Superintendent's Report

October 19th, 2012

LEARNING UPDATE

- **Navigation 101** – As you know, I have been given a tremendous gift of leading a group of freshman this year with their Navigation 101 advisory. We have had four meetings and our team is really starting to come together. I am also learning a lot about the Navigation program that we have heard so much about over the years from students during the linkage meetings they have had with the Board. My focus of learning with these students is to have them help me learn how to shape the Navigation experience for them in such a way as to better meet the Board's End policies in a way that they own the process. To aid in this work, we are using iPads at every meeting we can so as to help them: 1) lead their own learning; 2) support them collecting evidence of their growth; and 3) learn to use this tool as a presentation device so as to test their perspective of growth with their parents (and other guests) during Student Led Conferences in the spring. Having only 35 minutes every other week for Navigation class is a very short time to do all this work. I believe the course we are on as a team will help students expand the available time and space so we can use our class time in a strongly student centered manner. Having a chance to be part of this learning team will provide me a unique glimpse into the lives of our students here at school. To say the least, I am learning a lot that will help me as a learning environment leader in other parts of my service.
- **Old Dog 5 Learning Team** – Starting next week, we will begin our fifth session with a group of teachers that we have called the "Old Dog Team". Basically, I am the 'old dog" and they are teaching me a lot. A core group of elementary teachers have been with me through all five sessions and a fair number of other teachers have come in and out of the group as their time/schedule has allowed. Our focus this session is to look at the new teacher instructional framework that is part of the Teacher-Principal Evaluation Pilot (TPEP) through the lens of the La Center Learning Model. In particular, we will be learning how to use iPads as both an instructional tool as well as an evidence collection instrument for capturing learning growth evidence. This team includes ten teachers, three classified staff and several administrators. We will be meeting for a total of 9 hours over three separate evenings between now and the end of the first semester. It should be lots of fun and has been consistently filled with ideas that we all can implement/test within the learning teams each of us lead.
- **Learner Competencies** – Attached is the most current version of the district's *Learner Competencies* for your awareness. Minor changes are being made at this point so I believe we have settled into a solid framework of competencies to use across the district in all learning environments.
- **WSU Superintendent Cohort Presentation** – I will be giving a presentation the evening of October 19th at WSU to a group of 55 future school superintendents regarding the La Center Learning Model. Dr. Gay Selby who leads this program at WSU heard a presentation I gave at the ESD last spring regarding our learning model and asked me to present our work to these future school leaders. Dr. Selby was a member of my doctoral committee, was one of my teachers when I went through the WSU superintendent certification program nearly 15

years ago and was also the search consultant La Center used eight years ago when I came to the district. This is a great opportunity to put our model in front of a significant number of educational leaders from across the state. With 295 school districts currently in Washington and most of these individuals in this cohort within the next five years will most likely be serving in superintendent or senior district leadership positions around the state, it is a tremendous opportunity to test our model and to see if it resonates with them. One way or another, it will be a wonderful learning experience.

BOARD UPDATE

- **NEWS Report to the Supreme Court** – The attorneys from Network for Excellence in Washington Schools (NEWS), which the district is a member of, has filed its response to the Legislature's report to the Supreme Court regarding its McLeary ruling. This 50-page document articulates the State's failure to meet its constitutional requirement to amply fund basic education and encourages the court to not allow the State to delay its responsibility to amply fund K-12 education. The following concluding statement included in this report does a good job of putting this matter into simple and direct terms that we all need to understand.

> *"Back in February 2010, the trial court ruled that the defendant State's continued failure to amply fund its public schools is unconstitutional. The State's 2012 post-budget filing is long. But it demonstrates real, measurable, or steady progress stopping the State's longtime violation of Washington children's Constitutional right to an amply funded K-12 education. Instead, the State's post-budget filing demonstrates another year of delay.*
>
> *It basically says "Legislators have been talking about school underfunding for many many years now, they didn't increase funding for this 2012/2013 school year because it's not a convenient time right now, but legislators are looking busy with a bunch of busywork, and whoever's elected in November might start to make some progress next year for kids in the 2013/2014 school year."*
>
> *Many parents talk about "teachable moments" for their kids. The step this Court chooses to take in response to the parties' post-budget filings in this case presents a teachable moment not just for the McCleary and Venema children who are plaintiffs in this case, but also for every student currently in our State's public schools. Court's response will teach our upcoming generation of Washington citizens a fundamental lesson about whether our Constitution really matters. Does our Constitution grant citizens legally enforceable rights, or just make hollow suggestions that courts allow government officials to reject if politically convenient? In our State, is a Constitutional mandate an order that the government must obey, or just a suggestion that it may obey if it wants to?*
>
> *As the history of enforcing Brown v. Board of Education illustrates, forcing recalcitrant State officials to pay the political and monetary price of complying with school children's Constitutional rights can be a hard path for the judicial branch to take. But that same experience also confirms that the hard path is the Constitutionally correct one for the judicial branch to take."* Page 47 and 48

With the upcoming legislative session only a couple of short months away, this document and the conclusion above is certainly going to be a primary topic of conversation relative to

educational funding within our state. As Board members, I believe it is vitally important that each of you have a clear picture of the McCleary case and what is happening between the Supreme Court, the Legislature and NEWS especially in light of our upcoming levy request. I don't think you need to memorize the full report as this conclusion should serve you well. However, if you would like to see the full document please let me know and I will send it to you.

- **New Online Board Agenda/Documents** – We are moving to a new online board book software that will give you additional features such as digital private notes that you can make on your home PC and then retrieve on your iPad at the Board meetings. Another advantage to this new system is that it will be completely searchable. In other words, instead of trying to remember when something was said or done we can do a quick search around key words to produce a list of when and where the topic was discussed. Laurie really is excited on this feature as well as several others that will make the process more streamlined.
- **Technology and Teaching & Learning Responsibility Shifts** – Attached is a copy of the document I sent out to staff that describes the changes in responsibilities between the Technology Team and the Teaching and Learning Team. This shift has occurred and the work of realigning their responsibilities is underway. FYI.

I think that is all for now. Please give me a call if you have any questions. Talk with you later.

Mark

La Center School District's Learner Competencies

Within each of the three learning conditions of the district's learning model, the following learner competencies are to be practiced in every learning environment throughout the district. This is in support of the Board's Ends-1 policy expectation to develop confident, self-reliant life-long learners.

1. Flow of Information

Confident self-reliant lifelong learners are effective consumers and producers of information. To do this they can…

A. Use a five-step problem-solving process: 1) identify variables; 2) locate facts; 3) analyze and evaluate information; 4) create solutions/opinions; and 5) test solutions/opinions.

B. Conduct, produce and present research (i.e. locate and organize information, write, support and present thinking in diverse mediums) in a variety of forums.

C. Use multiple forms of information such as charts, graphs, tables, manipulatives, equipment, models and other resources within the problem-solving process.

D. Implement the technical skills necessary to:

- Read/write with skill and present with confidence (e.g. instructions, charts, thank you letters, letters of request, letters of response, proposals, lab reports, research reports, technical documents, summaries and graphs).
- Solve problems and express solutions using the language of mathematics.
- Use multiple types of technology (e.g. word processing, database, Internet, AV production and CNC machine tools).

2. Cognitive Demand

Confident self-reliant lifelong learners are able to thrive in uncertain and rapidly changing environments. To do this they can…

A. Initiate high-level thinking processes (e.g. analyze, evaluate, classify, predict, decide, estimate, generalize, solve, compare, simplify, design, and cause/effect) to solve problems and/or develop appropriate new strategies.

B. Continually use a self-evaluation/reflection process to enhance their learning.

C. Create goals and effectively work to achieve them (e.g. brainstorm, envision, research, plan, organize and persist).

D. Implement a continuous improvement process (i.e. plan, draft, analyze, and revise) when creating products.

3. Learning Trust

Confident self-reliant lifelong learners can create and use effective learning support networks. To do this they can…

A. Use their interpersonal skills in order to:

- Establish communication linkages with other learners.
- Use effective listening strategies in a variety of settings.
- Resolve conflicts that disrupt communications.
- Develop positive learning feedback connections with other learners.

B. Communicate their thinking with clarity and precision to test their ideas/strategies.

C. Effectively provide constructive feedback to other learners within their network.

D. Consistently demonstrate their strong learning confidence in a variety of different settings

September 10th, 2012

LA CENTER
School District

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: **October 10, 2012**

TO: **Whom It May Concern**

FROM: **Dr. Mark Mansell**

SUBJECT: **Organizational Realignment**

La Center School District – Organizational Realignment
The following is a description of the *Background*, *Vision* and *Organizational Realignments* regarding some pending changes that are necessary to help us to continue to move forward as a district with our collective efforts to meet the Board's Ends policies (specifically E-1 and E-3a).

As with all changes, there will almost certainly be a few glitches and some confusion, but the following information is designed to try and minimize these issues as much as possible. Thank you in advance for reading this document completely.

BACKGROUND
The iPad is rapidly becoming a game changer in education, not only within our district but also across the country. Like many other districts dedicated to creating innovative learning environments for students, we have added several hundred iPads across the district over the last year or so. This move has been both exciting and at the same time a bit stressful due to the changes caused by the additions of these new learning tools. We have learned much in the process and like most learning experiences, the more we learn the more we realize how much more we still have to learn.

These new learning tools are driving a multitude of changes within our district and we are not alone with these experiences. The introduction of iPads into educational environments across the country is causing massive realignments, rethinking of practices by many educators and a change in the acceptable levels of service to students. These changes occurring elsewhere will ultimately impact us to a greater and greater degree and our current work puts us in a good place… for the moment. But what was once an idea we had here in La Center to support our students to become more confident, self-reliant lifelong learners will soon become a necessity if these national shifts continue to occur. Therefore our continual effort to move forward with these tools is essential.

One example of the changes headed our way which may not be immediately evident to many are the significant changes as we transition away from printed towards digital textbooks. It is safe to say that within the next couple of years many of our instructional material upgrades we will want to consider

will only be available in digital environments. This shift occurring with instructional materials providers is happening so fast that it's entirely possible that within five to seven years textbooks as we know them will be virtually gone from most schools. Even in our own state, there is much talk about digital textbooks as a cost savings measure. It seems clear that this change is coming and we need to prepare for it.

VISION

But the rollout of our iPads is far more than just providing a fancy e-reader for future digital instructional materials. They are educational portals that will allow learners to gather information, network with other students and teachers, produce documents/videos, test their thinking beyond the walls of our schools, and so much more. I believe these types of tools will become increasingly necessary in our efforts to create even stronger learning environments for our students in their work to meet the Board's Ends policies.

With the above in mind, as a collective staff it is important for us to begin having a shift of mind around the iPads in order to help prepare us further for the opportunities that lay before us. This shift starts with us beginning to see the iPads as something other than just the next generation of a laptop. To be specific, *iPads (and similar tablets available on the market) are not laptops but rather they are powerful digital learning tools* (think of them as supercharged digital textbooks). As the world outside of La Center continues to move forward in this area, digital tools like the iPads (or similar devices) will become more and more essential for all students to have and to use in their learning efforts.

I am proposing a long-term vision for our district in this area to ultimately have a one-to-one, student to device ratio in all of our classrooms with a goal of having every student in grades 6 through 12 with their own device within the next two years. Just as students today bring a binder, paper and writing tools, within the next couple of years they will be bringing their own digital tools to school.

There will be many questions for which we currently do not have answers regarding how to achieve this goal. One of the most important on my mind is how will we reduce the digital divide between students who have external resources from those who do not. Like everything else we do here in La Center, I have no doubt that we will figure this out in a way that supports all of our students and get them the resources and tools they need to maximize their opportunity for success.

ORGANIZATIONAL REALIGNMENTS

To help us get from where we are at currently to where we need to be with this work, the lessons learned from this fall's rollout of the iCarts has shown that we must think differently about how we organize ourselves to support the vision of where we are heading with these instructional tools. To this end, we will be making some organizational and responsibility changes that will help us along the way. They will help us: 1) Shift Our Thinking, 2) Realign Our Resources and 3) Refocus Our Work.

1) <u>Shifting Our Thinking</u> – We all need to begin to think of iPads as "*Supercharged Digital Textbooks*" that can serve as digital tools to increase the flow of information, raise the cognitive demand and expand learning trust within the learning environments of our classrooms.

2) <u>Realigning Our Resources</u> – As iPads (and other similar digital tools) continue to expand in availability and use throughout the district, further demands on our infrastructure, systems and

processes will occur. Aligning our systems and people in a way that supports this long-term vision of where we are headed is critical. Therefore, **iPads and similar devices as supercharged digital textbooks will immediately become the responsibility of the Teaching and Learning Department.** Our four building technology coordinators (BTCs) will move from the Technology Team over into the Teaching and Learning Team to tap into their expertise as Technology Learning Facilitators rather than as technical support.

3) Focusing Our Work – We will need to have each team (T&L and Tech) focus their work in new ways so as to harness the collective energies to support students and teachers in their efforts to create even stronger learner-centered classrooms across the district.
   - *Teaching and Learning Team* - This team (led by Dave Holmes) will begin a process of supporting training, usage and troubleshooting of all iPads including the appropriate apps to be loaded. All media-library techs will continue to operate within the Teaching and Learning Department and will be joined by four Technology Learning Facilitators (formerly known as BTCs) to support learning efforts and responsibilities with all iPads.
   - *Technology Team* – This team (led by Dan Bentson) will refocus their efforts on providing the most reliable, robust and secure infrastructure in support of our current needs as well as the future demands these new and powerful learning tools will place on our system. All desktop/laptop computers and other technology tools will remain the responsibility of the technology team.