Dear Region 1 Members,

I want to take a minute to thank those of you who were able to make it to our meeting today, I know how busy we all are. We had 9 members who were able to attend. Below is a list of things that we talked about today. We had some great discussions on a number of topics. If you were unable to attend, I understand. We will have more meetings starting in January (December is a hectic month).

1) We started our meeting with a review of the fall board meeting that was held in October. I informed everyone that the submission dates for The Voice are Dec. 13, March 17, and May 2. I informed everyone that you can find The Voice on the NDAESP website, and that The Voice is always looking for articles or pictures of things you are doing in your buildings. You can do so by contacting Dave Hanson at D.Hanson@sendit.nodak.edu.

We also reviewed over a few things from our State Representative Dave Steckler. We discussed the by-law changes and how it appears that our voting rights will be saved. Also we discussed the upcoming National Conference in Nashville, as well as the fact that at this time nothing has been set for 2015.

As far as information from NDCEL, the big information was in regards to the State Spelling Bee. NDCEL will no longer be sponsoring the spelling bee or Close Up, and right now there is no one in line to take charge of it. We did discuss our County Spelling Bee and how even if the state bee is no longer, we will still have a County Bee (as long as we have a group willing to support it).

2) Midwinter Conference: I discussed the upcoming conference in Fargo that will be held Feb. 5-7. We also discussed the vote that we had earlier this fall regarding the location of the midwinter conference, and by popular demand it was decided that we would have Bismarck be our central site. We then talked about the possible responsibility of each region taking a turn to plan the event with help from NDCEL. The overall feeling on this was positive. People seemed to like the idea of the regions still running things because they liked the diversity the different regions bring.

3) Excessive Tardies and Absences: Brad Foss from Watford City brought up an issue he has been having trouble with, tardies and absences. This led to some great discussion as this is a topic everyone seems to be dealing with. Dawn Hurney from District 8 shared with the group an incentive plan that they have introduced in which students can earn little trinkets on a weekly basis for good attendance and no tardies that seems to work well for them.
4) Cold Weather / Recess Policies: This also led to some great discussion. Since many of our new families coming in are new to North Dakota and winter, it appears that we are all having issues where parents are concerned about their children going outside for recess, even when it's 30 degrees above zero!! Most districts have a set temperature, ranging from 0 to -10 with or without wind chill. It seemed that all of us held to our policies, and the only wiggle room we gave parents was if they had a note from a doctor because their child is sick (or was sick).

5) Modified Report Cards: As we were discussing policies, the question came up about how we mark a report card if the grades are modified. Most schools use a box that is checked or use an asterisk to signify a modified grade. This led to a discussion on students who are not on an IEP but still have some work modified. Do we still mark the grade as modified? Students do not need to be on an IEP to have modified work, which led some of us to believe that you would not have to mark it as modified. One question that was asked is whether or not the student was able to understand the skill or concept? Whether they are able to do 20 problems or 10 shouldn’t matter as long as they understand and learned the concept. There were some good points brought up that I think would be worth looking into further, especially the legality of modifying grades on a report card for non-IEP students.

6) RTI: We spent a few minutes discussing the RTI process. Most of the schools have implemented some form of RTI within their buildings. The Mandan Public Schools have a RTI link on their web page that has a lot of intervention activities and lessons that teachers can use in the classroom. I think this is a topic that would be beneficial to discuss further at another meeting.

7) Book Study: As a group we will be doing a book study in the spring semester. The book we will be doing is called *Leadership Isn’t for Cowards*, by Mark Staver. I will be sending out information for all principals who are interested in doing the book study.

We adjourned the meeting at 11:40 and proceeded to lunch as a group to Buffalo Wild Wings!!