Teaching and Learning Update February 2012

Testing/Assessment- We are currently in the middle of our WELPA (*Washington English Language Proficiency Assessment*) testing across K-12. We are testing 16 students this year. I'm anxious to see the results as Kellie Braaten has worked very hard this year in her new position as the ELL (*English Language Learner*) paraprofessional to transition our students out of the program.

High School HSPE (*High School Proficiency Exam*) testing in reading and writing begins the second week of March, 3/13-3/15. Juniors and seniors who have already passed the test and all freshmen will have a late start on those days. The library will be open for study space and the gym for activities for those students who must ride the bus but who are not testing.

MSP (Measurements of Student Progress) in grades 3-8 will begin later in April. We will be expanding our pilot of on-line testing to include 7th grade reading this year along with the 6th grade reading that we began last year.

Curriculum/ Materials Adoption- We just completed the creation of a historical master adoption list for literacy along with all other adoption cycle materials. The list goes back 18 years and includes all reading and writing materials adopted by the board during that time period. I have begun to collect the locations and numbers of copies that reside within our district for all of the materials on that list. The ultimate goal is to have not only an accurate inventory but also a tool with which a teacher can identify resources throughout the district that will support the creation of better learning opportunities for their students.

I have posted our work on the district website on the curriculum page! You'll find it under the heading "Instructional Materials Adoption List". Feel free to browse if you have the time and are so inclined.

We just received our samples of K-3 math practice/homework support materials from Saxon math. Those grade level teachers will be reviewing them with the hope of confirming our previous work, that indicated that these materials would be a great supplement to address many of the parent concerns we all heard in the fall. I would hope that we would have these materials in place for the beginning of school in the fall, at the latest.

Professional Development- The final class of our winter technology series concluded this Thursday with a class on "iPad applications for education". Mark's group of nine elementary teachers which he affectionately refers to as "Old Dog III" just finished up with twelve clock hours of work around the La Center learning model. They must really appreciate the learning or just like the name, as they've all signed up for a fourth round and are recruiting new members!

Woodland's high school principal will be bringing his leadership team to the high school next week to meet with Carol and I and do learning walks through the high school. This will be a great opportunity for us to learn from them how they view the work we've done on our learning model. We hope to gain insights into how we can make our work more accessible to not only them but also some of our own staff members who are just beginning to take notice and to consider serious changes to the learning environments that they lead.

Highly Capable- We have started a new after school club called the "Galileo" club. This was the brainchild of two of our parent volunteers, Melissa Flatt and Lisa D'Emilio. The club will meet every Thursday after school for one hour and focus on activities that challenge students to think. Even though it is being funded and designed as a highly capable activity it is open to all students grades three through five. With the help of parent volunteers, I organized a chess competition during week one and during week two Mr. Lincoln ran an "egg drop" challenge. Kris Sawyer will be taking over leadership of the club as of this week and will organize the activities through the remainder of the year. There is no cost to our families and we had over twenty students sign up!

CTE (career and technical education)- Jim Neiman and Carol have been working very hard at creating new CTE class offerings for students to consider this spring to schedule for the fall. I'm sure Carol will share with you her excitement over bio-diesel, power-energy-transportation and automotive technology offerings!

ELL- Just testing as mentioned above.

Grants- We just completed our application for carryover funds for title II part A. These are state funds that provide dollars for professional development. We were able to almost double our available funds with this process and now can begin to plan a very aggressive schedule of learning opportunities for our staff through the spring and summer.

Library- I met with our library staff and the data entry person from each building last week. We were able to standardize our data input into Skyward, our student information system, across the district in all fields. This will allow us to coordinate the data in the Skyward system and data within the Destiny program which is our library data system. I know this may seem trivial and mundane but this work will make us much more efficient and allow for more accurate and timely information for our whole educational community that work with these systems.

Dave.