Superintendent's Report

August 19th, 2009

LEARNING UPDATE

- **Leadership Retreat** – We will be having our annual district leadership team retreat on August 20th and 21st. This year the retreat will be held here in La Center rather than heading out of town to one of the administrator's vacation home. This is an effort to save costs, but it has provided us an opportunity to try something new this year. Normally this two-day retreat only offered the chance for administrators to work together. This year, we had a chance to include other district leaders, so we asked the five Lab Classroom Project teacher leaders to join us during the second day of the retreat. Our focus is to more closely connect our work and expand the vision of leadership and our learning model. We have never tried this so there will be lots to learn. I am looking forward to this opportunity.

BOARD UPDATE

- **Preparations for the start of school –** As it is every year during the month of August, our maintenance crews are working hard to get everything ready for the start of school. This year is no different and I am very pleased with the work Rob and his crew has done over the summer. The buildings are looking great with polished floors and fresh paint where needed. All the gym floors are finished and really look sharp, especially the middle school gym with their new logo center court. If you remember, we had some water damage from the drinking fountain by the main entrance over Christmas break (the drinking fountain was removed as well so we don't have it happen again). The floor was damaged to the point where insurance paid for a large section of the floor to be replaced. This work required the boarder stripe around the entire gym floor to be redone and that led to the ASB wanting to do the center court logo. Just like a remodel project at home, one thing leads to another. In the end, the project looks great and is ready for the new year. We also had to move a gas line this summer around one of the portables we installed last summer (as per the gas company). Our elementary school track project is still underway, but we hope to have this done soon as well. Finally, on the elementary campus along the walkway from the cafeteria to the main entrance, because we have so many students, there is a lot of foot traffic that occurs on the grass (lunch time as well as when they are loading on buses). This created a real mess that maintenance has tried to address. Their latest effort is to install plastic grid sections in the ground and replant the grass. The idea is that this grid is designed to hold the ground in place better when it gets wet and provide a solid footing when walked on yet still allow for grass to be in place and grow. They use this stuff in a variety of settings and it is supposed to work well for this application. I supported this idea rather than pouring more concrete because I thought even though we widened the sidewalk with concrete; most likely we would just be moving the problem further toward the building. Hopefully this idea will work and avoid having an ever expanding mass of concrete. Again, I am pleased with the work of our maintenance crew to get everything ready for school.

- **CORE-24 Implementation Task Force Update** – I continue to serve on the State Board of Education's CORE-24 Implementation Task Force. I have been asked to serve as co-chair of that task force, which has provided additional insights into what the SBE is trying to accomplish. At our last task force meeting, I was asked to present our work here in La Center relative to implementing our new graduation requirements that are in line with CORE 24. In particular, there was a lot of interest in our multiple pathways to the same diploma model (which I also talked about). This opportunity to serve on this state-wide SBE task force I believe really gives us a leg up on what the State Board of Education (SBE) is working on and where they are headed.
- **La Center Graduation Requirements: Presentation to the Full State Board of Education** – The State Board of Education's next regular meeting is on September 17th at the Puget Sound ESD in Renton. I have been asked to present the La Center graduation requirements as well as our Multiple Pathways to the Same Diploma model. It will be interesting to learn what their take on our model is as they ponder state policy around CORE-24 implementation. More on this as it occurs.
- **Skyward replaces PowerSchool** – Skyward is the new name for the student records system that is replacing PowerSchool. Our staff has been working very hard to make the transition smoothly and be ready for school. I appreciate the hard work done by all staff, but particularly Dan Bentson-Royal, Marion Bakker and Julie Campbell. The ESD staff has also worked very hard to make this transition occur. Kudos to all of them!

  Parents and students will still be able to access grades and attendance from the link off of the district website. Just look for the Skyward logo (instead of the PowerSchool logo)

  and enter the new username and password that will be provided at the start of the year. Information will be provided parents about this change in their back to school packet. The rest of our staff are in the process of being trained to use this new tool on top of their normal start-up duties and should be ready to go. One never knows if glitches will occur, but it won't be from a lack of effort to be sure.

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

Mark