Teaching and Learning Update September 2012

Testing/Assessment- Nothing new to report here following the information you received at and prior to this month's workshop. That said, I have modified our Title II grant application in the wake of those test scores to focus on three primary areas this year, K-8 math, completion of the K-12 writing adoption and TPEP. As a reminder, Title II provides federal dollars in the form of a grant to support professional development for staff throughout the year in areas of need identified by the district.

Curriculum/ Materials Adoption- We have identified an on-line resource for our 2nd through 5th grade teachers to create math support materials which will supplement our current adoption. The program is called "Teaching Made Easy" (yeah right!) As you know from discussions throughout last year, we had identified math workbooks written by Saxon as an alternative supplement to our current homework/practice sheet materials. As I explained at the workshop, my inability to negotiate what I felt like would be an equitable price point, we began searching for an alternative. I want to thank Saxon for this opportunity as that search found a new solution which provides more flexibility, easy access, lower price point and no waste. Beyond all of that, this program will enable our teachers to send home practice/homework/worksheets (on an occasional basis) that are more traditional in nature and work to hone students algorithmic skills. I like to think of this as teaching them how to think in school and how to master and memorize basics at home! (a side benefit will be that our parents will recognize this math)

Professional Development- I just issued 273 total clock hours today for our staff who participated in 3 different book studies this summer, great job by our K-12 staff! I had the opportunity to provide a 3 hour training for our district substitutes one evening last week and I was very impressed by the whole group's willingness to embrace the district's learning model and the empowerment that we are giving them to maintain quadrant 1 learning environments in the absence of the regular teacher. I have a second class scheduled during the week of K-8 conferences. Volunteer training is back in full swing and it is very rewarding to work with our parents and community members that are volunteering to give their time to help us, help their students. Tonight I get to play district nurse and present the 5th grade HIV curriculum for parent review at the K-8 curriculum night. Always looking for ways to be efficient, I will be staying after to meet with parents who would like to obtain the SuccessMaker home access software that night as well. Lastly I had the opportunity to lead a learning opportunity for our classified staff on the first "regularly scheduled late student arrival" day, that created a better understanding of how they could apply the district's learning model to both their personal learning and to their area of responsibility within the district for students. This was really rewarding and I learned something about both our staff and my own teaching.

ELL- Since the beginning of the school year we have registered another 10 ELL students into program. This moves our total program enrollment from 16 to 26. With

that comes a 60% increase in funding but the corresponding increase in student need. Kellie Braatten, our current ELL para-professional will not be able to serve all of these new students so we will be looking to reconstruct this program and likely increasing staff in this area over the next couple of weeks. As with any change/challenge comes and opportunity to learn and improve. I look forward to this review and opportunity to improve our service to kids.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)- We are in the process of recruiting more parents and community members to serve on the "Parent Vocational Advisory" committee this month. Our first meeting will be during the first half of October. If anyone knows of a trades person in our community whom you believe could lend insight and background to our business, metals, woods or small engines learning environments, please send me a note. Our main goal this year, in CTE, will be to align our metals curriculum with the beginning metals class at Clark CC so that we will be able to sign an articulation agreement with Clark CC. This agreement will enable our students to earn duel credits in metals.

Thanks, Dave.