

# OXBOW FRESHMAN ACADEMY

Evolution, Purpose, and Projects

# History of 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Core

- Oxbow High School has a long history of Middle School Teams, 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades have had some form of core teams for over 20 years.
- 2009-2010 - it is decided to create a core for 9<sup>th</sup> grade based upon high school graduation rates and failures starting 9<sup>th</sup> grade year.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Grade core is created, using one teacher for each of the four main courses (English, Science, Math, Social Studies). Prior years had multiple teachers teaching some of the core classes.



# 9<sup>th</sup> Core

## “The Early Years”

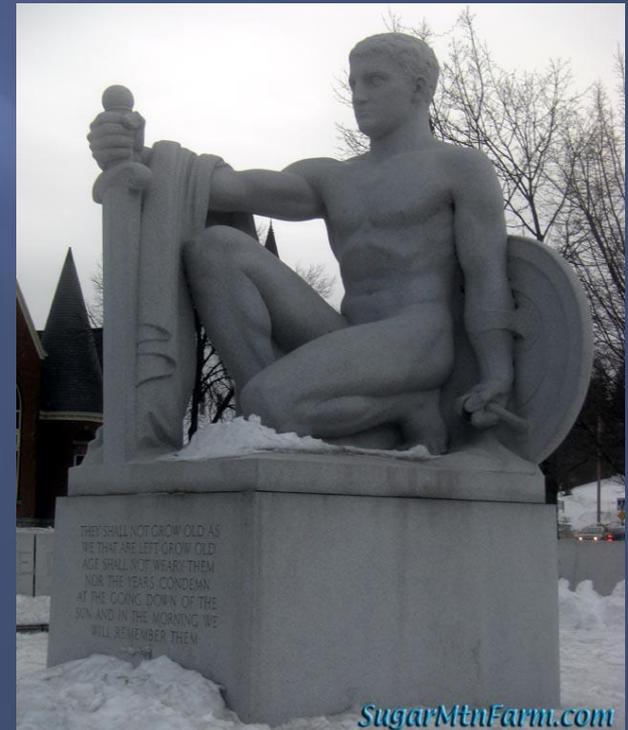
- ▣ First year of cross curriculum activities and field trips
- ▣ Black Mountain Hike



# 9<sup>th</sup> Core

## “The Early Years”

- ▣ Barre trip: visited Rock of Ages, the Capitol in Montpelier, and Hope Cemetery
  - Covered Earth Science, Art, Social Studies, English
- ▣ Math and Science embark on aligning curriculum and projects



# 9<sup>th</sup> Core

## “The Early Years”

- ▣ Capstone – end of year culminating project involving all core areas
- ▣ Time periods based on Western Civilization class
  - Science fair style presentation to admin, faculty, parents, incoming freshman, and school board
  - Honors classes made movies
  - Presentations by students followed by dinner and the Honors classes showing movies



# Freshman Academy Roots

- ▣ Burlington 21<sup>st</sup> Century Symposium leads to a discovery...
- ▣ Laura Gardner sits in on a presentation (while Carl surfs the net) from Rutland about their Freshman Academy and idea is born (stolen?...borrowed?...)



" ALL THE GOOD IDEAS HAVE ALREADY BEEN STOLEN. "

# Freshman Academy Today at Oxbow

- ▣ Classes blocked into 2 period blocking based on school schedule
  - Incredibly flexible use of time by four core classes
  - Group project work time
  - Ability to bring in guest speakers
    - ▣ The Logger
    - ▣ Autism Awareness Day
    - ▣ Dr. Harris talks about life in a PA coal mine town
    - ▣ Freshman Olympic Field Day

# Freshman Academy Today at Oxbow

- ▣ Freshman Seminar – all freshman spend 1-2 periods a day with Core teachers
  - Study hall
  - Study skills
  - Grade check in (MMS)
  - Alleviates crowded mixed class study halls

# Freshman Academy “Frost Heaves” at Oxbow

- ▣ Honors classes
  - Utilized an “Honors Contract”
- ▣ Improvised Block scheduling
  - Ideal is 4 periods in a row, but we faced heavy scheduling conflicts
  - Working with Guidance, we devised a split 1-2 and 6-7 blocks



# Freshman Academy Lessons Learned

- ▣ FLEXIBLE, FLEXIBLE, FLEXIBLE!!!!
- ▣ Large group room



# Freshman Academy Lessons Learned

- ▣ Flexible, Flexible, Flexible!
- ▣ Parent conferences as a group
- ▣ Core time for teachers to meet
  - Parent meetings
  - Project planning
  - Student meetings



# Freshman Academy Future

- ▣ Total Integrated Honors Classes and Creation of ESCI Honors
- ▣ No set schedules until after first week
- ▣ “Freshman Friday”
- ▣ Revitalize and redesign Capstone



# Projects – what it's all about!

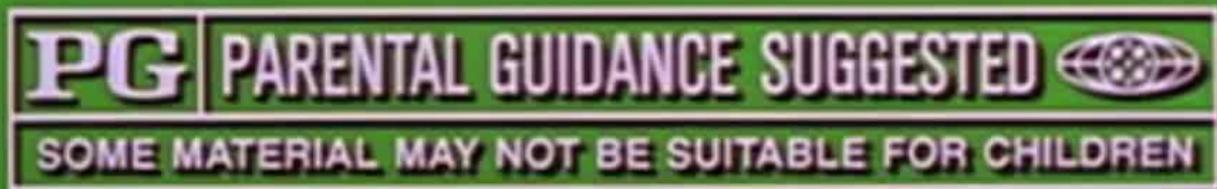


# October Sky Kickoff

THE FOLLOWING **PREVIEW** HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR  
**ALL AUDIENCES**

BY THE MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

THE FILM ADVERTISED HAS BEEN RATED



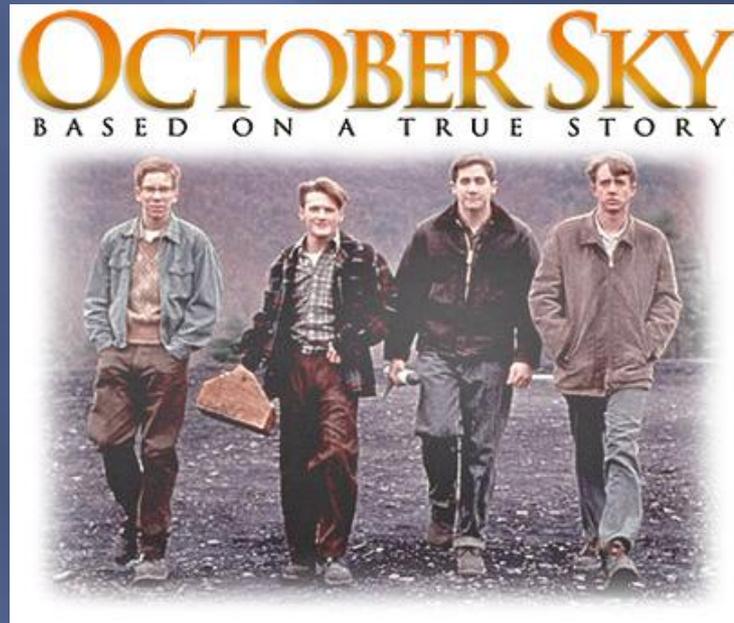
# October Sky Kickoff

- ESCI/Math Work
  - Space – research and learn space travel history to modern space use/travel
  - Coal/fossil fuels – the formation of coal and it's implications in Climate Change and society
  - Rocketry – Mathematical Designs, build, and test water powered rockets, altitudes (trig and Pythagorean)



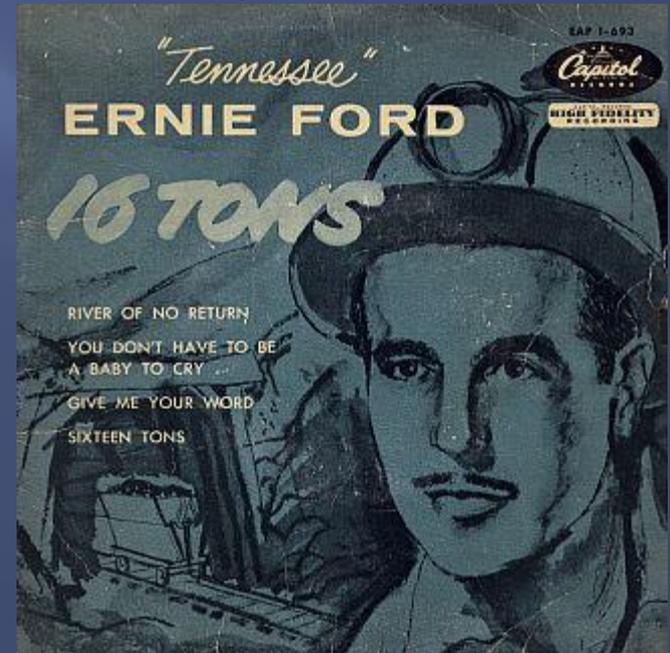
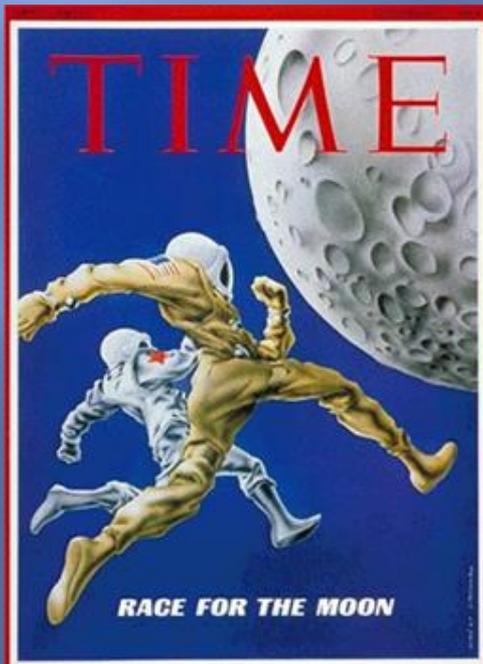
# October Sky Kickoff

- ELA Connections
  - Challenging book for many lower level readers, but content helped them to rise to a higher reading level
  - Reading scores go from 43% “flagged” to 10% by end of first semester
  - Will follow up with ending year with Huck Finn
  - “Coming of Age” theme in both books great for age level and Freshman Academy



# October Sky Kickoff

- Music Connections
  - The meaning and music of “Sixteen Tons”
- Social Studies Connections
  - 1950’s life in the US
  - The Cold War and Space Race
  - Technology and change as a theme in history
  - October Sky and Sixteen Tons as a primary source



# Irene/Hurricanes

- ESCI Work
  - Hurricane formation, evolution, tracking
  - Google Maps and topography
  - Vermont's topography and the effects of heavy rainfalls
  - VT and Climate Change: increased heavy precipitation events
  - Future of the Vermont: sugaring, skiing/snowboarding, Fall foliage, hiking, hunting and fishing, etc.



# Irene/Hurricanes

- ▣ Revised project that first utilized Katrina
  - English Connections –
    - ▣ Students write about their personal reflection of Irene along with
      - Effects on landscape, communities, and individuals
      - Government response



# Irene/Hurricanes

- Social Studies Connections
  - Compare and contrast the 1938 Hurricane and Irene
  - Required use of primary sources from VT



# Irene/Hurricanes

- Math Connections
  - Tracking and landfall statistics
  - Graphing Hurricane Data
  - Data Analysis
  - Predictions

