Northern Lights ABC Advisory Board

MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, 2/10/2026
3:00 pm
NLABC School

PRESENT: Dorissa Martin, Jenny Cabasag, Michael Wuerth, Kristina Wuerth, Kelly DeRouin, Cheryl Holden, Tyler Kobelnyk, Robert Voelker, Debbie Maestas, Rosa Hohnstein, Bernadette Wright, Tiffany Voelker, Lucy Matthew, Jackie Morris, Andie Kelly, Greta Gionet, Elizabeth Congdon-McGee, Brittany Gallagher

ZOOM ATTENDEES: Clare Fulp, Terre Kimble

1. Call to Order: 3:05PM - Jenny called to order.

2. Approve agenda: Mike moved to approve agenda. Kristina seconded. Motion passed.

3. Meeting Minutes from 01/13/2026: Mike moved to approve meeting minutes. Kristina seconded. Motion passed.

4. Pilot Program – Open Discussion
   Clare confirms we can adopt the Mos Dos program at the end of the year if we choose to. While "Teaching & Learning" does not approve of the whole program, it's approved for 20-30 minutes as a supplemental curriculum (note: if there is another pilot program in the future, of any kind for any grade, it must go through "Teaching & Learning" first).

   The committee asks Mr. Redhead for his prospective & opinion on the Mos Dos program. He says that he thought it was meant to be used as an ELA Curriculum for 90 minutes per day which is difficult, and that he doesn't feel that Mos Dos is a rigorous enough program as it has no standards; while there is a story each week, he feels that he is "winging it" and that the teaching guide does not explain best practices, just plot/story/questions, and no skills.

Mrs. Matthew confirms that Spalding is to be used for grammar & skills (learning strategies), whereas Mos Dos was just meant to be the literature piece.

Jenny questions consistency between the classes, curious if both teachers are aligned and teaching the same thing(s). Mr. Redhead confirms that while they are not mirroring exactly what lesson they're on, both classes are within a week of each other.

Mrs. Martin confirms that 5th grade is in a unique position because their pullout schedules aren't totally aligned. However, within the 90-minute block for spelling/writing/grammar, when this pilot program was adopted, it was only meant to be a supplement to the literature component.

Clare admits that the implementation of the pilot program definitely could have been more collaborative and should have had more consistent check-ins. Mrs. Martin & Clare would like Mrs. Matthew to continue teaching this pilot program through the rest of the school year and Mrs. Martin will provide more frequent check-ins. Mrs. Matthew requests to meet with Clare, Mrs. Martin, and Jenny (for the parent piece).

Tyler asks Mr. Redhead if (now) knowing that Mos Dos only requires 20-30 minutes per day, instead of 90, does it still lack the rigor that NLABC requires? Mr. Redhead admits that it's still not a program he would choose. Robby asks Mr. Redhead which program he has been using that he considers to be rigorous (compared to Mos Dos). Mr. Redhead says he has been supplementing materials with the CKLA curriculum. Robby inquires if Mr. Redhead was aware that this specific (CKLA) curriculum was not approved. Mr. Redhead confirms that CKLA is approved by the state and ASD. Jenny asks Clare to clarify that we, as a team, did not approve of this particular curriculum. Clare confirms that NLABC decided CKLA as a "core curriculum" was not approved and asks Mrs. Martin if there is a curriculum map to see what supplemental materials teachers are using. Mrs. Martin states that the PLC meetings have been focusing on this type of guide and it's about 50% complete. Clare identifies that she is hearing concerns with CKLA being used. Mike reiterated that the whole concept of CKLA "blew up" last Spring, clearly rejecting the CLKA curriculum. Jenny agrees and asks Mrs. Morris if she remembers that meeting. Mrs. Morris said she was here for the meeting, and it was obvious that the PAC didn't want to use CKLA but okay'd her to use it through the rest of last year and that her 5th grade class had some of the highest test scores last year. Brittany Gallagher remembers Mrs. Morris being okay'd to continue the rest of last year because the committee knew her as a teacher and that her values aligned with the NLABC philosophy. Jenny agrees that Mrs. Morris' test scores last year were a representation of her being a great teacher, not the curriculum. Cheryl acknowledges that the PAC is concerned that if the CKLA curriculum is being utilized by a teacher who is unfamiliar with the NLABC philosophy, that our school could end up becoming "just another neighborhood school". Mike asks for clarification about using CKLA even though it was rejected, and Mrs. Martin confirms that even though we, as a school, have chosen not to adopt it, teachers can supplement bits & parts.

Mrs. Voelker says that, as a 6th grade teacher for eight years at NLABC, she's never had an issue with students coming into 6th grade with reading or spelling. However, this is the first year she is seeing effects in 6th grade when consistency / curriculum/ expectations aren't preparing students, and she's concerned that they may not be getting what they need in 5th grade. Clare reiterates teaching standards and that PLCs should be used to discuss what teachers are teaching. Mrs. Matthew suggests maybe having a retired teacher helping to support new teachers and to ensure the standards are the anchor. Robby states that standards don't matter if there is no consistency. Mrs. Voelker mentions how when she was new to the school, she always had parents and teachers helping her out. Brittany says she believes the reason our school (was) so great is because it was parent-led and that lately she feels like the district-level has not allowed parents in the classroom. Clare confirms that the philosophical documents have been signed off and published to keep consistency; additionally, if a teacher isn't comfortable with parents in the classroom, that makes an impact, but parents can reach out and ask for advanced notice, and it's helpful if the teacher & parent have a relationship. Mike asks Brittany if she was referring to all parents, or specifically the PAC parents being in the classroom. Brittany confirms the PAC and PTA. Clare states that being in the classroom is not the purpose of the committees but if the PAC would like to create an onboarding process, that would be appropriate as long as it's not forced.

Mrs. Voelker says it's not fair to new teachers not to have an idea of what questions to ask, the NLABC philosophy, or what to set them up for success (even moving to a new grade level). Mrs. Matthew states how, as a parent, she loved knowing about the school and when she started working here, she absorbed everything she could from previous instructors (for both Kindergarten and 5th grade).

Mike says it's almost maddening from a parents standpoint that two teachers who should be collaborating have very different approaches and results, and not a coordinated effort. Jenny agrees that for the program to be a success, collaborative teachers were pivotal. Robby asks what the oversight looks like to verify that teachers are doing what they say they're doing. Mrs. Martin confirms that teachers are being taught what a general anchor standard instruction looks like. Mrs. Voelker states that while the plans are laid out, there are always tweaks needed, and instructors need to add & plan and address standards, it's not just done for them, and there is a lot of effort and planning required. Mrs. Morris says 3rd grade breaks down into an outline for standards. Clare acknowledges that alternative schools like NLABC have a lot of academic freedom and Mrs. Martin is supposed to be doing walkthroughs to make sure teachers are doing what they should be doing.

Mrs. Maestas asks if the pilot program was meant to be a semester or for the entire year. Jenny confirms that originally, the plan was for the whole school year, but that was dependent on grant funding.

Mrs. Kelly asks if there are materials to include 2nd grade as the materials are falling apart at the seams. Mrs. Martin confirms that PTA does not encourage funds to be spent on curriculum (as this is a district budget item), but the Spalding sets for K-2, if requested as a group, could be covered as "books" and not "curriculum". Clare confirms that budgets are tough, but if there's a will, there's a way, and if the books do not have copyright laws, local print shops can mass-copy.

5. Follow-up Items – Mike Wuerth

a. Middle School GPA Proposal

ACTION ITEM: Mrs. Martin will look for the proposal in her email from Jenny and reply with approval.

b. Middle School Electives – Syllabi

ACTION ITEM: Mrs. Martin states there is a Google Docs drive that contains all formal electives and will follow up with Jenny to provide access.

c. What's too sick for school?

ACTION ITEM: Mrs. Martin will generate an email to send to staff and parents.

d. Computer usage in class

Mrs. Martin agrees that screens need to be monitored where the teacher can see what's being viewed, and that this was addressed with faculty.

ACTION ITEM: Mrs. Martin will forward Jenny the email sent in "NL News."

e. Mr. Rushiti contact information

Jenny indicates she & Zoya have yet to receive contact information for Mr. Rushiti to formally thank him for the snow removal in the parking lot.

ACTION ITEM: Mrs. Martin will provide his contact information to Jenny & Zoya

f. Snow removal in teacher parking lot

Mrs. Wright confirms that the Teacher Parking Lot was taken care of and the faculty are glad to have more parking spaces available.

g. Parking Brochure

ACTION ITEM: Tyler will work on the brochure

6. PTA Comments

More baked goods are needed for the Winter Carnival on Friday 2/13

Volunteers are needed for the Book Fair coverage during Parent Conferences on Wednesday

2/25 & Thursday 2/26

7. Philosophical Corner
   Mr. Redhead asks that we include appropriate bathroom manners & etiquette.
   ACTION ITEM: Jenny to draft something with bathroom behavior for the next newsletter.

8. Committees
   a. Nomination Committee
   Cheryl would like the open seats on both (PTA & PAC) committees to be discussed during upcoming assemblies to spread the word to parents.

9. Parent Comments – Open Forum

   Mrs. Kelly would like to know who our NLABC representative is at the ASD Board Meetings. Mrs. Martin and Jenny both state how while there is not anyone in particular on the sides of the road with signs, there is communication being sent. The discussion of ASD raising the Pupil Teacher Ration brings concern as it is currently suggested, by ASD, to increase all class sizes. Additionally, parents express worry that classes may end up combined grades as class sizes can increase up to: Kindergarten 27 students, other grades up to 34 students, and to drop our current Battle of the Books from 2 down to 1 team.

10. Primary Teacher Rep Comments
    Mrs. Gionet is concerned that the larger class sizes will affect the fidelity of the NLABC program for all grades.

11. Secondary Teacher Rep comments
    Mrs. Voelker had to leave but did not have any comments before she left.

12. Middle School Teacher Rep comments
    Middle schoolers are currently offering “candy grams” during lunch time for students to purchase.

    Door designs are available for voting. Jenny suggests that the teachers open the voting for parents to participate in during the winter carnival.

    The middle school newsletter went out today.

13. Principal comments:
    Mrs. Martin covers the new lottery process and how there are no longer “rollovers”; each lottery resets and parents/guardians are responsible for reapplying. There is an in-depth video on the ASD site

    Mrs. Martin is currently trying to get a camera to see outside, behind the gym wall & A-Hall. These cameras usually run about $3-4K apiece and it is potentially a fundraising opportunity for the PTA.

    The new district PTR (pupil teacher ratio) for 6th grade is anticipated to be as high as 36 students. The PTR for NLABC will be 21 teachers and 3.2 specialists (total of 24.2 teachers)

    AK Star & end of year MAP testing across the board reflect that all reading scores have gone up. Math has dropped a little bit, but there was a 2% increase in students at the Advanced level, 128 students at Proficient level, 98 student Approaching Proficiency level, and only 36 who need support to reach Proficiency

    There is a lot of work to do with Spalding to decide if we keep things how we’ve always done them (utilized Spalding cards with some nuance changes) or change things so we can cautiously advertise how we give tours. 4 leadership team members are taking the training and just yesterday it was brought up how to proceed.

14. Celebrating Successes & Positive Wins
    Teachers are enjoying the Spalding training.

15. Adjournment: Jenny motioned to adjourn at 5:42pm; Kelly seconded. Motion passed.