Superintendent's Report

June 8th, 2012

LEARNING UPDATE

- **Core Competencies** – Over the course of this past year, we have continued to work on the Core Competencies and how to weave them into our lessons. I have shared the draft Core Competencies in the past, but this document has continued to evolve so I wanted to share the most current version with you (see attached copy).

- **New Evaluation Process for Teachers and Administrators** – As you are probably aware, the state passed a new law redefining how teachers and principals are to be evaluated. I have met three times this spring with a team of more than 20 teachers and principals from across the district to analyze the new law, evaluate the three instructional frameworks to choose from that shape the evaluation tools given by the state and to create a transition plan for moving from the old evaluation system to the new system.

  Beyond the work of making this transition, the entire experience of doing this work has been a wonderful learning opportunity for us as a team of educators. What I learned was that the La Center Learning Model is pretty embedded in many of our staff's thinking. This process of thinking about our evaluation process is engaging some of those who where less involved in the work we have done over the past several years. I fully anticipate this good conversation to continue, as the process to transition from the old to new evaluation system takes place over the next several years. Without question, I believe the work ahead of us with evaluations will be challenging but very fruitful in continuing to align our thinking, learning environment designs and organizational systems in support of the Board's Ends policies.

BOARD UPDATE

- **Technology Update** – With the enhanced funding in the budget in support of technology this next year, there is a lot of work that needs to be accomplished this summer. Dan will have more information in his report as well as he will be at the Leadership Team Linkage at this Board meeting. I do want to say that I believe we are taking a big step forward towards reaching the vision of a one-to-one portal device to student environment as a result of this summer's technology enhancements.

  We will be purchasing seven iCarts with iPads (20 in each cart initially) to use throughout the district. Three of these iCarts will be placed in the high school, two in the middle school and two in the elementary. Even though we are initially planning on 20 iPads per cart, I am confident that additional iPads will be added to these carts as the budget execution begins to occur. The goal is to continue progressing along the learning curve of how to create learning environments to meet the Board's Ends through the use of technology. This configuration will allow for more iCarts to give us better coverage across the district. Once we have the iCarts deployed and systems in place to support and care for these new tools, we can then expand the number of devices. And if students need to share for a while, that will be okay for now. In fact, I think it may actually help encourage students to bring their own (our long-term vision).

In addition to the iCart deployment, the high school business lab will be replaced this year through the use of Career and Technical Education (CTE) funding. These older CTE computers (approx. three years old) will be moved into the library. The laptops currently in the library will be configured on a cart and will be available for checkout as another classroom set. With all this in mind, the internet access for students at the high school will be expanded by about 85 or 90 devices (equal to about 22% of the student body). The middle school will see a boost of about 20 net devices initially (40 iPads in two iCarts minus 20 older machines in the lab that are going away), but the overall quality and availability of devices for these students will go up. The elementary will see a net increase of 40 additional devices through two iCarts.

This action is just the next step in the process. What we learn this year will shape our future steps, but I believe as the cost for these devices go down, our acceptance of them as students, parents and teachers go up, and our capacity for supporting them (our infrastructure and support protocols) we will see a greater shift to student owned devices coming to school and less district owned devices. Time will tell if this prediction will manifest itself, but this next year will clearly be an important next step in the process.

- **Summer Maintenance** – Our maintenance team has a very busy agenda for this summer. Beyond the normal summer maintenance of cleaning, painting, gym floors refinishing and minor repairs, Rob and his crew will be tackling several major projects.

  One of the biggest projects is to replace many of the ramp decks to portables on the K-8 campus. With all those little feet walking over them so often, it is no wonder they are getting to the point of needing to be replaced. In addition to this, there will probably be necessary repairs to the sub structure once the decking is off (which is no small feat in and of itself). Finally, all the traction material on the ramps will then need to be replaced and safety circles for the door swing paths will need to be repainted. We will also be working on replacing the railing of the portable nearest to the K-8 cafeteria with metal. This is because bees love the wood railing and we have had a significant number of bee sting issues in this area specifically. Therefore, we are going to try a different handrail design that addresses this problem to see if we can solve this problem.

  We will be reconfiguring some of the K-8 playground equipment this summer. This effort is not only designed to spread out the play equipment to the new play field by the round building for better use, but more importantly it is to make it safer. Over the years we have had some significant injuries (broken arms) and other attempts to solve the problem have not seemed to stop the problem. The original architect was contacted and is helping us create a new plan for us. I really appreciate Scott's hard work and dedication to find a solution to this issue.

  Finally, we will be adding a sink to a room in the elementary that will house our pre-school program next year as well as tackling several other projects to prepare for staff moves for next year. They have a lot to accomplish in a very short period of time. My hat goes off to them.

Please give me a call if you have any questions. Talk with you later.

Mark

La Center School District – Core Competencies of a Confident Learner

1. Confident learners are effective consumers and producers of information.

A. Use a five-step problem-solving process: 1) identify variables; 2) locate facts; 3) analyze and evaluate information; 4) create solutions/opinions; and 5) test solutions/opinions.
B. Conduct, produce and present research (i.e. locate and organize information, write, support and present thinking in a variety of mediums).
C. Use multiple forms of information such as charts, graphs, tables, manipulatives, equipment, models and other resources within the problem-solving process.
D. Possess the technical skills to:
   - Read/write with skill and present with confidence (e.g. instructions, charts, thank you letters, letters of request, letters of response, proposals, lab reports, research reports, technical documents, summaries and graphs)
   - Use multiple forms of technology (e.g. word processing, database, Internet, AV production and CNC machine tools).

2. Confident learners consistently use high-level thinking.

A. Initiate high-level thinking processes (e.g. analyze, evaluate, classify, predict, decide, estimate, generalize, solve, compare, simplify, design, and cause/effect).
B. Communicate thinking with clarity and precision.
C. Establish goals and effectively work to achieve them (e.g. brainstorm, envision, research, plan, organize and persist).
D. Use a quality process (i.e. plan, draft, analyze, and revise) when producing products.

3. Confident learners create and use appropriate learning support networks.

A. Possess strong interpersonal skills in order to:
   - Establish communication linkages with other learners.
   - Use effective listening strategies in a variety of settings.
   - Resolve conflicts that disrupt communications.
   - Develop positive learning feedback connections with other learners.
B. Use self-evaluation/reflection to enhance the learning process.
C. Effectively provide constructive feedback to other learners.
D. Demonstrate strong learning confidence in a variety of settings.