Teaching and Learning Update January 2013

Curriculum/ Materials Adoption- Some exciting decisions and changes in direction happening here! As of Wednesday we've decided to modify the work that had begun around the math review process to evolve the work into a full-blown adoption for K-12 math. Based on the energy around our math program by a variety of stakeholder groups, the state's adoption of the Common Core Standards for math, the full implementation of our district's learning model and the desire to see our "one to one" student device initiative come to fruition, this makes perfect sense at this time.

We had our first K-5 math review meeting on Monday morning under the old vision and it was very productive and positive. We had 18 stakeholders representing teachers, administrators, parents and community members. Everyone was engaged, positive and respectful of different points of view. I'm really excited to work with this group moving forward under the new vision of a full adoption process. I will schedule building level meetings now at the middle and high schools in the next 10 days to begin their work in earnest as well.

This process will not impact our current adoption schedule for the next three years. This year's adoption is world language and next year's is fine arts. We will be able to complete all of this work simultaneously and because of the nature of the two previously mentioned adoption areas, the budget for this work will be manageable. In year three we will begin science. This will be the next big endeavor. My assumption at this point is we will pause during year four during the previously scheduled math slot to "catch up" from a budget and professional development perspective.

If you would like me to elaborate on our thinking around this change I would be happy to do so quickly at the board meeting or more in-depth at our next workshop.

Professional Development- We are just completing our last two iPad training classes over the next week and a half for our staff.

Our next significant endeavor will be the site visit of Mark Church who is the author of the book "Making Thinking Visible" which was the focus of one of our summer book studies. He will be visiting our campuses for a day in February to do learning walks with our principals and meet with 6-10 selected teachers to orient him with our learning model and our learning environments. From that visit the insights gained will enable us to plan 3 Saturday workshops in the spring for a group of teacher-leaders who, in turn, will lead a summer institute for all staff next August. The focus of Mark Church's work is around identifying and reproducing thinking routines in students and classrooms in general which leads to increased cognitive demand in learners and their environments. This obviously fits perfectly into our district's learning model.

ELL- Melissa Flatt has fully integrated herself into our ELL model and is serving students 6-12 with much success. Our numbers continue to grow and the challenges in this program continue to increase as the transfer of students in and out of our district has accelerated along with the continued upward trajectory of enrollment. That said we are handling this quite well with Kellie Braaten and Melissa working very hard for our students.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)- Our second parent advisory council meeting for the year will occur in early February, at which we will finalize our expenditures for our Perkins grant funds. We have submitted our latest CTE framework (transportation/ bio-energy) to OSPI and are waiting for a response back.

Title I/LAP- Big changes here as well! After much discussion with Mr. Lincoln, Colleen Wing and numerous teachers, combined with much budget work with Brett, we have determined that we have the resources to hire an additional kindergarten teacher for the remainder of the year using LAP funds. This position will work with small groups of pre-identified students (2-4) out of all five classrooms Monday through Thursday. This work will be done using both a push in and pull out model of small group instruction with the goal of moving 15-18 students from below grade level to at or above grade level by the end of the school year. On Friday that same group of 15-18 students will come to school for a fifth day and be in a self-contained classroom with that same teacher working on those same learning goals. This is really exciting!

Highly Capable- Wow, last week we had 53 students stay after school to participate in chess club! Thank you to Mrs. Sawyer for supervising this after school activity. The energy in the library from this group was incredible.

Math is cool is still going strong and we will have our first actual "contest" coming up here in early February. This will be for the 6th grade group. 4th and 5th graders will be competing in March.

Testing/Assessment-We just completed EOC make-ups in Math and Biology and they are ready for scoring. With that out of the way the next big round of assessment will be Dibbles testing at the elementary beginning next week. The next state testing will be the high school HSPE (high school proficiency exam) in reading and writing on March 12th through the 14th.

Thanks, Dave.