

LYON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Staff Travel Report to School Board of Trustees

Your recent request to travel has been approved. Within two weeks of the date of the conference, the following report is due in the office of the Deputy Superintendent.

Please Download & **TYPE** the following information.

Staff Member:	<u>Dena Wright</u>	School:	<u>District Office</u>
Conference:	<u>Project Based Learning, Universal Design For Learning School Visits</u>	Staff Assignment	<u>District Support/District Administration/District Teachers</u>
Do not use acronyms			
Location of Conference:	<u>Nampa, Idaho</u>	Dates Attended:	<u>9/13-9/16 2026</u>

General Overview: Do not use acronyms

During our recent site visits to One Stone, North Star Charter, Columbia High School's STEM Academy, and Northwest Nazarene University (NNU), our team observed innovative instruction, routines, and collaborative learning environments designed to operationalize our Portrait of a Learner. At One Stone, we observed student-led project work in action through music video creation and learned about their design thinking framework. At North Star Charter, we observed high-leverage pedagogical routines, transitions, and instructional procedures in middle school math and science. At Columbia High School's STEM Academy, we saw students using iterative design thinking to finish prototypes and deliver peer presentations. Finally, at NNU, our team collaborated and reflected on these visits using a structured observation framework—analyzing what students were saying, doing, deciding, and creating; what teachers were asking, supporting, or facilitating; and what physical, procedural, and cultural conditions supported the learning.

How will this impact student learning in a positive way?

These visits will directly enhance student learning at Silverland Middle School by shifting classrooms toward more student-centered, active learning environments. By embedding the design thinking frameworks observed at One Stone and Columbia High, students will have greater opportunities for agency, critical thinking, and hands-on problem-solving. Furthermore, bringing back the explicit classroom routines and pedagogical strategies seen at North Star ensures that active, project-based learning is supported by structured classroom management. This balance helps students take ownership of their work, build self-direction, and develop key Portrait of a Learner competencies—such as collaboration and perseverance—in an engaging, real-world context.

How will I implement what I learned and how will I share this information with my colleagues?

Implementation Plan

We will implement what we learned by integrating structured design thinking cycles and real-world project applications into our unit designs and daily instruction. Specifically, we will establish explicit routines and expectations—modeled after the effective systems observed at North Star—to support student collaboration, peer feedback, and self-directed work. As part of our team planning at NNU, we will align our instructional activities with targeted Portrait of a Learner competencies, ensuring that learning objectives explicitly emphasize student decision-making, critical thinking, and reflection alongside core content standards.

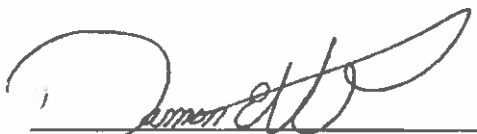
Sharing with Colleagues and Community

We will share these insights and strategies during team meetings, Professional Learning Community (PLC) sessions, and site-level professional development. As our team works to develop and refine Project-Based Learning (PBL) units for our group of approximately 130 students, we will use what we learned to help design collaborative structures, student-centered routines, and authentic learning tasks.

We warmly invite any and all colleagues to visit, ask questions, engage in conversations, and collaborate with us as we roll out these innovative practices. Looking ahead, our long-term goal is to showcase what our students create and learn—sharing our outcomes, student projects, and growth with our families, local community, neighboring schools, and the School Board by the end of the school year.

Other Comments:

This was an extraordinarily inspirational and transformative experience centered on deep professional reflection, team building, and shared growth. Our team engaged in meaningful dialogue—respectfully seeking to understand different perspectives and building a unified vision for our school. Additionally, we are highly impressed with the exceptional instruction and guidance provided by Dr. Amy Ackley and Dr. Michelle Van Beek. Across our team and administration, there is immense gratitude for this opportunity, deep pride in our staff's collaborative work, and strong optimism for the future of our students.



Site Principal/Supervisor Approval



Deputy Superintendent Approval

9/17/26

Date

9/18/24

Date