Mark Mathews

North Rose-Wolcott Middle School Report to the Board of Education

November 6, 2019

Upcoming events:

11/4/19-11/8/19: Interim assessments
11/14/19: grade 5 and 6-picture makeups
11/21/19 Grades 5 and 6 Q1 awards assembly
11/22/19 Grades 7 and 8 Q1 awards assembly

SCEP Goal-Tenet 2

In the DTSDE Rubric (Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness), there are six main beliefs that outline a framework for effective practice and school improvement. Tenet 1 outlines district leadership and is therefore not addressed in our building improvement plan; Tenet 2: School Leader Practices and Decisions; Tenet 3: Curriculum Development and Support; Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions; Tenet 5: Student Social and Emotional Health; and Tenet 6; Family and Community Engagement.

Tenet 2: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.

In our School Improvement Plan, the SLT chose to use the same format that we used when involved with the Focus School designation. We created goals in each of the tenets 2-6.

For Tenet 2 in 2019-2020, we established the following goal: By June of 2020, the School Leadership Team will create, monitor, and assess the effectiveness of systems that: create engaging, dynamic, and rigorous curricula in all areas; ensure effective, targeted instructional practices using data from all subgroups; ensure high-quality Social and Emotional Learning at all tiers; and create increased opportunities for families to become involved in their child's learning.

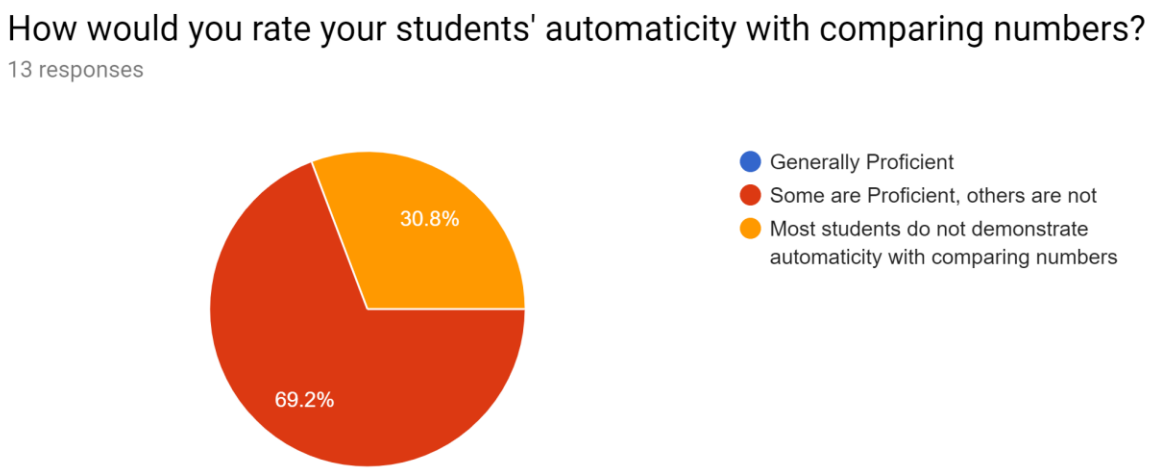
As part of the action steps for meeting this goal by June of 2020, we have been collecting data about several of our initiatives. Two such initiatives are the use of Aimsweb to analyze student progress and identify interventions, and the implementation of Community Circles as a tool to build a climate of acceptance and understanding in our school.

Math

In grades 5-8, there was a clear trend in our Aimsweb Math outcomes. Many of our students did not demonstrate proficiency with Number Sense Fluency and Math Computation Fluency. These gaps were very apparent when we examined student data from the first administration of Aimsweb.

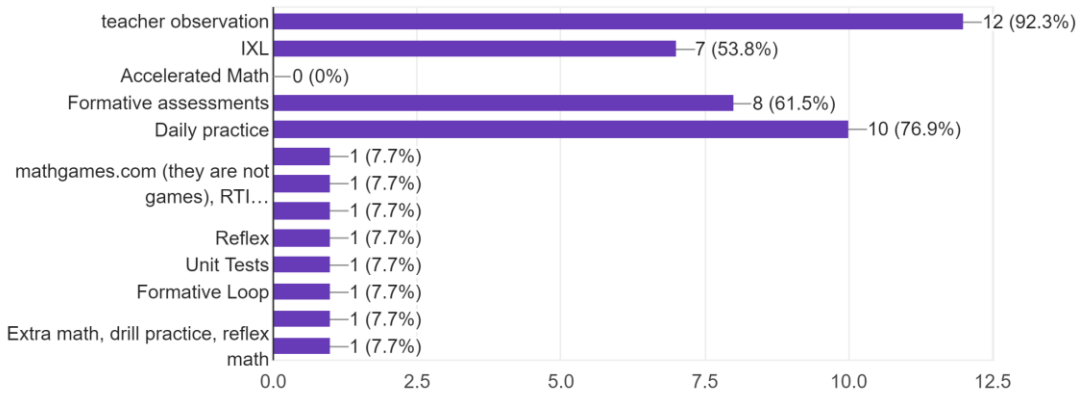
As we began processing this information and considering intervention steps, we wondered how these skills and concepts are taught in the context of Tier 1. This is very important, because if we are going to designate an intervention teacher to work with students on these skills and concepts, we are assuming that the current math curriculum and program is directly teaching them, that we are trying new strategies for students who don't "get it," and **then** determining that additional services are needed. In other words, if students aren't being directly taught these skills in Tier 1, how do we know they need Tier 2 supports? We cannot know in this scenario.

I devised some questions to our math teachers, and they gave a lot of consideration to their responses. See below



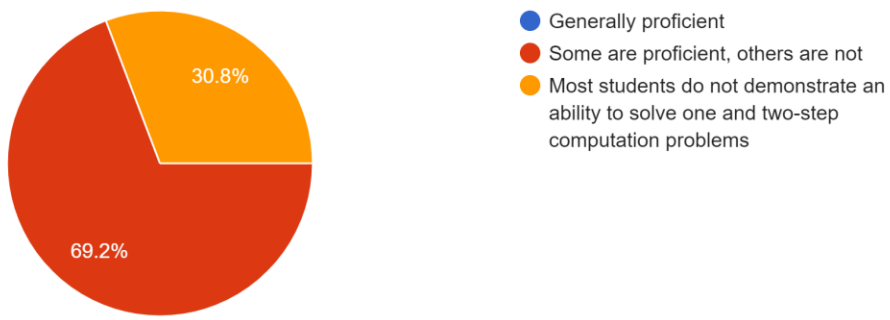
What data source do you use to support this rating?

13 responses



How would you rate your students' ability to mentally solve one and two-step computation problems?

13 responses



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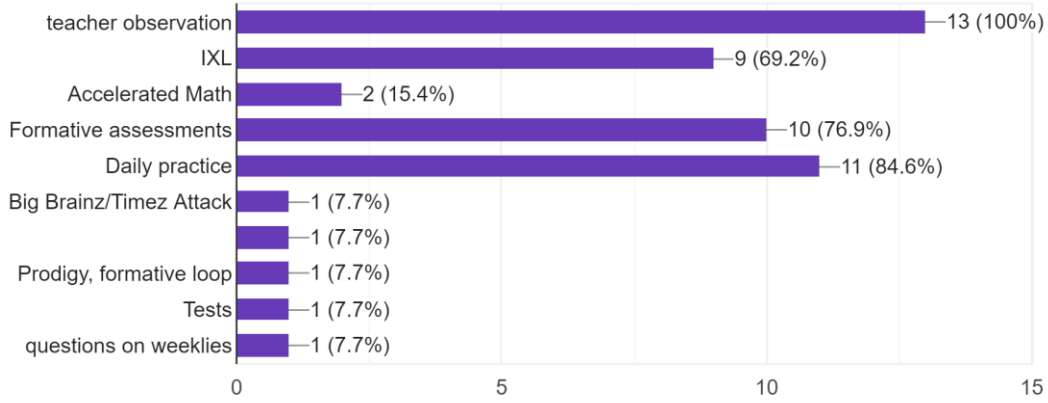


Please describe how our math program provides students with practice or guidelines for instruction with Number Sense Fluency.13 responses

I am still learning and understanding the math expressions program. In Unit One, we spent time comparing fractions. I have not yet come across opportunities in the program to practice computational fluency.

Students are asked to solve math problems daily by applying their mental math skills to solve problems quicker. Most problems require students to write down work because at this level the numbers are larger. In order to complete those problems the students need to know their number computations quickly. Every lesson includes math computations.

By 6th grade, number sense is embedded within the Expressions program. Comparing decimals and integers as well as multi-digit long division is taught/reviewed more in isolation.

The math program assumes that students already have these skills for the most part, and does not address them directly.

I do not believe the program covers these skills directly and independently. It assumes the students know their facts

We start each math class with fact fluency, start with multiplication then move to division, our math program provides spiral review of concepts

Our math program expects them to already be fluent at this point in time with math facts up to 12. They are not. I would say a very small percent of our class is fluent, maybe 3-4 students. This effects their ability to to do simple one step much less 2 step problems. We are currently working on

place value and adding and subtracting decimals, and they are adding and subtracting on their fingers. we are also having them compare values within the fraction and decimal topics, but they don't seem to have a strong enough background. These lessons are at the beginning of the chapters, so it appears that they assume they should know this by now. There is no explicit practice for this that comes with our curriculum, so it is something that we have added through the "Reflex" program. Last year's students showed significant growth using this program. I had to write a grant for it though, and it expires in December. So we will have to figure out what other program will be as equally effective.

Our math program assumes that students in 5th grade already have number sense fluency.

Our program is great for reteaching and direct instruction of specific skills but I do not think it greatly supports number sense fluency.

I'm not sure it does, at least not enough.

At this time it is not built in to specifically the curriculum. It is something additional that would need to built into the instruction.

Analysis:

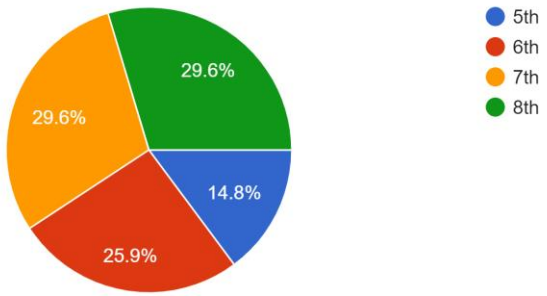
- This survey is designed for two primary reasons:
    - Improve math instruction at Tier 1
    - Identify the “right” students for targeted supports that are specific to each individual.
- It’s troubling that staff perceives such alarming gaps in our students’ skills in number sense fluency and math computation, however, I this gap has existed since the Common Core were introduced. The Common Core and Next Generation Math Standards “assume” that students know some of the basic math facts, place value, greater than, less than, equal to…, but don’t directly provide for them as standards.
- Notice that most staff identified two data sources to support their views: Daily Practice, and teacher observation. These two data sources provide for considerable inconsistency. Daily practice seems to be different across each grade level, and vertically 5-8. We have to define this if we are going to use it as a data source. Teacher observation, while very important as a general data source in almost every aspect of teacher’s daily functioning, does not necessarily provide them with specific data that can help identify students who are doing better than, or not as well as, their grade-level peers.
- In a nutshell, we have to create consistency in 1) how Number Sense and Computation is taught, and 2) How we are assessing these two areas so we can be informed about which students need help, and what they need help with.

<u>Community Circles</u>

We’ve also begun exploring the implementation of Community Circles at the middle school so we can evaluate systems and create interventions that support our students and teachers.

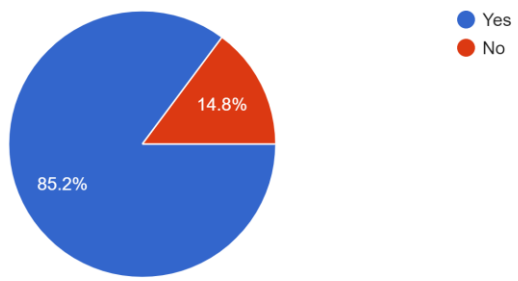
What grade level do you teach?

27 responses



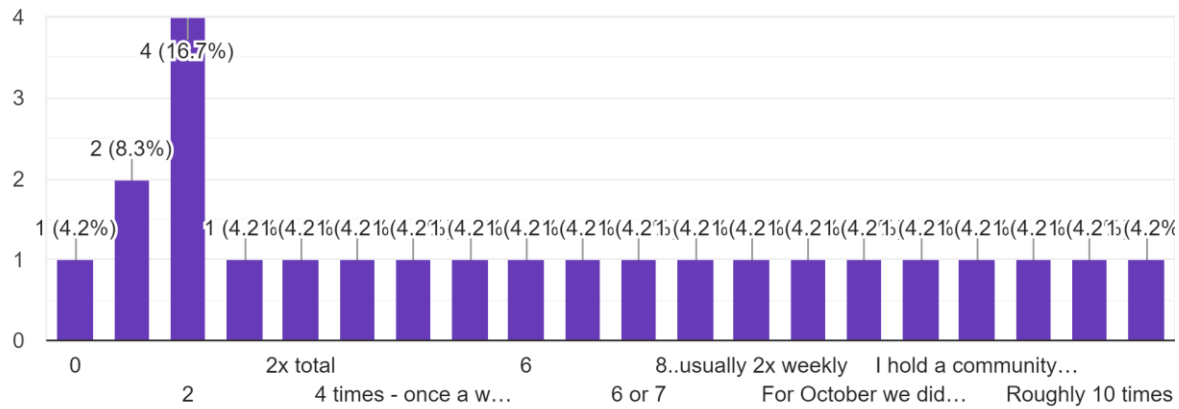
Have you lead a Community Circle in the past year?

27 responses



If yes, how many times in the past month?

24 responses



Please identify any supports that would be helpful to you in the facilitation of Community Circles.13 responses

I would love for someone else to lead my circle for multiple times in a row just to try to reinforce the expectations. I just don't want to "hog" our facilitators because I know that others would like to have the help also.

examples of community circles that i can watch (like on youtube, etc)

Have more times when another person can come in and help facilitate the circle. I think it brings a different perspective when another adult leads the circle.

Joined by an administrator at times so the kids know EVERYONE is participating in open circles

I hope we continue to get the focus questions from Brady... they are helpful; I don't use all of them but it is great as a "go-to"

A proper scheduled day to do them. Many students go to other teachers for help

None.

Community circles are probably most effective when provided by trained mental health providers.

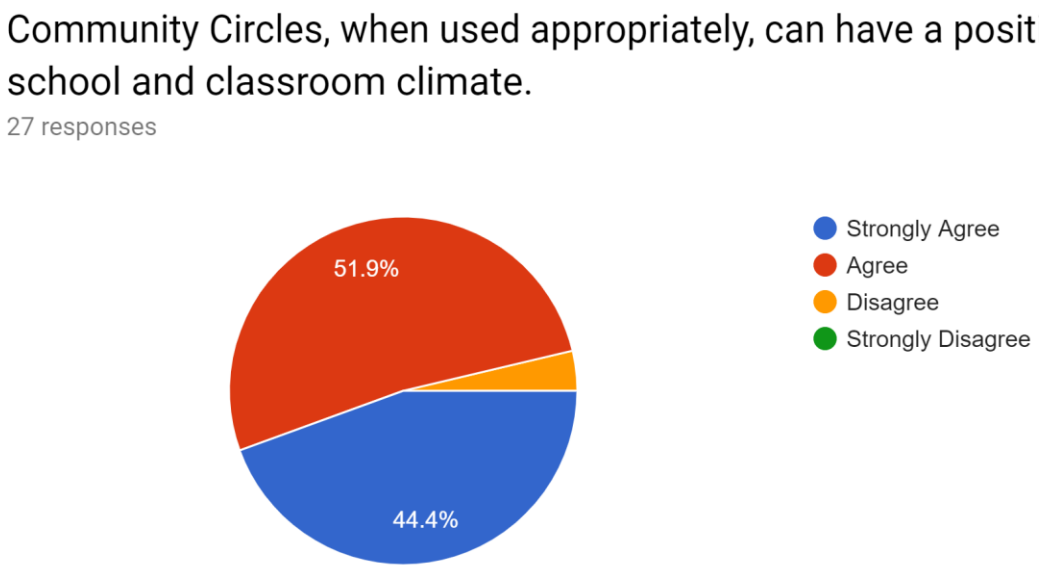
Have someone come in and do Mrs. DeFeo's and/or Mr. Farnand's with Advisory, although those students prefer to use it for study hall/work, so it would be good to announce it ahead of time

It would be interesting to hear how other people are using them, and the results they are having with them. It is also helpful to get the monthly prompts to reference. Overall though I feel pretty comfortable with them in my classroom, and I see the benefits of them within my classroom.

Having the prompts for the trait of the month is extremely helpful for talking points.

Maybe video examples of positive circles to show the students

I enjoy when experienced community circle leaders pop in from time to time



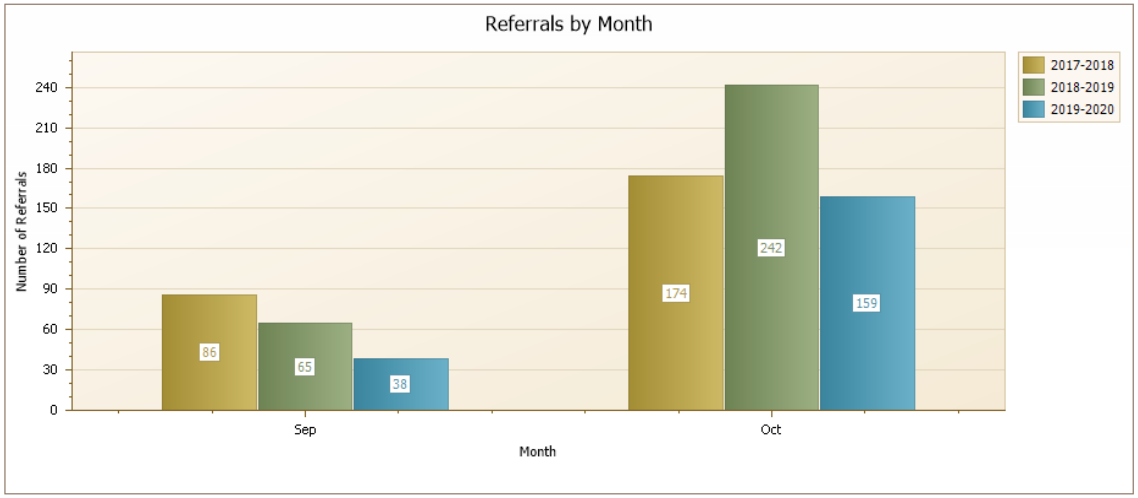
Analysis-Community Circles are established as a positive structure, but we have some gaps in implementation and support. We are also waiting for responses to the student survey that is being distributed to get their perspective on Community Circles, since they are new to many of our students this year.

The efforts to collect and utilize data are intended to create procedures and systems that are responsive. We can't wait to make improvements when student achievement is negatively impacted by outdates systems or routines.

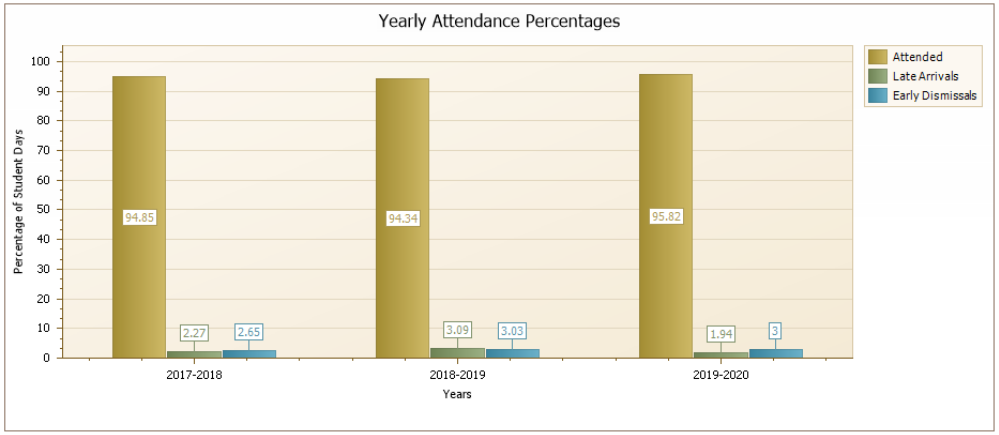
Brady Farnand - NR-W Middle School Assistant Principal (5th-8th grade) – November 2019 - BOE Report
**Linked to focus areas determined by the Building Principal Mr. Mathews, and directly linked to our District Strategic Action Plan.*

Projected Middle School Enrollment – 2019-2020:

5th grade	97
6th grade	97
7th grade	68
8th grade	107

District Strategic Action Plan	Focus area	Progress
Focus Area 1	Action Step 1	***Actionable Items*** *Staff Referrals-* We continue to address the social and emotional aspects of our students. We are doing more reteaching of expectations this year and we have positive results. So far this year, we have seen the lowest number of referrals per month in the last 3 years! 

	Action Step 1	Community building: We are working to develop a positive climate where students have input. Our student Cougar Pride group decided to plan a Minute to Win it Challenge during advisory where students could compete against themselves, other students, and staff in a variety of challenges. This was a great opportunity for students and teachers to see each other in a different light.
	Action Step 1	Attendance: Our attendance committee has met to discuss students with barriers attending school. Students that have This year we have had 95% attendance so far this year which is the best attendance rate for the middle school in the last 3 years.



<u>Character trait of the month:</u> For the month of October we focused on respect. Town hall meetings and community circles were tailored to address respect, what does it look like, and how do we show respect for ourselves and others. Our character trait of the month for November is being responsible.