

Dear Staff,

It's the PERFECT snow! You can bet your bottom dollar that Mr. Hillman and Mr. Clark are doing the "Happy Dance" about the lack of snow that fell this weekend. Predictions called for a couple of inches at least, and with only just enough to



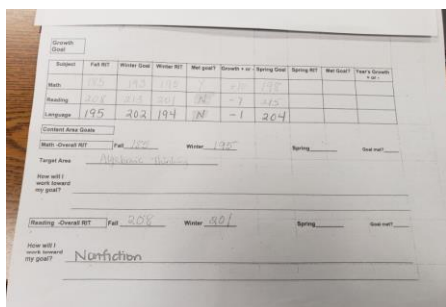
cover the grass and most importantly, it's not sticking to sidewalks and



Nettle Creek Family of Schools

drives, it appears that both gentlemen are going to get a reprieve from plowing this time around. Of course, the rooster will crow pretty early in the morning as we'll still need to check roads for driving conditions.

This past week provided a few great opportunities to see our staff and students at their best! On Wednesday, I joined Ms. Hokey and elementary teachers at their grade-level meetings. This time, I was first on the agenda, however. My purpose was to describe the project our corporation is undertaking over the next few months of tweaking the curriculum director/instructional coach job description. The learning opportunity for me however, came as I observed the process the school uses during grade-level meetings. Ms. Hokey sets the stage, and then teachers equipped with student learning data shared questions, celebrations and



concerns regarding the learning, behavioral progress, and overall development of various students that are on the teachers' radars for whatever reasons. Also included in the conversations was a Special Education teacher; Ms. Kaiser, the school counselor; and an interventionist if one is assigned to that grade level. Such broad representation of the professional staff at each of these meetings is a good

indication that the staff recognizes that it truly takes a team to assure student success. I spent my time jotting down phrases that I heard as the teachers discussed students. Here is a sample about multiple children at various grade levels:

- "He has the potential."
- "I'm worried about..."
- "He didn't meet any of his goals."
- "It seems at the beginning of the year it was motivation."
- "I wonder if sports will motivate him when he gets to the Junior High."
- "Did he pass IREAD3?"
- "Mom cries when we talk with her."
- "She was having trouble with friends at the beginning."
- "When I benchmark her..."
- "Her mom is married to her dad."
- "Lots of drama."
- "MAPS is slightly low. The goals are..."

All through the day, regardless of the grade level, I heard recognition of the challenges our students face, but never, even once, was a comment made about a situation that was hopeless, that blamed the student or that suggested that the team has tried everything, and that there is nothing else that can be done. Throughout the day there were great examples that the school operates out of the Growth Mindset paradigm. With some children, we're just not there yet!

I had an equally inspiring opportunity to see the Jr./Sr. high school on Friday during their Condensed Day activities! As most of us recall, Condensed Days were put in place to give teachers the opportunity to learn regularly while on the job. The session started with the staff sharing Celebrations. Several teachers shared. We send a tip of the Tiger's tail Mr. Kindt who shared with the group about Mr. Smith. Both gentlemen work in the Business Department. Beyond the specific details Mr. Kindt praised, I was struck about how powerful it was that a seasoned teacher like Mr. Kindt identified strengths that really matter in a great teacher in Mr. Smith who is relatively new to the profession!

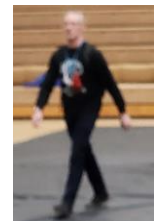
The meeting continued and Ms. Isaacs conducted a session for everyone explaining the student oversight component of Google Classroom. This oversight function came about as a result of teacher requests, is new in the building, and no one needed to be convinced that there is power in being able to see what students are doing on their Chromebooks before, during and after class. After the whole-group instruction, teachers chose one of three mini-sessions that were designed to meet the needs of teachers based on their level of experience with Google Classroom. We send a tip of the Tiger's tail to Mr. Tyner and his staff for staying true to the original vision for Condensed Days! And thanks to the teachers who are taking on Google Classroom. It takes intestinal fortitude to take on something new of this size!

We finished up hosting basketball Sectionals this week. We send a tip of the Tiger's tail to



Mr. Romack for the great job he did throughout the season preparing the boys' team for the event. Northeastern was a tough opponent with which to start, but the team played with a lot of heart and made us all proud!

On Saturday, the Winter Guard appeared in a regional competition at Hamilton Southeastern. We send a tip of the Tiger's tail to Mr. Harter for supporting these students and putting together a great show. The students' performance made parents and the rest of us in attendance proud to be Tiger fans!



Yours for another successful week with children!

WD

