

Northern Lights ABC Advisory Board

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, 08/05/2025

3:00 pm

NLABC School

PRESENT: Dorissa Martin, Jenny Cabasag, Michael Wuerth, Kristina Wuerth, Kelly DeRouin, Terre Kimble, Cheryl Holden, Robert Voelker, Tyler Kobelnyk, Greta Gionet

ABSENT: Zoya Stephens (excused), Jackie Morris (excused), Rosalie Hohnstein (excused)

1. Call to Order: 3:05PM - Jenny called to order, Kelly seconded. Motion passed.
2. Approve agenda: Terre moved to approve agenda; Mike seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.
3. Introductions: New Committee Members; Kelly DeRouin, Kristina Wuerth, Michael Wuerth
4. Meeting Expectations: A roundtable discussion took place for each member to speak. Jenny would for everyone to assume positive intent, be kind & gracious when someone is expressing their concerns passionately, stay calm & focused. Tyler emphasized the need to “stay on critical path” and would like to expedite the process and not convert to such an open discussion format, so we aren’t backtracking and derailing the agenda. Kelly would like to see more parent involvement with school events & PTA, knowledge of the PAC, and just generally staying connected with what’s happening on campus. Kristina would like to maintain mutual respect, no condescending comments making parents feel like we’re all on the same page as the administrators. Mike would like timely & fair behavioral & disciplinary actions to be handled at the higher standard that our school’s core values interpret; as well as monthly disciplinary report or statistics (categorical, no names of students). Terre would like to see the whole school go back to core values & foundations to help focus what this school is all about. Cheryl would like better communication, specifically from administrators, so parents hear about issues and concerns more promptly. Mrs. Martin would like more opportunities for the PAC to work together with administrators & to assist the PTA since everyone is carrying a lot of tasks. Jenny asked how the PAC could better assist the PTA and reiterated that it’s usually the same parent volunteers (who serve on the PAC and/or PTA), and agreed we need to get more parent involvement. Cheryl asked if there are designated roles for PTA as she took over Tiger Reading & the School Store last year. Jenny brought up how the PAC hosted the Thanksgiving Feast last year (with PTA funds). Terre mentioned how we haven’t done as many fundraisers & events like we have in past year (in

addition to carnivals, multicultural events, and sing-alongs) and is wondering what changed from how it was managed before because there used to be more parent involvement. Mrs. Martin agreed that some of these events were turned down due to lack of volunteers, and moving forward, we can look at the events & set-up on the front end to evenly distribute tasks. Jenny encourages PAC members to attend the first meeting. **(ACTION ITEM:** Jenny will confirm first date of PTA meeting). Mrs. Martin asked for clarity and official role of the Parent Advisory Committee; Robby states that it's a collaboration with maintaining communications between parents and administration & how to maintain our program and values. Jenny then reads the official PAC Statement, "The ABC Committee is a parent-steering committee that acts as an advisor to and liaison between parents and staff regarding ABC policies and curriculum. The committee is eight parents elected to three-year terms." Jenny continues to say the PAC meets monthly to evaluate the present program and take action to safeguard and perpetuate the original ABC program when parents are what built the program in 1978, and we need to make sure we're all aligned. Several PAC members reiterated a preference for partnership model that prioritizes parent involvement over teacher-lead direction. Multiple members expressed that some parents reject the progressive discipline approaches and would prefer a return to more traditional disciplinary systems. NLABC must continue to differentiate itself from other ASD schools as a unique alternative program.

5. Teacher Committee Members for 25/26 School Year: Mrs. Martin is developing a Teacher Leadership Committee to provide an equitable voice in each group. This group will be volunteer-based with certified teachers representing different grade levels; kindergarten, 1st-2nd, 3rd-4th, 5th-6th, 7th-8th, Student Support Staff (ELL, SPED, etc.), Specialist Representative (art, music). These individuals will come together to build a guiding coalition between grades to ensure there is a cohesive transition from grade-to-grade and faculty are aware of what was taught in the previous grade. Mrs. Martin will encourage (at least) two or three of the teachers to attend the monthly PAC meetings. Jenny confirms with Mrs. Martin there will be representatives from primary, intermediate, and middle school (preferably a rotation) & that if a teacher would like to be a part of this committee, they should express their interest to Mrs. Martin. Robby reiterates that all teachers are always welcome and that if they don't attend, and don't speak up, they are less likely to be heard. Jenny suggests that Mrs. Martin requires teachers to attend or they won't. Mrs. Martin agrees that this will help teachers feel more supported and bring information back to the committee. Kristina agrees that parents will also feel more involved when we distribute these (PAC) meeting minutes to teachers & parents who would like to help with participation. Mrs. Voelker expressed interest in volunteering as secondary representative. **(ACTION ITEM:** Jenny to forward email from Mrs. Voelker sharing interest.)
6. Curriculum Update: Mos Dos: Jenny asks which grades are piloting the Mos Dos, and whom would Mrs. Martin like to elect. Mrs. Martin confirms 3rd grade specifically requested NOT to pilot. Jenny identifies that a rumor was circulated that Mrs. Morris will be teaching CKLA in 3rd

grade; Mrs. Martin confirms this information was not communicated to her and she's to believe they are using Spalding & pulling stories from HM and that 3-5th grade has very little to go to. Jenny says that Mrs. Morris made it very clear in the fall of 2024 that she needed more in 5th grade and taught lessons from CKLA, but the data collected from that was very slim and the margins were not identifiable enough to survey if it was making a difference in test scores. Mrs. Martin said the whole reason CKLA was brought up was because test scores were showing a 60% proficiency in reading comprehension and there is currently no way to educationally track curriculum as there is no scope or sequence documented. During PLC we will be looking at building a list in the back of the Teacher Handbook to identify resources & common standards, and how to ensure their grades are aligned to the next grade level; Mrs. Martin said as of now, teachers are realistically teaching whatever they'd like. The goal is that students do not stay stagnant, and that they improve their proficiency or at least maintain; there is not a concern in the primary grades as their MCLASS foundations and Spalding are off the charts. Mike asks which test scores Mrs. Martin is prompting. Mrs. Martin confirms the MCLASS assessments in phonics, foundational skills for grades K-2, and MAP scores are for grades 3-10. While NLABC is still in the top 10 of the ASD, we are showing only 60% of students performing at grade level. Benchmarks are measured three times a year (fall, winter & spring). Terre says she has noticed an influx of classroom disruptions due to behavior and is curious, as a parent, if Mrs. Martin thinks these distractions can play a role in classroom retention, growth, and learning. Mrs. Martin acknowledges that there are many factors that make a difference, but test scores tend to be somewhat consistent. Terre asks if teachers have an expectation to say specifically what their students will be learning throughout the year because there is an inconsistency between teachers in the same grade. Mrs. Martin confirms this is a main priority during PLC time; working together to get a better alignment and that if something isn't working to get results, teachers can use their expertise to determine a solution while still maintaining some autonomy & academic freedom as they have their own teaching styles but collaboratively work together at a grade level. Some examples Mrs. Martin provided are 4th grade is introduction to fractions, then 5th grade is when they learn how to multiply and divide fractions; this spirals because Saxon Math flows all the way through, but there is a lack of this consistency with reading because the cross-grade-levels scope & sequence of skills do not have this standard. Mrs. Martin applauds 6th grade for providing a three-week scope of what's being taught, and she would like to see this practice adopted by other grades as well. Robby asks if the PLC meetings will address this and if only the 6th grade is doing this. Mrs. Martin confirms that is exactly what we are doing in PLC, and the next step is to ensure that this is how NLABC works and not "just this one class". Robby asks if parents and/or the PAC can support teachers. Mrs. Martin says her basic request wasn't CKLA or Mos Dos, but rather what we can do to come together and make a collaborative lesson plan; whatever we choose to use, we need documentation and consistency. Robby asks what benchmarks we can expect to see. Mrs. Martin asks what parents would like to see. Robby praises 6th grade's benchmarks and practices, acknowledging that they are doing well. Mrs. Martin reiterates that we need alignment going from one grade to the next so that each teacher knows what has been taught. Jenny confirms that while 5th grade may have enjoyed some of the

CKLA materials from last year, we cannot measure success from a few chapters in a book and suggests a year of a pilot program to accurately measure improvement. Mrs. Martin confirms that educational standards and expectations have changed drastically in the last 20-30 years, they're more difficult with a higher level of engaging questions & more multi-tiered questions. Kristina suggests using 5th grade for the pilot for Mos Dos since they've requested more materials. Mrs. Martin agreed that it would be a great idea. Greta states that if K-3 are using Spalding, it should not disconnect; while teachers may not use the exact worksheets, the same learning materials have not deviated in over 30 years. Supplementing other resources like HM is great, but classes should all be aligned. Mrs. Martin gives an example from Mrs. Morris about colorful & expensive workbooks (not Spalding) that haven't even been used, as well as science kits that haven't left the pallet. If these items were listed on an actual document, it would help them be identified and utilized as documents to create accountability. Robby goes back to ask Mrs. Martin how parents can help during PLC. Mrs. Martin says a template will align what they're doing over 3-week periods and collaboratively identify what crosses over to the next grade. Cheryl asked for a timeline of this PLC template & Mrs. Martin said it could take 2-3 years starting with reading & math, then science. Greta confirms there is a kit for every grade for science (while ASD, they are better than nothing). Mrs. Martin says that with so much academic freedom allowed, teachers have lost standards to hold them accountable. Terre asks if we require National or State Standards, and Mrs. Martin says ASD follows National standards. Kristina asks if we will be able to come together and see the document aligning grades. Tyler asks if there is a reasonable deadline or goal. Mrs. Martin says yes, but it's bare bones right now and they have yet to determine who's on the committee until teachers are back in school & their contracts are reinstated. Mike suggests instead of recreating the wheel, since we are still sitting in the top 10 schools of ASD, could we just focus on 4th & 5th grade since it doesn't appear to be a system-wide problem, just those specific grades. Mrs. Martin confirms she has hired a 2nd grade Spalding teacher to confirm we have the Road-to-Reading materials. Jenny redirects the meeting back to the agenda saying we can wait until the Teacher Leadership Committee is formed before considering the source of the problem, as it may be a "people problem" and not a "process problem".

7. Teacher Structure for 25/26: Who is teaching what grades? (view document provided of who's teaching what grades) Jenny asks why Lucy Matthew has been moved from K to 5th Grade, and Mrs. Martin says it's because she has experience with teaching 6th grade. Jenny asks if she is happy with this choice and specifies how we have a goal to keep morale and community high. Mrs. Martin confirms that Mrs. Matthew is certified and (all teacher's) contract says moves like this can happen at the discretion of the principal in the best interest of the students. While is not happy with this move, she has older children of her own that have attended our program and Mrs. Matthew had strong test scores in kindergarten. Terre asks if it would soften the blow if Matthew was offered the chance to pilot Mos Dos in 5th grade, and Mrs. Martin agreed that it would, and that Mrs. Matthew emailed her to ask to do the pilot program. (**ACTION ITEM:** Mrs. Martin to discuss Mos Dos pilot with Mrs. Matthew.) Mike asked if other teachers were notified

about the opening in 5th grade. Mrs. Martin said the position was previously filled with Mr. Johnston, but he transferred to another school mid-June, and the teachers were off contract at that time, and that Mrs. Matthew had been consulted with since this change went into effect. Mrs. Martin also shared that Mrs. Matthew has communicated a lot of information as to strengths and weaknesses of staff within the school. Tyler asked when other teachers were notified of the changes. Mrs. Martin said changes can take place at any time. Kristina asked if seniority plays any role in these changes. Mrs. Martin confirms it does not. Tyler suggested having a discussion with teachers to see if there was someone who would have liked to move, instead of just making the principal's decision. Mrs. Martin says the decision took place after the contracts expired and they are no longer required to respond. Tyler asked if a courtesy list could have been an option so there's not any disgruntled employees. Mrs. Martin replied that it is a choice that is at the principles discretion, and she took into consideration that there are 60 employees and not everyone will always be happy. Jenny mentioned how Mrs. Morris had moved from 5th grade down to 3rd and new way ahead of time; was this favoritism? Mrs. Martin confirmed that Mrs. Morris wanted 2nd grade, but third grade test scores needed help. Jenny shared that this is the 3rd time Morris has moved in 3 years, concerned with why she moved again.

8. Committee Requests: The first staff meeting is Wednesday, 8/13 @8am. When PAC meeting minutes are complete, Kelly will send to Jenny for final approval/edits, then Jenny will send to Mrs. Martin to upload to the NLBC website and distribute to teachers. This will allow parents to directly see what is being discussed in the PAC meetings.
9. Middle School Electives: Mrs. Martin emailed and texted middle school teachers to notify them that we are pairing with Stellar as there is one location for music. Band and Orchestra are going to be offered at different times; 4th period Orchestra, 5th period is 6th grade Band, 3rd period is Choir. In the past, 1st period has been study hall, moving forward 1st & 2nd will be core classes, with study hall either 6th or 7th period. Students cannot switch from Band to Orchestra, or vice versa, if they choose to leave Band or Orchestra, the only option is to switch to Choir. 7th graders in Spanish 1A that received A's and B's went into 1B (7th period) so they receive high school credit. Mr. Pierce will be teaching MS electives; literature study/book club. And Mrs. Easton will hopefully teach yearbook. Other electives that will be offered include Biology- Animals of the World, Anatomy, Environmental Issues, Introduction to Business and Entrepreneurship, Debate, Law Studies, & World Cultures. Jenny inquired about Intro to Business can be incorporated into the school store. Mrs. Martin is hoping to send the email to seventh graders and half of the eighth graders, who haven't had the opportunity to select electives yet. While she aims to meet most of their preferences, not everyone will get what they request. Two new teachers from the district are needed before we can go back to offering Spanish class. Tyler asked what data is set for guidelines for anatomy and environmental issues class. Mrs. Martin says that health will be specifically to teach anatomy. Every week, two days of their schedule will include study hall.

Electives were chosen through an AI search of what was easy to pick & Middle School teachers helped narrow down elective choices that aligned with our core values and philosophy. For the 25/26 school year we will no longer have a foreign language to allow our students to obtain college credit. (**ACTION ITEM:** Mrs. Martin will identify environmental issues that will be discussed so we can evaluate in the PAC meetings before they are finalized, and second semester will be prepared to offer this class.)

10. Parent/Student Handbook Revisions: Jenny asked why there were changes from the previous 7-page document to a 20+ page document and specifies that our NLABC handbook should differentiate from ASD. Mrs. Martin said that she can look to see what is aligned. Jenny specified deportment as an example, whereas animal visitors are aligned through ASD and not allowed on campus. Jenny is encouraging Mrs. Martin to try to condense so people can read through our specific rules. Mrs. Martin asked if someone on the PAC can assist with edits before the handbook is published. (**ACTION ITEM:** Jenny confirmed she will remove what's already on the ASD site and send it to Mrs. Martin on Friday.) Robby asked what prompted the 13+ page additions. Mrs. Martin admitted that when she put the handbook together, she didn't recall there already was one. (**ACTION ITEM:** Jenny asked Mrs. Martin if Mrs. Johnson (administration) can shift the PAC information on the NLABC over to "for families" tab for easier access, and Mrs. Martin confirmed she will have her do this.)
11. Primary Teacher Rep comments: Greta is looking forward to providing new teachers with building induction on Friday, 8/8. Greta emphasized that K-2nd grade have the material to have alignment to the curriculum, some teachers may not be using it.
12. Secondary Teacher Rep comments: Jackie is not present for meeting.
13. Middle School Teacher Rep comments: Rosa is not present for meeting.
14. Principal comments: Mrs. Martin is excited for new staff to arrive. We officially have 611 students for the new 2025-2026 school year; only 11 chose to leave the school after last year. While class sizes (student to teacher ratio) are staying the same, middle school classes may seem bigger because they were smaller last year. Mrs. Martin also confirmed that all grades 1-8 start classes on Thurs 8/14, with kindergarten following on Thurs 8/21 (unlike traditional ASD schools whose students don't all start on the same day).
15. PTA comments: Zoya is not present for the meeting, but Jenny had notes on her behalf. Back to School Ice Cream Social is on Tues 8/12; she would like to have an ABC table as well as a PTA table to help with selling phonogram cards. There will be no apparel to purchase at this event, but there will be more information provided for apparel at a later date. Coffee & Kleenex for the

first day of kindergarten will take place on Thurs 8/21 & would love to have PAC members available for this. Jog-a-Thon has changed to "Fun Run" and will take place on Wed 9/3 (no Skinny Raven, but still inflatable and music)

16. Adjournment: Jenny motioned to adjourn at 5:32pm; Tyler seconded. Motion passed.