



SPIRIT LAKE

From the desk of Angela Olsen - Summer 2024

Phone: 712-330-5041

aolsen@spiritlakecsd.org

1. Teacher Leadership and Development

The district has moved to offering a blend of professional development in an attempt to tailor professional development to what teachers need, versus a one size fits all model. Therefore, all teachers filled out an Individual Professional Development Plans which linked to their building or district goals. Building administrators and instructional coaches oversaw these Individual Professional Development Plans. These plans are now considered renewal credits for teachers through the Iowa Dept of Educational and Iowa Board of Educational Examiners. As a district, we believe fully in this model, as it allows professional development to be tailored and personalized for teachers, modeling how we want to also educate our students.

Similar to past years, teachers had the opportunity to use Teacher Quality funds to further their individual learning and growth by attending conferences or taking professional development classes to earn renewal credits toward their licensure. The Teacher Quality committee also approved hourly funding for teacher development tasks, pre-approved by building administration, that were completed outside of the contracted day and tailored at professional development sought by the teacher.

The district continued with their in house mentoring program this year, having a total of 15 teachers being mentored through our program. Of the 15 teachers, six were new teachers, three are second year teachers that completed the mentoring program during the school year, and six were veteran teachers who were new to Spirit Lake. We utilized 15 different staff members to provide mentor connections, support and guidance. Mentors and their mentees are provided training and support to assist new teachers entering the profession, as well as help provide a smooth transition to veteran teachers moving to our district. New and “new to us” teachers are provided reflection meetings with their mentors to help develop relationships, instructional tool box, problem solve with, celebrate with, as well as participate in structured observations across multiple grade levels.

2. Assessment

The Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP), which replaced the Iowa Assessments, was administered in the spring of 2024. The district has received the results. At this time the reports were not published and officially released to parents yet, although the district can report goal achievement. This information related to goal achievement will be presented to the District Cabinet in mid-late July, along with the 2024-25 goals, and both to the board at the August meeting. When that report is officially approved and available, it will be linked here.

The ISASP does not provide the same reporting features the Iowa Assessments did so determining individual strengths and goals is more challenging. The process is continually being improved and there is more information available now. We are working on getting the claim codes into the Infinite Campus Parent Portal and sharing information with parents about a better way to access their student's results and view the report that used to be provided by the testing program. It is now available online. We are working with Infinite Campus and that process should be complete by the start of school so parents can view last year's data. We

Encourage Relationships

Display Integrity

Embrace Growth

also continue to discuss the review of the test and testing data to align best with our curriculum scope and sequence, as that will also be looked at in the 2024-25 school year as we plan to intentionally do some test taking prep with our students as we consistently look to address areas of concern.

Elementary teachers are required to use the universal FAST screener three times during the year as their second assessment and then use student data from those screeners to progress monitor and provide interventions to those students who were at-risk or persistently at-risk. The middle school fifth and sixth grade teachers utilized the FAST screeners to assess and monitor the reading progress of their students.

The elementary teachers use a multi-tiered system of support to accomplish and monitor these interventions, called WIN (What I Need). It is individualized and grouped according to student needs and provided by elementary staff, but not necessarily the student's classroom teacher. Elementary teachers continued to utilize the Panorama, MTSS data warehouse for Iowa, in their progress monitoring and recording of data. Middle School teachers of 5th and 6th graders also utilize the FAST screeners and Panorama to tailor their interventions. The Middle School rolled out a new system of MTSS this year, which provided interventions and learning support to students - math in the morning time and reading during the afternoon time. Instructional coaches were very involved in both the elementary and middle school, assisting teachers with this process and analyzing the data.

3. Project Based Learning and Authentic Learning Experiences

Project based learning opportunities were provided through High School's J-Term, Middle School's School of the Wild and Spring Academy, the Elementary's Fall and Winter Blast, Internships, Junior Career Shadows, Career Fairs and other Career Awareness days, as well as through classroom connections with business partners. These experiences continue to be a priority for our district. The district works diligently to give students as many opportunities as possible for real world learning and problem solving opportunities. We are blessed to have the community support to help provide these experiences!

The district continues to offer 21st Century Skills as part of the rotation in the middle school, students are immersed in different skill development through Spirit Time at the middle school and morning meeting time at the elementary, which both included social emotional learning as needs continue to rise and be of critical importance. The elementary also continued with the Energy Bus rules and the promotion of creating a positive culture through various activities strategically scheduled through the year, which included programming, activities, and assemblies.

Life Skills Programming continued at the high school this year, further offering students additional opportunities to their classroom experiences in four distinct and intentional areas: Financial Foundations, Personal Health and Wellness, Leadership and Character, and 21st Century Skills. Financial Foundations replaces the semester Personal Finance course and immerses students in financial discussions over the course of all four years, versus one semester. The same is true for Health, as it is rolled into Personal Health and Wellness. The schedule changed this year to three blocks of time within the calendar where students had Life Skill Programming for 4 or 5 back to back days: October, late February, and May. This change offered continuity among learning experiences and the opportunity to provide more real world experiences and problem solving without large gaps of time between meetings, as requested by both staff and students two years ago. We continue to tweak the schedule, trying to find the opportune times to adjust the schedule and make intentional time for important life preparation activities.

4. Teacher Leadership Compensation Grant

The 2023-24 school year was the eighth year of implementation of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation Grant. This grant created leadership positions within the district in order to:

- Improve student achievement
- Promote collaboration among staff to advance instructional practices for 21st Century teaching and learning
- Provide a plan for teachers to experience career growth and leadership opportunities at multiple levels
- Attract/Retain effective teachers by continuing to offer competitive salaries and providing enhanced career opportunities.

Included in the grant for the 2023-24 school year were:

- One full time Instructional Coach (Elementary)
- Stipends for three Middle School teachers (in late leaving of Andrew Lundgren) to assist with scheduling, data, and instructional practices.
- One part time Instructional Coach (High School)
- Business Partnerships/STEAM Coordinator
- Technology Integrationist
- Mentor Teachers (for in house mentoring program described above)
- Members of Building and District Leadership Teams

5. Reports & Communication

Learning and Development was responsible for writing the following state and federal reports, grants, publications, and communications:

- Annual Yearly Progress Report
- CASA (Consolidated Accountability and Support Application)
- Assessment Assurances
- CSIP (Consolidated School Improvement Plan)
- Universal K-12 Desk Audit
- CRDCR (Civil Right Data Collection Report)
- TLC Planning, Modification and End of Year Report
- District Brochure
- District Communications to Board, Families & Media
- School Safety Grant (State and COPS)
- STEM Scale Up