

# Knight Administration

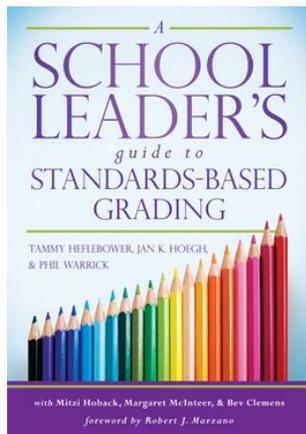


## November

### Mark Dohmen, Superintendent Report

Starting our 2016-2017 school year, Erik Wahl at our SAI Conference invited Iowa Administrators to rethink how we envision teaching and learning in today's classrooms. I would like to take this a step further and ask everyone: How do we as educators, parents, and community members cultivate creativity, provoke innovation and problem solving, and kindle a passion for learning?

I think the answer to this question starts with three things: Take care of yourself, take care of each other, and let others take care of you. In the best-seller book, *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change*, authors Joseph Grenny and his colleagues describe a model for getting the results we want. They note, leadership "requires changing hearts, minds, and operations to create long-term, sustainable positive changes, as opposed to simply managing people through tasks or inspiring short-term, specific actions." As a team we can accomplish the results we want for all our students for years to come. Help us create a world of opportunity in our own backyard.



### Mary Bendixen, JR/SR High Principal

The Junior-Senior High has identified four building priorities to improve the learning environment for our students: Standards-Based Grading, Multi-Tiered System of Supports, Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports, and Social Climate. We have established a leadership team for each initiative. While each is of great importance, my top priority at this time

is moving us forward in the implementation of Standards Based Grading in grades 9-12.

### **Standards Based Grading**

The SBG team has met several times and had some very productive conversations regarding the progress made over the past two years and also what needs to happen to move us forward this year. They identified three areas that need immediate attention:

- 1 - Establish a proficiency scale that will be utilized at all grade levels, 7-12.
- 2 - Develop the process for converting a standards-based grade to a letter grade.
- 3 - Set aside time for staff to work on proficiency scales for the priority standards.

In order to accomplish item #1, the SBG team developed four options and presented those to staff for discussion and a vote. Those four options were then narrowed down to two followed by a vote which resulted in a 50/50 split. The SBG team met again to discuss and make a final decision to adopt this North Cedar 7-12 Proficiency Scale for Standards Based Grading:

- 4 - Advanced
- 3 - Proficient
- 2 - Developing
- 1 - Emerging
- 0 - Lack of Evidence

The SBG team and I agreed it's the most logical choice since it uses the descriptors that the elementary and junior high have been using for several years and will provide consistency to students and parents as they move up through the grades. With the addition of a 4th level and a numerical rating scale, it fits well with high school courses. This decision has been shared with the 7-12 staff.

We are currently working on item #2 and have developed a conversion process that we will be piloting in the near future. We are collaborating with the PowerSchool team at Grant Wood AEA to finalize details of the proficiency scale and the conversion process. Once we have that set up correctly within PowerSchool, we will have a few teachers test out the scale and the conversion process. To address item #3, we will set aside time during our professional development days on November 14 and December 12.

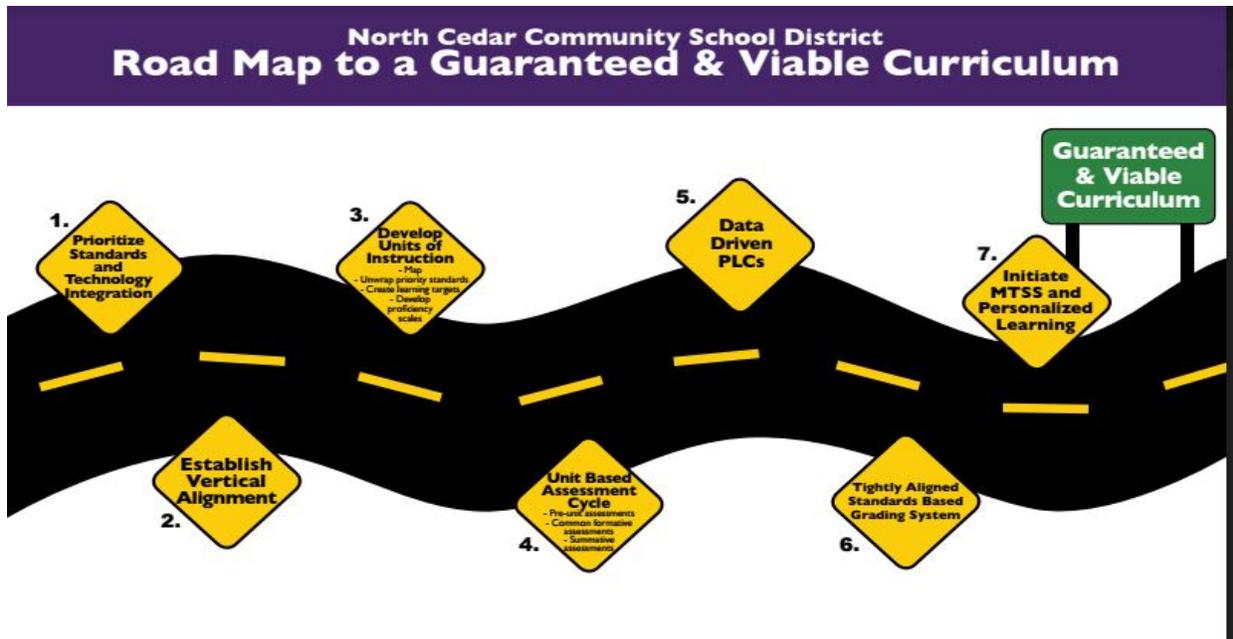
### **Jenny Horman, Elementary Principal**

The elementary has committed our work this year to ensuring we have a guaranteed and viable curriculum. The first step in accomplishing this goal was for our teachers to look at their core standards in literacy and math and identify their priority standards.

As an elementary we set aside time last year for teachers to work together in grade level teams to identify priority standards. Priority standards are those that call out the most rigorous work. Priority standards support all other standards that are nice to know. They are the essential standards. This year, teachers are continuing their work with the priority standards and are unwrapping each of these.

Unwrapping standards helps us truly understand what students know and should be able to do. The process of unwrapping gets at the very essence of learning by identifying key concepts and skills and zeroing in on essential questions. By identifying and unwrapping priority standards we create a tool that will help us to determine:

- What the students need to learn
- How to best teach what the students need to learn
- How to assess the learning
- What to do for students who have already learned the concepts
- What to do for students who need additional instruction



## Our Mission

The mission of North Cedar Community School District, in partnership with its community, is to ensure a safe and caring environment for each student, providing the essential knowledge, values, skills, and attitudes to create lifelong learners who are responsible, contributing, and productive citizens in a changing and increasingly diverse world.