Curriculum Director's Report

October 20, 2009

Updated Adoption Process: The administrative leadership team has been working to implement a revised process to adopt instructional materials which provides more structured opportunities for students and the community to provide input. Although it has created some challenges, I believe the increased communication will provide a stronger instructional program for students.

As we implement the new process we have identified some adjustments to make in the timelines as well as in the application process. One change will be a slight delay in the availability of the community survey so that we can obtain input from our community member adoption advisory representatives. Even though this may increase the overall length of our timeline, we feel the quality of the end result will be improved.

ADOPTIONS:

CMAAC (Curriculum Materials Adoption Advisory Committee) teams consisting of community members, students, teachers and administrators have been established for Music, Social Studies and 9-12 Health. These teams will be setting norms and looking at developing the district belief statements for each curricular area. By establishing belief statements, we will be able to develop a common understanding for the types of materials needed to develop unified support for student learners to meet district Ends in each area. The belief statements will then be used to develop evaluation criteria for the selection of instructional materials and to set budgets.

Math Adoption: All of the core materials have been received and distributed to the K-12 teachers of mathematics. We are now working on filling in the gaps and identifying and ordering manipulative materials that are required but are NOT included in the purchase of the core instructional materials. For example, the high school needed classroom sets of small mirrors and polyhedral dice.

Teachers in grades K-5 will be attending additional math inservices November 20, January 22 and May 21.

Clock Hour Applications:

The number of opportunities for staff to earn clock hours through in-district trainings has continued to increase. The majority of our certificated staff members are required to obtain 150 clock hours every 5 years. Therefore we have continued to provide opportunities for teachers and administrators to obtain clock hour credit for workshops and training we provide in district. In order to have these clock hours credited to those required to maintain their certification, a clock hour approval application must be approved by an accredited clock hour approval agency. In our case we use ESD 112.

Over the past 4 months we have made an effort to get the majority of our district administrators approved as instructors for clock hour courses which expands the opportunities we can provide to staff. Although this does increase the paperwork load, it is exciting to be able to provide more specialized learning opportunities that more appropriately meet the needs of our staff.

I sincerely appreciate the work Julie Campbell has done to keep track of all the necessary paperwork that is required to maintain these records.

IN THE CLASSROOM: Some of you may wonder how it's going in the classroom. Well, as challenging as it has been to try and keep up with both teaching and administrative duties, I LOVE being with kids again. We are so lucky to have the students we do. As I continue to work with staff from other districts and hear about the lack of interest of some parents, I feel so lucky to be in La Center where parents really care about their children's education.

With this in mind, I truly believe we now have a unique opportunity to do more for the students of La Center. In my thirty years in La Center I have seen us move from almost nothing where we as teachers and staff provided many of our own dollars to meet the needs of students to a time where we have been able to look at more innovative ideas to support the use of more technology and to provide up-to-date, research based instructional materials. We now even have on-going professional development for all staff to continue to improve the education of all students. This is something we never had in my first ten or more years in La Center.

I believe we are now at a juncture where we need to carefully evaluate what is important to our community and to the future of our students. In our rapidly changing society we can no longer depend on doing business as usual. As I work with other districts across the state, I have developed a true appreciation of the knowledge, desire and motivation of our staff and community to develop a school that is more than a "good" school. I strongly believe that we want to have the best for our students in order to be prepared for the future.

Although I don't have all the answers, I do know my first few weeks teaching sixth grade has provided me a great deal of evidence that we are NOT meeting the needs of all of our students. It is time for us to investigate some alternative learning experiences for those who do NOT learn as we were taught. Hopefully as we continue to try to meet the challenges of a stressed economy, we as the technology immigrants will be able to identify alternative options to meet the needs of students, the technology natives.

I sincerely thank the La Center School board and community in their efforts to support our work in trying to create the best learning opportunities for ALL students.