Intermediate Elementary News!

February 17, 2010

1) An interesting thing is happening among members of the Intermediate staff that are **not** involved in the Lab Classrooms . . . there is a synergy of discussions, observations, and awareness of the successes and outcomes of student to student interactions, better known as the 'Flow of Information' due to the activities the teachers involved **in** the Lab Classroom are doing. The buzz in the teacher's work area and/or staff room is about how students are learning, how students are engaged in learning activities and how students are making gains. An awareness and now application of cooperative learning groups and lesson studies is taking effect in several classrooms of non Lab Classroom participates. Several teachers are implementing and trying new ways to get students to discover and problem solve. This is fun to see teachers aware of the richer cognitive demands they can have on student's thinking just by the way they strategize the questioning techniques and become aware of when and how to use student to student interactions. The Lab Classroom project is paying off in more ways that we could have imagined. One teacher commented "it sure makes teaching more fun and students really get into learning!"

2) The Music Adoption Committee consisted of our music staff, two parents, two students and two administrators. We met four times throughout the school year and have completed the work of aligning our beliefs into a Mission Statement and Belief Statements for all students K-12 in the La Center School District. It is as follows:

Music Adoption Committee

The **Mission Statement** of the La Center Music Department is to create a supportive environment that empowers students to reach their fullest artistic potential.

<u>Indicators</u>

- The elements of music are essential to music education along with singing, playing, moving/dancing, listening, creating (by improvisation and composition), analyzing music and the encouragement for musical expression.
- Every child should have the opportunity to participate in music in some form.
- Every child should have a wide range of tools and/or instruments available to them so that they can improvise and compose freely given proper instruction.
- Special attention will be given to a progressive music theory program introducing and encouraging improvisation and creativity.
- Music education provides a bridge to diverse cultures and traditions within our global communities, teaching what is common and the same among all people. This understanding has a powerful effect on teaching racial diversity and promoting diplomacy among all people.

- Music is a form of artistic expression that reflects the thoughts and feelings of our culture. It is through the arts that historians are able to understand the nature of the people they are studying.
- Research and practice have shown the positive effects of music study on academic performance, cross-curricular learning and the social culture of the student.
- Integrating the arts and combining music with core subjects can produce powerful results and extenuated learning.

Within the Music Department all staff members have agreed on these core concepts, reviewed the state standards and have a common vision. As each music teacher in each building creates their performing groups, or the programs and lessons for each grade level, a solid foundation is established for students. Now the Music Adoption Committee feels from our work we want to reinforce this positive and exciting K-12 program with the La Center community and other various organizations. The vision is to create a tri-fold that shows the richness of the La Center Music Department, musical opportunities for students and provide next year's concert dates and festivals. This information will also be shared on the district web-site.

3) Our ELL program continues to grow in numbers! At the beginning of the school year we began with 15 students enrolled throughout the district K-12 and currently we are serving 23 students. The increase is due to new student enrollment and the awareness of students recognized by teachers and counselors when they realized English was a second language at home and parents hadn't correctly marked the enrollment forms. To help ease confusion, make teachers aware their student is in ELL, and inform teachers of students progress within the program, Sally Doss, the ELL paraprofessional, has helped me create working files as part of the student's CUM file. This data provides a better way of communicating the abilities of each child's level of English proficiency and fluency, and Sally is able to help teachers modify student's classroom work. Sally meets with each student a minimum of two hours per week. Usually she works with students in their classrooms unless needing extreme help as a new English Language Learner and then will pull them from class.

Currently, Sally is administering the WLPT II state test to all ELL students. State testing takes place from Feb. 8 to March 5th. Results will arrive back to the district before the end of the school year.

4) The Highly Capable program is open for applicants in grades 3 – 5. Parents can check the district web page for information about the application process, class and/or program offerings as well as the testing windows for the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). Approximately 2% of our students in these grades would typically qualify for the Highly Capable program. Student testing is scheduled for March 17th through March 26th. I will share the data and results when we complete the process.

Carol Patton, Intermediate Principal/Title I Coordinator