HAWK REPORT MAY 2010

May is always an interesting month for me as it is a time to reflect on all the great work being done this year by staff and students, addressing the requirements to finish the year as well as planning for next year. This has been by far the quickest year in my career. It has just flown by. This is due to an energized staff and a great group of kids. I am looking forward to next year if this year was a good indicator.

I attended the GK-12 Showcase at Washington State University last week. The students celebrated their learning in Science this year. The event was well attended by students, parents and staff. A bonus to this event was that many of our students stepped onto a college campus for the first time. I hope that this is the first step to them pursuing post-secondary education. I would like to thank our three WSU fellows who were a part of the grant this year, Sean Rooney, Bridget Deemer and Erica Henry. I appreciate their willingness to roll up their sleeves and get involved in the classroom. I was impressed with how well they teamed with Mrs. Cripe, Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Ecklund. When I observed the science classes I watched our teachers using the fellows as a resource, a partner and somebody to learn from. It was like having two teachers in the classroom and I would be more than happy to have that continue. We will have two fellows next year with Mr. Rooney continuing with Mrs. Cripe and a 'rookie' under the guidance of Mrs. Schneider.

LCMS recently completed the first edition of the Measurement of Student Progress. I have been reminded by staff, students and my own children to stop calling it the WASL but old habits die hard. I was pleased with the persistence of the students in the test. I only had to speak to two students about finishing the MSP in world record time and encouraged them to give it their best effort. Many kids stayed behind to make sure they did the best that they could. On another positive note we only had to do make up days for twenty students so that was a relief.

Mr. Totten was the facilitator of the Lab Classroom this month. He took a different approach to other lesson studies this year but I think this is where many of them are heading next year. One of Mr. Totten's areas of focus this year was to improve the quality of student presentations. He invited team members to analyze student work by observing presentations and then met with the team to find ways to improve the instruction and assessment of the presentations to make it a better learning experience for students. I have been assisting Mr. Totten with this all year and it is evident that the quality of presentations has improved. This is important work as this is something that all students could learn about.

Two staff members and I were able to take our version of the Lab Classroom Lesson Study to the high school with Bryan Zylstra being the head teacher. The head teacher is also known as the lab-rat in our building. Once again, it is amazing what a couple of tweaks in a lesson can make. Thank you to Bryan for leading the charge. We will have three more teachers from the high school coming down to observe Andrea Austad teach for a lesson study on May 28th so I will let you know how that goes. I have been so pleased with how the Lab Classroom Project has gone this year. The twelve teachers who were involved have found it a good use of their time as they have received feedback and support for their practice as well as picking up many new ideas to implement into their classroom. I am excited for next year as every teacher at LCMS has volunteered to be a part of the project.

One nugget that I have learned this year when looking at student presentations whether it is oral of on a tri-fold poster is that students struggle to answer the topic, "What have you learned as a result of this activity." When I go into classroom I see teachers stressing the importance of students providing feedback in their terms and to encourage students to express their own thoughts. However when it comes to writing their thoughts, students focus more on what the teacher covered versus what they actually learned. A goal for me next year is to help students differentiate between learning and coverage of material.

Track concluded with another successful season with a number of winners at district. We now officially have the fastest 1,600 meter runner in the state with Kyle Degraaf running 4 mins and 56 seconds. This should cheer Mr. Holmes up especially after finding out that his daughter's mile record was just beaten by Katie Whitten. A bitter-sweet day for our track guru.. While I enjoy it when our kids win, I am thrilled by

the number of kids who turned out and tried their hardest. I think 8th grade student Michael Yurecko showed it best. He was trying his best in the 400 meters but was running 6th at the last turn and was well behind the leaders. He kept plugging away and as he passed the La Center crowd in the stands, he looked towards them, gave them a big smile and kept on running. That's what middle school sports is all about. Thank you to Mrs. Broten, Mrs. Austad, Mrs. Slinkard, Mr. Dykes, Mr. Hollingshead and the 80 students who participated for a great season.

Mrs. Slinkard hosted the LCMS Talent Show again with 20 performers. There were a variety of acts including singers, skits and a boy who could catch tater tots in his mouth when thrown the entire length of the basketball field. I let him know that that will impress the ladies when he goes to college. I embarrassed myself again while delivering an important message about not chewing gum at school to the tune of the Queen classic, 'Another one bites the dust.' The students will ask me why I don't perform my songs in front of the parents at the night talent show. The answer is simple, despite my stunts over the year; even I have some level of dignity.

The Advisory Team will meet with students and the high school administrators to review our Navigation 101 plan. This has been a matter of trial and error over the last two years so we are hoping that we can get some consistency next year. One of the main goals next year is to give students more experiences of high school and careers so that by the time they get to high school they will have some ideas on what they want to do and understand how a four year plan in high school will support their goals.

At our last meeting you learned that we were not able to have leadership next year. Fortunately this decision has been reversed. This is due to changes in the 6th grade classes which means that we will no longer need a 6th grade study skills class. Mrs. Mosby will also be teaching a health class next year at LCMS. This freed up Mrs. Brightbill to teach PE and will allow Ms.Tyrrell to take on our leadership class. On that note, we are very happy to have Ms. Tyrrell back in our building full time next year. We wish Mr. Prewitt all the best in his new opportunity.

I am looking forward to the next two weeks of school as we finish up a great year. We have a lot of culminating projects to complete and then get an opportunity to celebrate the students' accomplishments. The last day is always tough as we say goodbye to a good group of 8th grade students. Get your tissues out.

Go Hawks,

David Cooke
Principal
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