Superintendent's Report

July 16th, 2009

LEARNING UPDATE

- **Universal Design for Learning** – As you know, I spent a week at Harvard learning about the latest research on what is known as Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This work has many great connections to what we are working on in the district relative to our Learning to Learn model. UDL is an extension into education of the architectural and product design concept of universally designing structures to support the widest possible users regardless of their ability or disability. Rather than simply creating designs for those who only fit into the "round hole" and then creating add-ons for those who have "square peg" needs, it is simple more effective to meet those needs proactively rather than reactively from the onset than after the fact. In education, we spend a tremendous amount of energy creating and sustaining special programs on both ends of the ability spectrum. Using examples from architecture, we can now see how when our hands are full when entering a building how nice it is to have door openers or ramps. From the world of products, if you have been in an airport or noisy sports bar you can quickly see how closed captioning on television screens can be a benefit for everyone. Going even deeper, if you have ever used a GPS device, the design allows for significant customization depending upon the needs of the user (e.g. map view, features, sound/no sound, font size, speech and voice type, etc.). This customization options is user centered rather than manufacturer centered. With our Learning to Learn model, we are changing the way we create learning environments so the leader (the teacher) really focuses their learning design to meet the abilities of the students as they become stronger learners (a learner for a lifetime – EL-1) first and foremost. This shift is built on the notion that the content is simply the learning topography used to produce independent, self-directed learners rather than the end in and of itself. UDL will be a powerful addition to this work and I am excited to learn how my new lens will help create better learning opportunities for our students (and staff) this next year. I wish school would start tomorrow!!!

BOARD UPDATE

- **Athletic Position Hiring Process Complete –** A team of high school staff and administrators interviewed four good candidates for the open athletic director position. I then personally interviewed the recommended candidate. The person we have selected is Aaron McCoy and is currently working in the Vancouver School District as a teacher. He just completed his administrative credentials through WSU and will bring a wide and strong background as an educator (math and technology), as a coach (I think the only sports he has not personally coached is volleyball and golf) and as an athlete (collegiate football player). We will miss Steve, yet I am very excited to have Aaron join our team!
- **Lighting Project at the High School** – The lighting project at the high school is essentially finished. Rob hopes that the final few touches will be wrapped up this week. Even without the energy savings, the lighting improvements are significant and should serve us very well.

- **Summer Vandalism to School Vehicles** – At the end of June, someone damaged the tires of all the school vehicles and wheeled equipment that was not secured indoors. Thankfully, we store all of our other wheeled equipment indoors (e.g. tractors, etc.). We had 36 tires slashed (five vans, three pickups and the BBQ and concession stand trailers). Additionally, the high jump cover was also significantly damaged. All totaled, we estimate the damage to be around $8,500. We documented all this damage as well as submitted police and insurance reports. Our insurance deductable is $1,000 with the rest being picked up by insurance. Everything except for the high jump cover has been repaired. A new cover is now on order.

In an effort to have better security, we have added additional cameras to record activity around our school vehicles in order to keep better watch over them. Until such time as we have a fenced area to provide better security, this is simply the best option available to us at this time.

I think that is all for now. Please give me a call if you have any questions. Talk with you later.

Mark