Superintendent's Report

September 22nd, 2011

BOARD UPDATE

- **Start of School** – We have had a relatively smooth start to school again this year (except for our flooded portable – see update below). One of the things I have noticed in the elementary is more comfort with those staff teaming again this year. In fact, all those who have their teams still in place are once again teaming (16 of 18 classrooms from last year). Because we had one retirement and one grade level change, two classrooms returned to being self-contained that were utilizing the team model last year. I see this as a strong signal of the value teachers see in this new way of doing business. We also have started a blended (multi-age) 4-5 classroom this year, which is new for us. Furthermore, our kindergarten team is sharing students as well. Looking at the entire elementary, we have 22 of our 30 elementary classrooms involved in either some form of teaming or cross-grade level learning environments, which is pretty exciting.
- **Class Size Numbers Across the District** – As you know, we have worked very hard to keep our class sizes across the district low. Below are the average class size numbers per grade band (aligned with the CBA) from 2008 to present as compared to the contractual limits.

	Sept. 2008/09	**May 2008/09**	**Sept. 2009/10**	**May 2009/10**	**Sept. 2010/11**	**May 2010/11**	**Sept. 2011/12**	**Contract Limits**
K	20	20	24	*20	19	20	20	**25**
Gr. 1 - 3	22	22	21	21	20	21	**24	**27**
Gr. 4 & 5	26	26	27	27	28	28	26	**29**
Gr. 6-12	24	23	24	23	24	23	26	**30**

Music, PE, Counselors and other certificated staff (Title I) were not included in these calculations as per CBA

*Added 1 non-continuing Kindy staff in October
**Will be 22 when additional 3rd grade staff member is hired

- **Making AYP in Math Across the District** – It is very exciting to see that our students made Adequate Year Progress (AYP) at all levels in Mathematics this year. This is something everyone has worked very hard at. Kudos to our students, staff, parents and volunteers for all their hard work.
- **Declining State Revenue Forecast** – The State's regularly scheduled revenue forecast recently came out and we are once again facing a projected shortfall. This time they are saying they will be short $1.4 billion dollars over the biennium. Since they just passed their budget less than four months ago, this is obviously very concerning news. As a result of this sharp decline in projected revenues, Governor Gregoire has directed all state agencies to prepare for up to a 10% cut in their budgets. Please know that schools are not part of this directive. However, she has stated publicly that "[even a 10% cut to state agencies] is not enough to cover the current projected shortfall" (Spokesman-Review, September 22, 2011).

She is planning on calling a special session following the State's November revenue forecast to address the issue prior to the regular legislative session that begins in January. In the same Spokesman-Review article, Gregoire was quoted as saying "everything is on the table". She went on to say that "the State can't make many more cuts to the Department of Corrections without closing prisons or eliminating community supervision for most released inmates. [The State] may have to cut early learning programs and even basic education 'is not sacrosanct'." The length of the school year is part of basic education, and with the uproar around the 1.9% teacher salary reductions I doubt the legislature will go there again (at least I am hoping so). In short, I am really concerned about levy equalization, which is $600K in our annual budget as it is not under the umbrella of basic education. It would be hard to imagine a solution that saved levy equalization, yet shortened the school year. Loosing levy equalization is equivalent to the cost of eight certificated teachers. Clearly we have many changes ahead of us, but as we have done in the past, we will do our best to get ahead of this in the process of minimizing the impacts on our students.

- **Flooded Elementary Portable** – As previously shared, we had one of our elementary portables flood from a broken water line to a toilet sometime during the evening between the first and second day of school. We immediately began the work to relocate classes and start the clean-up and restoration process. Kudos to Kim Hollopeter and the ESD's preschool staff for all their understanding and hard work. Additionally, a big thanks needs to go to Tonya McCord who gave up her music classroom so Kim's class could relocate and to Rita Peterson who gave up her library classroom so Tonya's students could use it for music. Amy Haynes (ESD's special education teacher) also gave up the classroom she was using at the high school so the special education preschool could use it. A huge shout out also needs to go to our students for their resiliency in how they handled this incident and the moves. A big thanks also needs to go to Rob Williamson, Brian Mangus, Skot Barker and all the other maintenance and tech folks who chipped in to get everything cleaned up and back on track. Finally, I would like to let the Board know how much I appreciated our administrators (especially Scott Lincoln, Bonnie Lock, Carol Patton and David Cooke) for their handling of this issue. Their leadership in solving this matter cannot be ignored. Thank you to everyone for their hard work and composure in working through this significant incident.

  Regarding the repair of the portable, the following work has been or will shortly be completed:
  - All new floor insulation;
  - All new flooring (i.e. carpet and vinyl);
  - Damaged drywall (approx. 18 inches up from the floor in 75% of the portable) was removed and replaced along with the wall insulation;
  - Damaged siding (approx. 75% of the exterior) has been replaced;
  - All the damaged cabinetry was replaced;
  - All the interior walls were retextured and painted; and
  - Ramp decking boards were replaced as necessary.

  Our hope is that the repair to the portable will be finished sometime early next week so classes can relocate and settle back into their repaired classrooms.

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

Mark