Hawk Report: September 2012

The start of the school year could not be any better than at LCMS. Along with sunny weather, students and staff seem re-energized for the coming year. I feel extremely lucky to be completing my administrative internship in such a great school district. In the first few weeks of August, David and I began our planning for the start of the year. After much discussion, we came up with a great way to start the year. To get the staff into the "mood" of critical thinking and reflecting, we took them to Tri Mountain Golf Course for a putting contest. Our goals for this outing were to bring our team back together in a fun, supportive manner, kick off our theme "Embrace the Journey", and focus on how we reflect on our 'learning journey.' During the putting contest, staff were asked to think about three questions:

1. What are you thinking about as you start this course?
2. What were some of your concerns as you approached a difficult hole? What tactics did you use as you approached a difficult hole?
3. What helped you be successful on the course?

It was really great to watch and listen to the staff as they went through the course. These questions could be altered to meet the needs of our students in their classrooms.

Once we all came back together at school, we continued on with our theme of embracing the journey. Individually and then as a group, the staff reflected on what they learned about themselves and their peers on the course. We used this opportunity to discuss how important reflection is for our students. Each student will be reflecting about their learning in all their classes so that they have evidence of their learning. Staff also shared their professional goals and what kind of support they will need to meet their goals. As a whole, the staff at LCMS are ready to go and have some amazing new ideas for our students.

Students will be using a CPR sheet to help them with their reflection. They will write about the **C**ontent they learned, the **P**rocess they went through to learn and then **R**eflect on what the learning means to them. The goal is for students to have a true understanding of how they are improving versus believing that effort will always guarantee success. Having a 'learning strategy' can increase the chances of success the next time we complete the task.

A big change this year for all schools in our district is the Regularly Scheduled Late Student Arrival (RSLSA). We greatly appreciate this opportunity as it will allow our staff to have more collaboration time and students to be better served. In September, the RSLSA will be used for teachers to meet in their subject groups. This will allow teachers to align their curriculum from each grade level. Each group has created a Google Doc. to share with each other, David, and myself so that we can learn from each other's work. We look forward to effectively using this time together.

A cosmetic and much needed change at the middle school is an additional 50 lockers in the 6th grade wing. Adding these lockers allowed us to open up the very crowded 7th grade hall near Mr. Brothers and Mrs. Cooke's classroom. We have also assigned lockers differently this year to try to curtail any discipline issues. In the first three weeks of school, we have noticed that the hallway congestion and locker incidents have gone down significantly. Overall we have had very little discipline problems to start the year.

A new challenge this year will be our rising numbers. At the start of the year we saw many new faces in the crowd with our current enrollment at 407. We have made many efforts to keep class sizes down and have been successful for the most part. David and I have also been making ourselves visible in the hallways and in the classroom to let students know that we are there to support, guide and correct when needed. The staff have gone with the flow and accepted every new student as if they have known them for years.

As always, an exciting part of Fall is CISPUS. This year we have about 130 students attending outdoor school. The sixth grade team has been working overtime to get all the supplies and curriculum ready to go. The sixth grade students are eager to get going and show a positive attitude about their learning. Thank yous are again in order to the La Center Casino Foundation Charitable Fund for donating $10,000 so more students can participate in this great experience.

Something to celebrate this year is the return of our leadership class. There are over sixty students participating in the class. Currently, their work includes reviewing the Board's Ends Policies with the goal of aligning their vision of what the needs of the Middle School are with the Board's Ends. They are focusing on Advisory time, suicide prevention and bullying issues. Later in the month, we will be having an assembly about bullying prevention from Camfel. We will have small group lessons before and after the assembly to help our students understand that we have a no tolerance policy for bullying.

Our sports teams this year have seen a great amount of student participants. Volleyball has gotten off to a great start thanks to coaches Austad, Slinkard, and Eiesland. The girls are working extremely hard and are getting better every day. The cross country team started out fast and hasn't looked back yet. Coaches Broten and Dykes even like to get a good run in with the students on a daily basis. As usual, the football team is full of confident young men. Thank you to coaches Hiller, Magnuson, Millay, Johnson, and Williamson for helping the young men of La Center become great people. David says that he wishes that he could have Football year round as it brings the best out in the boys.

I look forward to my journey as an intern at La Center School District. I am amazed on a daily basis at the work ethic, compassion, and excitement that the staff bring. Students in our district are lucky they have such great role models in their lives.

GO HAWKS!!

Katie Kipp
Administrative Intern