

DRAFT MINUTES
North Dakota Teacher Center Network (NDTCN)
May 19, 2008
10 a.m. – 3 p.m. CDT
Hughes Education Center, Bismarck

Participants

Teacher Center (TC) directors in attendance were NDTCN President Marty Odermann-Gardner, NDTCN Vice President Doris Griffin, Jennifer Carlson, Pat Beil, Mary Geffre, Darlene Schwarz, Sandra Schilke, Deb Sisco, Valeria Becker and Leah Krauth. Advisory Board members in attendance were NDTCN Financial Representative Dr. Kris Warmoth, DPI Liaisons Valerie Fischer and Andrea Peña, Glenda Fauske, Beverly Sandness, Dr. Doug LaPlante, Dakota Draper, LeAnn Nelson and Sen. Larry Robinson. Also in attendance were Tom Geffre of Mayville State University and Dana Schaar of Clearwater Communications.

Welcome & Call to Order

President Odermann-Gardner called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Fischer moved to approve the agenda with the addition of an NDEA item. Griffin seconded the motion, and it passed.

Approval of Minutes

Beil moved to approve the minutes of the Feb. 4, 2008, meeting. Fischer seconded the motion, and it passed.

Discussion Draft of ND Instructional Coach Program

Draper and Nelson presented a discussion draft for the ND Instructional Coach Program. This program is under consideration by a professional development subcommittee of the ND Governor's Commission on Education Improvement, which is chaired by Lt. Gov. Dalrymple.

The NDEA wants to know if the NDTCN is interested in being involved in the process as the TCs have come up in discussions as an option to help implement instructional coaches in schools. Nelson said discussion is in the beginning stages, and she wasn't sure what it will look like in the end. A timeline and funding have not yet been discussed, although the current work is based on the Picus Report and likely will be presented in some format to legislators during the 2009 Legislative Session.

Schilke asked if the NDTCN would be governed by the REAs, and Nelson responded that she sees it as a side-by-side partnership. Draper clarified that the intention was to have the program governed by the NDTCN, not by TC policy boards as written in paragraph four of the discussion draft.

T. Geffre is concerned that work is already being done on some of these issues between the Mayville TC and Grand Forks, and he doesn't want to lose what's working. Schwarz added that Bismarck is implementing something similar next year on its own. This is allowed as outlined in paragraph two of the draft (any district with ADM over 185 would have the option of providing coaching services within their district).

Sisco pointed out that the NDTCN has been providing professional development for years and doesn't want the NDTCN to get lost as the legislature determines what will happen to the REAs.

There were questions about how the legislature sees the functioning role of the REAs and TCs. Beil stated that Valley City is transitioning to a TC role as professional development director working with the southeast REA (includes Fargo, Wahpeton, Valley City).

Fischer asked if a majority of districts belong to TCs. The directors said there are some gaps in the Fargo region and in the Carrington area. The Fargo School District has always been able to do professional development on its own because of its size and connection to North Dakota State University.

LaPlante wants to clarify the discussion draft in terms of governance by the NDTCN versus a TC policy/advisory board. Sisco believes it should be the NDTCN.

In response to a question about the “instructional coach pool,” Nelson said she envisions groups of teachers who come together with the help of a TC director and board to determine the need for coaching. The TC director would help facilitate the pool using a “train the trainer” model.

There has been some REA money for coaching/mentoring but not much. In the past, the NDTCN has been involved in a mentoring grant administered through ESPB.

Sisco’s primary concern is that the NDTCN can’t stretch its activities any further without additional funds. Odermann-Gardner asked what the role of the NDTCN should be in the program, assuming there’s funding, and the consensus was that the NDTCN should be involved as one of the Network’s goals is professional development. All agreed that there is a need for clearer definitions of the REA and NDTCN roles.

Nelson said this program is very focused on small rural districts and less so on districts like Fargo and Bismarck (only for under ADM 185, number from Picus Report). Odermann-Gardner asked about the issue of teachers’ distance from professional development training, and Nelson said part of Picus Report includes using technology to increase access.

Fischer asked if the NDEA supports the program, and Draper said they have the same concerns the NDTCN raised regarding clarity, including what is needed for professional development, the funding issue, and what teachers will be involved in training.

Odermann-Gardner commented that the NDTCN has been good about asking what teachers want and then providing it in terms of professional development.

Nelson will contact Dr. Doug Johnson, who is chair of the professional development subcommittee, about inviting NDTCN representatives to participate in the next subcommittee meeting.

Fischer moved to appoint Odermann-Gardner and Beil to attend the subcommittee meeting if invited, with Sisco as an alternate. M. Geffre seconded the motion, and it passed. Sisco thanked the NDEA for including the NDTCN in the discussion.

Financial Report

Approval of Bills

Treasurer Warmoth presented the NDTCN fiscal summary, with an ending cash balance to date of \$12,618.17. LaPlante raised a concern that the funds coming from DPI to the TCs are not recognized on the fiscal summary. Sisco moved to change to financial report heading to “Teacher Center Network Marketing Fiscal Summary,” delete the DPI operating column, and delete “Non-DPI” above marketing in second column. Becker seconded the motion, and it passed.

The directors asked Schaar to provide travel vouchers at future meetings.

The five TCs that have not yet received ND Game & Fish funds of \$200 must send an e-mail request to Warmoth.

Sisco moved to leave remaining dollars in the marketing fund at the end of the year and to address the issue of fund disbursement to the TCs next year. Becker seconded the motion, and it passed.

Fischer moved to pay the meeting expenses and \$500 to the West River TC for the president’s time. Griffin seconded the motion, and it passed.

Advertising Financial Account

Schaar reported that the advertising revenue for 2007-2008 was \$16,450. There is one account outstanding, but the check is expected in the next week.

Center Reports

Valley City – Beil

The TC policy board is very active and for the first time, with Beil's retirement, had to look at hiring. The position has been advertised. The TC doesn't receive the resource material requests it did in the past, but there are still some requests for "surprise" boxes and from rural schools. Most TC resource materials have been integrated into the Valley City State University (VCSU) library, except for HIV/AIDS and School to Work materials. Beil said it's important to have a plan for transition materials out of the TC, and many extra materials were distributed to teachers. To assist the incoming director, Beil has scheduled all professional development outside of Valley City for June. The new director will only have to deal with professional development in Valley City in August. The REA that Beil worked for is combining with the Fargo REA so the new TC director is being hired to do professional development only. Only one district won't continue as member of the TC (dues are \$25/teacher). Beil said there is some adjusting to do, but it's not bad. Everyone involved wants the professional development piece to stay at VCSU because of education. Also, VCSU values having the TC on campus, which provides lots of connections with students. VCSU provides the TC with space; it is a good relationship.

Mayville – Geffre

The TC is on the campus at Mayville State University (Mayville). Geffre is working on moving materials from the TC to the Mayville library. A new space is needed for the TC. The TC has a good relationship with the Grand Forks REA, and T. Geffre is on the professional development committee, which helps decide what the University of North Dakota (UND) and Mayville can do. The TC facilitates professional development meetings, holds monthly meetings of teacher groups, and is presenting an August workshop. Sometimes the teacher meetings are held at the TC.

Fischer asked if the REAs match the TC map. They don't, but there is no REA without a TC.

Grand Forks – Becker

The TC is housed at UND. The TC doesn't do anything for professional development because of the UND continuing education department offerings, which it helps advertise. Its main function is providing a newsletter and resources.

Lake Region – Griffin

The TC works closely with the REA; they host an August and January in-service together and work on others as well. Griffin said an accomplishment this year was holding teacher focus groups – teachers brought professional development plans and needs to discuss, and issues were prioritized. Work is being done to revitalize Sully's Hill in partnership with the REA and TC; grants have been secured to hire a full-time manager, and summer classes will be offered. Carlson is taking over the director position with Griffin's retirement. She is a current employee of the REA and was hired to provide tech support for the technology learning cooperative and IT coordination for the region. Carlson was involved in the teacher focus groups and planning process. The TC also partners with Lake Region State College for August and January workshops (facilities, logistics).

Minot – Sisco

Sisco e-mailed the directors the online link to the TC's summer programs. The TC is offering a StarLab training, and Sisco is looking for ways to attract more interest. The title of the HIV/AIDS training was changed to show it encompasses several healthy lifestyle issues. Construction has been going on in the TC office, and Sisco has been working on cleaning out books and reorganizing. A NASA class is also being offered.

Williston – Schilke

The TC is located at Williston State College. Schilke works with Dave Richter, who is the REA director. The Lewis & Clark Liberty Fellowship grant for history teachers continues. The TC's focus is professional development because it is the area where the TC can do the most good. There is a January inservice and summer professional development workshops, including NASA in August. The TC requires a minimum of 10 to register in order to hold a class. Materials do not get checked out much. Schilke is also working on the REA website.

Bismarck – Schwarz

Schwarz posts all the professional development activities offered by Bismarck Public Schools on the TC website and also provides links to university classes. The TC is offering StarLab training; Schwarz has been told the StarLab isn't getting used as much because of curriculum and teaching to benchmarks (Bismarck has two StarLabs). The TC purchased a VariQuest Cutout Maker to replace die-cuts; an advantage is the size of cutouts because everything is done on a computer (1" to 18"). The VariQuest cost \$8,000 (computer, some cutouts, cold laminator), plus it is \$8-10 for additional designs. Teachers do all the labor.

Wahpeton – Krauth

Krauth is not sure if she will be continuing as the TC director as she may have a teaching job. She doesn't know what the TC will do if she leaves. The TC board wasn't thrilled with the combination of the two REAs in southeast North Dakota. Beil says the proposal is for Valley City and Wahpeton TCs to work closely together, but there has been no word from Wahpeton TC board about the future. The TC offered HIV/AIDS training in February, a Readers Theatre, a Understanding the Culture of Poverty in June. Food, Land and People is scheduled for August. Krauth said it is hard to get teachers signed up; 25 is the minimum required for a class (200 teachers total in TC area). Some teachers go to Fargo for professional development.

West River – Odermann-Gardner

Odermann-Gardner distributed a summer workshop handout. The TC works closely with the REA and is located at Dickinson State University (DSU). All credits are processed through the TC office (with Minot State) so Odermann-Gardner knows what is coming up. Almost all workshops are held in cooperation with other entities, generally with a \$10-15 registration fee plus any credit fees. Sometimes DSU faculty teach courses. The TC is also involved in a CTE grant for technology. The January and August in-services are coordinated with the REA (TC does credit and logistics, REA pays for speaker, both do marketing).

Other Reports

DPI Report

Fischer said the NDTCN budget is a line item in the DPI budget. The 2007-09 line item was \$276,000. Fischer needs to know if the NDTCN wants to stay at \$276,000 or request an increase. DPI will present the same budget as the last biennium at the Governor's request, with an optional budget with increases. The last request was well justified and received nothing but support so Fischer believes it is reasonable to ask for more funds.

Fischer said that the school health unit has been restructured, and Peña will take over as DPI Liaison to the NDTCN. Fischer is still available to the NDTCN for questions.

Fischer raised concerns about the Amendment criteria. She appreciates that each TC is unique and serves different audiences but wants the NDTCN to make sure each TC has enough time to do professional development. TC director positions require 20 hours per week. Fischer stated that we have to make sure the NDTCN is strongly positioned in relationship with REAs. She is concerned about the possibility of losing Wahpeton coming soon after the Grand Forks struggle and loss of Fargo. It is important not to weaken the NDTCN because TCs are not meeting minimums.

Fischer said DPI will support the NDTCN request, and she will take the request and justification forward.

Odermann-Gardner asked Fischer what is the playing field is like with REAs at DPI. She also asked that, if the NDTCN asked for more funding, would it be in danger of losing existing funds. Fischer responded that that is probably not the case, and that Sen. Robinson and Rep. Aarsvold have always been strong supporters. Fischer said it is important to tie needs to outcomes and lay out history (no increase for seven sessions, increase last two sessions; from \$250,000 to \$276,000 for 2007-09). Odermann-Gardner asked if \$350,000 was too much (almost \$20,000 to each TC annually instead of \$15,000), and Fischer said it would probably be ok but had to be justified. The topic was then tabled until later in the agenda.

HIV/AIDS Funding

Peña provided new materials to be used by August. There were cuts in HIV/AIDS funding from the federal government so fewer dollars are available at the state level. The TCs have new contracts starting in March that have to be signed annually. This year is the first year of a five-year grant cycle. Peña will send an updated material list to all the directors.

ESPB Report

Sandness said that five hours will be needed for renewals effective July 1, 2010, and six hours in 2012. Effective August 1, special ed credentials goes to endorsement from ESPB. Background checks are required for all student teachers. A student teacher can get a 40-day provisional license to sub. Sandness promotes the NDTCN all the time – teachers call needing professional development so she refers them to the TC in their area. She said out-of-state teachers often lack classes. Odermann-Gardner commented there are many online classes through NDUS to meet these needs. Sandness has course links on the ESPB website.

Becker asked if there was a problem with education advisors providing wrong information about credit requirements. Odermann-Gardner said she always refers teachers to ESPB, and Sandness concurred that is what should be done.

Sandness' e-mail is besandness@nd.gov.

New Center Director Training

Carlson will be training with Griffin at Lake Region TC. Beil may overlap with the new director in Valley City (interviews next week, possibly hiring by June 11). Krauth is unsure of what will happen in Wahpeton. Carlson will let the NDTCN know if she needs further training. Odermann-Gardner stated that the NDTCN does fund travel for new directors to visit another TC.

Business Items

Election of New Vice-President

Sandness nominated Sisco to serve as vice-president. M. Geffre seconded the motion, which was amended to cast a unanimous ballot, and it passed.

NDTCN Budget Request for 2009-11

Discussion continued regarding what is a reasonable request for additional funds (2007-09 funds are \$276,000 with each TC receiving \$15,000 per year).

Robinson said this is an unusual time and some have a mindset of terrible times (drought, wind), but he believes opportunity is there if the drought doesn't last all summer. Some of his legislative colleagues are concerned despite the booming oil activity. Robinson mentioned other issues that impact the state: the federal deficit; ballot measures such as the income tax reduction, freeze on the permanent oil trust fund, and cap on government funding to rate of inflation; and rising energy costs. Robinson said the NDTCN can't be overly confident on an increased budget request. The loss of Rep. Aarsvold hurts, and the NDTCN needs to get to legislators this summer and then really ratchet up efforts after the election. Robinson also mentioned that the state had deferred many projects and the need to play catch up. Many groups are asking for additional funds because they have been underfunded. Robinson said the NDTCN and other organizations need to decide what kind of state we want – he said it is time to step up. The NDTCN needs to identify stakeholders for education – who are they and how we can get them to support the NDTCN. Robinson believes we have to invest in the state now and should start with the DPI budget presented to the Governor.

Odermann-Gardner asked Robinson what the NDTCN could reasonably ask for. Robinson said the NDTCN needs to be realistic about what is necessary and honest about the needs and provide appropriate justification, including funding progression. Robinson said the NDTCN needs to get to leadership and appropriations (handful of legislators that actually move legislation). He also said that the NDTCN needs to make more than one contact – continuous each month; go to legislative forums; ask teachers that use TCs to contact legislators. This should be a high priority.

T. Geffre suggested a request of \$320,000. Additional funds could be used to support high speaker travel expenses to North Dakota and also to increase director salaries.

Beil mentioned that a superintendent on the Valley City TC policy board told her that the ND Council of Educational Leaders (NDCEL) had voted at a recent meeting not to support the NDTCN by a vote of 11-13. Sisco mentioned that the NDTCN has fought successfully against past attempts to close the NDTCN. Beil will find the NDCEL meeting results and send them to Schaar, who will distribute with the meeting minutes.

Odermann-Gardner asked if the REAs are against the NDTCN. Beil said the Fargo REA director came to visit her to learn what the TC does. Robinson asked if the NDTCN has support from the school board association. Odermann-Gardner said she thinks there is a misunderstanding between the NDTCN and REAs and what each does; often they are working together to complement each other, and each couldn't function without the other. Griffin said they had to look at how to "limp" through on dollars available. Beil said the TCs have to have funding to do anything meaningful.

Sandness mentioned that she hears that many teachers are going out of state for professional development.

Beil said the TC dollars are often used to fund someone to be at the TC so collaborations are necessary to accomplish anything. Sisco said 1985 was the first year for NDTCN state funding (NDTCN formed in 1977). Beil said that increased advertising in the statewide newsletter shows the commitment of advertisers to the NDTCN.

Sandness moved to request \$360,000 for the NDTCN line item in the DPI budget for 2009-11. Becker seconded the motion. Odermann-Gardner then asked everyone to share his or her perspective about the NDTCN and the funding request and specifically how directors would use additional funds.

Draper said Fargo and Hillsboro, for example, are very different. To smaller school districts (that aren't like Fargo) with overwhelming needs, the NDTCN is invaluable. Sandness said the calls she receives are from mostly small schools looking for professional development in the area. She has directed Fargo teachers to the Valley City TC. LaPlante mentioned that the West River TC was woefully underfunded and there was quite a range in size/needs. West River TC struggled until DSU became involved. T. Geffre said Mayville funds are used to pay for the director salary/benefits, but there is nothing extra for equipment. M. Geffre said Mayville serves small schools. Becker said the TC can get materials that can be used by many schools that individual schools can't afford. Carlson said the Lake Region TC has a tight relationship with the REA and is able to serve small schools and Devils Lake. Sisco mentioned the last Bremer grant when teachers at a Bismarck meeting said they wouldn't miss the NDTCN. She is frustrated with lower numbers and said additional funds would help add service areas. Fauske said she represents educators from state agencies that need to share educational information with teachers. The NDTCN is their network to deliver information, and there is no where else to go. Griffin said she works closely with the REA, which has funded in-services with the TC doing legwork, coordination and paperwork. Neither could do it alone, and they are still looking at cutbacks with only \$15,000 per year. Schilke said she is focusing in more and more on professional development, but Williston is isolated and faces higher travel costs. Schwarz said there is a good partnership with Bismarck Public Schools and the TC, which allows TC longer hours for teacher access. Extra funds would be used to buy additional resources and fund professional development. Krauth said the \$15,000 goes for salary, and schools provide some of their professional development funds to the TC. Peña said the time is now for building on partnerships. Robinson asked how much engagement the NDTCN has with legislators. The NDTCN should have a checklist of contact with legislators – discuss funding history and how the NDTCN is a good investment (need talking points and handouts). He also said that if school administrators are not behind the NDTCN, then we have work ahead of us.

The motion for a \$360,000 budget request for 2009-11 passed with unanimous support by roll call vote.

Griffin moved to have Odermann-Gardner, Sisco, Schilke and Geffre serve on an NDTCN legislative committee. Becker seconded the motion, and it passed.

Annual Report Forms Approval

Schaar will change the district form title to “districts that are being served by your teacher center” and add a second check column to identify when individuals are TC members when their districts are not. She will also add a column for NDTCN financials to the annual report. Schaar will distribute the updated forms by the end of the week. All forms are due to Schaar by August 1.

Newsletter Recommendations 2008-09

All agreed to the newsletter recommendations; the only changes were to distribution dates for the statewide newsletter.

Brochure Status

This item will be tabled until the fall meetings. Directors should take pictures (300 dpi) of TC activities and e-mail them to Schaar for future use.

Potential Network Grant Projects

This topic was tabled until the fall meeting.

Clearwater Communications Contract

T. Geffre moved to increase the NDTCN 2008-09 contract fee with Clearwater to \$650 per month (up from \$600 per month). Sisco seconded the motion, and it passed.

Advisory Board Members

Beil will draft a draft to letter to Rep. Aarsvold thanking him for his many years of commitment to the NDTCN. Beil will send Schaar the letter. All directors should e-mail their electronic signatures to Schaar, who will add them to the letter and mail it.

The role of advisory board and a review of the constitution/bylaws will be added to the fall meeting agenda.

Sisco recommends Odermann-Gardner call Dr. Doug Johnson with NDCEL regarding the invitation to participate on the NDTCN Advisory Board, mentioning that participation in the past had been a courtesy, but the board is more active now and the NDTCN wants administrator input.

The NDTCN needs to replace Rep. Aarsvold on the advisory board; Sisco will ask Rep. Matt Klein of Minot to participate.

Website

Schaar will alphabetize the organizations include on the NDTCN website “links” page and delete the State Math and Science Alliance and Dakota Dinosaur Museum. Sisco moved to post only the current and previous year’s minutes on the NDTCN website “director’s area” page. Beil seconded the motion, and it passed. M. Geffre moved to post the most recent meeting minutes on the page in draft format. Sisco seconded the motion, and it passed. Posting of the NDTCN annual report on the website was tabled until the fall meeting.

Adjournment

Sandness moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:15 p.m. Draper seconded the motion, and it passed.