

For Immediate Release

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Sometimes even teachers go back to school. And Edgar School District teachers did just that recently, attending a Common Professional Development Day (CPD) sponsored by CESA (Cooperative Educational Service Agency) 9.

During the event, which was held at Stratford School District. Edgar teachers met with dozens of teachers from other districts who teach the same grade and subject and took part in seminars on a variety of subjects. The districts that attended were: Athens, Edgar, Marathon, Prentice, Rib Lake, and Stratford.

CESA 9 serves 22 school districts, many of them small and rural. Al Betry, agency administrator of CESA 9, said the event was created to give teachers, especially those from small districts, a chance to collaborate with their peers.

“We have so many districts that have departments of one,” Betry said. “We thought it would be nice to have discussions that go beyond school borders.”

The day starts with a keynote speaker and then 4 breakout sessions. The first session is a networking session where teachers meet with other teachers teaching the same subject or grade level.

Kristin Bornbach, who teaches 4-year-old kindergarten at Edgar, appreciated the networking opportunity.

“It’s just nice to meet with other teachers and to be able to talk with other teachers who are teaching the same thing you are,” Bornbach said.

She attended sessions on literacy and oral language and said she also appreciated the chance “to acquire new information based on what my classroom needs are.”

High school business teacher Amy Hahn attended breakout sessions on career-based learning experiences, the ACT, and AI (artificial intelligence). She came away with some new strategies for making career opportunities more engaging for students. She also appreciated the opportunity to learn more about AI and how to use it in the classroom effectively.

“It is challenging us,” Hahn said about CPD. “It’s keeping us up to date on what other districts are doing.”

Amber Guldán, a middle school language arts teacher, said her session on building a positive classroom environment taught her some new tools for keeping students engaged such as the importance of giving immediate feedback. A session on self-regulation reminded her that she needed “to make sure that I’m regulated as a teacher and that I’m focusing on what student needs are.”

She also appreciates the timing of the session. It comes several weeks into the new school year after the start of school energy has faded.

“It’s a good time to pick up these things,” Guldán said. “It’s nice to take this time and regroup ourselves.”

Betry said the topics for the sessions are chosen based on feedback from participants. The goal is to find topics – like AI this year – that are important to teachers.

“We try to look at what’s happening now and what’s coming down the road,” he said.

Since there is a shortage of substitute teachers and classroom teachers cannot always attend CESA 9 professional development opportunities, some of the most popular professional development topics are offered again at CPD.

Betry said CPD reflects CESA’s mission of connect, grow and inspire.

“It’s nice to get everyone together and celebrate teaching,” he said.

And the teachers appreciate the opportunity to do just that.

“This shows us that the district cares,” said Hahn. “They want us to learn and grow just like the students.”