

Teaching and Learning Update May 2016

Curriculum / Materials Implementation –

Secondary ELA: The instructional materials adoption process for K-12 English/Language Arts/Literacy continued this month. For middle school and high school, two sets of instructional materials have been provided for review. Others will be provided as requested. A quick “next steps” survey went out to all teachers of middle school and high school English Language Arts. They will weigh in on where we are and how they’d like to proceed. During the April 22nd Learning Day, several self-formed teams continued conversations about the needs regarding English Language Arts instructional materials as well as middle school / high school alignment

Elementary ELA: A similar survey has been completed by all K-5 adoption committee representatives. They have reiterated a desire to stay away from Regularly Scheduled Late Student Arrivals as a meeting time. Results show that two, out of the original six, sets of instructional materials are most desired to continue a deeper look. After school is out, this committee will likely get together for several days to begin the Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET) process. At this time the committee is split on whether to push ahead to a selection for fall implementation with August training or 2016-2017 pilots of materials for selection for implementation the following year. In the last month literacy trainers from both the two remaining K-5 instructional materials were brought in to present to any teachers interested in attending. They may be asked to return as we move into the IMET process.

Reading Intervention: Conversations are moving forward in the process of identifying reading intervention materials for K-5, 6-8 and Special Education students in K-8. At this point there are three materials that have risen to the surface. The challenge becomes finding the “right fit” as well as one that is cost effective. What is clear is the need for a significant investment in up-to-date, quality, technology-based reading intervention. At this time we are still using cassette tapes for assisting students in literacy development. The research is clear that if students are not fluent readers by third grade, then they will struggle to catch up the remainder of their school career and beyond.

Professional Development –

April 22nd Learning Day has come and gone. By all accounts it was a day well received and appreciated by certificated staff. I want to thank everyone that agreed to facilitate during this very important collaboration time. The line-up included approximately 40 different session choices broken in the five “periods”. Most of these sessions were facilitated by our own LCSD staff with and for their colleagues. Our teacher leaders are fantastic professionals! The day was packed with grade-level, collaborative meetings, vertical teaming, Google Education and *MindUP* Extension meetings. Some of the content areas that collaborated included: Science/STEM, Math, English, Literacy, World Language and Technology. Areas of focus also

included Reading Intervention, ACEs, CPI (Non-violent Crisis Intervention) Training, Number Talks, Special Education, LINX and Home School Academy.

To see current (and archived) professional development offerings both in and out of district, please visit the Teaching & Learning Director's page at:
<http://www.lacenterschools.org/teachingandlearningprofdev/>

Highly Capable Program (HiCap) –

Early Identification: The Cogat was administered to several dozen students K-5 during May. This assessment will help in determining if individual students qualify as Highly Capable. If so, they will have opportunities for enriching experiences throughout their years in La Center School District. The elementary HiCap staff and parent group has revised and updated the identification process for Highly Capable students. Not only will it provide a more inclusive process, but will inform the update of the secondary HiCap program as well. Thank you for all again for your continued hard work. Jeremy Kidd has created draft documents that represent the “new and improved”, proposed Hi-Cap Screening and Identification Process. This will be shared with stakeholders, including the school board, soon.

Middle School: In addition to the courses that 6th graders enjoy in Technology, next year at the middle school they will offer an Advanced Robotics class for 7th and 8th graders. Recently funds from the Highly Capable iGrant were used to purchase Lego Extension Packs for this new course. These supplies will not only provide the opportunity to build additional, advanced robots, but also provide an upgraded system for programming them. The program they currently use will no longer be supported by the maker. An additional Lego First Daimler grant will be applied for by the instructor, Kristy Schneider to assist with the expenses related to attending the competition. These are not the Legos our kids played with back in the day. They are actually robotic and programmable. Kristy has received two days of STEM 101 training with Vickei Hrdina (ESD 112 STEM Director) and plans to spend two additional advanced days this summer. As a result of her participation in these professional growth experiences, she has access to a teacher portal with all the lessons necessary to integrate these Lego robots into her current and future classes. With these new materials, students will be prepared for the competition in December at Washington First Robotics Competition. Please see the following website for more information <http://www.firstwa.org/>

Teacher Training: Plans are in the works for five elementary teachers to attend the three day “HiCap” training in June. This is the same summer conference that three of their colleagues attended last June at Whitworth University in Spokane. Last year's focus on differentiation has informed and inspired teachers all year. This year's focus is on, *Personalizing Learning: Making Curriculum More Responsive to Advanced Learners' Needs*. Session will assist us with identifying and developing strengths and interests of students, using cluster grouping and designing high-quality differentiation in the content areas to promote continuous growth in our students. Please be looking for a report on their learning once school resumes.

Testing / Assessment –

Testing, Testing, Testing: All Test Administrators, certificated and classified, have received proctor training for the Smarter Balanced Spring Assessment. This training ensures a smooth testing experience for all students 3rd through high school as well as complies with OSPI training and compliance expectations. Many teachers have opted to utilize available online SBA interim assessments, both comprehensive and block, to provide experience and support to learning. SBA Summative assessment season kicked off after Spring Break with the third graders and will conclude with a final high school assessment in June. With the exception of the Biology EOC and Math EOCs, all of our state assessments are administered online. As the MSP and EOC tests are phased out, the SBA will soon become the test that is administered up through high school and will apply toward graduation. To see the district assessment schedule please go to the Teaching and Learning Director's page at <https://sites.google.com/a/lacenterschools.org/amy-neiman/Assessment-Calendar>.

K-12 Library–

Integration: In the last month our K-12 Librarian, Lynn Cooke, has been working with the high school music department (jazz band) and collaborating across grades and subjects to integrate literacy and music. The high school jazz band has been coming to the K-8 camps and reading music related books to the elementary students grade K-3. On Friday, May 20th, they will perform music related to the books. Lynn will have two assemblies/performances scheduled 11:45 for grades 2-3 and 2:00 for grades 1-K. It should be a lot of fun.

Redesign: The K-8 library staff are planning a redesign by flipping the library so the middle school side will be the first as people walk in and the K-4 will be in the south end. This will help with the traffic flow during library lessons and encourage more middle schoolers to utilize their library.

Grants: Lynn has applied for three grants from the Washington State Library to make our nonfiction section more current (\$1000 at each building). We should be hearing by the end of May if we receive the grants.

Show Case: During this month's board meeting, our K-12 libraries will be featured along with the FCRC, so stay tuned!

Family and Community Resource Center (FCRC) –

Attendance: Aften, FCRC Coordinator, continued supporting attendance teams at the Elementary and Middle School levels. She is currently running a morning check-in called "Race to Success" for students exhibiting severe chronic absenteeism (on track to miss 20% of the school year or more) and high levels of tardiness to promote "on-time" attendance. To take advantage of the unique K-8 campus, FCRC connects students with attendance issues at the middle school with elementary students and classrooms for morning support and check-ins.

This provides opportunities to develop both leadership and responsibility, as well as give them a chance to be a role model to others. Elementary students and middle school students doing check-ins have shown improved attendance with several participants not experiencing any absences since they began.

Youth Mentoring: Mentoring continues at the elementary school! Our volunteer mentor is on campus every Monday and Friday to connect with his four mentees individually. Through collaboration with teachers and the counselor, a set of targeted behaviors were identified for our mentor to work on with our students. This allows our mentor to work toward positive outcomes in our youths' self-esteem, engagement in class, homework completion rate, respect for peers, and positive outlook for their futures! Our mentor has done an amazing job building positive and meaningful relationships with his mentees. Mentees are excited for his visit and their targeted behaviors are showing improvement, especially surrounding attendance.

After School Extended-Learning and Enrichment: The middle school and FCRC have geared up to run a two-week pilot after school program in May. FCRC developed an interest survey for middle school students to better understand what enrichment activities are most interesting to our students. Survey results were used as a guide for creating classes. FCRC has found three, well-qualified volunteers to teach Stretching-Yoga Hour, Running Club, and Cars 101. Additionally, FCRC is receiving donations for after school snack from the local community members and staff.

Fuel Up: In partnership with La Center Evangelical Free Church and other amazing community members and staff, FCRC continues to support Elementary and Middle School students through Fuel Up! When youth miss breakfast in the morning or do not have anything for snack time, they can stop by FCRC and fuel up their brain with food. There are now three locations throughout the school for students to Fuel Up. For the month of March, LCES accessed Fuel Up 201 times (just over twelve times per day) and LCMS accessed Fuel Up 85 times (five times per day).

Weekend Packs: Thirteen families between LCES and LCMS are provided weekend packs every Friday with food for the weekend. This helps ensure that our families that rely and free/reduced lunch during the week can continue to feed their children over the weekend when school meals are not provided. With four Fridays in the month of April, 52 bags of food went out to support La Center families. An additional four bags of food went to support families not on the Weekend Pack program but needing a little extra support throughout the month.

Resources & Referrals: The nature of resources/referrals vary quite a bit based on the needs of a family. Within the month of April FCRC provided resources or referrals for school supplies, food, mental health services, medical insurance, legal services, domestic violence advocacy, early childhood behavioral support, job search, resumes, and applications, computer/internet access, summer program scholarships, life insurance, disability support, homelessness prevention resources, clothing, hygiene supplies, shelters/alternative housing, general case management, emotional/social mediation, housing supplies, and high school-to-college transition support (fee waivers, deposit deferrals, financial aid navigation for special circumstances, and referrals to mental health counseling). Affordable housing continues to be a

significant challenge for our community's low-income families. Families are moving out-of-district or seeking shelter as a result of the lack of affordable housing in La Center. There is also great need for employment as La Center families struggle to find work that will sustain their current housing costs.

Grants: FCRC and La Center Middle School have been awarded the \$1,000 Game On Grant from Action For Healthy Kids for the 2016-2017 school year. This grant will support increasing physical activity and healthy eating habits by providing funding and resources for after school programs. La Center Middle School and FCRC will use this funding to purchase FitZips, yoga mats, snacks for healthy food "Taste Tests", and ingredients for baking and cooking classes. Receiving this funding opens up the possibility for three years of additional funding to ensure sustainability of the program. Thank you to Action For Healthy Kids!

Show Case: Again... during this month's board meeting, our FCRC will be featured along with the K-12 libraries, so stay tuned!

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Neiman
Director of Teaching & Learning
La Center School District