

Teacher Evaluation Instrument Committee

MINUTES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016; 4:00 p.m.

Central Administration Office

Present: Superintendent Douglas Sullivan, Mrs. Melanie Kathrein, Mrs. Michelle Jaeger, Mrs. Trina Kudrna, Mrs. Kathy Mavity, Mrs. Mandy Lubken, Mrs. Shawna Knipp, Mrs. Mary Ann Reisenauer, Mrs. Naomi Thorson, Mrs. Kay Poland, Dr. Marcus Lewton, Mrs. Diana Stroud, Mr. Scott Schmidt, and Mrs. Tanya Rude.

Absent: Mrs. Betsy Brandvik, Ms. Alisha Webster, and Dr. Becky Pitkin.

Call to Order – Superintendent Sullivan called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. He thanked committee members for attending the meeting.

Additions/Deletions to Agenda Items – There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

Approval of the November 17, 2015, Meeting Minutes – Dr. Lewton moved to approve the November 17 meeting minutes, as presented. Mrs. Poland seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Sullivan introduced a new committee member, Mrs. Shawna Knipp. Mrs. Knipp will be an additional representative for Heart River Elementary. He thanked her for agreeing to serve on the committee.

Business Topics

Implementation Updates - Mrs. Kudrna shared several concerns that have been brought to her attention. When she spoke to other teachers in her building and discussed the components she realized they are not really the components of the evaluation. Mrs. Kathrein said that if she was referring to the pre-observation form, that form is not part of the evaluation. It is background information so the principal has some idea of the classroom setting. She added that the pre-observation form will be reviewed next year. Each year the form can be changed. This committee reviewed the form last fall and approved it. As the teachers and principals go through the evaluation process they may find that the form needs to be revised. Mrs. Lubken added that it is a generic form. Mrs. Kudrna inquired if the components that were used this year will continue next year with the additional domain components. Mrs. Kathrein responded that was the current plan but it could be modified or fluctuate. Dr. Sullivan explained the current implementation process has 14 of the 22 components implemented in the 1st two years. He added that the district needs to demonstrate to AdvancED in 2018 that it has the instrument in place. Dr. Lewton shared his past experience as a teacher. Even though all 22 elements were open, the principal evaluated Dr. Lewton as an individual. He added that the principals need to be reminded that they are not using 22 elements each time. Mrs. Kathrein briefly explained the professional development for the Danielson model recommended by the Professional Development Leadership Team. Mrs. Kudrna asked what would happen if a principal is absent on the date that a teacher was scheduled for an observation. Mrs. Kathrein responded the pre-observation form has been completed by the teacher. The teacher is giving background information on the classroom in the pre-observation form. That form would not have to be redone. Dr. Sullivan explained that a potential absence of the principal on an evaluation

date was discussed at the November meeting. Sometimes the teacher and principal have to adapt because there is a Century Code deadline that must be met. It will have to take some cooperation from both the principal and the teacher. Mrs. Kudrna inquired if the behavior implementation at the school is also supposed to be district wide in order to be on the evaluation. Mrs. Kathrein explained CHAMPS is a critical part of PBIS. She continued by explaining that CHAMPS is the portion of PBIS that relates to the classroom. The district provided two days of training on CHAMPS to help teachers set expectations for students in their classroom. She also explained that CHAMPS is different than the school motto or brand. Mrs. Lubken explained that she took pictures of her CHAMPS board and added it to the Teachscape. Mrs. Kathrein explained that teachers should not worry about sending things that the principal can see. They should explain things or decisions that principals may not observe. Such as why students are grouped a certain way or why a student is standing in the back. Share the things that are invisible. She suggested having the teacher put themselves in the principal's viewpoint. Dr. Sullivan reminded the teachers that the PBIS is the district's bullying prevention program required by the Century Code and that it is the district-wide initiative. Dr. Sullivan suggested during the implementation stage to continue with these discussions and encourage further discussion. He noted the Teacher Evaluation Committee members are the key communicators back at their buildings. If there is an issue teachers are to share it with these committee members to bring back to the meetings. Today's discussion was exactly the discussion intended for this committee.

Mrs. Jaeger said at Heart River Elementary she is getting the feeling that there are a lot of staff overwhelmed with this piece. She felt that probably includes the administration as well. There are many pieces that go into the evaluation. Some of the teachers are not understanding what needs to be addressed. Mrs. Kudrna said that some teachers are spending 45 minutes or close to 2-3 hours on the pre-observation form. Mrs. Lubken added that on top of typing lesson plans the teachers also have to complete the pre-observation form. This is very time consuming. She felt the form didn't relate to what the teachers want the principal to see. The principal needs to know the learning objective. Mrs. Kudrna said that writing two or three sentences for each question isn't something that comes automatically. There needs to be some thought put into those sentences. She said over time she will become more efficient. The evaluations could get quite lengthy. Teachers have said they didn't know what the principal wanted in the form. Mrs. Kathrein felt that the teachers should be asking their building principal what they need for information in the form. If the document is read the reader needs to be able to understand what is written. She noted this is still a work in progress. Mr. Schmidt said at the high school he has heard similar comments to what was shared at the meeting. He has been teaching for over 13 years. Not only was the process testing him but he was also testing the process. He suggested the administration clarify how much time a teacher should spend preparing the document. Some teachers spent an hour or more. He spent 15 minutes. He noted the purpose of the new model was to have the same evaluation form used district wide. In his opinion he was more concerned about the lesson in the classroom. Mrs. Thorson said the principal explained not to spend five hours of preparation work because the principal doesn't have time to read many pages of documents for each teacher. Mrs. Poland said she has her lesson plans done for the remainder of the school year. Whatever she is teaching on a particular school day is what the principal will observe. Mrs. Kathrein said that the observation is not about how fun the lesson was. Teachers should not be picking the most dynamic lesson on the day of the observation. Everything the teacher does requires good educational teaching. Mrs. Kathrein suggested committee members reassure the teachers in their building. She noted even if the process were simplified there might still be people spending four hours preparing. Mr. Schmidt inquired if the pre-observation form is going to get longer as more components are added. He asked if there was going to be a question on each component. Mrs. Kathrein responded the pre-observation is a generic document.

There could be changes made as the document is part of the planning and background piece but we can determine what questions are on the form. The form can be changed each year. Mrs. Jaeger asked if the pre-observation covers disciplines such as special education. Mrs. Thorson noted several individuals are very distressed over the process. Mrs. Poland inquired regarding the timeframe for the walk-throughs and noted that her evaluations are done during third quarter. She teaches 12 classes and her evaluations are based on three classes. She did not think she had any walk-throughs. She wondered if the time frame could be changed, instead of only third quarter. Mrs. Kathrein explained there are two deadlines the principal must observe. The first deadline is December 15 for new teachers in the district. The second deadline is March 15 for all teachers. These deadlines are stipulated in Century Code. Mrs. Poland asked if the people making the deadlines realize the stress they are placing on the administrators and teachers. Dr. Lewton felt that the walk-throughs are occurring over the entire year and therefore the principal is getting a snapshot of different classes at different semesters. Mrs. Lubken asked if the walk through scores and the feedback are put into a master spreadsheet with her name on it. Mrs. Kathrein responded that principals will observe and collect evidence. Based on the preponderance of evidence, they will assign a score for the walk-throughs. The formal and informal evaluations are also part of the entire evaluation process. There was discussion regarding walk-throughs with a follow up email or discussion with the principal and some without a follow up. There was a discussion regarding the length of time for the walk-throughs. The minimum length of time for the walk-throughs is five minutes. The maximum length of time is open ended. Mrs. Kathrein said that teachers should not be afraid to have principals in their classroom.

Mrs. Stroud reported that she has not had any negative feedback from Berg teachers regarding the new evaluation process. One new teacher reported to her that the evaluation wasn't really that bad. This teacher did not spend a great deal of time on the pre-observation form because it was discussed previously that it was only background information. The principal came into the classroom did the observation for about 45 minutes and there was great conversation afterwards.

Student Achievement Data – Dr. Sullivan reminded the committee that Century Code states that part of the evaluation process must include student achievement data. There has been a conversation at Cabinet on this topic. He thought it would be best to open the dialogue with this committee. There was discussion at the November meeting with this committee and the response was anywhere from 10-50%. Mrs. Thorson inquired if the federal changes eliminated the requirement of using assessment. Dr. Sullivan said he has a training coming up that would provide more insight into the changes implemented by federal law.

What is percentage weight for “significant” – Mrs. Poland asked what was the percentage weight recommended by Cabinet. Dr. Sullivan responded between 30-40%. Mrs. Mavity stated that she had a dual voice and as a parent she felt 30-40% would be adequate. She said as a teacher, though, she had many concerns. Some of the concerns she shared were student turnover, such as the transient students; previous grade scores on NWEA and any standardized tests; tardies and absences beyond the teachers control; are other district using student data test as a method of retention and what percentage are they using; will new curriculum be implemented if district scores are low; are junior high and high school teachers as accountable as the elementary level teachers; and is the testing window timeframe taken into consideration, spring to spring, spring to fall. Mrs. Kathrein and Dr. Sullivan addressed her concerns. Mrs. Kathrein explained that in order for students to count in the AYP that student must be in the school district for one full year. Mrs. Kathrein also noted that students are expected to grow in our district. Even if they are just coming into the district they should be going forward and not backwards. There was discussion regarding a growth model, the

evaluation looked at globally, the relationship between teaching and student performance, the curriculum review cycle, when teachers will know the percentage weight (will it be before signing contracts), there is no evaluation percentage for principals for now, what is the data piece going to look like, ELL and homeless students included in the mix, percentage based retention causing a teacher shortage, particular disciplines affecting reading scores or math scores, kindergarten student retention, the placement of low level students in the classroom, along with other topics. Many areas are out of the control of the teacher. Mrs. Thorson asked if the same percentage score will be placed on every teacher in the district. Dr. Sullivan responded that a score for student achievement will be added to the individual evaluations across the district. Mrs. Thorson stated that if the same data is used for everyone in a building, every teacher's score will be changed by the same amount. Mrs. Kathrein added it makes everyone part of a team. Dr. Sullivan thanked and expressed appreciation to all the committee members for their open dialogue at today's meeting.

Schedule the Next Meeting – The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, February 24 at 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m.