

Superintendent's Report

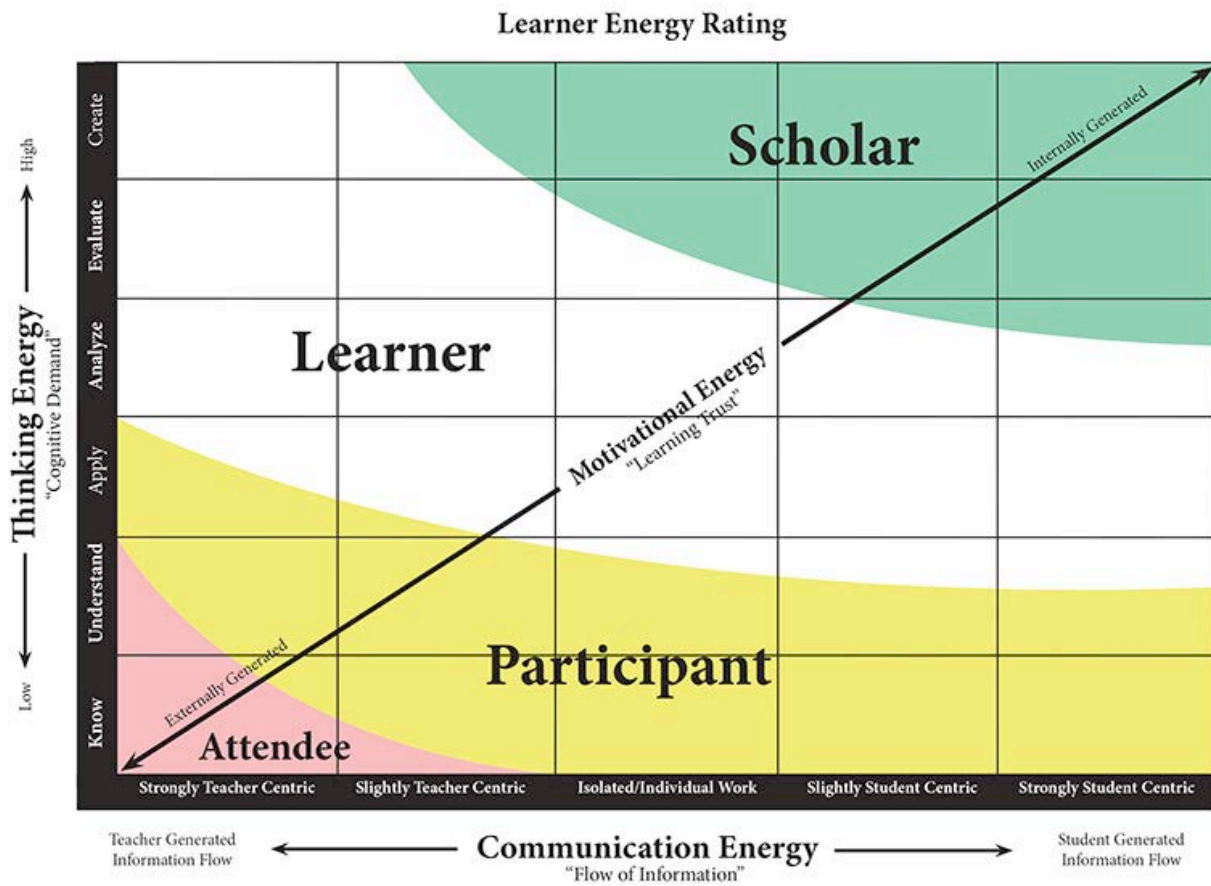
November 21st, 2014

LEARNING UPDATE

Learning Energy – We have been working on extending our learning model into ways that can show its connection to TPEP. As a result, we have developed some new tools to further define what students are doing in the classroom.

To accomplish this, we began to think of the three learning environment conditions of the district's learning model (*Flow of Information, Cognitive Demand* and *Learning Trust*) in terms of energy. This shift in thinking resulted in us relooking at the three conditions and describing them in terms of *Communication Energy, Thinking Energy* and *Motivational Energy*. Then we began to connect resulting student behavior when these three energy conditions are varied.

The result of this work is we have identified four different student engagement descriptors that are connected to the learning environment energies (the learning conditions). These engagement descriptors are: Attendee, Participant, Learner and Scholar (See the graph below). We have started to collect evidence that there is a direct correlation between the three different learning energies (i.e. learning conditions) and corresponding student engagement descriptors.



As a minimum, students who are present are attendees (there is no hope of engagement without attendance). From there, student actions and the resulting evidences build up to show that they become more and more engaged in the learning process as the learning conditions are maximized. For example, the evidences of student engagement increase when learners are active in the learning process (i.e. they do the work, they are asked to think and they are internally motivated to learn).

Take the process of learning to drive a car as an example. If students are never allowed to get behind the wheel, the evidences that they are learning to drive a car are greatly diminished... obvious right? By contrast, when they are given the opportunity to actually drive a car as a way to demonstrate as well as test their knowledge, skills and abilities in order to be adaptable in many different situations in real and meaningful ways, we will find lots of evidences they are learning at high levels.

With all this in mind, we are working to include within our learning model a framework for collecting evidences (using the energies nomenclature) within the learning environment when the conditions of the learning model are maximized. The result of this work has helped us create a student engagement spectrum that we are starting to use in our communications as well as our learning strategy development efforts.

Below is what we are calling the four stages of student engagement. It is important to note that we believe all students are capable of exhibiting and sustaining high levels of engagement, but that it is the learning environment created by the teacher (learning environment leader) that establishes the conditions of encouragement that will maximize the release and ultimately the sustainability of student learning engagement (from level 1 to level 4).

Attendee (level 1) - A student who is present within the learning environment.

Participant (level 2) – An on-task student who is an attendee, but has moved beyond being present and is partaking in the activities offered within the learning environment.

Learner (level 3) - A student who is a participant, but has moved beyond participating and has begun gaining meaningful knowledge and/or skills that benefit themselves as a result of being in the learning environment.

Scholar (level 4) - A student who is a learner, but has moved beyond learning for themselves alone. They are consistently adding quality information to the collective body of knowledge and provide value to the learning experience for others. As a result of this sharing, they are testing of their knowledge/ideas as a scholar that will ultimately help them learn more in the process.

These learner engagement descriptors are directly connected to the learning conditions created by teachers. Therefore, this work is connected to TPEP because students who consistently exhibit scholarly engagement are more easily found in highly proficient or distinguished learning environments. Whereas learning environments that limit the learning energies of students through low cognitive demand work, teacher centric routines and a strong influence of external motivators (e.g. punishments, use of grades as motivators, etc.) are found with classrooms that are described within the TPEP evaluation rubric as either Basic or Unsatisfactory learning environments.

BOARD UPDATE

District Security Camera System Update – We have been working since last year to determine how to move forward with updating our security camera equipment across the district. Since there is no dedicated funding stream for this project, my hope has been to find a creative way to pay for this effort. Several of the variables with this equation have included getting through the certificated negotiations, which as you know has been a significant fiscal variable that has now been determined for the next several years. Additionally, the transition of fiscal officers has weighed on my mind as we have worked to determine district needs in filling this important position.

Beyond the funding for such a project, we have been working to develop a more refined description of our needs and then to determine what these needs really might cost. To that end, we have taken the broad-brush data from the safety and security audit that was completed last year (free of charge to the district) and work with a couple of vendors to find appropriate solutions and estimated costs. We first reached out to the company for assistance that worked recently with KWRL on the La Center Junction transportation site. Through this company we tested a more advanced system than we currently have, yet one that would allow us to build upon our current video architecture as a way to keep the costs reasonable. This effort showed us that even though it would be better than our current system, it still didn't give us the type of video quality we are looking for. In the end, we felt this strategy would not produce long-term value for the money spent.

Next we turned to a company that we have used in the past for our current video and bell systems that were installed during the modernization back in early 2003-4 (GB Manchester). Their more detailed proposal/estimate has given us what I believe to be an example high water mark for the cost of this project that would give us the desired quality, needed district-wide coverage as well as providing us additional needed infrastructure such as expanded data coverage that will be necessary to keep ahead of our growing data network needs. As you can imagine, this type of step forward comes with a price to the tune of nearly \$300,000. This is clearly outside of our current revenue/budget.

That all said, we feel now that there is the need to step back and consider our options further before we can narrow down which way to head. I will provide you more information as this work continues. FYI.

Railing Damage on the K-8 Campus Now Repaired - The damaged handrail along the lower sidewalk on the K-8 campus has now been repaired. We were able to obtain insurance funds from the person who hit the railing, so no district funds were required to make this repair. I just wanted to let you know that this safety railing has now been returned to "good as new" status. FYI.



District Office Staff Changes – We have now officially made the transitions in both the personnel department and our front office as I have shared previously. Connie Majors has moved into HR and Julie McKee is now holding down the front desk. Additionally, we have officially switched fiscal officers from Kent Simpson (Brett’s original replacement) to our new business manager, Bernice Sundby. We are very pleased with Bernice and I am confident that she will get up to speed quickly. Bernice brings a wealth of experience in small schools as well as a long list of work experiences outside of the fiscal office. This experience base will pay big dividends because she understands what it is like to do many of the jobs of the staff she will be working with as our fiscal officer. I have been impressed with Bernice’s work ethic, her understanding of how small schools work as well as her can do spirit. I am confident she will be a great fit for our district as we continue this transition in business managers.

Internet Filter Upgrade – As it seems to never fail, equipment breaks down when you least expect it. Recently our Internet filter crashed and caused us to quickly need to think through our options. Obviously, the filter to the Internet is a critical piece of equipment so there wasn’t much time to decide. Thanks to Dan and his hard work in gathering options created a solid range of solutions for getting this important part of our digital network back on line. From this list of options, I decided we needed to bite the bullet and not only replace the filter but to step up and prepare for our further network needs. For the nearly \$21,000 price tag of this new filter, we increased the number of simultaneous users 250% (thus increasing our network capability), we gained a five-year immediate replacement guarantee (in case of another breakdown) and five years of service, upgrades and support. After I swallowed hard on this option, I did the math and felt better that an average of \$4,200 per year (cost divided by five years) to have filtering service for our students was a price that was more manageable to handle. I would rather face this expense than have an open floodgate to all the bad stuff on the Internet (although no filter can absolutely prevent everything from getting through). FYI.

Updated Capital Facilities Plan – I have begun the work to update our capital facilities plan. This effort is necessary for us to establish our new impact fees for the next several years. To help in this work, we asked for and received a \$4,000 grant from OSPI to complete a modified Study and Survey of our facilities. I have asked Northwest Architectural Company (NAC) to assist us in completing this Study and Survey. NAC helped us prepare for our 2008 Study and Survey that was part of our bond campaign. With their knowledge of the district, I believe we should be able to get through this effort quickly. I am hoping to have a six-year capital facilities plan to you for review and approval early next year.

I think that is all for now. Please give me a call if you have any questions. Talk with you later.

Mark