Happy Holidays

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December

7	Science Leaders Network
12	Math Leaders Network
13	County Principals Network
14	District Leadership Team Meeting
20	Cultivating Leadership County Meeting (Cohort 3)
21	ML County Networking

*HOLIDAY BREAK: Dec 23rd - January 7th

January

8	Records Day (No Students)
11	Early Childhood County Network
12	County Instructional Coaching Network
15	District Full Day Professional Development Day
16	Assistant Principal County Network
18	County SEL Steering
	District Leadership Team
31	Cultivating Leadership County Meeting (Cohorts 1/2)
	County Principals Network

District Leadership Team Update

by Dave Minsker, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

The District Leadership Team (DLT) is in full swing and have been meeting since the middle of October. Your building leadership group has committed their time and efforts to supporting you at the building level in your professional development initiatives and creating a collaborative and engaging culture. The district team is wonderful to work and learn with. There has always been a focus on building leadership capacity within our buildings and district, and we have continued that work.

The district team have spent the past 5-6 years focusing on individual leadership skills. Learning leadership strategies, analyzing our own strengths and weaknesses as leaders, and talking about important ways we can use leadership to move people toward a common goal (student achievement). Leaders set out to learn from each other to make their own skills better. Leaders try to see the big picture and how different parts of our district function and fit together. The end goal is for students to leave us college and career ready. All components of our district have a hand in that, and our leaders need to understand what those components look like, so we can all push toward that common goal.

This year we put all this to the test by seeing how leadership and its critical components (goal/vision setting, culture creation, enacting effective systems of support, and more), looks like in our district. Each building team is presenting to the district team on these areas so we can learn from each other and see the dynamics of each buildings culture. Knowing who we are is critical in making decisions how we can improve and understand what makes our district so great.

As the year goes on you will see parts of this work through the communications from your building team. Second semester we will also work on the 24-25 professional development calendar, so expect a survey from your building team. I appreciate the collaborative culture we have created in our district, and continue to look forward to using that to improve on skills in the name of student success and achievement.

Math Matters
by Annette Macfarlane, District Math Coach

Embracing Mistakes

People of all ages feel unsure about their math skills and say, "I'm not good at math." This is because making mistakes, especially in front of others, can be intimidating. However, there are ways to shift this kind of mindset. By celebrating mistakes, we can create environments where students feel at ease taking academic risks. It's vital to establish spaces where students trust that they won't be criticized for mistakes/errors.

Many of our teachers include an activity called "My Favorite Mistake" in their daily lessons to promote this positive approach to learning. Through error analysis, pairs or groups of students review a solved problem, sparking discussions about their observations. They engage in mathematical talk about the types of mistakes they've identified and explore why the problem solver may have made those errors. These math discussions offer valuable insights into problem-solving methods, fostering strategic thinking among students. It's also important to be able to identify the type of error made and how to fix it.

Errors generally fall into three categories:

Careless Errors: These occur when students aren't paying close attention or are working too quickly. These mistakes stem from oversights rather than a lack of understanding of the math concepts. Examples include copying the problem incorrectly, writing down the wrong number, forgetting a negative sign, writing numbers in the wrong place value due to messy handwriting, and mistyping values into a calculator.

Computational Errors: This type of mistake happens when students make errors in the process of addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division. It's crucial to note that one error in a multi-step problem can lead to incorrect parts throughout the entire problem, resulting in an incorrect final answer. This is why teachers stress the importance of students showing all their work.

Conceptual Errors: These errors occur when students misunderstand underlying concepts. Identifying conceptual errors can be challenging, as students might perform all math computations accurately. Recognizing and addressing these conceptual errors is crucial for promoting a solid foundation of understanding in mathematics.

Knowing that mistakes/errors occur in all facets of mathematics and that we celebrate them, should help students understand that they are good at math. Through error analysis and a growth mindset, we can change our students' perceptions.

Building Thinking Classrooms @ Farms Intermediate

   Fifth and Sixth grade teachers are currently engaged in a professional development series centered around the book "*Building Thinking Classrooms*" by Peter Liljedahl. This program emphasizes creating classrooms where students go beyond memorization, actively engaging in thinking and collaboration. It's a place where everyone plays a part in discussions and collaborates to grasp concepts. This approach also includes performance tasks, encouraging students to apply their knowledge in real-world situations, and making meaningful connections between what they learn and practical scenarios.
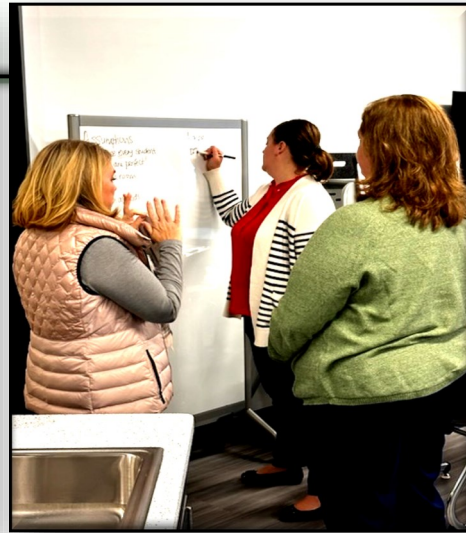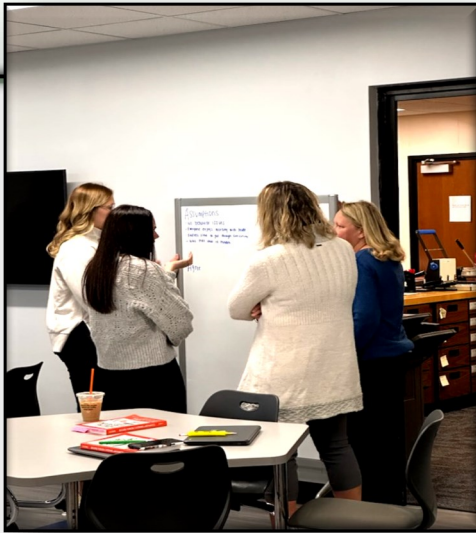
Fluency Coaching Cycle for Third-Grade Round Team

   The third grade team at Round Elementary is currently in the midst of a group coaching cycle. Our focus is on improving fluency in multi-digit subtraction. We achieve this goal by honing in on specific skills through engaging in math games.

A Moment of Science
*by Colin Costello, District Science Coach*

Crosscutting Concept (CCC) #4: *Systems & System Models*

We are deep into the year of learning science and although there is still work to do across K-12, it really feels like we are starting to settle in and become more familiar with our curriculum and assessments. Each grade level is in a different spot, but overall we are slowing down with curricular changes. Now we can start turning our focus to **how** we enact our curriculum to get the most learning out of our students. I look forward to partnering with everyone as we shift to being more intentional about our science instruction. For instance, how do we teach **systems and system models** throughout our curriculum?

When we are confused about how something works, it can be simplified by thinking about it through the lens of a **system**. Especially for young kids, thinking with a **systems** lens can help us make sense of complicated phenomena in more organized and purposeful ways, supporting understanding of how the world or a solution works.

What are Systems & System Models?

Like all crosscutting concepts, systems cut across all science disciplines and are a tool for understanding the natural world or a design solution. A **system** has components that are related and can interact, like ecosystems with various organisms that feed on each other. By defining our **systems** and determining the components, students can begin to describe how a system and its parts work and can change. When scientists do this, they are trying to identify the processes, flows, and changes that can occur, like with severe weather patterns. These models can be simple or highly complex, but all have the same elements:
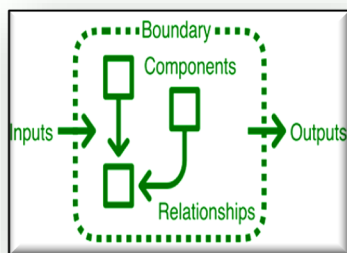
- A **boundary** - What is and is not part of the system?
- **Inputs & outputs** - What goes in and out of the system?
- Processes & **interactions** - What parts interact and in what way?
- **Flows** within the system - How does the system change when **components** and interactions change?
- Systems at different **scales** - At what level are you looking at the system? For example, food chain vs. ecosystem vs. biome
- System **models** - How do we represent the system?

How do I get my students using and thinking about Systems & System Models?

- Make **Systems & System Models** an explicitly taught part of instruction. Discuss systems, their boundaries, components, etc. with students in class to encourage this way of thinking.
- Use common language when referring to systems aspects. The list above is from NGSS and should be the same terms K-12. Consistency helps all students learn and develop language, especially MLLs.
- Have students define aspects of systems. Ask questions like "What is the boundary of the system we are studying?" ie: a leaf for photosynthesis or a tree to discuss how it gets its mass.
- Use systems to make connections between curricular activities. Students who can apply their learning connect details to core schema, like a system, and know how the aspects change in different situations. Returning to a system to connect each lesson's learning supports all students in doing this.
- Use systems to support modeling. Models can be drawings, physical replicas, or mathematical equations. Models get students thinking about systems and how they match the real world.
- **This is my favorite resource** for prompting students to engage in the **CCCs** like **Systems & System Models**. Anytime students are learning about phenomena, they can discuss it as a system, especially if you are going to model it. The **appendix for the progression of CCCs** is also a good resource for what level you should teach this to your grade level. Here is an **example lesson sequence** explicitly teaching system models for an idea.

Where and how are students thinking about Systems & System Models?

CURRICULUM NEWSLETTER

# The Lit Bit K-6

by Monique Alberts, District ELA Coach K-6

Happy December! The sprint is on to squeeze in all the learning we can before the holiday craziness arrives. The months of October/November were filled with lots of nonfiction reading across the district. From 2nd grade nonfiction text sets to 4th grade main idea work, classrooms were buzzing with excitement and talk around high-interest nonfiction topics. Kudos to so many of you for motivating and engaging our students in this important work!

K-4 teachers please remember to engage in Essential 9 module work before our January PD. This online module takes about 2 hours to complete. I am including the link below that allows you to register for Essential 9. Once the module is complete, please email me your certificate. Reach out if you have any questions or concerns, I am happy to help.

https://plp.michiganvirtual.org/?course=487

Finally, big shout out to Rebecca Spiker, Sofia Brenner, Lori Clay, and Stacey French for engaging in reading coaching cycles. It has been exciting to collaborate with each of these amazing educators to achieve student success. I enjoy watching each week of data go from just ok, to good, to great!

2nd Graders from Mrs. Komaromi and Mrs. Carpenter's classes explored different nonfiction topics across text sets. Students could choose a topic and read many different books across that topic to become an expert.
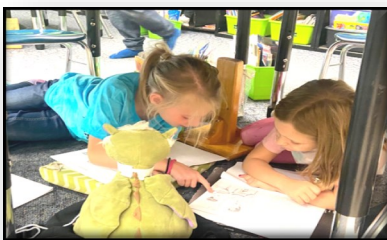

2nd Graders from Mrs. Spiker's class are working really hard to be good reading partners. Students have created a space (clubhouse), a routine for reading, and a tool to self-assess their partner work time each day.

4th Graders from Ms. Brenner's class engaged in a deep dive of Summary/Main Idea work in nonfiction. Students learned how to use a learning progression as a tool so they could set a goal and self-assess.
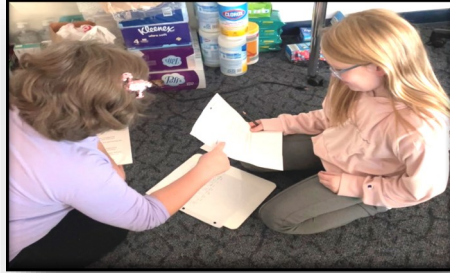
Literacy Tip #999,999,999...

Did you know that anchor charts aren't just for displaying? So many times we build these wonderful charts with our students, for them to just serve as colorful wallpaper on a bulletin board. These important charts can take on a much more active role in learning.

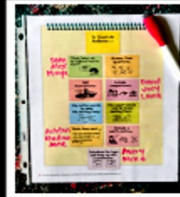Here are 6 ways anchor charts can support student learning in your classroom.

6 WAYS TO USE AN anchor chart

TO RESEARCH IN YOUR CONFERENCE
As you talk to the writer, you can reference the anchor chart to research strengths and next steps. You might tally the writing moves the writer is using and reflect on what they're ready for next!
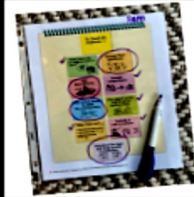
AS A SMALL GROUP PLANNING TOOL
Use an anchor chart to study your students' writing. Plug in names beside particular strategies your students are ready to learn and try out. Now you're ready to pull your small groups. Lots of names on one strategy? Make it a whole-group minilesson!

AS A GOAL-SETTING CHECKLIST
Demonstrate how a writer can use a small copy of the anchor chart as a checklist. Check or tally the strategies you're already using and set goals for future work.

AS A PARTNER GAME
Have partners hunt for evidence of different strategies in a friend's writing. Celebrate successes and set new goals!

TO ANNOTATE A MENTOR TEXT
Cut apart an anchor chart and use the pieces to annotate a mentor text. Have writers hunt for evidence in the piece. Then, they can try those strategies, too!

IN YOUR MINILESSON
Build your anchor chart WITH kids across your minilessons. You might also add examples, sketches, photos, language stems, or additional strategies to support independent work!

📚 Literary Lessons

by Sarah Demgen, District ELA Coach 7-12

"Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home." — *Edith Sitwell*

The winter months are upon us! This brings up visions of family, coziness, hot cocoa, and piles of books next to a fireplace. There are also visions of common assessment data, semester exams, catching students up on missed work, and preparing for the second semester. A lot is going on during November, December, and January. Make sure you take time to enjoy these early winter months while also setting yourself up for success when you return in 2024. I am currently home with my new baby and I am hoping that all of you get to enjoy the holiday break!

Illuminate Reminder

By the end of the first semester, the following common assessment data needs to be entered in Illuminate:

⇒ **7th Grade**: Narrative On Demand & Informative On Demand
⇒ **8th Grade**: Argumentative (Literary Essay) On Demand
⇒ **9th Grade**: Informative On Demand
⇒ **10th Grade**: Literary Analysis On Demand
⇒ **11th Grade**: Narrative Post On Demand
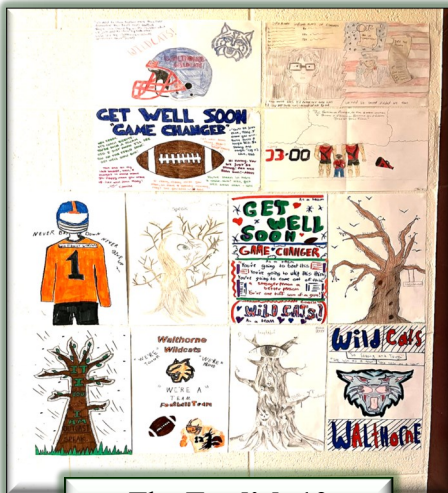
The **English 10** students created visual representations of the books they read during a Multigenre Unit.
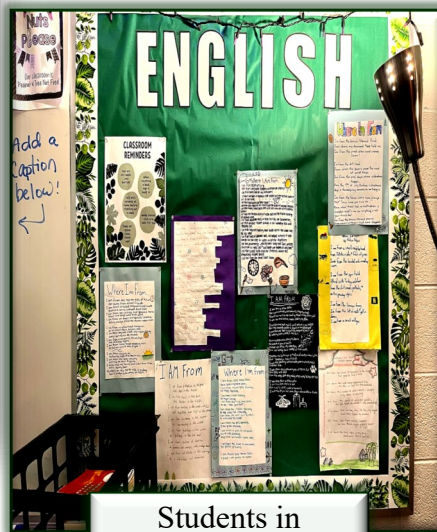
Students in **English 11** wrote poems to start the year.
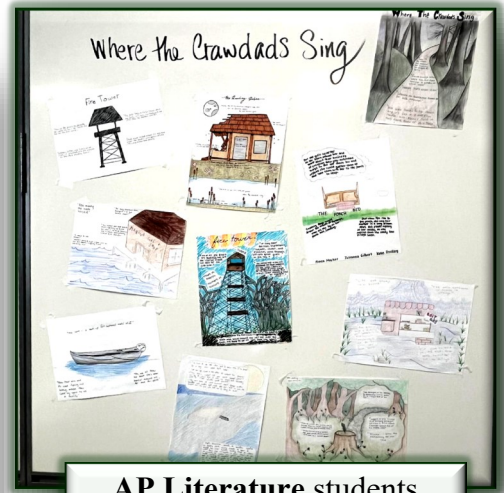
AP Literature students have to show their understanding in multiple formats. These are symbolic representations from a book study they recently completed.

Technology

Jason Watkins Network Admin / Tech **David Allward** Network Admin/ Tech	**Stacie Motz** Data Collection/ Submission, and Instructional Data Coordinator	**Scott Usher** Director of Technology	**Dave Larson** Network Engineer **Cameron Montney** Network Admin / Tech	**Ryan Fox / Lucas Johnson** System Engineers **Jen Grabowski** Help Desk

## ChatGPT and other AI Potentially Linked to Increase in SPAM

by Scott Usher, Director of Technology

There has been a lot of discussion in the past 6 months regarding Artificial Intelligence and the potential good it can bring. Unfortunately, there has also been much conversation about the possibility of it doing harm. An annual report by SlashNext Threat Labs has noted a trend potentially linking a 1,265% surge in malicious phishing emails since the fourth quarter of 2022, and a 967% increase in credential phishing attacks. Credential phishing attacks are those phishing emails that are intended to obtain your user ID and password information. Bad actors are leveraging AI like ChatGPT to help them write increasingly sophisticated phishing messages that some of us may be more likely to fall for.

What does this mean for us? We need to be extra vigilant guarding against phishing attacks. If your "spidey sense" tingles at the site of a certain email, listen to it, you are probably right.

⇒ Verify the source of the email.
⇒ Pick up the phone and make a call before just blindly clicking on links.
⇒ Be SURE you know the email is legit.

Let's not let those scammers get us.
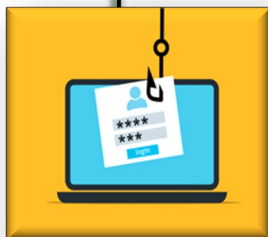
New Phones

A friendly reminder - some of us in the district have still not recorded our names, unavailable messages, or changed our passwords on our new phones that we received in August. We ask that you please do this at your earliest convenience.

For assistance in changing your voicemail password, recording your unavailable message, and recording your name, refer to the Yealink Voicemail Functions white paper linked below.

Yealink Voicemail Functions (Quick Start)