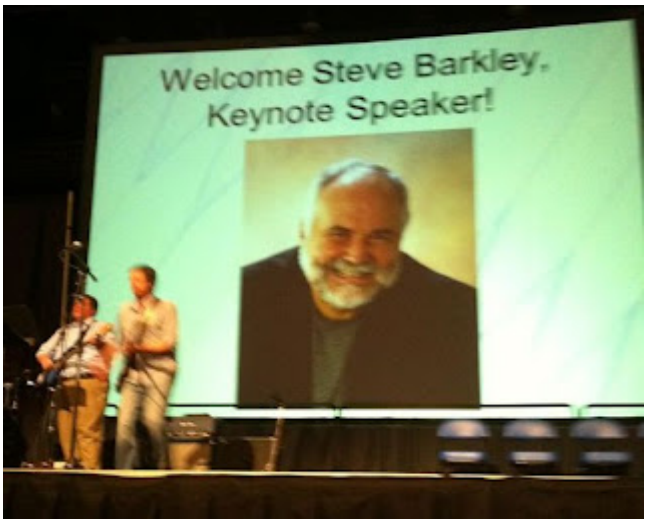
Team as the Theme



This week I provided the opening day keynote for the staff of Bismarck, ND School District. I will be consulting with the district throughout the year with a focus on their mission and vision.

***Mission**: All students will have the academic, social, and personal skills to be career, college, and community ready.*
***Vision**: "Together, we inspire a passion for learning, discovery and excellence."*

The decision was made that my focus for the opening day keynote would be on **Together**.

Principal/teacher band that rocked the opening day session for Bismarck, ND schools!

Here are a few of the major points I built the presentation

around. You can access the power point here if you'd like.

I opened with a clip from Apollo 13 that demonstrates the value of group creative problem solving. *"We need to find a way to get a square peg to fit into a round hole using nothing but this."* Combined with a quote from Lee Shulman (Charlotte Danielson shared this in a presentation) that compares teaching to a doctor in ER during a national disaster, I established my thinking that teaching is too challenging to be tackled alone. Teaching is a team sport!

I shared the work of Margaret Wheatly defining key elements of information flowing through the system, people forming rich and diverse relationships to strengthen the organization, and the value of having a common vision to unite (detailed in earlier blog).

The Partnership for 21st Century cites the following collaboration skills as crucial for students:

Demonstrate ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams.

Exercise flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal.

Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work, and value the individual contributions made by each team member.

I suggested that educators need to do the same.

Here is a quick humorous clip that illustrates the power of working together.

I proceeded to present the developmental progression of PLCs, moving from individuals who meet and share to franchises to teams (earlier blog) reinforcing those ideas with Barth's work on teacher relationships and Michael Fullan's writing on collective capacity.

I closed the presentation with this video on teamwork that I thought left participants with elements to ponder.

I'd appreciate hearing about strategies you use to communicate the importance of teams in schools. I'll do my best to pass them on.