


District Specialists

H.E.L.P. NEWSLETTER

September/October 2017

HONORING EDUCATORS' LEARNING PRACTICES



Hello!

Welcome to our first monthly newsletter. Every month we will provide fun, engaging strategies to try out in your classroom (K-12!), as well as news and training information. If you have a question, or would like us to help you in any way, please contact us. We are here for you!

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Information

Looking for the standards alignments for math, language arts, science, and social studies? They are all located on the district website under “Curriculum” -- “District Curriculum”-- “Bemidji Area Schools Academic Standards.” This resource will align the curriculum to the state standards.

Who We Are and What We Do

Gigi Nicoson- Hello! I am the District RtI Reading and Social Studies Specialist. My office is located at Horace May, but I am here for all teachers in all buildings, including middle and high school. Prior to this position, I taught for 10 years in grades 1, 3, 5, Title 1, and Indian Ed Math. I also hold a K-12 reading license. My job is to provide support, resources, and professional development opportunities to teachers. What does this mean? I can help you implement or fine tune language arts or assessment strategies. I am available to meet with you one-on-one, observe your lessons and offer feedback, and model strategies. I look forward to working with and getting to know the fabulous teachers throughout our district this year!

Amanda Mix- Hello! This is my third year as the District RtI Math/Science Specialist. My office is located in Lincoln Elementary's library, but I love to help and visit teachers K-12 whenever I can. Before I became a math specialist, I was a Title I interventionist for 8 years. My job is to provide resources, coaching opportunities, and support to teachers as they create a positive math environment for their students. Whether it is implementing a new strategy or intervention, providing professional development opportunities and guidance, or helping you promote engagement and mathematical success within your classroom, I am here to provide encouragement and support. I enjoy working with Bemidji's talented and passionate teachers and staff and I am looking forward to another amazing school year!

Jared Blanche- Boozhoo everyone, I am the American Indian Culture and Curriculum Specialist for the District. That means I am a resource for teachers to learn more about local American Indian culture, assist with teaching strategies for American Indian students and provide lesson plans and resources for the district. This is my first year in the district, I am originally from the Red Cliff Reservation on the very northern tip of Wisconsin and have worked in several districts until getting my position here including the Duluth area! Feel free to contact me with anything I can assist with, my office is in the Middle School and I am more than willing to go anywhere in the district to meet with you. Miigwetch for your time and I am looking forward to meeting the educators here in the Bemidji School District!

Leo Alberti- 안녕하세요! After 15 years of teaching art it is time for me to reintroduce myself as the new technology integration specialist:) Over the coming year I will be helping across the district as we continue finding new and exciting ways to implement technology into the amazing things everyone is already doing. The main focus right now is on all things Google including Gmail, Drive, Sites, Docs, Sheets, Forms, Classroom and beyond. There have also been some great ideas in regards to lesson recording and I will soon begin making regular "Tech Tip" videos that will be shared with all of you. Feel free to drop me a note at anytime if you would like to meet one on one or with a small team looking to learn how to use a new resources. I hope all of you have had a fantastic start to the school year and I look forward to another great get in Bemidji!

Upcoming Trainings

October 12- Math Expressions and Think Central at Lincoln 3:45-4:45 (K-5)

October 17- Running Records at Lincoln 3:45-4:45 (K-5)

October 25- Poor Students, Rich Teaching at Paul Bunyan 3:45-4:45 (K-12)

November 2- Using MAP to Create Small Groups at Lincoln 3:45-4:45 (K-12)

November 16- Guided Reading at Paul Bunyan 3:45-5:00 (K-8)

November 30- Teaching Cultural Competence at Lincoln 3:35-5:00 (K-12)

Teaching Strategies

K-2 Reading: “Think Aloud” As you are reading a book aloud, pause every few pages and think out loud. Voice questions and comments good readers would be thinking as they read. For example, “I wonder why the boy is crying on this page?” “I notice that the illustrations just got really bright.” “The girl in the story is acting just like my little brother does which drives me crazy!” Eventually, have students model thinking aloud during a read aloud or small group.

K-2 Math: “Concrete, Representational, Abstract” Activities Cognitively, our brains, develop mastery on new skills in the same order this activity describes. If you are noticing students demonstrating a lack of understanding on a particular math concept, or if you are seeing a lack of fluency it is because they are needed to strengthen their concrete and representational skills on the topic at hand before they reaching mastery level (the abstract category). This activity is found on the District RtI website and can be taught as a classwide activity, small group, or individual intervention. Here is the link to this resource: <http://www.bemidji.k12.mn.us/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/CRA.pdf>

3-5 Reading: “Questioning” As you are reading a book aloud, plan quality questions ahead of time that meet all depths of knowledge. I like to write them on sticky notes and put them in the book so I don’t forget. As you are reading, ask the questions, give appropriate wait time, then let students share with a shoulder partner, or whole group. Make sure that you are mixing up the questions, so they are not all simple recall questions. Also, encourage students to tell you how they know the answer. What from the story gave them the clues to their answer?

3-5 Math “Identification of Common Word Problem Structures and Using Schema Based Strategies” The concept of word problems can be very intimidating to students who lack a strong mathematical foundation and/or reading ability. This activity helps build upon what students know by starting with one type of word problem and appropriately branching out so that students experience a mixture of different word problem formats. By allowing collaboration and discussions to

occur between students and the instructor, oral language and vocabulary will, also, improve. Here is the link to this resource:

<http://www.bemidji.k12.mn.us/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Word-Problem-ID.pdf>

6-12 Reading “Read Alouds” Big kids love to be read to, even if they don’t verbalize it. Use this time to read higher level, complex text to them and have a great discussion. Read poems, novels, short stories, current events, the list can go on forever. Just make sure it is interesting to your age group. Allow time for discussion, whether it be a whole class discussion or small groups. You can model so many good reading skills and strategies during this time and introduce students to new genres they normally wouldn’t choose for themselves. This can be done in any subject area too!

6-12 Math “Reteaching Using Math Games” The best way for students to understand the relevance and significance behind the concepts they are learning in the classroom is through hands-on application. A game will, always, be more successful in reaching our students than a worksheet of problems the students never asked. Games allow high-level questioning to occur, collaborating, an informal observational assessment option by recording and listening to student responses, and an engaging way to peak student curiosity. This intervention can be done in a class-wide, small group, or individual format. Here is the link to this resource:

<http://www.bemidji.k12.mn.us/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/General-Re-teaching-with-Games.pdf>

K-12 Technology “Google Sites” Throughout the school year create a classroom website as a “one-stop-shop” for everything relevant to your classroom. Post announcements, classroom rules, assignments and due dates. Even embed a Google calendar to keep track of special events or develop a page for various classroom resources. This can be done with any class and is a fantastic way to share information with students and parents alike!

American Indian Culture Tip: “American Indian or Native American?” Something to keep in mind in addressing many of our American Indian students is wording. The term “American Indian” is used broadly by the Minnesota Department of Education and is mostly preferred. “Native American” is not offensive but not the preferred vernacular. Also many people would like to be addressed by their individual nation such as an Ojibwe or a Dakota. Another thing to keep in mind is asking the person or student what they would prefer, asking them in a respectful manner is always a good choice! Things to avoid are the term “Indian” and “native” on their own, as they may be taken in offense, along with culturally inappropriate nicknames like “chief.”