

Hello Skyview Families,

With so many students new to Skyview, we thought it might be helpful to share a deeper understanding of some of our programs. Over the next few months, I'll be sharing with you more information about the work our team of educators has, and continues to do, on our journey to remain responsive to students and their families.

About six years ago, our staff began researching RTI (Response to Intervention) in an effort to update our practice and address student needs. We attended conferences and studied work by Rick Dufour, Austin Buffum, Mike Mattos, Rick Stiggins and Ken O'Connor, nationally recognized leaders in this field. We began to question the traditional approach to learning and grading that is far too prevalent in education – giving students a zero grade for an assignment not completed and turned in by the deadline. We know that students learn at different rates, that life can interfere with learning, and that a cookie cutter approach to education does not benefit the individual student.

In our studies we discovered students who were failing classes fell into two groups, each needing a different style of intervention. The first group needed additional structured time to complete late work. Some students had assignments that were almost complete, but not finished, and some were not motivated to turn in their work, even if it was complete. Others might have had an extended absence that put them behind. However, with the traditional model of grading, these students received an F because they did not turn in their work by the deadline.

We experimented with giving students extra time on their own to turn things in to their teachers. However, we found that many students still did not turn in assignments and fell even further behind as new work was assigned, compounding the issue. Our team also wanted to ensure the academic integrity of a class and the grade that was earned for it. After some trial and error, we realized giving students structured, supervised time at school to catch up on assignments was what was best for kids. The only time to provide this type of intervention that did not disrupt other learning opportunities was during lunch.

So, how does Lunch Table work? Every Thursday we pull grades. On Friday, Brandi Doyle, our assistant principal, or I meet with students who have an F to share with them the purpose of Lunch Table. We also express our belief in each one of them, and that our team at Skyview wants to do whatever we can to support their academic success. We explain they will begin Lunch Table the next week, and that it runs on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday in the portables next to the cafeteria. When the bell rings for lunch, students go to the portable first to check in with the Lunch Table supervisor and leave their books and backpacks. Then they go to the cafeteria to get lunch. Once students return, they have the rest of the time to work and eat. We also suggest they come prepared so that they can make the best use of their time. Students are also given paperwork that describes the program to share with their parents.

Sometimes students forget to go or they may have been absent on Friday and did not receive advance notice. In this case, we call out names on the microphone in the cafeteria, just as we call out the names for students who have a parent waiting for them in the office, or who need to hand in paperwork for the magazine drive or the dance, or who forgot their lunch and we have it for them, or who need to get in paperwork for a field trip, or . . . No matter the reason a student's name is called, we never identify why. We just ask them to come up to meet with us. For a Lunch Table student, we talk with them privately to remind them they have Lunch Table, and encourage them to get their lunch and make their way there.

So what happens if a student is in Lunch Table for a couple weeks, but doesn't seem to be making progress, or they have accumulated more F grades? These students fall into the second group, needing a different style of intervention. They may need direct support from a teacher to fill in learning gaps or time to collaborate with peers on an assignment. This more intensive support is delivered in Kitchen Table.

Kitchen Table is held after school on Mondays and Thursday from 3:05 – 4:35. Students may take the Activity Bus home. The program is staffed with English, Math, Social Studies and Science teachers who work directly with students to help them get caught up. Students are also able to collaborate where necessary and access technology to complete work. Snacks are provided.

Teachers accept late work completed in Lunch or Kitchen Table within some limits. They encourage students to attend and they monitor student progress. If a student turns in missing work or catches up in class, teachers are able to remove their name from the program. Teachers can also remove a name if they have a different plan for a student, if they have updated their grades and find it is no longer necessary for a student to attend, or if a mistake was made.

If a parent or guardian does not wish to have their child participate in Lunch or Kitchen Table they may contact Brandi Doyle at 425-408-6825. Parents will then work directly with their child's teacher(s) to see if there are other options available after the deadline has passed to turn in late assignments.

So, do the programs work? We've tracked a variety of classroom, school and district data over the years and found that both Lunch and Kitchen Table reduce the number of F grades, build student self esteem as a result of academic success, and deepen the learning happening in classrooms each and every day. However, the most powerful data is qualitative – The many students and parents who have asked if the student may remain, even after they have raised their grade. Students and parents share with us that both programs provide a place where students can focus and receive support.

We often are asked if a student can participate in Lunch or Kitchen Table if they do not have an F. Yes they can, and they do. Many of our students drop in and use the services as they wish.

If you have questions about this program or thoughts to share, I would love to hear them. Please give me a call at 425-408-6805.

Dawn Mark