



Informational Memo: Overview of November 11th Institute Day

TO: School Board
Trisha Kocanda, Superintendent

FROM: Daniel P. Ryan,
Assistant Superintendent for Professional Learning and Human
Resources

DATE: November 15, 2016

Background

Our academic calendar includes allocated days for our faculty and staff to participate in dedicated time for professional learning and growth. With students absent from the buildings on such days, we organize time for staff to engage in thoughtful learning and discourse about student growth and achievement. November 11th was one of our allocated Institute Days. Below is an overview of what took place on this day.

November 11, 2016

Our November 11th Institute Day allowed for District/Building Committee work in the mornings followed by a selection of course offerings in the afternoon. The morning sessions include dedicated blocks of time for important committee work. Between 8:30 and 11:30 am, we had over 10 committees meeting throughout the District. These committees included Art, Drama, Music, KW, Language Arts, Mathematics, RC/Technology, RtI, Science, and World Language. Each committee focused on supporting District goals via their committee objectives. Along with committee work, all members of the Department of Support Services gathered together to increase alignment of student services across the District (a District annual goal). There was also a select group of faculty that met to discuss Grades 7-8 Math and Grades 7-8 Social Studies.

In addition, we held training sessions for our associates. Last May, a list of suggested professional learning opportunities was generated by the WEA and we have been responding to their requests by providing training sessions to meet their specific needs. In the morning all classroom and special education associates participated in a training session provided by Jenni Knudson from NSSED. She presented information on, *"How to foster engagement and independence with students"* and *"The process of data collection involving student behavior."* This 3-hour training session also included a discussion of any existing concerns or questions from the associates. Using exit slips we will collect feedback from all associates to inform our planning for the February 20th Institute Day as part of our continued commitment to ongoing professional learning for associates.

From 11:30 am - 12:30 pm, District faculty and Staff enjoyed lunch together in the Washburne gym. As it was Veteran's Day, we took time during lunch to honor those who have served our country. We have several faculty and staff who are veterans.

The afternoon sessions were organized around three themes that align with District goals: *Communication, Social Emotional Learning, and Reaching All Learners.* The schedule for the afternoon was robust. Between 12:30 and 3:30 pm there were over 52 sessions offered by our faculty connected to one or more of the themes. We had received feedback from past institute days indicating faculty benefitted from having sessions offered by their peers on pertinent topics. These 52 sessions allowed us to personalize professional development to reach as many faculty and staff as possible. Some session topics were, *"Introduction to See Saw Portfolio"*, *"Mindfulness in Teaching"*, *"How to Structure and Lead Math Conversations"*, and *"Virtual Field Trips."*

In addition we had two featured speakers; Louise Phipps Senft, author of *Being Relational: The Seven Ways of Quality Interaction and Lasting Change*. She presented sessions on, *Engaging in Difficult Conversations (In and Out of School)*. Mark Hayward was also a featured speaker. He is a World Yo-Yo champion who has appeared on The Late Late Show with James Corden, NBC and CBS news and America's Got Talent. He spoke on the topic, *The Art of Failure: How Failure leads to Success*.

In order to continue refining our professional learning to best meet the needs of our community, we have collected feedback from faculty and staff to provide input regarding November 11th committee work and professional learning sessions. We will use such feedback in planning our February 20th Institute Day.