



Director of Learning

October 2025 Board Report

Teaching and Learning:

Learning is alive and well in District 66! It is truly inspiring to visit classrooms and witness firsthand the outstanding work of our students and staff. Our classrooms are filled with engaged, smiling students who are eager to learn each day. One of the highlights of my week is spending time in classrooms and observing the incredible learning experiences taking place across our schools.

Our K–5 science program continues to thrive. Under the leadership of Mrs. Gemmel and our dedicated teachers, students are exploring scientific concepts through hands-on, inquiry-based experiences. The excitement and curiosity in our classrooms are clear indicators that our students are not only learning science—they are *loving* it.

Assessment:

New this year, we have implemented what we are calling ***Data Digs*** in each building. These sessions are scheduled 4–5 times throughout the school year and are designed to engage staff in meaningful, data-driven discussions about student learning.

Under the leadership of the principal and myself, grade-level teams analyze reading and math data through a structured process. Initially, data is reviewed without student or teacher identifiers, allowing staff to focus on patterns, trends, and hypotheses. After this exploration, student and teacher names are revealed, and teams discuss targeted Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports to address individual student needs.

Overall, the data is very promising. Staff members are doing exceptional work, engaging in deep, reflective conversations, and using data to guide instruction and intervention planning effectively.

Professional Development:

In addition to our School Improvement and Institute Days, we have scheduled four major professional development opportunities for staff throughout the year.

The first opportunity is a four-part, hands-on workshop based on the book *Seven Strategies of Assessment*, facilitated by Joy DeFors and Kari Gemmel. Following that, staff will have the option to participate in a book study on *The Breakthrough Years*, which focuses on supporting adolescent learners. This study will be hosted by Tara Herndon, Julie Dudasik, and Teagan Halik.

After the first of the year, Joy DeFors and Kari Gemmel will offer a professional learning session designed to strengthen staff skills in providing effective feedback to students. Finally, in the spring, I will once again facilitate a book study on *Teaching with Empathy*.

All of these opportunities are offered outside of the regular school day, and participating staff will be compensated for their time.