Superintendent's Report

November 16th, 2010

LEARNING UPDATE

- **The Board-Superintendent Learning Team -** As you know, the entire school board and I attended the annual Washington state school directors' conference in Spokane on November 18th through 20th. By the time you read this report you will have already returned from the conference and had a chance to reflect upon what you have learned. The way I look at this is that you carried with you all the thinking and work you have done as a board to date to the conference and immersed yourself in an environment of other people charged with fulfilling the same responsibilities as school directors. This type of experience can be very thought provoking and therefore I would like to use the learning update of my board report as a way to prompt your thinking. To be clear, I have no idea as I write this report what you learned at the conference so without question if nothing else this is a wonderful example of learning trust as who knows what will develop from this effort. But I think as you approach this task you will experience for yourself the type of open ended, personalized learning opportunities we are working to create for all the learners in our organization.

  With all this in mind, I would like to begin by reminding you that before we left I sent an email where I asked you to complete an informal survey at the conference of board members you met there by asking them the following two questions:

  A) What percentage of time as a school board is spent directly focusing on student achievement (rather than adult or organizational matters/issues)?
  B) How do you hold your superintendent accountable for meeting board expectations?

  What I would ask as you prepare for this board meeting on November 23rd is to consider the answers you received to these two questions and reflect upon your own practice as a member of our board. Then I would like for you to answer the following question and share your thinking during the WSSDA debrief section of our board meeting agenda:

  How does Policy Governance make a difference (if at all) between what you heard from those you asked the above questions to at the conference and your own practice as a board member of the La Center School District?

BOARD UPDATE

- **WASA Small School Conference** – I have been asked if we would be interested in repeating our WSSDA conference session on La Center's Pathways model and graduation requirements at the upcoming WASA Small Schools Conference next spring in Wenatchee. We don't know if we will be formally accepted as presenters to this conference yet, but to receive a special request from the conference design committee would seem like a ringing endorsement

of our model and its value. If we are selected to present, not everyone would need to attend but I thought I would pass along the information about the request as an FYI item.

- **Appreciation Survey –** Dr. Kathy Hagler came to the district and completed the appreciation survey with students on Friday, November 5th. She was back in the district on November 16th to meet with our leadership team and review the results. What resulted from this discussion is that we believe our students are focused on their own learning and feel empowered to be strong independent learners. What results are positive learning environments and strong relationships. Furthermore, students shared how much they appreciate their learning environment, both in how safe it is as well as how supportive it is. Again, this work was done for no cost because I have been assisting Kathy with her work on Policy Governance with the Clark County Skills Center.
- **Washington State Leadership Academy** – The district leadership team had their first WSLA meeting of the year on November 8th. As part of this meeting, we self-evaluated our work relative to the standards set forth in the program. The real core of the standards is built upon the creation of a learning organization that is focused on serving students. Across the board, our team's evaluation was at the top end of the scale on each criteria and significantly ahead of the other teams in WSLA on almost every count. I share this information with you because it shows that the expectation from the board to building an organization around learning by everyone is really beginning to take hold across the district. I am very happy for our team as they could see their work paying off for themselves as learners and most importantly for their students. In addition to this work, we heard a briefing about the upcoming teacher and principal evaluation changes that are ahead of all educators in the state. This work will not be fully implemented for several years, but it will be something that we will need to tackle. I don't believe that our current model is far off, but some changes will need to be made. FYI.
- **All-day/Every Day Kindergarten** – I just wanted to reiterate what I shared at the last workshop to make sure that everyone gets the same message about what I have set for an organizational goal. As you know we continue to face the threat of reduced state funding and all signs point toward a significant reduction for the 2011/12 school year. This reduction could be a much as $500,000. With that said, I believe that in the times of greatest challenge, come the opportunity for the greatest change in thinking. With this in mind, I met with the elementary staff and laid down a challenge to them. This challenge is to develop a way to utilize the same certificated staffing as we currently have and yet move all kindergarten classes to an all-day, every day kindergarten model. I believe it is possible and have confidence that they can find a way to make this happen. Therefore, I want you to know that for next year I have full intention to implement all-day, every day kindergarten in our schools regardless of the threats of reduced funding.

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

Mark