Superintendent's Report

August 24th, 2012

LEARNING UPDATE

- **District Leadership Retreat** – On August 21st, the entire administrative leadership team held our annual retreat for the day. Our work was to focus ourselves on Board Policy Ends-1, the District Mission and our game plan as a team to further meet these expectations. From the mission, we worked to deepen the connection to our learning model and our daily practice as administrators. Then we spent a significant portion of the rest of the day working on studying the new evaluation framework provided from the state, looking for how it can be a value add to our work on the mission through the lens of the learning model. I was very proud of our leadership team and their deep thinking about their own practice as educators and administrators. We are very fortunate to have such a talented, skilled and stable group of administrators in the district. This team has been together for many years and their collective wisdom is a tremendous key to our overall success.

- **Learner Competencies** – As you are aware, our focus that is clearly stated in Board Policy Ends-1 is to *develop confident, self-reliant, lifelong learners*. Last year as part of our learning progression in this work, we developed what we called Core Competencies in order to be more specific about what learner skills students needed to work on in order to maximize their success at becoming *confident, self-reliant, lifelong learners*. This was a work in progress, and still is.

  Over the course of this past year we have continued to modify and enhance these competencies. As part of this work to make the document even better, we changed the name from "Core Competencies" to "Learner Competencies" for two reasons. The first reason is we feel this better communicates what we are trying to achieve (e.g. "Learning" and not "Core"). Secondly, the state is working to roll out what they are calling "Common Core State Standards" (CCSS) as part of a nationwide push to develop a national curriculum. The word "Core" in the CCSS has caused some confusion in staff will most likely to the same for students and parents. Therefore, the need for a name change become clearly evident to us.

With all this in mind, the following is our current articulation of the *Learner Competencies* that we have developed over the past couple of years and will be used in our work to achieve the expectations of the Board Ends-1 policy during the coming school year. This continues to be a work in progress as we further use these competencies to learn ourselves as educators.

La Center School District's Learner Competencies
Within each of the three learning conditions of the district's learning model, the following learner competencies are to be practiced in every learning environment throughout the district. This is in support of the Board's Ends-1 policy expectation to develop confident, self-reliant life-long learners.

1. Flow of Information
Confident self-reliant lifelong learners are effective consumers and producers of information. To do this they can…

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 diverse mediums) in a variety of forums.
C. Use multiple forms of information such as charts, graphs, tables, manipulatives, equipment, models and other resources within the problem-solving process.
D. Implement the technical skills necessary 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 types of technology (e.g. word processing, database, Internet, AV production and CNC machine tools).

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2. Cognitive Demand
Confident self-reliant lifelong learners are able to thrive in uncertain and rapidly changing environments. To do this they can…

A. Initiate high-level thinking processes (e.g. analyze, evaluate, classify, predict, decide, estimate, generalize, solve, compare, simplify, design, and cause/effect) to solve problems and/or develop appropriate new strategies.
B. Continually use a self-evaluation/reflection process to enhance their learning.
C. Create goals and effectively work to achieve them (e.g. brainstorm, envision, research, plan, organize and persist).
D. Implement a continuous improvement process (i.e. plan, draft, analyze, and revise) when creating products.

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3. Learning Trust
Confident self-reliant lifelong learners can create and use effective learning support networks. To do this they can…

A. Use their 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. Communicate their thinking with clarity and precision to test their ideas/strategies.
C. Effectively provide constructive feedback to other learners within their network.
D. Consistently demonstrate their strong learning confidence in a variety of different settings

BOARD UPDATE

- **K-8 Parking Lot Enhancement –** Oh what a difference a year makes. Below are pictures from one year ago showing the progress of the new connector road from the K-8 parking lot to Ivy Street. This picture was taken just a handful of days before school started in 2011.

Below is the current picture from the same spot. Over the course of the summer, we have added safety poles to further delineate the walking path from the roadway for greater safety. We have also added additional arrows on the roadway and signs designating this area as a no parking zone, as it quickly became a "new favorite illegal parking" spot during packed events.

Furthermore, we have added an additional handicap parking spot and will be adding even more temporary handicap parking spots for football games in support of patrons who need them.

- **Energy Upgrades** – Our energy upgrades projects we've been working on over the summer continues to progress well. The plumbing and lighting portions are nearing completion. The mechanical upgrades to the high school boiler and hot water system have made it through engineering and design phases, and should be completed in plenty of time before it turns cold. I am particularly impressed with the lighting upgrades as not only are they more efficient, they are much brighter as well. As you can see with the new football field lights, they provide a much better illumination of the field than the previous light fixtures.

One final point about the football field lights… Just in case you get asked about these lights being left on for multiple nights, please know that we had to leave them on for three straight days (and nights) to accomplish what the engineers call "burning them in" in order to maximize their overall life span. Odd? Kind of, but that is what they needed us to do. FYI.

- **Technology Enhancements** – All the iCarts and iPads are onsite and in the process of being prepped for student use. The high school business lab has been upgraded and a significant amount of refurbishing and redeployment of computers throughout the district has been accomplished. As part of the roll out of the iCarts and to create additional classroom space we needed in the middle school, the old MS computer lab with its very old (used to us from Vancouver Public Schools) computers has been dismantled. The iCarts and the library lab and in-library computers are the access points for students in the middle school. The old MS computer lab room (due to its large size) has now become the 6th grade science room with Mrs. Schneider moving into it. This will be a huge plus for our science program, as they will now have the much-needed space for their lab projects.

- **Middle School Lockers** – This summer we have added additional lockers in the 6th grade wing. This has been needed for some time, but became absolutely necessary this year due to the increase in the number of students in the middle school (large classes that used to be in the elementary have now fully arrived in the middle school).

- **Summer Maintenance Progress** – As usual, our maintenance and custodial staff have worked hard at preparing all three schools for students and staff. Their effort to clean, repair, paint and update whatever is needed has been much appreciated. Some of the major projects this summer included re-decking and repairing many of the ramps on the portables at the K-8 campus including new traction paper, new hand railing on the portable between the round building and the cafeteria (the bees love the wood so we are trying to see if this will reduce the number of bee stings we have had in the past (this particular portable is where they usually occur). Additionally, as we do every year we refinish all the gym floors, do routine maintenance on HVAC systems and complete all of our usual grounds maintenance projects. I am very pleased with their work, as I am sure the Board will be as well. FYI.

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

Mark