Welcome and Introduction

Following a brief period of socializing, Dr. Hilarie Welsh welcomed those present and had each participant introduce themselves. She thanked them for coming and acknowledged that the Teacher Education and Counselor Education Program at Loras could not do what we do without our school partners.

Highlighting a Teacher Candidate’s Research

Dr. Welsh introduced Kelly Minear, a secondary education student who is currently student teaching at Roosevelt Middle School. Ms. Minear shared her on-going research on young adult literature which began during her English Methods class at Loras and has continued into her student teaching semester. She began her presentation by explaining the purpose of teacher inquiry and introducing the questions which drove her own inquiry project. She wondered if high interest young adult literature could be taught in the classroom and what the best strategies are for teachers to use when teaching these books. Her data collection methods included student surveys, librarian reviews and teacher interviews. She found similarities in student perceptions both at the high school and middle level. Most students had either a positive or neutral feeling toward reading and most did read outside of school. However, she found there was a mismatch between the genres students enjoy and the ones commonly taught in school. Students generally like books they perceive as funny and relatable but many reported that the kinds of books they read in school are often “boring.” In talking with teachers, she found that while they generally supported using high-interest young adult literature, they had a few reason they did not include these more often. These included lack of access to classroom sets of books and young adult literature not always being a good alignment with required standards. The teachers also said that the books needed to “stand the test of time” which recent books have not done and book choices needed to appeal to a wide audience of students.

Comments on this presentation from those present were very positive. Donna Shaw also related an instance from her own teaching which supported these findings.
Teacher Education and School Counseling Updates

As a matter of information, Dr. Welsh reminded participants of our upcoming state visit early next fall.

Dr. Tuescher gave an update on the counselor Education Program and that one student graduated last fall and additional 8 in the first cohort will graduate in May. She said there is much interest in the program and many applications have been received. It is anticipated that the program will continue to grow. Dr. Tuescher explained that this has been a data-driven program from the beginning and on-going data collection influences all program decisions.

Board Input:

- **School Safety: What should we know?**

  Barb Roling shared how fortunate they were to collaborate with the police officer that their school works with and she thought they would also be happy to come into our Loras classrooms if requested.

  Kevin Kuske shared that not all administrators will realize that student teachers and other Loras students in the local schools may not have the information they need. Our students need to take the initiative to find out school policies related to safety if this is not shared with them. Mr. Kuske emphasized that the first 2-3 minutes in an emergency situation are critical. While every school has a plan, each plan will be different because of the particular setting. There is not a universal concrete answer to what a school safety plan looks like.

  Along those same lines, another participant shared that a school building with a commons area produces a problem because it does not lock down in the same way as the rest of the school. It may come down to the adult making the decision about what to do in a particular situation. This may be a student teacher who is making this decision.

  Dr. Tuescher asked how much is done in schools at present to identify students who might be a risk for violence and what kinds of protocols are in place to identify those at risk.

  In Dubuque City Schools participants reported that at the administrative level they are working toward developing a protocol to identify students at risk for violence.

  Libby Gansen from Western Dubuque shared that in their last school professional development – mental health professionals emphasized the importance of each child needing one adult they can trust. This has been shown to greatly reduce incidents of violence in school. When asked, 10% of Western Dubuque students said they had no one such person. She went on to say that many students who are not normally on the radar were often the ones who responded that they had no adult in the school they could trust.

  Dr. Tuescher cautioned that once schools have collected and documented this kind of information, they need to address this or the school could be held libel should an incident occur.
Schools need to think about what they are going to do to address this. Once you collect the data you need to act upon it.

Kathy Fuchs also stressed the importance of building relationships with students. A student needs to be known by at least one staff person in a school.

Dr. Welsh noted a general shift in educational settings from classroom management to relationship building.

- **What trends should the TEP and SCP be aware of?**

Kevin Kuske mentioned that in talking to administrators, concealed carry came up. Regardless of how individuals personally feel about it, this is an issue that is being talked about.

It was also mentioned that students who have anxiety issues may really get stressed when just talking about violence in schools. These students need to be prepared in advance for these kinds of discussions and school faculty need to carefully monitor these students. They may have difficulty refocussing their attention and these discussions can trigger trauma.

Barb Roling mentioned that it is especially important for elementary education majors to know how to conduct a classroom meeting. This is something many are not familiar with.

Ron Meyers mentioned the importance of having Loras students avoid political issues in their role as teachers. Kids are products of their parents and teachers should not interject their political opinions.

It was mentioned that our students need to think about ways to open lines of communication with parents and get them involved as partners in their child’s education.

Rebecca Fabricius asked for ideas for our students of how to contact parents and methods of effective communication.

In closing, Dr. Welsh thanked all for attending and for their comments.

Meeting ended at 5:15.