

Superintendent Report January

- During the January 3rd workshop the principals focused on having mid-year conversation with individual teachers on progress made on their Individual Professional Development Plans working with the Instructional Framework. Two big components for each teacher is the collaboration time and what actions they have taken place in their classroom around the indicator that the group is focusing on. Overall, all principals felt that these were powerful conversations and teachers could respond on how they have improved from the point at which they self assessed this fall.
- We recently had a construction meeting on our facility project that focused on items that were needed to be completed for final completion and the amount of retention dollars that should be paid at this time. Tom Wollan from FRK will be working with Snyder and Associates, our Civil Engineer and Farris, our Electrical Engineer to do a back punch evaluation. Once this is completed FRK will determine the amount of the \$437,000 that should be paid to Graphite for work completed. We do know that there is some concrete work that needs to be redone along with some fencing. Two areas that will need to wait for spring is the dormant seeding and concrete around the wall at the Trojan Bowl. It was noticed that there was some sinking, but not enough to affect the drainage plan. If the concrete does not settle anymore we will be alright on the other hand if it continues action will need to be taken. All parties know of the situation with the concrete and decisions moving forward will be based on this understanding.
- Progress had been made at the Middle School. All subfloor has been completed in the building and the lower level passed the first of two electrical inspections allowing the drywall on the lower level to begin. Once this is installed (approximately a week) the lower level will be ready for spiral ductwork to be installed by Camblins. At the sametime the electrical subcontractor is working at passing the inspection on the main floor and once this is accomplished will follow the same process as the lower level. This is designed to allow multiple crews to be able to work at the same time.

Thanks to Danielle at Interior Touch for selecting carpet samples that would look good with our baseboard and wall coloring. We showed samples to a group of middle school teachers and the one I brought this evening rose to the top.

We have created a small committee consisting of Mr. Rasmussen and a teacher from each grade level to explore the possibility of purchasing new classroom furniture for the Middle School. Two school furniture companies have been invited to present their product to the committee.

- Recently, the CDC has released guidance on quarantine of positive cases to 5 + 5. Our policy has been 10 days for those who have tested positive and we do not quarantine any individual for close contact (which is still a CDC recommendation). According to the IDPH this 5 + 5 is in their manual, but it states that it is strictly a school policy. The following are some concerns that the 5 + 5 approach has to being an effective mitigation strategy.
 - According to the State Epidemiology individuals who have tested positive are contagious from days 6-10. In the 5 + 5 mitigation strategy individuals would need to wear a mask at all times during this time period. How do we ensure our students and staff will meet this guideline when compliance to masking has always been a challenge? I struggle allowing individuals that we know based on science are contagious in the building.
 - In a 5 + 5 strategy someone would need to call on day five to determine if the individual would be fit to return on day six. We have had different situations throughout the COVID time where individuals have not always been truthful about their symptoms or have hidden them, so that they can participate in school and different activities.

- To alleviate some pressures from absenteeism, we have not prevented close contacts from attending school nor have we been able to social distance as was the case last year.
 - I realize going to this approach would reduce absenteeism, but would increase the risk given information that is available to us. From day one fidelity in mitigation strategies was paramount. Both Cass County Public Health and Mrs. Freund agreed that the new guidelines would be hard to police and open us up to more potential COVID positive cases.
- There was a period of time during the first semester that we were short staff due to absenteeism and not having enough substitutes to fill the position. Prior to break this had gotten better in the buildings. Right now one of our buildings is experiencing a shortage of substitutes. Over the next couple weeks we are grateful that two additional teaching substitutes will be available to substitute in our buildings. As you know we do have a floating substitute that has been helpful with this need.

Obviously many folks in the organization have been frustrated with this reality that continues to last longer than any of us hoped. Our principals have done a great job in managing this shortage and many folks have stepped up when needed to educate our students. A discussion on adding more floating substitute teachers and sub paras have been suggested, yet I am not convinced that will solve this issue, which I hope resolves sometime this semester. By hiring another floating substitute you would probably take away from a current teacher substitute or a current paraprofessional. This would help in one area and create a challenge in other areas.