Teaching and Learning Update November 2011

Testing/Assessment- We are beginning preparation with the high school biology teachers for the new EOC (end of course) assessment in biology this spring. This test will be similar to the current math EOC's that our students took last spring. Those tests replaced the HSPE (high school proficiency exam) which replaced the WASL which…. (sorry, couldn't resist!) In addition we've added on line testing in reading for 7th grade this year. Last year we had our 6th grade class take the reading assessment on line so they will continue to test in this manner and we'll add another group of 6th graders to the mix. Since we will be forced at some point in the near future to do all state testing on line we want to continue to expand our capabilities and infrastructure to handle this when it happens.

Curriculum/ Materials Adoption- We will be having our first literacy materials review meeting coming up during the second week of December (12/14). This date was moved back a couple of weeks in order to accommodate everyone's schedule and to recruit a student from the high school and middle school. That being done and parent/community members identified we're ready to begin our initial conversation.

Professional Development- This last Thursday was our first of four, one-hour technology offerings for staff after school. These offerings provide staff with tools that help make them more efficient, and better able to use technology to enhance their classroom. Upcoming classes have space if any of you are interested! They are: 12/15- google doc's, 1/19- google forms and 2/23- iPad app's for the classroom.

Mark Watrin the ESD science specialist will be here on November 30th to work with our 3-5 grade science teachers. Mark is a specialist around the 5th grade MSP (formerly the WASL) he will work with our staff to help them connect the state MSP testing goals to our science kits that we use in grades 3-5. This should be a major help in filling gaps in our instructional materials that might leave our students with less than the best preparation.

I met with six of our K-2 grade math teachers along with Colleen Wing, Bonnie and Scott last week to discuss our math program. My goal was to share, and to listen to them concerning community concerns expressed at our last linkage meeting. I feel like this was a great first step in opening a conversation around improving our math program for all of our students. They have picked up the ball on this and are now organizing grade level meetings to which they will invite me. Their initial goal will be to address what supplemental instructional materials are being used across each grade level to fill real or perceived holes in our core, Investigations 2, curriculum. From there we can standardize what everyone is using that works best. The next step will be to find a better and more consistent way to communicate with parents

concerning the program and to start addressing the concerns brought forward by some of our parents.

I have sent an invitation to the 3-5 grade math teachers to begin the same conversation with me and the response has been great. We will be meeting initially before break to begin our discussion concerning those same issues in those grade bands.

All but one of the high school math teachers have now taken the compass test at Clark. I might add that Mr. Johnson scored the highest in the history of the test! (are we really surprised?) We will be getting together as a HS math department before break to analyze what we learned and develop a "refresher" class for our seniors this spring to better prepare them for this test. In addition we will be able to identify where each of the areas of the test are covered (or not covered) in our current curriculum and make note of those for future communication to our students. Our initial reaction to this experience is that we will be able to make an immediate impact for our seniors this spring and we feel very confident that this issue will be solved quickly!

CTE (career and technical education)- Since the board approved the surplus of a large portion of broken, out-of-date and inappropriate equipment in the metals and wood shops we are in the middle of offering those to surrounding districts. If none of those districts are interested we will be selling or scrapping those items to the general public and using the funds to support the current program in those areas! We will be having our second CTE (career and technical education) parent advisory meeting the week of 12/12.

ELL- Nothing new to report!

Grants- Finalized for the year!

Community Linkage- Our next parent/community resource evening will be Monday December 5th @6:30 where I will team with the La Center Police department to present information concerning drugs and alcohol and our students! All are invited!

The results of the community/ parent survey on "district communication" is now posted on the front page of the district website. I received 113 responses from which we've, once again, gleaned lots of good information for creating better communication opportunities between the district and our parents and community. I will have an "official" district facebook page ready to go live in the next couple of weeks!

Dave.