

## Teaching and Learning Update September 2015

### Curriculum / Materials Implementation –

Based upon many conversations and needs expressed by staff as well as the updated Washington State English/Language Arts Standards, we will be moving forward on adoption of Literacy and Language Arts materials K-12. This adoption process, including community members, will continue through the 2015-2016 school year with the goal of implementation in 2016-2017. By conferring with districts in the region that have either recently adopted ELA/Literacy instructional materials or that are currently exploring adoption, our process and choice of materials will hopefully be better informed.

### Professional Development –

There are many plans for professional development in the works. A volunteer, grade-level representative group will participate in a series of on-site professional learning events with Gail Westbrook, Evergreen School District Elementary Literacy Specialist. Gail has graciously volunteered to assist participants in understanding pilot instructional materials written by Lucy Calkins. We are excited to assess the anticipated K-5 student improvement in writing using these materials.

Kristina Wambold, Google-certified trainer, will continue to support Google Integration work from last April and the well attended, week long summer institute last June. Thus far we have four additional days of coaching scheduled during Regularly Scheduled Late Student Arrivals in late September and throughout the month of October. During that time Kristina will be available for optional hour-long follow-ups and Google-related work, such as web page design and Google Classroom. In advance of each of these coaching days, teachers will be able to sign up for instructional technology assistance during the school day. Kristina is prepared to differentiate based upon need. For example, she can visit a classroom to support students in using a ChromeBook application or teach a model lesson on an iPad or simply confer with a teacher during their prep. Teachers requesting her assistance on their tech topic of need will determine her activities.

Our own part-time Technology coach, Stephanie Holmes will again offer after school Tech Cafes on Monday afternoons for interested staff. Teacher questions will drive the agenda and conversations.

Lynn Cook recently changed roles from a highly successful, National Board Certified English Language Arts teacher to that of K-12 Librarian. While her teaching role has changed during 2015-2016 she will continue to offer support to teachers interested in pursuing or renewing their National Boards. Thus far there are about six teachers that have expressed interest.

During the October 9th Learning Day both the elementary and middle school certified and interested instructional classified staff will be participating in MindUP training. PreK-5th grade staff will implement these supplemental materials following last year's pilot and subsequent board approval. The middle school staff will likely pilot these materials during the 2015-2016 school year. MindUP training was made possible through the generous funding of our community partner, La Center United.

The high school certificated staff will participate in morning rotations related to technology, problem-solving and mindfulness, then continue with the work on climate and culture they began prior to the opening of school.

#### Highly Capable Program (HiCap) –

Both the Highly Capable 2014-2015 Year End Report and the Highly Capable 2015-2016 Form Package have been submitted to OSPI for program review. The guidelines and documentation for both identification and funding expenditures have changed considerably over the last couple of years. This is part of the reason that as a district, especially at the elementary, we will be looking at our HiCap program closely. Scott Lincoln, Elementary Principal, is identifying teachers with special knowledge regarding the needs of Talented and Gifted students as well as interested parents. This group plans to begin meeting in October to consider possible recommendations for more inclusive identification as well as potential improvements to meeting the needs of students once identified.

#### Career and Technical Education (CTE) –

The duties and responsibilities of the CTE Director have been transferred to the high school principal, Carol Patton. She will undoubtedly have exciting news to share about the new car lift installation.

#### English as a Second Language (ELL) –

The duties and responsibilities of the ELL Director have been transferred to the new elementary school associate principal, Jeremy Kidd. He will undoubtedly have exciting news to share about a well-attended and highly successful ELL parent night.

#### Testing / Assessment –

The much anticipated, delayed score reports for the 2015 Spring State Assessments arrived in district early this week. Two copies of each score report are in the buildings. One copy of the individual student reports will be mailed out during the last few days of September to parents/guardians along with documents to assist in interpretation of results. The second copy will be placed in individual student cumulative files. Spring scores are

available on-line in several locations including public access to the Washington State Report Card on the OSPI website as well as the password protected Online Reporting System (ORS) on the Washington Comprehensive Assessment Portal (WCAP).

Overall La Center students performed very well and in most cases were significantly above state averages. With last school year being a first year for Smarter Balanced testing, which was primarily on-line for secondary students, administration went quite smooth. The experience has better informed our district's preparedness and understanding of online testing in general and Smarter Balanced specifically. A noticeable number of elementary students, especially third graders, found the paper-pencil version of the SBA to be particularly challenging. Moving back and forth between a booklet with prompts and assessment items, then writing responses in a separate booklet was confusing. For this reason all SBAs will be administered online during 2015-2016 for grades 3,4,5,6,7,8,10 and 11. The 2015 administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessment was likely be more a test of the test rather than a reflection of student learning.

#### Title I / LAP -

Due to Jennifer Blechschmidt leaving La Center School District, many of her previous roles and responsibilities related to Title I and LAP grant writing and compliance has now moved to Amy Neiman, Director of Teaching and Learning. Programmatic decisions are occurring primarily within the elementary school under the leadership of principal Scott Lincoln.

All required Title I and LAP Form Packages have been submitted to appropriate program directors at OSPI. Scott Lincoln, Colleen Wing (ACE teacher) and Amy Neiman attended the first Title I Director's meeting at ESD 112. The plan is to continue to send at least two people to these monthly meetings to ensure compliance, continuity and enhancements to our efforts toward meeting the needs of our students that qualify for Title I and LAP services.

Respectfully submitted by Amy Neiman, Director of Teaching and Learning.