before this date we will be able to offer our CDL program during the winter/spring semester.

Thanks,

Steve Vose
 Adult Education Director

To: RSU #38 Board

From: Nancy Harriman

Re: January 2015 Board Report

Smarter Balanced – More than a Margarine!

Maine is part of a consortium of states that will be trying out a new form of state achievement test this year. In the spring of 2015 students throughout the state will take the Smarter Balanced Assessments in Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA). The new tests are taken on the computer, and the testing program adjusts the level of difficulty according to how accurately the test taker has responded to earlier questions. The assessments are aligned to the Common Core standards and are very rigorous. They emphasize critical thinking and ability to apply reading, writing, and mathematics strategies in unfamiliar contexts, to solve complex problems. To succeed on these assessments students will need to have developed stamina for persisting with difficult tasks – and for doing sustained reading, writing, and problem solving.

In Language Arts many reading items provide two or more passages to read followed by a few challenging multiple choice questions that require making subtle distinctions to choose the “best” correct answer. Then there may be a “constructed response” question or two for which students write an extended response of one or more paragraphs. There is also one “Performance Task” that involves “real life” application of concepts in a multi-step task. In ELA the performance task usually requires an extended written response (similar to an essay). The questions often require the student to analyze issues or concepts from the readings and cite evidence from the passages to support the ideas in their essay responses. Sample questions can be viewed at [ELA SAMPLE QUESTIONS](#).

In Mathematics students solve problems using on line tools for drawing geometric figures, creating graphs, creating equations, or other applications. The problem types are mixed and often require interpreting data, making fine distinctions among possible answers, and using strategies to solve multi-step problems. There is also one “Performance Task” at each grade level that involves applying mathematical concepts or algorithms to solve a practical problem. Each Performance Task is an extended problem that usually requires 45 minutes to an hour or more to solve. Sample questions can be viewed at [MATH SAMPLE QUESTIONS](#).

While the computer adaptive nature of the new assessment necessitates additional local and State planning, it will ultimately help to improve teaching and learning in Maine by better allowing students in grades 3-8 and 11 to demonstrate critical and higher-order thinking skills and providing educators and parents more timely information to inform instruction. (Maine DOE News.net).

The window for administering the new Smarter Balanced assessments is March 16 – May 29. The Administrative Team has started preparing for the assessments, which involves professional development for teachers and administrators, technology planning, and coordinated scheduling throughout the district. More information on Smarter Balanced, including our district plan will be shared at a future Board workshop.