Report to the Board of Education

North Rose-Wolcott Middle School

Mark Mathews

April 2018

Upcoming Events:

April 11-12-NYS ELA
April 13-17-NYS ELA makeups
April 18-Early Release grades 5 and 6-parent conferences for summer school, promotion status
April 27th-7:30 AM Quarter 3 Awards Assembly
April 27th-6:00 PM dance

The DTSDE (Diagnostic Tool For School and District Effectiveness) Review took place on March 19th and 20th. Outside Educational Expert, Dr. Denise Stappenbeck, who led the team last year, led the review team. Brian Read, Melanie Stevenson, and Megan Paliotti also took part in the review process.

By all accounts, the logistics of the review and visit went well. The team visited all classes, they met with a group of seven parents, they met with all other teams, including teacher and student teams, as scheduled. They discussed their findings at length, then created recommendations for each Tenet. I've listed these recommendations below and made some comments. The recommendations and report will be used by the School Leadership Team, along with input from constituents and staff, to develop the 2018-2019 SCEP over the next three months, so we can submit a strong plan to NYSED, and also we can have buy-in from all constituents.

<u>Recommendations and Comments</u>

Recommendation for Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions:

By June 30, 2018 all stakeholders will identify and clarify core beliefs and answer the questions, " What is our collective vision for what our school should be? What does that look like, sound like, feel like? What is my role in making this happen, and how does my role interconnect with

others." **From this shared vision, the SLT will develop specific action plans and systems that by their design, serve to strengthen and achieve these core beliefs as a daily way of life, ultimately leading to shared responsibility and accountability.**

Comments: It was apparent to the review team that our has some "soul-searching" to do, and the School Leadership Team should be at the forefront of this important work. The SLT will work with groups of teachers and staff in tenet groups to facilitate a discussion on these very questions: What is our vision for our school? What does that look like? Sound like? Feel like? What is my role and how does that interconnect with others? This discussion will lead to an improved understanding of one another and a shared vision of our school's future. I think this is an important step for our school, as the leadership structure of the SLT in our school is still relatively new, and they must take on that direct leadership role as individuals while maintaining their unity as a team.

Recommendation for Tenet 3 – **Curriculum Development and Support:**

By June 30, 2018, teachers will utilize the tactics bank for data driven instruction (from Personalized Learning) to select tools and plan for the collection of baseline data on student skill, knowledge, and behaviors that are the target of a unit of study for the fall. As the 2018-19 school year commences, teachers will monitor student progress on an ongoing basis using tools from the tactics bank; the results of which will be shared at grade level or subject area team meetings. This work will serve as the basis for driving instructional practice as described in tenet 4.

Comments: While we do considerable work with data that represents the achievement of large groups of students, the team describes that they did not see the effective use of data by teachers in the context of their lessons or the day-to-day operations of their classrooms. I agree that a tactics bank for DDI would be a very helpful tool for teachers who must seek to personalize instruction more effectively through the PL initiatives. In addition, we have work to do on the development of common expectations as it relates to student achievement. We must explore proficiency and come to some consensus on what characteristics demonstrate proficiency in student work. The has to happen vertically, meaning all teachers who teach each subject from 5th-8th grade, but also horizontally, where teachers are expecting similar levels of proficiency from all students, regardless of the subject area.

On another note, I think that one of the more important aspects of this recommendation was missed by the team is that we are missing a structure to ensure that all teachers have input into the curriculum, and that there is a mechanism for monitoring this curriculum throughout the year. We tend to do this only in the summer, when not all teachers can participate, then we don't revisit/review the curriculum during the course of the year. This could happen, for example, after an interim assessment, where a careful review of student responses to standards-based questions or prompts is used to make adjustments to the assessments themselves, or the curriculum itself.

Recommendation for Tenet 4 – Teacher Practices and Decisions:

By June, 2018 all school staff will review the district-wide data protocol to ensure understanding and capacity. Using their classroom data (obtained as indicated in tenet 3), teachers will analyze formative assessment information following the district-wide protocol. From this analysis, teachers will make adjustments to instructional groupings and provide targeted instruction. Evidence of impact of these adjustments will be shared with colleagues and specific strategies will be identified for individual students among the grade level team for 7th and 8th grade and within teacher/interventionist/support personnel teams for 5th and 6th grade.

Comments: Making adjustments based on live student data is a very important next step for our teachers and students. We have spent considerable time learning about formative assessment, along with the "how" and "why" to collect student data during the teaching process, but we have not spent considerable time with how the data should be used, or what kinds of adjustments can be made. Our students continue to have a limited understanding of the "how" and "why" they are learning what they are learning, and the feedback to students is general in many classes. While we are working towards the vision of full implementation of personalized learning, we still have significant misunderstandings and work to do on this important model. For example, the team found that many students, while they were clearly working in centers and stations; they were expected to complete all the stations. The use of small groups at independent stations can be a very effective tool for personalizing the learning for students; however, this is negated when we expect all students to do what everyone else is doing.

Recommendation for Tenet 5 – Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:

At the onset of the 2018-19 school year, support services personnel will observe 5th and 6th grade team meetings and 7th and 8th grade team meetings to identify potential linkages between social-emotional and academic needs of students. The counseling team will provide supplemental data on overlapping students as they arise. The joint team will develop a shared action plan for individual students that will include SMART goals, leading indicators for success, individuals responsible for implementing plans and tracking and reporting data, and a timeline for monitoring plans. Data will be collected on the impact of the target intervention as well as on the overall outcomes for student academic success.

SLT will work with support services personnel to identify ways in which to use data to support student learning needs for a broader scope of students.

Comments: This is a very appropriate next step for our program. Clearly, we have made a lot of progress in these areas, yet there is still a very long way to go. The connection between the social and/or emotional side of learning and academic achievement is very strong. We've made some significant progress in the creation of Tier 2 and 3 intervention plans for students, yet we still have some logistical difficulties in our schedule for data analysis and adjustments to these plans. One of the other "trouble spots" for us is that we frequently see that students with

disabilities are those who are most "at-risk" according to our data for student behavior and academic success, yet it is difficult to know when the IEP "stops" and the Tier 3 intervention plan "starts." In order to develop a strong Tier 2 or 3 plan for a student with a disability, we must have assurance that the IEP is being upheld with fidelity, otherwise we have to go back to the drawing board. We have talked with Megan Paliotti about this, and are working towards putting a special education teacher on our Tier 2/3 team to get their input on how to make this happen.

Recommendation for Tenet 6 – Family and Community Engagement:
By June, 2018, the SLT will work with the school leader and teachers to develop a mutually agreed upon process and schedule that aligns with the union contract and district calendar to invite all parents to a parent/teacher conference. Further consideration should be given to the development of a shared understanding and common expectations for ongoing parent/teacher communication that includes both general information regarding the curriculum and class activities as well as explicit, actionable information regarding individual student progress.

Comments: During our first DTSDE review, the staff at the middle school was asked to start submitting parent contact logs. They were asked to include days, times, whom they talked to, and what they talked about on a log that was to be submitted and reviewed by administrators. In addition to that, the staff was asked to complete a "preferred contact" list, where at the beginning of each year, we ask parents to identify a preferred method of contact (email, phone call, which number to call, work calls, etc). This has been done over the last three years. However, it has clearly not lead to improved two-way communication between parents and teachers. In addition, we find that we continue to contact parents of those who are failing far more often than the parents of those students who are doing well, but could be doing even better. Parent contacts with all parents and parent/teacher conferences with all parents are essential elements to improving student achievement.

In addition to this, we are looking at our voicemail system to make certain that all teaching staff has a voicemail box where parents can leave them messages as needed.

SCEP 2018-2019 Development

Part of being a focus school means that we must develop a School Comprehensive Education Plan. The Self-Reflection and DTSDE review are both part of the process to develop this plan. Over the next month, the School Leadership Team and I will be reviewing the DTSDE recommendations with the staff, and facilitating discussions with them about what they think our most significant needs are. Each member of the SLT will chair a Tenet Group, and they are tasked with building consensus around Needs statements, which make up the foundation of the SCEP. I've laid out the process below. This is an actual communication to SLT, so bear with it if you can.

In the next two months, our work will be to construct a SCEP for the 18-19 school year that

- Is driven by the evidence in the DTSDE report.
- Has fully-developed SMART goals and action steps that are realistic, relevant to the SMART goal, and "doable."
- Includes input from staff members, parents, and students.

The development of next year's SCEP begins now, and each of us will play an important role in its development. See below for guidelines and timeframes. We'll discuss in more detail at our meeting on April 11th.

1. We will organize ourselves into Tenet groups
    a. Tenet 3-Ben
    b. Tenet 4-Laurie
    c. Tenet 5-Kristin
    d. Tenet 6-Kurt/Melissa

2. I will choose which staff goes to which group, as it's important to have equal representation on each team in terms of numbers to ensure participation and input from all staff.

3. At the Thursday meeting on April 12th, SLT leaders will facilitate a discussion that addresses the following questions/discussion points:
    a. What is our vision for what our school should be?
    b. What does that look like?
    c. What does that sound like?
    d. What does that feel like?
    e. What is my role in making this happen?
    f. How does my role interconnect with the roles of others?

4. At the Thursday meeting on April 19th, SLT leaders will finish this discussion.

5. At the Faculty meeting on April 19th, a member of each Tenet Team (not the SLT member) will report out the summary of the discussion from their tenet group.

6. Also at this faculty meeting, Tenet groups will convene and carefully review the report from DTSDE.

7. The SLT member will facilitate a discussion of the report and recommendation for each tenet, then will collaboratively create evidence-driven Needs statements. For the SCEP, we will only be able to include 1 needs statement that leads to a SMART goal, but more than one needs statement at this time will be fine. The team will work to agree on the most pressing need and build consensus around a NEEDs statement. See below on what a needs statement is.
    a. **C1. Needs Statement: Create a clear and concise statement that addresses the primary need(s) to be addressed. Be sure to incorporate the most recent DTSDE review and other applicable data.**

8. April 26th-Math/testing meeting, accommodations, schedule, etc.

9. May 1-SLT meeting 3-4 topic: developing SMART goals and the 18-19 SCEP.

From the recommendations above, you can see that we have a lot of work to do before the end of the school year, however the work is very important for us to continue to move student achievement forward. More to come on this next month in my report.