Teaching and Learning Update
February 2011

The SuccessMaker math home access program continues to expand as we now have about sixty 5th and 6th grade students who have picked up software to work on math from home. We now have the program installed on all computers in the K-8 tech lab. (Thank you, Dan) I will be meeting with the ASK program leaders this week to organize the use of this program during ASK time. We will begin signing up 4th grade students next week.

We are currently proctoring state testing for all of our ELL students this month. This is going quite well but it does remind me of one of Mark's favorite sayings, "you can't fatten the cow by weighing it all the time"! So much time away from instruction for assessment; and, since this is state designed, it is not possible to make it a valuable learning opportunity for the students.

We have a team of elementary teachers and administrators, including myself, that will be working on differentiated instruction through the spring. This will begin with a seminar at ESD this coming week and then be followed up with collegial work in their classrooms. What we learn from this experience can then be shared with the rest of the district as it applies to highly capable, special needs and the diversity of learners in all classrooms.

Our "Love and Logic" parenting class for our parents is underway with great success having had two classes. Joni Hancock is doing double duty as she is teaching a parallel class in the afternoon for 38 of our teachers!

CTE teachers are working to complete their proposals for sequences of classes for next years master schedule. Once again to remind you of the uniqueness of this process this year, we will not have any CTE class on our master schedule next year that does not align with a two-year sequence of classes ending in a "next step opportunity" post high school. Our next parent advisory meeting will be during the 3rd week of March and we will be reviewing proposals from staff at that time.

We are in the process of gearing up for our first experience with on-line state testing this spring. We have selected the MSP (measure of student progress) 6th grade reading as our first foray into this new challenge. We will be installing software into the lab and organizing student training and practice exams over the next couple of months.

As you probably noticed from the board agenda and the number of books that have been submitted for your approval, the IMC (instructional materials committee) met on February 10th and approved a large number of materials. The texts are the final phase of the middle school social studies adoption that wasn't completed last year and the numerous, historical fiction, novels are for literacy or reading circles in our 9th grade English/global studies block class. The committee is taking four more novels under further review and will likely be up for your review at the March meeting.

Dave.