Teaching and Learning Update October 2012

Testing/Assessment- As some of you, with high school students already know, we were able to distribute our HSPE and EOC assessment reports, from last spring, this week to our parents and their students. There were a lot of very proud students at the high school, many of them stopping me to show me how well they had done. I am really impressed with the fact that our students now seem to take pride in their achievement on these tests. We are currently getting ready for the fall assessments given to a select population of our special needs students.

Curriculum/ Materials Adoption- Having just assumed the oversight of iPads and cart deployment along with application acquisition this month as part of the teaching and learning department, I have made this a priority in my schedule. I've spent a considerable amount of time ensuring that these devices are in our classrooms with desired functionality and are being used to improve the learning environments for our students. Our four building "Technology Learning Facilitators", John Johnson, Perry Calabrese, Warren Westerberg, and Sharon Bussler along with Beth Marshall in the high school library have done a phenomenal job helping with this process. I would like to recognize Dan Bentson for the huge help and resource he has been to us all in this transition. We are currently focusing on "free" applications and assessing their functionality. As we gather more and more knowledge and skill with the use of the iPads we will begin a formal professional development process to share learned expertise between and among all staff.

We will be making a final review next month of the writing assessment we began last year. We will be obtaining copies of instructional materials needed to fill gaps in our K-8 curriculum identified over the summer by our staff. Those materials will go through the usual approval process with the IMC committee and then finally to you for approval.

Also next month we will be beginning a review of our K-12 fine arts curriculum per our adoption schedule. In addition we will begin the evaluation process of our current math adoption per that same schedule. If you have names of stakeholders that you believe would be good representatives to take part in that evaluation, please send me their names. This review is not intended to overturn an adoption or argue in favor of such, but to evaluate it's effectiveness to date and look at it's strengths and weaknesses. This input/data will then be used to look for additional resources or techniques that strengthen those weaknesses prior to a complete curriculum review in 3 more years.

Professional Development- I just held my second substitute training seminar this week. As always it was a great learning experience for myself and I hope it was for our substitutes. They really appreciate the opportunity for learning and are genuinely thankful that we as a district feel that they are important enough to provide this type of opportunity for them as other districts do not.

ELL- We just posted a second part-time position to serve our English Language Learners as our enrollment has doubled from 14 to 29 this fall. Kellie Braatten is doing a wonderful job juggling schedules and grouping these students in the most advantageous ways in order to serve them most effectively. Melissa Flatt has been filling the second position temporarily while we progress through the hiring process and has served our older students at the middle and high school extremely well.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)- We just held our first parent advisory meeting for vocational education this week. Thank you to Duane Neiman who stepped up to be the new parent advisory board chairman for this year. Our primary focus for this year via the board will be to establish tours, mentorships and apprenticeships in the trades, in and around our local area for our students.

Title I/LAP- Another area that I've assumed oversight of this month. I can say that I really appreciate this opportunity for my own personal growth. I've met with Scott Lincoln and Colleen Wing to discuss program specifics and have met with Brett B. to set up monitoring of both budgets. After thorough review of the filed applications and budgets we are making some minor changes this year that I believe will lay the ground work for more significant changes going into next year. I'm very excited about those changes and will share them with you as they come closer to adoption.

Highly Capable- We are in the middle of preparing our 3rd -5th grade HC team to compete in the science olympics again this year. Thank you to Kris Sawyer, Julie Smith and Sharon Bussler for once again providing this opportunity. Mr. Holland is beginning a "Math is Cool" club in the MS which will be funded through HC but will be open to all students. This club meets after school similar to science olympics and has competitions by grade level after the first of the year against other schools in the Clark county area. Once the science olympics concludes in November, Kris Sawyer will once again be running our after school Chess/math/science club once a week as she did last year.

Thanks, Dave.