HAWK REPORT: APRIL 2010

I have found that the Hawk Report has served a variety of purposes over the years. First I can talk about the achievements of students and staff, bring the community up to date about upcoming events and get a few things off my chest. Sometimes these reports can be therapeutic which is why I am about to rant a little bit now.

I was reviewing the grades of students who are failing at school. When reading through the grades I noticed how many students have experienced divorce in their families. I have heard from many students this year at the middle school that their parents are getting divorced. When I review the accountability plan at our schools it states that some students can be promoted due to 'extenuating circumstances'. I have no idea what it is like to be a child of divorce but I am sure that it must be a devastating blow to the students and for many they struggle to recover. I discuss the question with various people; I get the concerned look back and hear the message, "What can we do?" After the events of this year I think that I need to proactively look at this issue. This is a community issue as well as the school. It is not about blaming parents but supporting them as they continue to support their kids in these difficult times. Last week I had to look after my kids by myself while my wife was on a business trip. This was a small taste of what it is like to be a single part and it is hard. My hat goes off to any single parents who are doing it everyday. There must be a way to help and we need to start where we always do in La Center by bringing our people together and start working out a solution and break down the wall that starts with the words, "I am not sure what we can do?"

Thanks to the Board for the linkage meeting last week. I was pleased with the general lack of concerns (not concern) that the staff had. With all the economic turmoil and cuts around the schools it was good to see staff that appreciate their jobs and are staying focused on the task at hand to help students succeed.

The 7/8th grade choir class attended the Alder Creek Invitational Choir Festival in Milwaukie, Oregon. The schools participating in this event were all part of the 5 and 6 A districts. This means that they were really big schools compared to our small group of 50. However we matched it with the big schools with our level of performance. The students were well behaved and proudly represented our school. Mr. Calabrese and the LCMS jazz band participated in a jazz festival at the University of Portland this month and as always performed admirably.

This month's lab classroom project was in Mr. Pritchett's room. The focus was on assessing how students analyze a task. Mr. Pritchett gave the students a scenario with minimal directions from him. The team then wrote down and later analyzed the questions that students had and strategies that they developed to analyze the task. They then wrote a plan to tackle the task. We have found through our work in the Assessment class that students have a tough time determining the requirements of an assignment even when the teacher has put a great deal of work into explaining the process. Our goal using the flow of information and learning trust model is to allow student the opportunity to analyze the project in group and then rewrite the process in their own terms so that they have a

complete understanding of what to do. We found the results to be enlightening for future assignments. This is why the Lab Classroom is so important. We can address a concern and come up with strategies and then test the strategies in a collaborative, supportive environment and come away with new ways to help our students. All it takes are a few subs for the day and a whole lot of trust.

The track team has almost eighty members which is a fantastic. They recently completed in Washougal and did very well. I like the idea that we have eighty students who have even more motivation to be successful as motivation is not always easy in April and May.

May should be an interesting month with the students taking the MSP. I am confident that the work that our teacher and students have done to build collaborative learning environment will reap good results for our students. That almost sounded like a Joe Namath statement so I will wait and see.

Look forward to chatting with you in mail. I will send you the bill for my therapeutic session.

Go Hawks,

David Cooke
Principal
La Center Middle School.