Superintendent's Report

October 21st, 2011

LEARNING UPDATE

- **Core Competencies** – As you know, we have begun the work of creating and implementing our locally developed life-long learning skills and abilities standards for our students known as *Core Competencies of a Life-long Learner* (see attached for the latest version). This document began within one of our learning efforts last year known as "Old Dog Team". The goal of this team was to help us see how the district's learning model could be made more practical through the creation of clear learning targets that could be woven into every learning environment across the district. In August, we set out the goals of working over the course of this school year to accomplish the following: 1) move the Core Competencies from draft form to an approved document that could be shared with students and parents; and 2) learn how to utilize these standards within our lesson designs in all grade and subject levels across the district. As with all change efforts, there are various signs of progress but I am pleased overall to see strong energy toward utilizing the Core Competencies to create more exciting learning opportunities for our students. One example of this effort to incorporate these standards occurred with Mrs. Hollopeter's 3rd grade class in their project "Meet the Snails" (see the link of the same name on the district's main web page). This is a lesson she designed for her students utilizing the Core Competencies, the district's learning model through lesson design and technology (from this summer's iPad training). I encourage you to take a look at this PowerPoint, and maybe we can get Mrs. Hollopeter's class to attend an upcoming Board meeting and have them present their learning in person.
- **Old Dog 3 Learning Team** – Again this year the district is providing funding for teacher efforts around the three learning conditions of the learning model. This funding is known as Learning Conditions Mini-Grant (LCMG). One of these efforts involved a team of elementary teachers who wanted to learn how to make the learning model more practical. Their efforts resulted in the foundation of our Summer Institute Training that occurred in August (and the make-up session that occurred on October 14th – see below) on how to create lessons incorporating the three learning conditions and the Core Competencies. This team of elementary teachers were so excited about their learning last year that they submitted a third LCMG proposal for this fall. Their focus is to learn how to bring the Core Competencies more alive for their students and other teachers outside of this team. I am very impressed with their energy and enthusiasm for this work. I am confident that there will be lots of learning from this team once again, which has now expanded from nine to twelve educators. More on this team's effort as they move forward.
- **Math Compass Testing** – Even though we have talked about creating a special course or mini-class to help our students prepare for the Compass math test (passage is required for entrance into a community college), we just haven't got the idea off the ground. As a result of our recent Board-community linkage, Dave decided to go and take the test himself to learn first hand what it is like. Just for the record, he passed the test (good thing as he is a math teacher by training) and does not have to take non-credit remedial math ☺ What he learned was very helpful for him to see how to move forward to support our students. Additionally,

he has now asked for and received the support from all of our high school math teachers to go and take the test for themselves as well (Dave will substitute teach for them so no sub costs). I believe that once they take the test themselves, the way they communicate to students about the Compass test will change and will help them provide students with the skills and confidence to do well. Furthermore, I believe our staff will take it even more personally if students are not successful at this entrance test where it may have been easy previously to simply blame it on the test. I am very proud of our staff and Dave for leading this effort and again it is a result of what we heard at the linkage.

- **Make-up Learning to Learn Training** – On October 14th, we had eight participate in an all-day training on Learning to Learn and using the model to design student centric learning environments. This was a catch all opportunity for those who could not attend either of the two sessions this summer, but still wanted the training. We still have some staff that have not received this training, but even though all this work is voluntary there are just a handful of staff left who have not participated directly in learning to use the model. With over 100 professionals being part of this summer's institutes (about 40% from outside the district), we clearly have the majority of our team that is steeped in the learning model and how to create lessons utilizing the three conditions. A huge thanks to all those who participated in these trainings is unquestionably warranted.

BOARD UPDATE

- **Career and Technical Education** – First off I want to say that I am very pleased with the reinvention work to date of our CTE program at the high school. Adding Jim Neiman to our program has been a huge win for our students. I am very impressed with how he is raising the standards of learning expectations and readying the program for a tremendous leap forward for our students. Kudos to Jim for his hard work and leadership to reshape the metals, woods and small engine programs. Also, good job needs to go out to Carol and Dave for their support of this retooling effort.
- **Cispus Funding** – You may or may not be aware of this effort, but Warren Westerberg (Cispus leader) is working to position Cispus funding on more solid ground with the potential loss of grant funding from the Casino Charitable Trust. He has been engaging 5th grade parents in this conversation and deserves kudos for his forward thinking and hard work on this effort. If you get a chance to see him please give a verbal "high five" to him for his work.
- **Clark County Skills Center** – I was recently elected to serve as the 2011/12 chair of the Clark County Skills Center executive council. I have had the opportunity to provide leadership for the executive council over the past couple of years through the move to a Policy Governance structure. This is the year of implementation of the Policy Governance model, so I am especially honored to have been asked to serve as the chair for this wonderful program. Finally, if any Board member would like to take a tour of the Skills Center, please let either Laurie or me know so we can arrange for a visit for you. It is always exciting to see the great things happening for our students at the Skills Center. Also remember, it is always wonderful to plan the tour around lunch because their culinary program is top-notch!
- **Navigation Program** – Another piece of learning I walked away from the community linkage meeting with was in reference to Navigation and our Pathway structure for

graduation. We continue to learn how to enhance this experience for students and it was clear to me from the linkage that some of our parents were not aware of Navigation as one might think or with the pathway model. To address this point I have met with both Carol Patton and Lauri Landerholm to share the information received from those parents. The following are points that I learned that I want to share with each of you:

1) Navigation advisors are being aligned with the pathways (i.e. technical/academic students, academic pathway students only or honors/academic pathway students);
2) Navigation packets including pathway information are aligned with student graduation requirements. For example, this year's seniors are under the old graduation requirements of 23 credits, so they did not receive the same information packets that the other three classes did (who must meet the 24 credit requirement). The parent who brought up the question about not knowing more about Navigation and the pathway model has a senior this year and her other students are in elementary school;
3) We need to ensure that Navigation materials are flexible enough to meet the needs of students on the different pathways, not a "one size fits all" approach. Furthermore, the materials will be most valuable if they are created within a quadrant 1 focus rather than quadrant 4. An example of this would be now their post-secondary planning process on financial planning asks them to calculate tuition, room and board, and/or book costs. For students who are headed for on-the-job training, this activity may not be seen as a helpful exercise. This is not to say these types of budget questions should not be provided to all students, but their list should be developed by students based on their needs within a learning process (quadrant 1) rather than a check-off endeavor (quadrant 4); and
4) I need to get first hand information from students themselves about their experiences with the Navigation program and the pathway model effectiveness. To do this, I have asked Carol to let me serve as a Navigation team advisor next year so I can experience the process with a team of students first hand. Dave has also decided to serve in the same capacity next year as a way to learn directly from students.

- **Summer Road Projects** – This summer there will be two road projects in the La Center area that the county will be undertaking, which could impact school transportation. Both of these efforts are projected to wrapped up by the time school starts, but you know that the best-laid plans can sometimes go off track. We will be watching these projects and encouraging the rapid completion where ever we can. The first project will be at the intersection of Timmen Road and La Center Junction road. This project will be to widen parts of the intersection in order to provide turning lanes. This project will help make this intersection much safer so we look forward to its completion. The second project is the much-needed repairs to a section of the Old Pacific Highway past Bolen Road (leads to the new school property) on the way to Woodland. This road will actually be closed for the repairs, so not having this route open by the time school starts will cause significant issues. However, if we can make it through the Ivy and 4th street project as we did a few years ago, I know we can overcome this one too. However, the county promised the will do everything they can to have the road open by the time school starts (knock on wood).
- **Pending Changes to Principal and Teacher Evaluation Model** – You may or may not be aware that starting in the 2013/14 school year as a result of SB 6696, the standards for

evaluations of both teachers and principals will be changing (see attached document). We are working to link our learning model to the new state standards to make it a strong connection for our staff. Over the next year and a half I will be sharing more about this work with the Board because it will ultimately require Board approval.

With that in mind, you may have heard me say the following statement a time or two: "Luck is when preparation meets opportunity". I currently serve as our region's representative on the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) board of directors. As part of this statewide teacher and principal evaluation redesign effort, there are many districts across the state engaged in pilot projects to implement various evaluation models. We are not a pilot district because we want to link the evaluation process to our model and not use something that is misaligned with our learning environment expectations. As a result of these statewide pilot projects, WASA is forming a committee to oversee this work and learn from these districts. I was asked by the WASA Board to serve as the chair of this committee over the next year, so there will be lots of opportunity to learn about this important work. I believe this learning will provide value to our efforts to create a more effective evaluation model within our district. FYI.

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

Mark