

# NMEC Workshops with Mary Bellavance and Frank LaBanca

(for teachers)

(For Principals)

October 30 and November 9, 2017

## Learner Outcomes:

- ❖ Participants will reflect on their current beliefs around student-centered learning. (ALL)
- ❖ Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the Jobs for the Future's Student-Centered Learning Framework. (ALL)
- ❖ Participants will explore a variety of technology tools and choose at least one to implement at the school or classroom level. (ALL)
- ❖ Participants will create or revise a lesson or unit that encompasses one or more component of the student-centered learning framework. (TEACHER GROUP)
- ❖ Participants will develop and /or enhance requisite knowledge and skills related to leading staff and community partners through the transition to a student-centered learning model. (LEADERSHIP GROUP)

## Leadership Topics/Activities

- Strategies for transitioning to 1:1
- Using technology to increase collaboration and communication both for adults and students.
- How G suite can save money and empower students and teachers to utilize technology efficiently
- Defining an optimal student-centered classroom and examining "look fors" during observation cycles
- Using protocols to leverage faculty meetings for professional growth
- Using Instructional Rounds to identify schoolwide best practices
- Having a relentless focus on data using a process (e.g., DataWise) to guide schoolwide instructional improvement

## Teacher Topics/Activities

- Using protocols to discuss and explore the resources and Student-Centered Learning Framework from <https://studentsatthecenterhub.org/>
- Creating a personalized learning plan for professional growth this year
- Using protocols to revisit and/or revise learning progressions and assessments
- Exploring structures and instructional routines that support student-centered learning
- Exploring a variety of technology tools that can be integrated into classroom instruction
- Using protocols to create or revise a lesson or unit that incorporates one or more student-centered learning component

Virtual



## Mary Bellavance

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### **Biddeford, ME**

Instructional Coach, Biddeford Middle School  
Biddeford School Department

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Mary Bellavance's career as an educator includes 11 years as a classroom teacher and 15 years in roles such as literacy specialist, literacy coach and instructional coach in southern Maine. Mary is the current President of Maine ASCD and strives to promote the organization's mission to provide leadership in designing, innovating, and customizing learning for Maine educators. She has published articles about personalized learning for Competency Works, ASCD Edge, and Educational Leadership, and she currently works with educators in Biddeford, Maine and surrounding school districts to help grow and sustain a student-centered, proficiency-based teaching and learning system.

Mary has been a Reading First Instructor and Literacy Leaders' Network facilitator for the Maine Department of Education. In addition, she has taught reading courses at the University of New England. Mary's professional writing was rejuvenated after she participated in the Southern Maine Writing Project Invitational Summer and Fall Institute. She has written about personalized learning for Competency Works, ASCD Edge and Educational Leadership. Mary has presented at many local and national conferences on topics such as educating in a digital landscape, habits of mind and creating a personalized learning climate for each child.



## Frank LaBanca

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### **Danbury, CT**

Principal, Westside Middle School Academy Magnet  
Danbury Public Schools

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Frank LaBanca is a teacher, educational researcher, and change agent. He is the Founding Principal of Danbury Connecticut's Westside Middle School Academy Magnet, which opened in September 2014. Previously, he was the Director of the Center for 21st Century Skills at EDUCATION CONNECTION, where he directed and managed the implementation of innovative science, technology, engineering, and math programs in 50 high and middle schools across Connecticut through funding from the National Science Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, Connecticut Department of Education, and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation.

Frank has been recognized as a National Education Association Innovation Teacher, a GTE GIFT (Growth Initiatives For Teachers) Fellow, a RadioShack National Teacher for Excellence in Science, Math, and Technology, a fellow of the Connecticut Academy for Education, and the Teachers' Insurance Plan Teacher of the Year, and he was recently named the 2015-16 middle-level recipient of the William Cieslukowski First-Year Principal of the Year Award by the Connecticut Association of Schools.

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Building Administrators and School Counselors,

As we work towards greater collaboration in our three school districts/departments we are looking for your advice and guidance as it pertains to the school year structure, specifically comparing and contrasting Trimesters vs. Semesters. We would appreciate any feedback you can provide by including information in the tables below. Thanks!

<b>Semesters and Quarters</b>		
<b>Strengths and Benefits (If any)</b>	<b>Weaknesses and Restrictions (If any)</b>	<b>Resource Links that may help</b>
<p>I do not care about quarters, but I do support semesters. The transition to a postsecondary institution - 4 or 2 year - will see students enrolled in semester segments 99% of the time. Having semester courses makes that transition that much smoother. While we may be targeting a specific population, it is still impactful. For those not going to post secondary education, semesters or trimester mean nothing anyway. Why not aid the ones we can, especially as it is not a detriment to those not going to post secondary schools?</p>	<p>In reality, there should probably not be quarters, semesters, or trimesters if PBE is to be employed correctly. However, parents will want to know how their children are doing. A "ranking period" be it semesters or otherwise provides an opportunity to report out to parents about progress and pace as to student learning.</p>	
<p>Semesters is what other areas report on. As we work more with the colleges, whether they be Community or University, Semesters makes sense, That being said, they still do not line up with our calendar. The start and finish at different time slots., Trimesters give more flexibility on doing</p>	<p>As we go with PBE, we could use the arbitrary report dates that line up with the Universities and colleges. We focus on fixed on making everything equal number of days. T1 count same as T2, Q1 same as Q2 etc...</p>	

<p>the credit dance. Not that should drive us, but making up credits seems to be easier with Trimesters. It is a benefit as less formal reporting having to go out. Especially now that we should really only be reporting Proficiencies with summative pieces.</p>		
<p>As mentioned above, quarters/semesters are how other institutions, such as colleges &amp; universities, do things. For instances of half-year courses, it is a cleaner divider to use for splitting those courses up and determining credits for those students who will need to graduate under a credit-based system. They are also familiar reporting terms for parents and students.</p>	<p>In a true PBE universe, semesters will not be necessary. Under the PBE umbrella, there should not be things like midterms and finals, as we will be assessing a student's learning at the time they can show it, not on a large exam at certain parts of the school calendar. I am sure part of the semester setup is connecting two halves of a year, and to use midterms/finals as ways to assess student knowledge, but perhaps they do not truly reflecting student learning.</p>	
<p>Standards clusters can be centered around a quarter . Having Quarters/Semesters may be easier to switch instructors when we go to a total standards curriculum. As stated previously, Semesters line up better with the post-secondary world.</p>	<p>Grading periods, quarters, may be too short of time to report out on. No matter what we use, either system may be inadequate to teach a totally PBE curriculum. Perhaps we need to think of a system that will work for that? Change once and be done with it?</p>	


<b>Trimesters</b>		
<b>Strengths and Benefits (If any)</b>	<b>Weaknesses and Restrictions (If any)</b>	<b>Resource Links that may help</b>
I cannot speak to this as I have not experienced it first hand. I will say that it may provide flexibility in scheduling.	Conversely, such scheduling provisions may lead to course "valuation." Why is one course taught three trimesters and others at two trimesters?	
Fewer grade reports is usually tossed about as a positive for the trimester side. In the age of parents accessing their student's progress online, report cards may also become relics of an older system. Trimesters provide longer periods to assess students, to then report out on their progress.	Trimesters could impact the translation of coursework to credits under the Carnegie system. The unfamiliarity of trimesters may also be a concern for parents and/or students. Trimesters may also be more effective in large schools where the need for multi-level courses in some subjects need to be offered.	<a href="http://www.mlive.com/news/muskegon/index.ssf/2011/02/muskegon_high_rethinking_trime.html">http://www.mlive.com/news/muskegon/index.ssf/2011/02/muskegon_high_rethinking_trime.html</a>
Trimesters offer a decent amount of time to allow standards based work before reporting out. Trimesters offer more flexibility in	As stated previously, trimesters don't line up well with the post secondary world and with midterm finals. Longer time frame may reduce the	

