

## **East Allen Student Voice Project**

*National Urban Alliance*

*Robert Price - NUA Mentor Facilitator*

*www.eggplant.org*

*robert@eggplant.org*

### **Overview**

It is the goal of the National Urban Alliance (NUA) 'student voice' project to make legible the life of the school through careful observation, reflection, and documentation. The students (and teachers) will develop a regular practice of reflection that supports the students, the faculty and the school community. The documentation will capture and share the essence of the school through the use of video, panels throughout the school, booklets, comic book strips, street theater, presentation software, and field notes to influence understanding and choices. Most importantly the documentation is a part of the dialogue with and between students, teachers, parents, outside support (e.g. National Urban Alliance), and the school community.

### **Learning Outcomes**

**Students:** students will deepen their understanding of the learning process through documenting their frame of reference(s). This will include learning effective methods of communicating their findings and observations; presenting throughout the school community; working collaboratively, and learning methods and strategies that parallel the National Urban Alliance professional development with educators.

**School Community:** the school community will have a deeper understanding of the learning processes from the perspective of the students.

**National Urban Alliance:** NUA will use the 'student voices' as part of professional development.

### **Artifact Outcomes**

Artifact outcomes include Case Studies, presentations, interviews captured on video, 'comic book' strips on pedagogy from professional development sessions, poster panels used throughout the school, and other means of communication developed by the 'student voice' group.

In addition to methods of 'broadcasting' artifact outcomes as determined by the students, the documentation by the students can be used for:

- professional development sessions by National Urban Alliance;
- presentations to the school board;
- reflective materials with the school staff;
- the school community to understand more deeply;
- understanding the student's frame of reference(s).

### **Student Group**

The student group for the 'student voice' project will be representative of the school student body. Approximately 20-30 students will take the lead on developing the process and outcomes. They will meet regularly when National Urban Alliance is doing professional development in the district, and via video conferencing the times between the professional development sessions held within the district. It is requested that 2-3 of the students are proficient at drawing / illustration. No other specific skills are being stated as prerequisites for involvement.

The students will begin the process by developing a framework of their goals. This will include seeing 'models of excellence' with documentation, media, interviewing, and other aspects of documentation that support their visions and goals. For example,

if we are using video, we will share powerful examples to learn from. If we are creating posters, we will look at the work of known designers as models of excellence. The process will include initially using visual cognitive mapping (Thinking Maps which the teachers are also being trained in) to assess and develop key elements of documentation, and a deeper understanding and development of inquiry.

### **Project Development**

Project development with the lead 'student voice' National Urban Alliance (NUA) Mentors and the students, administration and teachers will take place during:

- during professional development sessions with NUA in the district;
- via video conferencing (e.g. Skype) weekly and/or bi-weekly between the monthly professional development sessions with NUA;
- via additional online support mechanisms to be determined collaboratively with NUA Mentors and the student group

### **Timeframe**

The projected timeframe for the project includes: Feb 4-6 (concurrent with NUA Professional Development in the East Allen School District) The first in-person meeting with the student group will occur on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009. This half day session with twenty five students will include initial visioning and initial 'student voice' observations and outcomes with the project. We will then continue to meet weekly via video conferencing (Tandberg connection with the school district).

Early March

Meeting with students in East Allen by NUA Mentor facilitator (separate from concurrent sessions with NUA Professional Development).

Weekly in March

There will be regular meetings with students via video conferencing (e.g. Skype).

March 25-26

Meeting with the student group will occur concurrent with NUA Professional Development in East Allen School District.

Weekly in April

There will be regular meetings with students via video conferencing (e.g. Skype).

April 16-17

Meeting with the student group will occur concurrent with NUA Professional Development in East Allen School District.

Weekly in May

There will be regular meetings with students via video conferencing (e.g. Skype).

May 14-15

Meeting with the student group will occur concurrent with NUA Professional Development in East Allen School District.