Digital Learning Initiative Community Engagement Notes:
February 9 and February 10, 2016

*Notes submitted by Bridget McGuiggan, Director of Communications, for the purpose of recording general feedback and comments. Language is paraphrased.

Members of the Digital Learning Initiative Committee welcomed community members for two events to discuss the draft Belief Statements and welcome feedback. Committee members Ian Ball and Dr. Kurt Schneider facilitated both sessions.

For the evening session on February 9, attendance included 15 people in total, including four community members and 11 committee members (seven teachers, two administrators, one parent, one resident).

For the morning session on February 10, attendance included 21 people in total, including one Hinsdale Public Library staff member, three parents, and three administrators plus 14 committee members (three teachers, one support staff, four administrators, three parents, two students, and one Board member).

Belief Statement #1
- Small Note: ELA acronym should be written out.
- Small Note: The sub-bullets should be "b" and "c" (not 1 and 2).
- Overall Note: Recognize that standards are required, and technology is required to meet specific standards. They are non-negotiable. Specific examples were cited of standards referring to creation of multimedia projects, use of the Internet, research, etc.
- Overall Note: Discussion that sometimes technology is not appropriate for a certain skill (i.e. teaching students to structure sentences and writing out drafts before typing them).
- Big Note: Should we add something related to the standards for art, music, and P.E.? Discussion on whether they are in draft form or if they are state approved already.
- Comment: "Standards aren't going to wait for school districts that wait. They represent expectations."

Belief Statement #2
- Overall Note: Discussion about teaching technology being vital to effectively teach to different styles and abilities. It provides instant feedback so you know if students are mastering content. Discussion that with different types of learners, the teacher needs to use different types of delivery.
- Big Note: Discussion about the phrase "personalized learning" and what that was supposed to mean. Some thought it referred to learning styles (learner profile - i.e. visual vs. written) while others thought it referred to encouraging students to personalize their own learning (becoming a self-motivated lifelong learner). Others felt the term "personalized learning"

was redundant to "differentiated instruction" which relates to personalizing learning. Discussion that the statement as written doesn't speak to students' passions and isn't aspirational. With those thoughts in mind, there was a suggestion to change the statement to end with "…facilitate differentiated instruction and can inspire a lifelong love of learning." This would speak to the way technology tools and access help students explore things they find interesting. Or it was suggested that "personalized" change to "student."
- Big Note: It was suggested that the committee look at this language in tandem with the new strategic plan guiding principles (student characteristics).

Belief Statement #3
- Overall Note: Discussion that standardizing skills by grade level will need strong accountability for sustained implementation.
- Overall Note: Discussion about whether the concept of "digital literacy" or "literacy in a digital environment" should specifically be referenced in the statement, or whether it is covered under digital skills and/or covered in the Information Literacy Standards in Belief #1.
- Overall Note: Discussion that the skills should be clear enough that they could measured on a report card. Comment from Elm PTO (See *** at bottom) that more specifics or definitive points would be helpful.
- Overall Note: Because standardized assessments like PARCC and MAP require use of technology, certain skills like drag-and-drop and accessing drop-down menus are required.
- Overall Note: Discussion by Hinsdale Public Library staff member that (a) Encyclopedia Britannica is not published in print anymore, and (b) Using a print book as your only cited source has been greatly diminished.
- Implementation Note: Need to address keyboarding (how to teach it and when), screen time (quality of engagement, kids also have at-home screen time, screen time for educational and entertainment purposes), note taking, and fast reading (skimming).
- Big Note: Suggestion to re-word the opening phrase as underlined: " We believe it is necessary to develop (or to have) a common set of digital skills, including digital citizenship skills, standardized by grade level."
- Big Note: Suggestion to re-word the opening phrase as underlined "…standardized by grade level and aligned to the curriculum." This change would address a concern that was discussed - that these skills would be stand-alone concepts taught in isolation, thereby requiring time set aside in the school day for only that work, instead of being taught as part of a broader unit / lesson.
- Big Note: Suggestion to add language here (or create a new Belief Statement) around parent training, support, and responsibilities. (See further notes in "Other" section below.)

Belief Statement #4

- Overall note: The phrase "and at home" reinforces that this is aspirational and recognizes the exploration / creativity students engage in with continued access to tool.
- Overall note: This statement speaks to the present concern of staff not being able to provide students with regular access to digital tools for organic, teachable moments that are not always planned for. Access is currently strict and requires much pre-planning (i.e. reserving carts) and so hinders opportunities for on-the-spot learning.
- Overall Note: Discussion by Hinsdale Public Library staff member about the Library wanting to continue to be a good resource for families if a computer is down or more kids need access at home than there are computers. Textbooks are among the most commonly checked out books at the library.
- Overall Note: This may help address parent concerns about having two, three, or more kids sharing a device at home. ("They have to take turns using the computer, and all of their assignments have something that requires technology.")
- Overall Note: It will be important to differentiate what is appropriate for middle school and elementary school in implementation.
- Comment: "Kids don't share textbooks, so why are we asking them to share devices which are so much more than a textbook?"
- Comment: A parent remarked that when his child comes home from school, and she has access to a device to take home, she says "Let me show you what we did in class today." It becomes a tool for family conversation and more parent-child engagement in schoolwork ("magical connections"). It was noted by a teacher that this represents the highest level of teaching as evidenced by evaluations - when a student can share, discuss, and re-tell what she learned.

Belief Statement #5

- Overall Note: This speaks to not leaving staff "on an island" to teach themselves.
- Overall Note: We should be okay with students helping the teachers, too. They are digital natives, and staff should be encouraged to share and learn with the students.
- Big Note: This doesn't address support (beyond PD) and should include language highlighting the need for it (i.e. tech staff support, troubleshooting).
- Big Note: Discussion about whether to change "professional development" to specifically say "job-embedded professional development" - a concern was raised about that being too specific as "job-embedded" is just one kind of PD. (Overall concern is that a few Institute Day sessions aren't going to be enough for true PD.)
- Big Note: In Belief Statement or implementation, need to ensure that support and training are planned not just for teachers and support staff, but also for subs (especially those covering long-term leave) and new employees (who start in the middle of the year).

Belief Statement #6
- No suggested changes from either engagement event.
- ***Elm PTO: "We believe that it should be the role of the district to fund the tools for technology/digital learning just as it is the role of the district to provide text books and that this should be stated in the belief statement."

Other Notes
- Discussion about the power of storytelling and the need to step back and discuss curriculum design and how classroom instruction really looks today.
- Discussion about creating a new Belief Statement that addresses the need for parent training and support, and their responsibilities. Discussion about some parents' fear about not being able to help their kids (i.e. helping with homework), not having the right equipment (different platform at home), and kids losing a skill (i.e. handwriting). Parents need assurance. They also need support in understanding parent controls and privacy / protection options.
- Comment: "It is almost daunting as a parent. When they came home with a list of spelling words, you knew how to quiz them because that's how you were taught. But with technology, you aren't sure how to support them."
- ***Elm PTO: " It seemed that the belief statements did not aspire to be a leader."

***Elm PTO discussed the Belief Statements at a meeting and provided feedback, as well.