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Dream IT Update

At this point in the school year, Mike, our Physics teacher, and I have started to discuss how we can adjust our curriculum for next year. The focus has somewhat shifted now to planning for next year, and planning how we are going to prepare and retool our classes for the next academic year.

My interest lies in areas of problem based curricula, and incorporating real world problems to introduce math concepts. However, my struggle lies in the practicality of this mysterious “curricula” and several questions follow:

- Does problem based learning lend itself to developing skills needed to succeed on the PARCC and/or ACT?
- What do mathematics classes look like in schools where this curricula exists?
- How do students acquire basic or advanced math skills in project based curricula, such as factoring, simplifying radicals, etc.?
- Where can I get ideas and help, as developing integrated, problem based curricula is not my specialty?

These are some of my questions and they only scratch the surface of my concerns, but I feel are the major ones that need to be answered before going any further. I have been researching and looking at STEM schools for a rough idea of what an integrated, problem based curricula may look like. I have found some schools, however, that leads to my next list of concerns and questions – how does the classroom look and what does it look like to implement this curricula? Where did the school and teachers obtain this curricula? What there training and professional development for the teachers involved? Have the teachers experienced success? Have the students experienced success?

I feel that until I have a clearer picture and understanding of what integrated, problem based learning looks like in a high school mathematics classroom on a day to day basic, I will continue to struggle understanding and implementing this in my own classroom.