Superintendent's Report

November 18th, 2011

LEARNING UPDATE

- **Core Competencies** – The work on our draft Core Competencies continues along well. There have been contributions from across the district by staff to enhance the original draft that was shared with the Board earlier in the year. Attached is the most current version of the Core Competencies for your review. One important point to note is that the three parts of the Core Competencies are now linked to the three conditions of the learning model. The following three items in my learning update will share some of the steps we have gone through to make these adjustments as well as highlight what appears to be shaping up to be another important breakthrough in our ability to collect evidence of learning utilizing our learning model.
- **District Leadership Team** – Our district leadership team has for several weeks been working on the instructional frameworks behind the State's effort to redesign the teacher and principal evaluation process. We have been trying to learn from these frameworks, but we continually come back to our own learning model as the most powerful tool to define, reflect upon and learn about our own practice. From this point in our learning, we returned to the work of completing learning walks in the buildings with a focus of how we use our learning model to collect evidence around a building specific problem of practice (similar to the structure we are headed for with evaluations of staff). We started in the middle school looking for evidence of student learning via how they were communicating their learning. In our post-learning walk discussion, the concept of learner confidence began to emerge as a way of expressing the energy levels we were perceiving from students. The idea of "learning value" and "learning risk" as variables in how to increase learner confidence surfaced and generated much discussion. We decided to continue this line of thinking at our next LT meeting.
- **Old Dog 3 Learning Team** – We held our first OD team meeting after school following the above mentioned leadership team meeting, so the ideas we talked about at LT were still fresh in our minds. The focus of this elementary OD team were to bring the Core Competencies alive for students by making them more visible and engaging students in developing ways to express the Core Competencies for themselves and other students outside of their own classrooms/learning teams. Because of the rich discussion we had just had at leadership team that afternoon, I asked if I could share with them what we talked about as I thought it connected to their work and needed their perspectives. What ensued was a three-hour discussion on not only Learning Confidence, but also how the Core Competencies could/should be expanded to reflect our district learning model more fully and include all three of the learning conditions. Their work is both expressed in the next item (Learning Confidence Equation) and the attached draft of the Core Competencies.
- **Learning Confidence Equation** – This equation is an expression of what we explored as three variables that could be utilized to measure what might make-up what we see as learning energy manifested as "confidence" of the learner to learn. The three variables are *Learning Value*, *Learning Risk* and *Learning Support*. All three of these variables are perceptions from the point of view of the learner. With these variables now seen by us as leading to

learning confidence and they are perception based, we could collect this data directly from students and then measure changes relative to changes teachers make in their learning environment via lesson design alterations. As you can see in the diagram below, Learning Value is connected to Cognitive Demand, Learning Risk is connected to Learning Trust and finally Learning Support is linked to Flow of information. Our Evidence Collection Array (the document you used when we did learning walks) are the visual, auditory and product evidences to collect to see if lessons are engaging the learner. The breakthrough for us is we believe we can now collect student perception data to augment our direct data collection in a more meaningful and authentic way. I hope that makes some sense, because for us it is pretty exciting and we have lots to work on over the coming months as we explore this new line of thinking. More on this work as it emerges.

Learning Confidence

Classroom Conditions that Impacts Learning Confidence

Cognitive Demand | Learning Trust | Flow of Information

$$\textbf{Learning Confidence} = \left(\begin{array}{c}\text{Positive (+)}\\ \textbf{Learning Value}\\ \text{Negative (-)}\end{array}\right) + \left(\begin{array}{c}\text{Low (+)}\\ \textbf{Learning Risk}\\ \text{High (-)}\end{array}\right) + \left(\begin{array}{c}\text{Ample (+)}\\ \textbf{Learning Support}\\ \text{Limited (-)}\end{array}\right)$$

Learning Confidence is equal to the sum of the ***Learning Value*** of the experience as perceived by the learner, the ***Learning Risk*** present to the learner within the learning environment, and the ***Learning Support*** available to and determined by the learner.

BOARD UPDATE

- **Budget Update** – The November forecast for State revenues was just released and they are predicting a decline in revenue that is equal to a decline in caseloads (a.k.a. expenditures). Therefore, the hole didn't get any worse in reality, but it definitely didn't get better. Therefore, they are still shooting for filling a $2 Billion dollar deficit for the 2011-13 budget. Also, when Representative Rivers was in the district on Monday, she stated to us that the Governor will be taking Levy Equalization off the table in her final budget proposal to the legislature due to the tremendous back-lash that was building around that idea. With that

said, the budget hole is still there and the cuts need to come from somewhere. Therefore, we will have to keep an eye out for where she will be getting the $150 million dollars that she was thinking about getting from levy equalization cuts. Her proposal is expected to be out shortly so hopefully I will have more information at the upcoming Board meeting.

- **ADA Work at Football Field** – Thanks to the gracious gift of some community members who are avid football fans, we received a gift of donated gravel for the football field to eliminate some muddy spots that developed this fall near the smaller bleachers near the concession stand. Additionally, these patrons were also concerned about ADA access for handicapped individuals so we took advantage of their gift and also asked Bob Colf (who had his crew here working on the new elementary climbing wall near the round building – this project was paid for by the PTO) to complete some leveling and compacting for us. It is looking very nice and will allow for greater access by patrons who have mobility needs. Furthermore, next year we will be trying to create a Senior Citizen parking area (which will include handicap parking) near the football field as a way to support their participation in attending games on the field. I wanted to share this information with you as it all started from a generous gift and a problem solving effort by some of our community members who care about our success. We listened and addressed their ideas in a low-cost effort to provide greater value for our community. FYI.

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

Mark