HAWK REPORT: JANUARY 2010

The year 2010 may be an interesting journey for our school district as the state budget cuts loom over our heads. One thing that I have learned over the years in tough times is to keep plugging away and focus on what you can control. It certainly helps to have supportive people around you who are on the same page to help get through the tough times. Today I left a staff meeting feeling encouraged and revitalized by the support and energy that our staff has. We know that there might be a rough road ahead but we are going to stick together and focus on the positive elements of education which is to create a positive learning environment for our kids regardless of the external factors.

Last week I attended the Washington State Leadership Academy (WSLA) conference with the La Center Administration Team. The most interesting part of the meeting for me was listening to what other districts are doing. I left the meeting having reinforced my belief that the most important element in education is trust. There must be trust from the school board down to the students. I am very proud of my own staff that is willing to visit each other's classrooms, give and receive feedback, and support each other to plan instruction. As the staff supports each other, they take more risks and find many ways to help all students succeed.

I have now been involved in ten lesson studies and I am still enjoying them immensely. In our last lesson study, led by Kristy Schneider, we invited two teachers and the principal from View Ridge Middle School to be a part of the team. They enjoyed the process and will send more members to our next lesson study. They also gave us some valuable feedback which we will use to improve our lesson study process. I was also able to see Andrea Austad lead the second lab classroom group and that team did a wonderful job as well. By the end of the year each member will have participated in six lesson studies. The staff has been impressed by how the small changes in a classroom can make the biggest difference. Valuable learning strategies are developed which are easily implemented into the daily lesson.

Warren Westerberg and Rhonda Slinkard hosted a thought provoking Martin Luther King assembly. Mrs. Slinkard's drama class performed a play which connected the struggles of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and today's students. Mr. Westerberg accompanied the play with video clips and photos. This moved the students and led to some great discussions about how we should treat each other.

We are fast approaching the end of the first semester. The students understand the importance of the last few weeks as everybody is trying to improve their grades. Study halls are full including the three hour sessions so I appreciate the students' efforts to get their grades up.

The boys' basketball season is underway under the guidance of Steve Tippets. I appreciate the enthusiasm that Steve and his coaching staff have shown with the kids so far and look forward to an exciting season.

LCMS is off to a flying start this calendar year and we look forward to the many challenges for the rest of the school year.

GO HAWKS

David Cooke
Principal
La Center Middle School