Teaching and Learning Update May 2011

Testing- Testing is finished! Testing is finished! Well not exactly! We have completed the MSP (measure of student progress) for grades K-8. This is a great feeling to have this behind us and we can now get back to focusing on learning. Thank you to everyone involved for the diligent work throughout this process. I need to single out Winnie and Bonnie in the elementary, Jan at the middle school and Julie Campbell in the district office for their great attention to detail. We do still have to complete the EOC (end of course) assessment for math in grades 8-12. This will occur during the last week of school.

Curriculum/ Materials Adoption- As you may remember from my earlier teaching and learning presentation, the updated instructional materials adoption cycle, calls for us to begin the review of our K-12 Literacy curriculum starting in the fall. I have already begun the process of working with the building principals to identify team members from each building to be part of that work. We will also be adding student representation from buildings and I will ensure that we have plentiful parent/community membership as usual.

Professional Development- As last months attempt to link files from this report for your viewing was less than successful; I will provide those to you on Tuesday in hard copy.

One of those files was the summary of the professional development survey that I did just prior to last month's meeting. The results of that survey will drive my efforts in some way to provide what the staff feels they need.

From that survey and other sources I identified three or four books that I will offer over the summer as book study opportunities for K-12 staff.

"How People Learn, brain, mind, experience and school" by the National Research Council

"Results Now", by Mike Schmoker

“Fair Isn’t Always Equal” by Rick Wormeli

“The Speed of Trust” by Stephen Covey

If anyone has an interest and the time, you are welcome to join us on any of these. We do the collegial interaction via our Moodle server over the Internet so there are no meetings to attend. We will cover the material between June 7th and August 1st. (give or take a little)

CTE (career and technical education)- I would like to thank Mr. Pust for all he has done for our students over the years in the vocational department. He was one of the first teachers that I substituted for in 1992. He was our vocational director for a number of years and was a real champion for vocational education in our district.

We have posted a 1.0 FTE position for welding and woods. If we don’t find the right person to fill this position we may structure it as a job share in order to accommodate available talent.

Highly Capable- We have identified a number of areas to use our highly capable resources in for this coming year. We will be purchasing accelerated mathematics instructional materials for

each classroom, grade 1-5, in the elementary. We are purchasing a classroom set of "BotBrain" engineering components designed to instruct students in robotics. These will be used in our high school in the physic's classroom. Lastly Kristy Schneider will be using the remaining funds to supplement her young astronauts club curriculum for middle school students.

Ad-Hoc committee to explore Boundary exceptions- I have done some work to look at the reasons and frequency with which students leave our district for "other" educational opportunities. I have observed for a couple of years with unrest as these numbers have grown. Many of the reasons, fire science or ROTC programs, are legitimate reasons that we cannot control, or want to. Others, on-line learning, math choice, etc. are things we may be able to impact.

I intend to have a late August or early September "summit" with parents of these boundary exceptions and any other community member or parent who is willing to participate. The goal would be to identify either supplemental programs or changes to existing programs that might enable us to maintain many of these students who currently feel there are better educational opportunities elsewhere. If you are interested or personally know a parent or community member that I should contact for inclusion, please let me know.

Dave.