

Innovative



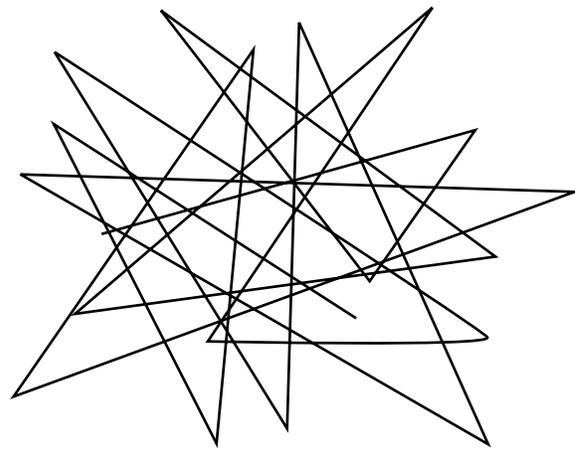
Superintendent's Conference Day

March 12th

Was Entirely Virtual



2021



Developing a Newark Central School District Superintendent’s Conference Day is no small task. It required a few months of coordination between Robin Uveges, Coordinator of Professional Development, District and Building Administrators, Technology Department/Integration Coaches and Teacher facilitators to prepare for the day.

Planning for the March 12th event was no exception, but with one additional significant challenge. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, it was all to be done virtually.

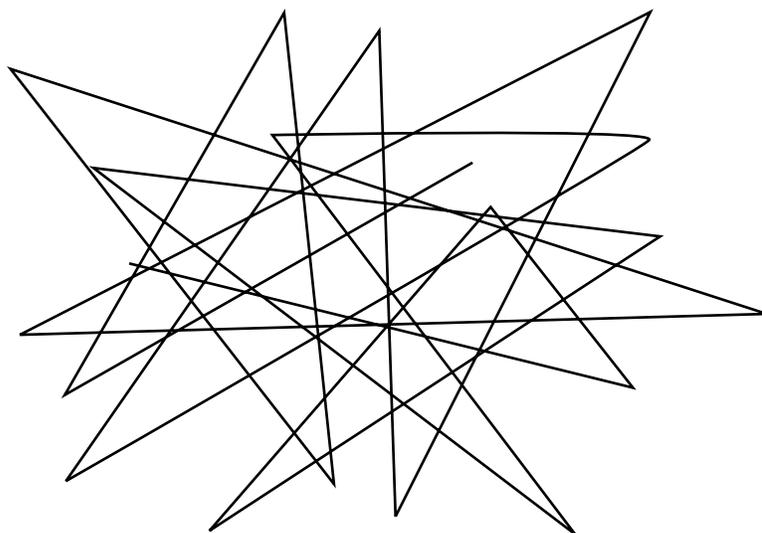
Suffice it to say, doing a conference day entirely remotely presented LOTS of challenges with the most important one being the staff’s ability to easily access the myriad *Zoom* meetings, presentations and other related materials for each of the five NCSD school’s individual professional development offerings.

However, since district staff has been receiving instruction, practicing and been utilizing their digital skills for more than a year, planners were confident they were *ready* for a virtual conference.

To facilitate, Uveges developed a clear, concise digital schedule with interactive links, provided by conference facilitators, that staff members would use to access the various day-long program offerings.

	7:30-8:00	8:00-9:30	9:30-11:30	12:30-2:15	Special Assignments	2:15-2:40	2:40-3:00
O P E N I N G High School Zoom link Middle School Teresa's Link	O P E N I N G	Teachers & Teacher Assistants: "Circles in the Virtual World" Link: HS Circles in the Virtual World Monitors: Monitor Mar SCD reflection 2021.docx	Teachers: "Deconstruction of Standards into Learning": A Reboot! Link: Zoom link TAs & Monitors 1. Uveges Zoom (begins at 9:30) 2. Playlist for Talking to Students.docx (Asynchronous work) 3. De-escalation Techniques (Asynchronous work) Click here for presentation	6-12 Dept. time, BHT w/ Danielle Danielle's Link UPK-12 Dept. Time (Art, Music, PE, LOTE, FACS, Health, Lib/Media) Links page 4 UPK-5, 6-12 TAs/Monitors: "The Power of Slowing Down" (Erika Ebert) Link: Zoom link	Microsoft 365 Training, 8-2:30 for those who signed up prior! Link: Teams Link Speech/Lang.: Annual Training 8-2:30	E F F E C T I V E	C L O S I N G
		Teachers & Teacher Assistants: "Circles in the Virtual World" Link: MS Circles in the Virtual World Monitors: Monitor Mar SCD reflection 2021.docx	Teachers "Advanced Literacies in the Content Areas" Link: Amanda's Link TAs & Monitors 1. Uveges Zoom (begins at 9:30) 2. Playlist for Talking to Students.docx (Asynchronous work) 3. De-escalation Techniques (Asynchronous work) Click below: Click here for presentation	6-12 Dept. time, BHT w/ Danielle Danielle's Link UPK-12 Dept. Time (Art, Music, PE, LOTE, FACS, Health, Lib/Media) Links page 4 UPK-5, 6-12 TAs/Monitors: "The Power of Slowing Down" Link: Zoom link	ENL: Develop Spreadsheet for family Communication. 8-2:30 Link: Lisa's Link		

Above, Page 1 of the 7-page digital schedule



Once the links were checked by NCS Technology Integration Coaches Aaron Sweet and Will Bean, the conference agenda, attractively packaged in one pdf document, was sent to every staff member, a week in advance, so they could have time to look it over and ask questions, in order to avert any access issues on March 12th.

Bean said the day went “really well” with only a few access-related questions from staff.

“Robin Uveges did an amazing job putting together the schedule for our staff to follow. She used a shared Microsoft Word document that contained all the different links (*Zoom* and shared documents) and important instructions for the entire day. This organization was extremely important, as it allowed all NCS staff members to navigate their learning plan from whatever location they chose to learn from that day, whether it was from their classroom, their office, or the comfort of their own home.”

Superintendent Susan Hasenauer agreed.

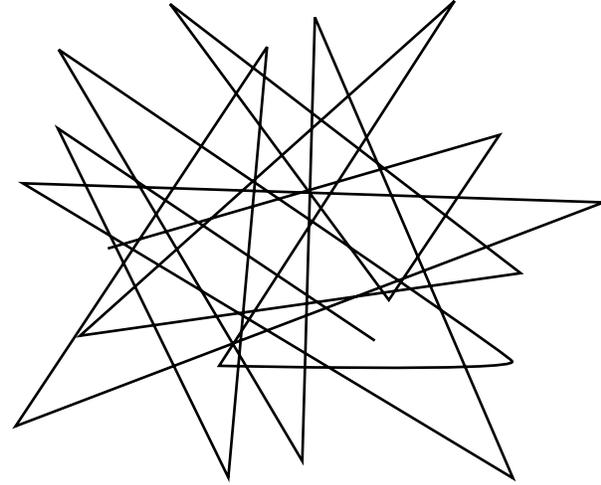
“While COVID has created challenges, there also have been positive unintended consequences we did not anticipate,” she said. “The format of this Superintendent’s Conference Day

being one of them. A year ago, this would have been unimaginable to plan or execute. Utilizing technology, we created differentiated learning opportunities for each school while still collectively pulling all staff members together from across the district to learn from each other and problem solve collaboratively to build a strong knowledge base in a variety of areas. It was a true representation of what teaching and learning looks like in the 21st century.”

The remote conference day also afforded staff the opportunity, if they had sufficient internet access for their devices, to participate from home. Otherwise, they accessed the conference from school. Not surprisingly, most of the staff participated from home.

“I think there were a lot of positive pieces to the virtual conference,” Bean said. “Staff could work from their own locations. There were timely breaks built into the schedule so there was no *Zoom* fatigue. I think most people would say the only drawback was missing the typical staff interaction you have at an in-person conference day.”





Like Hasenauer and Bean, Krista Lewis, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction is also very pleased with the outcome of the March 12th conference day.

“This was a day of rich learning and collaboration delivered virtually. It would have been hard to imagine a year ago that a conference day of this magnitude could be accomplished in this manner. I think it is just one example of all that we have learned and how we can leverage technology to meet the needs of all learners, whether that is students or adults. A huge thank you to Mrs. Uveges for the planning and coordination of this day.”

And what did the NCS D principals think about the virtual conference format?

Essentially, they all echoed the same sentiments. It was effective and allowed for *more* learning.

Typically, a conference day has either been held entirely at Newark High School or begin there at 7:30 a.m. and then after an opening session, staff from the other four schools would return to their building to receive that building’s professional development offerings.

Kelley School Principal Jeff Hamelinck: “I appreciate our Professional Development Coordinator and Technology Team's work on coordinating this great day of learning for our staff. These opportunities to learn and collaborate with each other improve instructional practice and student learning. I’ve heard positive reviews from staff.

Newark Middle School Principal Teresa Prinzi: “The day was well organized and the material was relevant for our teachers and staff. A great deal of positive feedback was shared by Middle School staff with regard to the virtual conference format. They appreciated the smooth transitions from one learning opportunity to the next that was afforded by the well-prepared schedule. The virtual conference kept them in the learning mode all day.

Perkins School Principal Rhonda Underhill: “I think the virtual format allowed teachers to accomplish more and be a part of many more learning opportunities because it eliminated transportation from one building to another and also moving from one classroom to another. Instead, people were connecting and learning all day with just one click of a button.”

Lincoln School Principal John Ginter: “Eliminating travel because of the virtual format allowed staff to just concentrate on learning. It also allowed staff the option to learn in their preferred setting. I was thrilled with the virtual conference day and thought it was a great success!”

Newark High School Principal Nick Ganster: "A silver lining of the pandemic for educators has been the creative and innovative approach that our teachers and staff have used to provide learning experiences for our students. The virtual conference day is a perfect example of how deeply technology has become engrained in our daily lives at school, and how it will positively impact our students and in the future.

Uveges is grateful that the virtual format for the entire conference day worked so well.

"Like any other conference day this one was accomplished through the dedication, creativity and collaboration among many individuals; we are truly blessed to have the capacity to do what is necessary for us to continue learning and growing together.

