

SBLT Meeting Minutes: March 19th, 2024

Members present: Nicole Weeks, Dr. McMillon, Alex Swerbinsky, Renee Bomar, Amy Schoppa, Jennifer Albano-Miller, Kelly McClure, Lori Vernon, David Hammack, Barbara Hultberg, Katie Hazelwood, Michelle McGee, Andrea Matkins

Welcome/Meeting Called to Order

Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve: Alex Swerbinsky; Second: Kelly McClure

The team voted to approve minutes from the previous meeting.

Celebrations and Successes:

- Spring Break is around the corner!
- Shout out to 4th and 5th grade teams for all the field trip planning.
- Lots of testing is coming to a close!
- Book Fair was a great success!

Old Business:

Technology Plan Updates (Indicator D1.02):

Mrs. Weeks has heard that schools are slated to get new equipment and updates to their existing technology. Northern is slated for upgrades during the 2025-2026 school year. This information is not confirmed and is subject to change. Mrs. Weeks still proposes getting 3 Promethean Boards – one for NEST lab and 2 for the EC department. The plan to purchase Promethean Boards for classrooms would be put on hold until confirmation can be made on whether we are or are not getting new equipment. This brings the dollar amount required to fund technology updates from \$26,400 to \$11,709. Lori Vernon made a motion to approve the purchase of the 3 boards; the motion was seconded by Andrea Matkins. The team voted to approve these purchases.

Headphone purchases have been priced out for 2 different options: \$30 a set for a less expensive option and \$90 for more expensive bluetooth headphones. \$1800 would be the cost for the budget friendly option.

Mrs. Swerbinsky made a motion to approve purchase of headphones. The motion was seconded by Ms. Matkins and voted for approval by the team.

A proposal to continue our Brainpop subscription at a cost of approximately \$4000 was made. Many teachers responded to the tech survey that they use this program regularly. Very few teachers responded that they use Raz-Kids. However, Individual teachers could still get a Raz Kid subscription if they wish to use it in their classrooms. Both programs were approved.

Another program that was discussed for potential purchase was *Progress Learning*, formerly *Education Galaxy*. Teachers can assign material and there are differentiated components where you can earn stars, awards, etc. This is used at Summerfield Elementary and there has been good feedback received from other principals around the county. Mrs. Swerbinsky said that she would be in favor of this purchase. The total cost is \$8500. It does have both a literacy and a math pathway. It may have science and social studies for 5th grade. We will still have access to Zearn as that is a GCS funded learning platform.

Questions: Is there a free trial that we could try before we commit to purchasing? We will table this for further discussion after exploring the option of getting a trial.

Mrs. Swerbinsky made a motion to approve funds for the purchase of a school wide subscription to Brainpop and limited subscriptions to Raz Kids. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Vernon and approved by the team.

The projector in the library needs replacement at an approximate cost of \$1500. We could potentially replace it with an existing unit that we already have in an effort to save money, or we may end up needing a brand new one.

Mrs. Swerbinsky made a motion to get a new projector at whatever route was the most cost efficient. Ms. Matkins seconded this motion and it was approved by the team.

Teachers should go back to their teams to discuss any further needs they have regarding technology.

Mrs. Weeks is appreciative to everyone for filling out the survey about what applications you are using in the classroom on student devices.

Current School Improvement Goals for the 23-24 School Year

By June 30, 2024, Northern Elementary will increase overall 3rd grade reading EOG proficiency by at least 3 percentage points, from 74% in 2022-23 to 77% in 2023-24.

By June 30, 2024, Northern Elementary will increase its overall Performance Composite by at least 3 percentage points, from 77.5% in 2022-23 to 80.5% in 2023-24.

By June 30, 2024, Northern Elementary will decrease chronic student absences (10% or more of days enrolled) by 5 percentage points, from 11.7% in 2022-23 to 6.7% in 2023-24.

By June 30, 2024, Northern Elementary will reduce the number of lost instructional days resulting from discipline referrals by 10% from 9.91 number in 2022-23 to 8.9 number in 2023-24.

By June 30, 2024, Northern Elementary will utilize assessment data (Dibels for K-2 and CFA data for 3-5) in all classrooms to guide small group and tiered interventions.

Indistar Action Steps: Review and Update:

The following items have been marked complete:

3/6/24: 5th grade students will tour Northern Guilford Middle School. (A 4.16)

3/6/24: Guidance Counselor will assist 5th grade students in selecting courses for middle school. (A 4.16)

3/19/24: At the end of each quarter, teachers will complete data journals and meet with administration to reflect on student progress and next steps for instruction. (C 2.01)

3/19/24: Teachers in grades 4-5 will use NWEA data to target students to participate in after school tutoring. Students will participate in after school tutoring from February 12 – May 10. (C2.01 and D1.02)

Upcoming Action Steps:

4/30/24: Duril April PLC's, Mrs. Weeks will meet with 3-5 teachers on an EOY plan. This will include mapping out the last two months of school, as well as answering reflective questions on student readiness. (C2.01)

Book Club - Grading For Equity: Chapters 11-12 (Indicator E1.06 and B1.03):

Dr. McMillon sent out discussion questions for the team to look at prior to our meeting. The following are key points from today's discussion:

- Discussion of post PLC conversations amongst grade level teams regarding the book study and current grading practices: 2nd grade will be gathering to have a collaborative grading day. They feel that they are on the same page with grading; 3rd grade reports that they have a lot of conversation about grading and are eager to have a plan in place to improve our grading policies at NES; the comment sections on report cards are helpful to expand on numerical grades and providing additional clarity to families.
- The importance of having the opportunity to for a redo, both in the world of a student in a classroom and in our professional lives as adults; several real work examples were shared that show the benefit of this policy
- "Hope" as a motivator – when students start school they are often filled with hope; we know students have to make mistakes to learn, but when they do...we often punish them with poor grades. When the hope is gone, the motivation wanes and the students do not have success.
- Discussion regarding the value of intrinsic motivation vs. extrinsic motivation.
- Hard lines vs. soft lines: grades should be reflective of a true understanding of the work. Before a retest is given, there should be a pause: a teacher should be allowed to give additional instruction to help a child improve their knowledge of the content and their previous score. The EOG is an end of year hard line and there is also a purpose for this as well.
- Retakes should not be optional; all students if given the opportunity for a retake should be required to participate.
- 4th grade already does mandatory retakes; there is a classroom culture of this procedure in place. Some students show a lot of growth; some students are not happy that they need to receive remediation.
- Discussion ensued regarding how retake processes are working in some of our classrooms. What is the most ethical way to make this happen while also being practical?
- Minimum grading discussion:
- Renaming of grades – how would this impact students?
- The "insufficient evidence" comment as opposed to a failing grade – taking into consideration extenuating circumstances.
- Do students have a clear understanding of how they are being graded on different assignments, especially one that is project based? 2nd graders used rubrics with their recent projects and presentations. Communicating and modeling your expectations are very helpful and necessary for our students. Restating the goal throughout the lesson/project is crucial.

- If students could create their own rubrics, they know the expectations and they have buy-in to their project.

Team members should read chapters 13 and 14 for the next meeting.

Team members should continue the conversations about zeros, retakes, how to work with grading EC kids so that we can eventually create the “Northern Way” and have a collective agreement about grading in an equitable way.

Schedule for 2024-2025 School Year (Indicator B2.02 and A1.07):

- Could there be modifications for Hawks Hobbies and 2 hour delay days?
- Changes that have not yet been communicated should be emailed to Dr. McMillon
- A few grade levels brought up concerns with the current schedule as written. These concerns should be submitted in writing.

General Staff Concerns (Indicator B2.02):

- SBLT is an elected group of people. Team members are voted by secret ballot and intended to represent many voices. Discussion ensued about a lack of diversity on the current team; members should talk to other team members about interest as many spots will be opening up. How can we truly make sure that all voices are represented?
- 4/5 bathroom policy during lunch; students should use the bathroom before lunch and if you must go during lunch, please make sure they use the main hallway bathroom.
- Communication between classroom teachers and AG teachers; TAG team is a great tool for sharing information between this avenue. TAG team meet every month and has grade level representative to share the information that is discussed.

Adjournment: Motion made to adjourn by Hammack and seconded by McMillon. Meeting was adjourned.

