Board Report: March 2013

This month our students are completing their student led conferences and our staff has worked hard to support our kids in reflecting on their learning this year. This has also been the theme for our staff this year.
I have also been doing a lot of reflecting recently in regards to my future career plans. As I look back on my own life, I have realized that your life is determined by the decisions that you make. In my life that includes moving to the United States to follow a girl that I was pretty keen on. Another big decision was leaving a wonderful job at La Center High School in late August 2005 to become the principal at La Center Middle School. Both of these decisions have brought me a great deal of happiness and I would not change a thing.
Making these decisions are difficult as I had to leave many wonderful people behind that I was deeply attached to. So here I am again, making another big decision in my life with a mixture of emotions. While I am excited about the opportunity to be closer to my family and a new challenge, I am sad to be leaving my second family in La Center. The way that the students, staff, parents, school board and community have embraced and supported me is so overwhelming and it will be a hard act to top in any future position that I have.

So, enough about me and on with the report.

The eighth grade class went to the "College Exploration Day" at WSUV. Students learned about WSUV, college requirements, what you need to do in high school to prepare for college, and the financial independence that college can bring. The event was led by college students so students could also ask questions. It was perfect timing for the students since we have been talking about selecting their HS courses based on different pathways.

Mrs. Slinkard and her choir have been extremely busy this month. Seven choir students participated in the Region's Solo/Ensemble Festival, which took place in Vancouver on Sat., March 3rd. Each prepared, memorized, and performed a challenging solo (some in a different language) in front of an adjudicator; this judge gave them a score ranging from 1-5 (1 being the best); each solo is judged on every aspect of their performance (notes, rhythm, dynamics, diction, phrasing, interpretation, appearance of performer, etc.) All 7 choir students received 1's for their performances.

LCMS is hosting the Region's Choir Festival again this year (4 years in a row) on Tues., 3/26 from 9:30am-1:30pm. Twelve choirs from local schools are participating in this event. This is the highest amount of choirs at the festival in the past 13 years. Each choir will perform for all the other schools as well as an adjudicator; just like the Solo/Ensemble Festival. The judge will give the group a score ranging from 1-5 (1 being the best); each group is judged on every detail of their performance (stage etiquette, notes, rhythm, dynamics, diction, phrasing, interpretation, facial expressions, blend and balance of harmony sections, difficulty of song selection, etc.). The festival is highly competitive but a healthy competition that fosters learning, growth, and support of other performing groups. La Center is a community that has always supported our band and choir programs so we are proud to host this competition at at our school.

Due to the large numbers in the drama, Mrs. Slinkard has her students working on 3 different plays at once. Performances will be sometime in May. There will be some props and concepts added to these plays. Larry Schneider is currently building an elevator for for one of the plays (called "Trapped"). One

play will take place on a "boat", and some "statues" come alive in a museum during a class field trip for the third play.

Mike Holland has done a wonderful job this year starting the Math is Cool program at the 6th grade level. He has worked closely with elementary teachers Julie Smith, Jason Grotte, Karen Alanko and Bonnie Poffenroth. Here are the results of their efforts.

Fourteen 6th graders participated in practices from November through February 8th when we went to the competition at Fort Vancouver High School. The team did well competitively (4th place) and had a good time as well. The team members are excited to compete again next year. Eighteen 5th graders were practicing from mid- December until their competition on March 15th at Skyview High School. 14 of the students were at the competition and again competed strongly (4th place again) and felt good about the time spent and look forward to being on the team again next year. Sixteen 4th grade students have been practicing since mid-December and will have their competition April 19, again at Skyview. Julie Smith, Jason Grotte, and Karen Alanko as well as Bonnie Poffenroth have been working with the 4th and 5th grade teams as well.
Mr. Holland would like to thank parents Betsy Hoppe, Jennie Martin and Rebecca Blanshan for chaperoning the competitions and have been very helpful making the kids feel comfortable.

As mentioned earlier the Student Led Conferences were held this week. The goal for this year is for our students to reflect on how they are improving as a learner. Our goal is for our kids to successfully analyze their work and assess what they do well in their assignments and what they need to improve on. They must then come up with strategies to improve their work. This has been a struggle at times to get students to think about more than just putting in more effort to get better grades. When I ask students what putting more effort into your work means, they are now able to give actually strategies. This is a critical skill to master and we are working hard to ensure that the students can do that. Our parent attendance has been great so far for this event. I have been able to host some conferences and really enjoy seeing the growth in the students. The kids feel pretty good about themselves as they show off their hard work to their parents.

Our students raised $6,100 for Doernbecher this year. This means that we have now raised over $30,000 over the last six years for the hospital. Therefore ‘Bieber Nation will be hitting the schools next week. I am concerned that the kids may never be able to look or listen to Mr. Bieber again after I am done ruining his reputation with my antics. Student Warren Phillips will be the principal next Thursday as well and I will be doing his work instead. I am excited that Warren’s elective in art. The last 5 winners of Principal for the day have all been tuba players. I am sure that Mr. Calabrese is relieved as well. The new principal has no idea what they are in for when they have to ‘pay’ for Doernbecher fundraising next year.

Knowledge Bowl this year is a small, but enthusiastic group. This year they traveled to Castle Rock and Jemtegaard middle schools to compete against 5 other league teams. The year has been challenging, but each of our three teams has increased its scores in every meet. They finish off this Thursday with our first away meet in Hockinson in several years.

I am looking forward to the remainder of the school year. This is a wonderful place to be and will enjoy every moment that I have left here.

GO HAWKS

David Cooke
Principal
La Center Middle School