HAWK REPORT: OCTOBER 2010

October is not a good time of year to watch TV, listen to the radio or even answer your phone as you are constantly swamped by the negativity that comes with an upcoming election. It is nice to come to work and surround myself with positive people who do not blame each other for life's struggles but band together to help each other get better. Such is the La Center School District and its community. This month I have seen our staff and students continuing to work together to help each other get better. When the students focus on what they control and avoid getting caught up in life's dramas they can do amazing things. Things are not always easy but I hope they can find a safe place to come to and work hard at LCMS.

Mark Mansell, Joe Jones, the Superintendent/Principal of the Green Mountain School District, and I presented at the Annual AWSP Conference in Bellevue on October 4th. Our topic was 'Putting the Learning into Learning Walks.' We expected about 25 people and ended up with 70 which were great. As I said to Mark, we may have struck a nerve with some of our peers. It was exciting to share our learning model with our peers around the state and we hope to be able to collaborate with them even more in the future. This month we were also able to show the learning model in our classrooms to the Superintendents of Ridgefield and Woodland. We appreciate any feedback from our guests as we regard them as consultants who can help us get better. The students are so comfortable now with teachers and other guests coming into their classrooms as they are so used to it. It also shows the students that teachers and principals are still trying to get better in their practice.

Fall athletics concluded this month with successful seasons in football, volleyball and cross country. Cross country was undefeated for the second year in a row. All four volleyball teams had winning seasons. Football struggled a little this year as their rosters were small. LCMS will try to promote extra-curricular activities more to get more students to come out for sports next year. Thanks to all our coaches for their effort and dedication to our kids.

Some students are excelling in other extracurricular activities. Seven choir students auditioned for the Junior All-State Choir. They sang some vocal exercises accapella, as well as a polished art song for this audition. The recordings were sent in last Thursday and we await word on the results of these auditions. Six groups of choir students sent in recorded auditions to sing the National Anthem at a future Blazer game. We are also awaiting word on the results of these auditions. Both drama classes are working on plays. One performance will be in November and one will be in December.

The leadership class has been busy this month. They have been raising funds for some school projects. So far they have raised $260 this month. The projects are to improve the weeded area between the 7th and 8th grade wings, purchase a ping pong table for lunch

activities and to get a photo taken by a helicopter of a LC logo made by the students themselves. The leadership students also met with the Young Ambassadors from the elementary school and discussed what leadership in the middle school meant to them. They are an energetic group led by Ms.Tyrell and we appreciate all of their efforts.

ASB, Leadership and the STARS club are hosting Spirit Week in the last week of October. This is not only a good time to dress up but to be aware and make a pledge to not do drugs and alcohol. This is also a good excuse for the teachers to be a little goofy which we all need once in a while. Spirit week will conclude with a dance which is always well attended. Thanks to Ms.Tyrrell, Mrs. Broten and Mrs. DenBoer for their hard work putting on Spirit Week.

Whenever we can get additional help in the classroom it is always appreciated and we have found some great assistance in the class. Here are some examples. Josh Emerson is the newest GK-12 Fellow and this week the 6th graders observed and learned about Copepods. Josh's Masters research is looking at Copepods in the Columbia River and he was influenced to become a scientist by Barb Carroll, our retired science teacher! It has been fun to watch Josh understand the world of 6th graders and bring his knowledge and skills to the kids. We have also started growing our own helpers and have three kids assisting Mr. Holland in his 6th grade math class. They have become an instrumental part of his classroom. Mr. Holmes even videotaped these students to show future parent volunteers some strategies on how to support students in the classroom. It is an exciting new chapter at our kids when students become effective teachers in the classroom.

To conclude this report, I would like to share a small moment that happened on October 17th which put everything back into perspective about what is most important. Today I walked into Lynn Cooke's classroom expecting to see her sub again and I found Lynn. It was great to see her back with her students doing what she does so well. We are so glad that Matt and Lynn's sons Max and Lance are doing better after such a frightening illness. The strength shown by Matt and Lynn and the boys fight to get better was an inspiration to us all. Also inspiring, but once again not surprising, was how this wonderful community rallied to support their people in time of need. It just shows once again, that times can be difficult but when you surround yourself with good people it can make it a whole lot better. To quote Mark, that is the 'La Center Way.'

Go Hawks,

David Cooke
Principal
La Center Middle School