



# TEACHING & LEARNING NEWSLETTER

A monthly newsletter designed  
for **Norwalk Educators**

**WELCOME BACK!**

**HAPPY  
NEW YEAR!**

We hope the winter break provided you with time to rest, relax, and recharge your batteries. We all certainly deserved some respite from everything the year 2020 threw at us! As we move into 2021, we know the Warrior Spirit will be alive and well in all of you. Take time to reflect on everything you are grateful for and get ready to share your passion, energy, creativity, care, and commitment with your students and your colleagues. YOU are what makes this organization amazing and we are so grateful for you and the work that you do!

Here's what's new in  
this issue:

**COACHING CORNER**

**DISTANCE LEARNING  
PLAYBOOK**

**NSEF  
ANNOUNCEMENT**

**NEW TEACHER  
SPOTLIGHT!**

# Coaching Corner



**Teacher:** Jenna Stiegelmeier, Math 7  
**Instructional Coach:** Kirsten Britt



**Goal:** Students will be able to add and subtract linear expressions and simplify expressions by combining like terms, factoring, or using the distributive property.

**Results:** Jenna is most excited about the growth students made during this unit. Nearly every student (91%) showed progress towards proficiency. Even with a high number of students on quarantine during at least part of this unit, 64% of students ended up with an assessment score of 3 (or higher) and Jenna feels confident that the reteaching already planned for the next unit will help even more students demonstrate mastery of these learning targets.

**Highlight:** One strategy implemented was targeted instruction to small groups. These ability-based groups were put together using evidence from student work to ensure students were getting the specific reteaching they needed. When reflecting on this coaching cycle, Jenna said, "I will incorporate small groups more - because I see the benefit of that scaffolded instruction. It definitely had a positive effect (on my students)."



**Teacher:** Anna Wellman, First Grade Teacher  
**Instructional Coach:** Renae Hodge

**Goal:** Students will be able to use strategies to add and subtract within 20 and will become fluent with addition facts to 10.

**Results:** Watching students grow in both skills and confidence was Anna's highlight of the coaching cycle. At the beginning of the unit only 16% of the students were proficient on the fluency standard. By the end, every student showed growth during this unit with 94% of the students reaching proficiency in their fluency standard. 100% of her students showed growth in the ability to use a strategy to solve an addition problem. Anna is currently helping the child who did not reach proficiency by giving her an additional math intervention and is confident this will help her to continue to grow.

**Highlight:** During the coaching cycle we used multiple teaching strategies but the ones that Anna felt made the biggest difference were; distributed practice, gradual release and giving students specific feedback on the learning targets and success criteria. "Letting students know what the learning target and success criteria are for the lesson allowed me to give a more targeted lesson, practice, and feedback to my students. This also allowed me to have evidence of learning so that if students needed additional support I could give it to them immediately to ensure that nobody was falling through the cracks."

**Interested in working with a coach? [Contact Us Today!](#)**

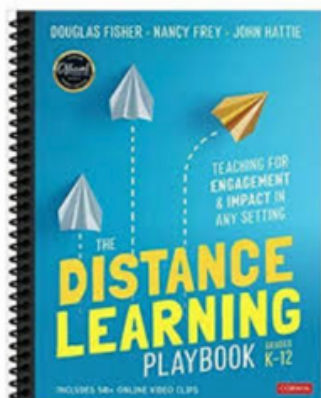
Oviatt ~ Renae Hodge, Michelle Tomkins

Orchard Hills ~ Kathie Phillips

Lakewood ~ Pam Nichols

Secondary Campus ~ Deanne Berg, Kirsten Britt, Sara Kratzer & Kerri Levi

## DISTANCE LEARNING PLAYBOOK :



Nearly two dozen secondary teachers and instructional coaches are currently engaged in a book study of *The Distance Learning Playbook, Grades K-12: Teaching for Engagement & Impact in Any Setting* by Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, and John Hattie. Some are participating to earn renewal credit, while others are using this opportunity for TQ hours. Topics in this book include teacher-student relationships, teacher clarity, engagement, feedback, and more - all through the lens of distance learning. The study is designed to give participants the opportunity to experience some of the strategies in the book from the student perspective, including both synchronous and asynchronous options. Participants also have the opportunity to complete a theory-demonstration-practice-feedback loop by implementing one of the strategies described in the book. One of the biggest takeaways from the book is that, "Effective teaching is effective teaching, no matter where it occurs," and many of the strategies in the book apply in remote and in-person learning environments.

## NSEF ANNOUNCEMENT

Each fall the Norwalk Student Education Foundation hosts an event to raise funds for the students and teachers of Norwalk Schools. This fall, NSEF was unable to host an in-person event, but instead will be holding a pledge drive to continue to raise funds for Norwalk Schools.

This year the funds raised through the pledge drive will be divided between all of the PLCs in the district. Each PLC will be given funds to help meet the needs of their students. Specific information will be coming soon!

A huge thank you to the NSEF Board for their continued support of Norwalk Schools!



# NEW TEACHER SPOTLIGHT



## **LAUREN STEPHENS**

1st Grade Teacher  
Oviatt Elementary

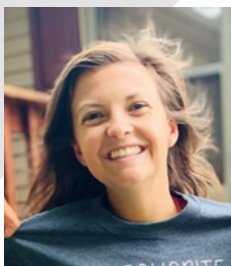
Lauren Stephens is a new face on the kindergarten team at Oviatt Elementary this year. Lauren comes to us with two years of experience teaching kindergarten in her hometown of Goshen, Indiana. A graduate of Indiana University, Lauren made her way to Norwalk after her husband, Josh, took a job with the Iowa Cubs. Lauren enjoyed exploring all of the new things the area has to offer this summer. When she is not at school you might find her visiting family, traveling, shopping, or watching HGTV home flip shows. Lauren loves the positive and supportive community she found when she came to Norwalk. In her words, "The district is driven to the success of students and teachers. Everyone I meet has been kind and welcoming. I truly could not ask for a better place to teach!" Welcome to Norwalk, Lauren!



## **AMANDA ROBINSON**

2nd Grade Teacher  
Orchard Hills Elementary

Amanda Robinson is one of the new faces on the second grade team at Orchard Hills this year. She is a University of Iowa graduate with seven years of teaching experience. Before coming to Norwalk, Amanda taught kindergarten, second, and third grades in the Des Moines Public School District. A fun fact about Amanda is that she grew her first garden this past summer. Amanda loves the supportive staff and wonderful students in Norwalk. We're glad you're a Warrior, Amanda!



## **BROOKE TRAUTSCH**

4th Grade Teacher  
Lakewood Elementary

Lakewood Elementary welcomed a couple of new teachers to the fourth-grade team this year. One of them is first-year teacher, Brooke Trautsch. Brooke is a Grand View University graduate and originally hails from Wisconsin. In her spare time, Brooke enjoys being outside, reading, and going shopping. She says that everyone in Norwalk has been so helpful and wants what is best for teachers. Welcome, Brooke! We're glad you're a Warrior!



# NEW TEACHER SPOTLIGHT



## **MATT ANDREWS**

Special Education Teacher  
Norwalk Middle School

The band room may not be the only place at Norwalk Middle School where you'll hear the sounds of drums or a guitar. That's because one of NMS's newest special education teachers, Matt Andrews, is also a semi-serious musician who has played in many different bands around the Des Moines area. Mr. Andrews is teaching special education to our 6th-8th students this year. He is a Drake University graduate with two years of previous experience teaching AP Government and 9th Grade World History at North High School in Des Moines. Matt loves all of the students and staff at Norwalk Middle School where he feels privileged to work. Welcome to Norwalk, Matt!



## **BENJIMIN MCCARTNEY**

Instrumental Music Teacher  
Norwalk High School

Ben McCartney joined the instrumental music department at Norwalk High School this summer after spending five years as the Knoxville High School Band Director. This year, Ben teaches high school band, Jazz II, 6th grade band, and he teaches lessons to 8th graders. This graduate of Drake University enjoys playing basketball and golf as well as spending time with his fifteen month old daughter, Emery. Ben is enjoying the Norwalk community, students and staff. Welcome to Norwalk, Ben! We're glad you're a Warrior!



## **Teaching & Learning Department**

**Dawn Schiro, Shelly Vroegh, Nicole Linderman,  
Christie Beving, Lauren Phillips**