NORTH THURSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Monitoring Report

Report Date: December 10, 2024

Policy Type: Ends

Strategic Plan Goal 3: Critical Thinkers and Solution Seekers
Every student will demonstrate skills in creative and evaluative reasoning, communication, and collaboration to address challenges in a socially just and democratic society.

Outcome b: Increased percentage of students applying learning to collaboratively engage in solving relevant challenges within the classroom, school, and community.

Interpretation:
Students demonstrate collaborative problem solving by participating in STEM field studies, elementary and secondary math practices, and Career and Technical Education community, industry, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Rationale:
There is an ever-increasing demand for collaboration skills in modern workplaces. Today's workplaces demand people who can solve non-routine problems and can solve problems in concert and collaboration with others by combining their ideas and efforts. In fact, research has shown that the number of jobs requiring mathematical skills coupled with a low level of social skills have decreased over time, whereas jobs requiring mathematical skills coupled with non-cognitive skills (such as collaboration and social skills) have increased significantly over time. Additionally, these jobs have been accompanied by an increase in wages, suggesting that there is higher demand from employers for such skills.

Collaborative problem solving has several advantages over individual problem solving such as the ability to divide the labor among team members, bring in and apply a variety of knowledge, perspectives, and experiences to try to solve the problem, and the ability for team members to stimulate and enhance each other's creativity possibly resulting in a higher quality solution. The importance of collaboration extends beyond the workplace. A great number of human activities take place in groups, from a variety of physical and artistic endeavors to living in harmony within a community. Almost every human relies on interactions with other individuals and collaboration skills are essential to facilitating such interactions. In fact, groups of people working together can often successfully advocate for an idea on a scale greater than what could be achieved by an individual in the group. This form of collaboration is foundational to maintaining and improving the quality of life in our communities.

These enduring skills of critical thinking and collaborative problem solving are essential for our students to thrive in our modern world.

Data:

Science: A common STEM field study has now been developed for students in all grades or science courses PreK-8 and HS Biology and Chemistry. A number of these experiences have explicit components highlighting local Native culture, social emotional learning, and collaboration, seeking to solve a locally relevant environmental issue. They are increasingly integrated across multiple content areas, providing opportunities for students to apply learning from one content to another.

Math: Opportunities for students to problem solve collaboratively through the implementation of resources and instructional practices such as Building Fact Fluency (1-5), Fraction Fluency (5-6), and Building Thinking Classrooms (6-12) are increasingly evidence across the district.

Career and Technical Education: Community and industry-based learning opportunities where students can access authentic local experts, participate in job experiences, classroom demonstrations, and internships are all continuing to increase reaching a greater number of students each year. The number of courses where students have these opportunities have increased from 50 to over 70 in the last 3 years alone.

Analysis and Conclusion:
In the previous monitoring report cycle, we set goals to maintain our current commitment to providing a STEM field study opportunity for every student K-8, to sustain the momentum we had for providing students opportunities through CTE to engage in a variety of field and site-based experiences, and to sustain a minimum of 27 student-run businesses. We also committed to continuing to collaborate with community, agency, and industry partners to ensure experiences are standards-aligned and address problems that have relevance for our local community and our students.

We believe we are in compliance, having met our previous goals. We plan to maintain current levels of opportunities for students to collaboratively engage in solving relevant challenges within our science, math, and CTE classrooms, and our local community. Moving forward, we will be focusing on continuing to improve all student experiences and increasing product lines for student-run businesses.