

## CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING

10:00 a.m.

October 23, 2014

District Office

Members Present: Markus Ladd, Stuart Long, Robert Runge

Others Present: Louise Blankenheim, Deb Sixel, Dawn Mueller, Sheila Lefebber

Call to Order On Motion of Member Runge, seconded by Member Ladd, the meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m.

PLC Overview Dr. Blankenheim provided an overview of Professional Learning Communities (PLC). She referenced that we have areas that are doing very well and others that are not. She spoke to early release every Wednesday, and how thankful the District is for the support the Board and Community for providing this collaboration time for teachers. The focus and commitment of PLC's is that all students can learn. Teachers' spend time reviewing data, sharing concepts, looking for gaps and enrichment opportunities that will provide a culture of learning for all. PLC is not just on Wednesday's, it is a process. Some groups are progressing well and some groups need to step back and re-evaluate. Elementary has grade level teams; and the middle and high school have content area teams. A drawback at the middle and high school is that all teachers do not have the same students.

Dr. Blankenheim shared an example of an SLO using high school Math which is slightly below the state average. Will the SLO help to determine where the deficiencies are? This is currently being worked on.

Dawn Mueller provided an overview of the High School PLC Grant. It is a five year grant to help improve outcomes for students with disabilities. The performance gap for students with disabilities is a state and national issue. Kiel is currently in its second year, which is an action year. The team is currently developing essential learning targets and common formative assessment for Algebra.

Is retention an issue or is it depth of knowledge? Common core provides for more indepth learning. It is about collaboration and use of results/data. It is also about a cultural shift of attitude and practice. Knowing what are student needs.

Staff needs to understand what they need to do. High school math is in the beginning stages; creating formative assessments and measuring curriculum. Need to make sure all students are learning---if no---re-teach. The standards= learning targets and are student friendly. Need tools to measure student learning. Power standards are ones being assessed along with quick checks.

PLC is a whole process, everyone has to buy-in, along with cultural shift. This will lead to standards-based report cards at the middle and high schools. Some people are feeling lost in the process and don't know how to begin.

Strategic Planning will also help with student learning through the Personalized Learning Goal. This will result in a review and/or revision to the current Mission Statement. This is a shared responsibility between the student and the school.

PLC is a process and culture which focuses more on students, has an accountability piece, and is a collective commitment for all. There needs to be Board support, including financially. There are teachers who are resistant to moving forward. Member Long asked how can the Board support locally? Dr. Blankenheim suggested that the Board schedule a time in the near future to attend PLC time to see what is happening. She also shared that Dr. Sixel and Mrs. Mueller will be presenting on the school report card at the November 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting. Dr. Blankenheim shared that having Instructional Coaches at each level would be preference and will be addressed as part of the staffing plan. Member Long likes the PLC process and inquired how the Board can be more effective in helping the process. Currently, there is too much pointing of fingers. Board members need more awareness/understanding of Professional Learning Communities. When questioned by teachers, Board members should direct them to speak to their PLC group, administrator, etc. PLC's is providing teachers an opportunity to get better, not to blame. It is a mindset and people need to learn by doing. Currently, not all interventions being used are effective. Need to re-evaluate current practices. Member Runge asked about board funding? Dr. Blankenheim shared that the District is currently using funds designated for strategic planning and professional development. The current district initiatives have a specific focus and therefore, some staff members are being told they cannot go to things because they do not fall under the specific focus/district initiative. Dr. Blankenheim indicated that the message needs to be stronger to staff on what the district focus is. A PLC expert will be onsite in March for the full day inservice. Mrs. Mueller shared that the high school grant monies from 13/14 were used to purchase resources and the 14/15 monies are being used for professional development.

Member Long would like to further explore the possible use of fund balance for PLC opportunities at the next meeting. Dr. Blankenheim will follow-up with our financial consultant on this possibility. Member Runge indicated that any requests to use the fund balance should meet the educational goal of the district. Member Ladd referenced bottoms up budgeting and allocating dollars on educating vs B&G. Member Runge spoke to PLC and training for staff and that there is a certain percentage that are not enthused....this is a small percentage.

## Reading

Dr. Sixel provided an overview on what programs the District currently uses to support the reading programs. These programs are helping students to be successful in doing their own work as well as teaching students to become independent learners. Mrs. Mueller referenced assessments, evidence and research (ie. phonics, foundational skills, reading fluently along with comprehension, etc). Staff needs to look at the diagnostic data and determine where the gaps are.

How does reading progress through the grade levels? The use of standards such as: (curriculum companion; teachers developing curriculum based on standards; teachers teach based on reading model; and self-select instead of one for all). It's about practice. How is the curriculum chosen? There is a perception that individual teachers can be bias. Teachers are professionals and need to teach facts and not personal convictions. If a concern is brought forward about this, the administrator would address the individual. Students who are engaged in learning, have different thoughts, but that does not necessarily mean that it is being driven by the teacher.

Why are students being promoted if not reading at grade level? Research shows that retention is harmful to students. It decreases achievement. If not reading at grade level by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade it is more difficult to close the gap. If students in grades 4K and 5K are deficient in all areas what happens? Conversations are had with parents regarding the child's performance and areas of need. Retaining is not something that should be discussed as a solution to the child's needs; it needs to focus on providing the instruction and supports necessary for the child. 4K has helped to diminish deficiencies.

These are exciting times for teachers, but also more challenging. It's all about differentiation. How does open enrollment and transfer students impact deficiencies and how many resources are spent on these situations?? Not much or many. How prepared are we as a district if incoming students are not at standard level? Systems currently have in place would address these issues.

Future Meetings

The next agenda will focus on assessments and data, follow-up from school report card presentation (11/19 board meeting), math, and possible funding for professional learning communities.

Next Meeting

Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

Adjourn

On Motion of Member Runge seconded Member Ladd, the meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.