La Center Middle School Hawks Report

September 2013

The 2013-14 School year is off to a very good start. The students are a buzz in the halls, happy to be back at school, going to classes and seeing their friends. The teachers are fresh and feeling solid about the beginning of the year as well.

Before school started, teachers spent their in-service day working with student data on the students identified as either on an accountability contract (7th & 8th grade) or those identified as participants in the Hawks Landing Summer School program (6th grade). The teachers, after looking at test scores, grades and attendance, spent time identifying strengths of each of the students and also created a list of strategies that have worked with each student in the past. This information was then shared with the teachers of each student in hopes of making a strong connection with that student from the very beginning to increase their success rates.

The data work with these students is one of our three focal points for our annual work plan. Through implementing the success strategies and monitoring student progress, our goal is to increase the number of students who will meet promotion standards this year (The number of students not meeting promotion standards counts towards our LSI's, or Learning Success Indicators for the middle school). As part of this goal we have a task force which will be reviewing current research on retention practices and will review the viability of our current plan based on research. Our second goal is to get our advisory program solidified for our students, and we have another task force team working together to make recommendations moving forward. Our third goal, which is ever ongoing, is to improve communication with our stakeholders. Two priorities with this is for our staff to provide both an updated web page and to have weekly skyward grades entered into grade books.

Teachers are preparing for the full implementation of the TPEP evaluation system this year. It will require each teacher to be engaged in data work with students, which began during our in-service in August. At this point in time, teachers are completing the step of self-reflection & evaluation and scoring, and then will be meeting with me for establishing goals for the year.

Our student count this year is at 416 with over 30 new students to the district. The biggest change for the students from last year is the switch to two lunch periods. We are having all of the students go to lunch in the cafeteria for the first 10 minutes, and then opening a gym (and the outside field when the weather cooperates) for those who wish to have some play time. Some students stay in the cafeteria for the whole lunch but the majority chooses to head out to move

and play. From a supervision and safety perspective, having two lunches has provided a much more manageable environment for students to play.

We have over 100 students out for a fall sport: 28 for cross country, 32 for volleyball and 42 for football. We know students who are involved in extracurricular activities generally do better in school so this is very positive news. We appreciate our dedicated coaches who continue to be positive role models for our student-athletes.

We sent nearly all of our 6th grade class to CISPUS the week of September 16-20. The students are excited and anxious all at the same time. We are grateful for the dedicated staff members, both our own and our volunteers who commit to this week of fun and adventure. Although there was some drizzle at send off Monday morning, the spirits were high and positive.

Lastly, as a first year principal, I am grateful to the highly professional and capable staff surrounding me, who accomplishes so much in a day, and do so with a smile. There are some really great people in our middle school, both students and adults alike. We are off to a really good start.

Lauri Landerholm