Superintendent's Report

May 22nd, 2009

LEARNING UPDATE

- **Staff Evaluations –** Each year administrators spend a significant amount of time writing up and meeting with staff to review and discuss annual evaluations. Over my years as an educator and now as an administrator, I have seen both ends of the evaluation spectrum (giving and receiving). When I was on the receiving end from the administrators I worked with, it always came across to me to either be a nice pat on the back at best, or an incredible waste of everybody's time at its worst. When I became an administrator, I worked hard to make it meaningful and a valuable expenditure of time and energy. This is my eleventh year as a superintendent and over that time having considerable influence to change the evaluation process, I can say that there has been some positive moves in shifting the conversation from a "backwards" perspective evaluation process towards a "forward" perspective process. With that said, I believe we have had a profound leap forward this year in this work. With our great "ah-ha" as district administrators being seeing every conversation/interaction with stakeholders as a powerful learning opportunity, our administrators worked together to have a deep conversation about how do we communicate to our staff through evaluations with a "forward" thinking perspective so that the effort is both real and meaningful? I am excited to share that I believe our administrators have accomplished this goal to a whole new level this year. I have read all the certificated evaluations submitted to date (approx. 65), and could not be more pleased with how they have communicated in writing in a way that shifts the focus from "looking in the rear view mirror" to one of "looking through the windshield". This shift turned a closure activity and process into a "learning forward", "laying the tracks in front of the train" process that could accelerate our collective learning. As I read each administrator's evaluation write-ups, I clearly understood where their buildings were going and what was important to not only them, but to their staff as well. Many of these write-ups used examples from this year as springboards for their work next year. To say the least, I am very proud of our administrators and the work they have done this year around improving their own practice. These evaluation write-ups are a clear example of what they have learned both as individuals as well as a team of professionals.
- **Washington State Leadership Academy –** For the next two years, our district administrators have been invited to participate in a new statewide learning opportunity known as the Washington State Leadership Academy (WSLA). This experience provides our administrators with six days of training (five of which are at our own ESD), sixteen days of leadership coaching in our district from an outside the district coach as well as opportunities to expand our collective network of administrators throughout the region. So far, Ridgefield, Woodland, Hockinson, White Salmon, Camas and Washougal have agreed to join La Center in this exciting work. Given the fiscal challenges we are all facing, WSLA has reduced the fees to join from $5,000 per year per district to $3,000 per year. Additionally, Dr. Twyla Barnes has agreed to split this cost with each district so our share of this learning opportunity will be only $1,500. The state and private funding through the Gates Foundation covers most of the cost of WSLA. Forgetting everything else but the

coach, we are going to receive sixteen days of outside coaching/assistance in our work for less than $100 per day. We have a lot of influence on who will be our coach so this is really a wonderful resource that is great timing. I am working hard to recruit a person from the ESD who has proven to be very helpful to us of late in supporting our efforts to learn. Her name is Barbara Lomas and she was one of the participants that attended Harvard with me last summer. The entire WSLA program is centered on the Harvard model for school improvement, so having Barbara on our team will be a real advantage at a bargain price. More on this endeavor in the future.

BOARD UPDATE

- **Budget Development Process** – Brett and I continue to work on the budget for the 2009/10 school year. I believe we are getting down the nitty-gritty and so far so good. We are planning on drawing into our reserves as communicated in our Level I reduction strategy in order to not impact the classrooms. I am considering recommending an increase in athletic fees to help offset costs in this area. Many of our league counterparts have significantly higher participation fees (at least twice as high to as much as four times as high). We have not raised our athletic fees for many years and I just believe now is the time (both budget wise and politically). Whatever my recommendation will be, we will still be far below what other districts in our league charge and we will make sure that money does not prevent participation; only helps to support the operational costs of running these programs. As far as food service and other fees, at this juncture I don't believe we absolutely need to or that we should. Again, this is just a heads up that most likely my recommendation for fee increases will be limited to only athletics. More on the budget as it continues to develop, but I am feeling more and more confident that our overall plan for meeting this fiscal challenge will prove to be effective.
- **HB 1776 Changing School Levy Provisions** – At this point in time, one of my biggest concerns about funding support for the next few years is related to levy equalization. HB 1776 failed in the House at the last minute. This bill is what they call in Olympia to be a "trailer bill". What that means is that the legislature included in their budget a reduction in levy equalization (about 15% or $45K), but they needed a law change (HB 1776 enters stage left) that would have authorized this change. However, the House republicans blocked this effort on the threat of a filibuster. Since this was occurring at the 11th hour, the whole concept of the cut to levy equalization fell through. When the governor decided not to have a special session, HB 1776 went into the legislative parking garage.

  Besides the threat of cuts to levy equalization in HB 1776, the bill also included an increase in the levy lid from 24% to 28%. Since we are not even close to the levy lid, this was not a plus for us. However, many districts (including many large districts with huge tax bases) get voter approval in excess of the levy lid and do what they call "roll the levy back" down to their lid. That way, as their budgets grow over a three or four-year levy cycle, they never get caught leaving levy dollars on the table. Again, this is not an issue for us because we are not at the lid.

  Here is where my concern is escalating. Many districts that have the capacity to go well above the current lid are preparing for running levies next spring. One district in particular is my study district in the Seattle area. They are planning for a 28% levy to take advantage of

the possibility that the lid will be raised. With simple majority, massive budget cuts from the state, and intense pressure by unions, I believe HB 1776 will show its head again. The time in which it reemerges may be next spring. Worse yet, if the fall state revenue forecast continues to decline, the governor may be forced to call a special session in October to deal with additional cuts required from the further erosion of state revenues. To me, this is the making of a very significant fiscal collision ahead of us that will pit property rich districts against property poor districts, with the state using it as a way for them to balance their next budget deficit situation. I don't know if it will happen, but it is a possible scenario.

So what does that mean for us? It means that we need to continue to get ahead of this fiscal storm, continue to develop organizational and operational efficiencies, and to continue to budget conservatively. Please know that this is our goal and to date I believe our staff has done a great job of being creatively frugal and at the same time find new ways to increase opportunities for students. That is probably more than you ever cared to know about legislative happenings, but at least you know that my antennas are way up on this concern. More on HB 1776 as it, or if it develops.

- **Lab Classroom Project** – We continue to work on our Lab Classroom project for next year. Again, this is an idea that would create one lab classroom at each grade band (primary, intermediate, middle school and high school) where the teacher would be connected by a cohort of fellow teachers and together they would develop ideas on how to improve their professional practice. These ideas would first be implemented by the lab classroom teacher and observed by the cohort teachers. Once the practice was confirmed as promising, other teachers in the cohort would then give it a try. This idea is a potential new way of creating self-initiated professional development internally rather than holding massive all staff "sit and get" sessions. To help get this idea off of the ground, we are working with our ESD (via Barbara Lomas) to seek some funds from a grant they are closing out this summer. Often times grants have money left over, so what better use for these dollars than to use them in a way to springboard a new concept. At least that is the pitch we are communicating and so far it is working. My hope is that we will obtain some grant funds to at least do the planning for the lab classroom concept some time next month. This work will pay for staff to work to fine tune our idea and get this ball rolling.
- **KWRL Property Purchase** – We have met again with LeAnne Bremer (Property attorney our district has used before – now working with KWRL). I believe we continue to make progress on determining an acceptable agreement for a potential transportation site property purchase. As we have talked about before, acquiring the property in the southern part of the transportation cooperative would be a huge plus for not only Ridgefield and La Center (both desperately need our busses off-site), but also for the cooperative as a whole. With Woodland potentially changing its facilities plan that would require the demolition of the current transportation facility, the need for a new location is now seen as even more critical in the years ahead.
- **La Center Class of 2008 Transcript Study** – Attached to my report is the condensed results from the transcript survey we recently completed. We did this study to determine how close our students were to meeting both the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) standards for minimum entrance requirements into our state's four-year universities, as well as meeting CORE-24 standards at graduation. The data shows we are much closer than we originally thought and that is why we believe the new graduation requirements will position

ourselves to meet both these future expectations and prepare students for the maximum success at their next step in learning after graduation. I have attached copies of the current draft visual for CORE 24 as well as the most current HECB standards.

- **Athletic League Changes for 2009/10** – Both Steve Frucci and I attended a recent meeting with the other ADs and superintendents from the schools in our league (Trico). The ADs explained their proposal for reducing costs for athletics, specifically when it comes to travel. The following is a brief description of these ideas:
    1) The league will not schedule more than 80% of sub-varsity games (allows for fewer games if the district chooses to do so).
    2) The league will not schedule week 10 non-playoff football games (again, allows for fewer games).
    3) Volleyball and girls soccer were made with the same schedules so teams could travel together.
    4) Both boys and girls basketball will travel together and play on the same night (Tuesdays and Fridays).
    5) Varsity softball and baseball will travel together.
    6) Post season – look for ways to save tournament costs and play six teams vs. eight team tournaments.
    7) Middle school schedules and teams will be scheduled in a way to split the league in two to reduce travel costs.
    8) Explore the concept of having limits on the number of student athletes who will travel (i.e. traveling squad vs. home squad). This will be a district specific decision.
- **Lighting Project at the High School** – The lighting replacement project is currently underway at the high school. The contractor is working after hours so as to not interfere with school or after school activities. I have seen some of the new lighting and they are great! Wow what a boost in lighting quality! The plan is for the contractors to be finished in time for graduation.

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

Mark

Opening Doors with **CORE 24**

ENGLISH	● ● ● ●
MATH	● ● ●
SCIENCE	● ● ●
SOCIAL STUDIES	● ● ●
ARTS	● ●
FITNESS	● ◖
HEALTH	◖

CAREER CONCENTRATION	● ● ●
WORLD LANGUAGE	
ELECTIVES	● ● ● ●

CERTIFICATE, APPRENTICESHIP, OR TWO-YEAR DEGREE PROGRAM

CORE 24 allows for flexibility and personalization:

TAKE CLASSES IN DIFFERENT VENUES. Complete courses in high schools, skills centers, and/or online—put together the combination that works best.

EARN DUAL CREDIT. Take advantage of Running Start, Tech Prep, and Advanced Placement programs to begin earning college credit in high school.

CONSIDER CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) COURSE EQUIVALENTS. Satisfy some requirements through CTE-course equivalents per district policy.

MAKE APPROPRIATE SUBSTITUTIONS. If consistent with career plans, take a third math credit different from Algebra II/Integrated Math III, or substitute other courses for world language credits.

GO DEEP. Explore an interest area by using career concentration and elective credits.

CAREER CONCENTRATION	● ● ●
WORLD LANGUAGE	● ●
ELECTIVES	● ●

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE DEGREE

CORE 24 allows for flexibility and personalization:

MEET OR EXCEED COLLEGE ENTRANCE STANDARDS. Meet or exceed the Higher Education Coordinating Board minimum college admission standards—college academic distribution requirements.

TAKE CLASSES IN DIFFERENT VENUES. Complete courses in high schools, skills centers, and/or online—put together the combination that works best.

EARN DUAL CREDIT. Take advantage of Running Start, Tech Prep, and Advanced Placement programs to begin earning college credit in high school.

START EARLY. Earn credit through approved middle school courses.

GO DEEP. Explore an interest area by using career concentration and elective credits.

Educated Citizens with Living-wage Jobs

Washington State Board of Education • www.sbe.wa.gov • December 2008

CORE 24 is the new graduation requirements credit framework adopted by the Washington State Board of Education (SBE) in July 2008, with implementation contingent upon funding.

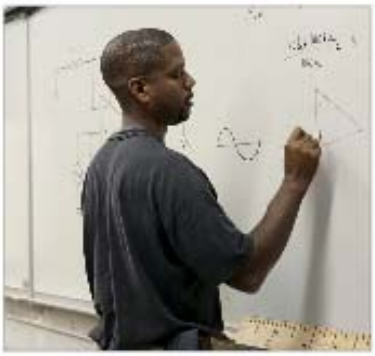
CORE 24 provides students with a strong academic foundation, and with flexibility that will prepare them for whatever path they choose—whether that's the workforce, an apprenticeship in the trades, or a two- or four-year college.

CORE 24 matters because Washington State's high school graduation requirements haven't been updated since 1985. The world our graduates walk into today is much more challenging, demanding and fast-paced than a quarter century ago.

CORE 24 represents the well-rounded education our graduates will need to be flexible, adaptable lifelong learners in a global economy and a fast-changing society. CORE 24 is designed to prepare our young people for the future.

WHAT CORE 24 IS

- **A KEY THAT OPENS ALL DOORS.** CORE 24 equips students to have all options open to them: career and apprenticeship, college, or both. Whether a student is headed for college or the trades, there is a CORE 24 pathway that will get her ready. And if she wants to keep both options open, she can. CORE 24 gives every student the base of knowledge they need for the 21st century, and the freedom to build upon that base as their own learning interests and future plans determine.
- **A TOOL TO HELP STUDENTS PLAN AHEAD.** CORE 24 will ensure that high school students develop a plan for their learning, update it and live up to it. Under the current requirements, a student can take the minimum necessary requirements and still end up ineligible for apprenticeship programs or for a four-year college. Under CORE 24, this won't happen: that student will have an education game plan to help ensure that when he graduates, he will have a clear next step.
- **A FRAME WITH FLEXIBILITY.** CORE 24 lays out credit requirements by subject matter category —but then it's up to every school district, in the best traditions of local control, to determine what courses meet those requirements and to develop innovative ways for students to earn credit. Credits can be earned via competency—not just by seat time. Depending on which pathway a student wants to take, she can swap out credits from one subject to another in order to build a career concentration.



WHAT CORE 24 IS *NOT*

- **THIS IS NOT A COLLEGE- OR UNIVERSITY-CENTRIC PROGRAM.** For many students, the choice that makes most sense after graduation is going into the workforce or an apprenticeship, or to a community or technical college. CORE 24 treats all these paths as equally worthy — and prepares all students for success in any of them.
- **THIS IS NOT AN UNFUNDED MANDATE, OR AN OVERNIGHT SWITCH.** SBE has stated forcefully that implementation of this framework will be contingent upon funding. New requirements will be phased in over several years, so that the Class of 2016 would be the first possible class to graduate under CORE 24.
- **THIS IS NOT AN END TO LOCAL CONTROL.** For over 50 years, SBE has set statewide minimum graduation requirements, and for all those years, local districts have in their own ways built upon that floor. Today, **all** districts in the state already exceed the state minimums: local school boards, educators and parents clearly know that we have to do more to prepare our graduates for success.

NEXT STEPS

The Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force proposal to the Legislature supports the staffing and instructional time necessary to implement 24 credits of minimum high school graduation requirements.

SBE will be working with an Implementation Task Force to consider the implementation challenges presented by CORE 24.

Thanks to the Washington State PTA, League of Education Voters, Higher Education Coordinating Board, Workforce Training Board and others for their support of CORE 24.

WASHINGTON HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

Minimum College Admission Standards

An Overview for Students and Parents

New college admission requirements affect high school freshmen, beginning in 2008

In 2008, high school 9th graders who plan to seek admission to public baccalaureate institutions (four-year colleges and universities) in Washington, should begin taking courses that meet the state's new minimum college admission standards.

The new standards, approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Board in 2007, include *College Academic Distribution Requirements* (CADR) that specify the course work required in six different subject areas. The subject areas are math, English, science, social science, world languages, and the arts.

Shown on the following page, in the right column, are the revised CADR that high school 9th graders, beginning with academic year 2008-09, must meet in order to be considered for regular admission to a public baccalaureate institution in 2012.

Shown in the left column are current CADR that remain in effect through the 2011-12 academic year for all other high school students, (except 9th graders in 2008-09, as previously noted).

The revised minimum college admission standards also require high school 9th graders, beginning with the 2008-09 academic year, to begin earning three credits of CADR courses each year of high school, including their senior year.

Each school district determines which of its courses meet CADR guidelines.

New science requirements could affect 11th grade students in 2008

Beginning in the summer of 2010, to be considered for regular admission to a public baccalaureate institution, entering college freshman will need to complete two years of laboratory science, including one year of algebra-based biology, chemistry, or physics.

To meet this new science requirement, 11th grade students in 2008, if they have not already, should begin taking laboratory science courses that meet this CADR.

Standards fully implemented in 2012

Beginning in summer 2012, Washington's public four-year colleges and universities (baccalaureate institutions) will fully implement the new minimum college admission standards approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Notes on CADR and admission standards

CADR refer to college admissions criteria established by the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The term differs from high school graduation requirements that are determined by the State Board of Education and local school districts.

Students who plan to attend a four-year college or university should be aware of both sets of requirements.

Meeting the minimum college admission standards does not guarantee admission to a public baccalaureate institution.

Therefore, students are encouraged to go beyond meeting minimum college admission standards to improve their chances for gaining entry to a public baccalaureate institution. Students should obtain admission information from the institution they wish to attend.

All K-12 and college personnel who advise students on admission to public four-year colleges and universities should obtain a copy of CADR guidelines and other related minimum college admission information.

The information is available at:

www.hecb.wa.gov/research/issues/admissions.asp

Students should consult with their local high school to obtain complete information about minimum college admission standards, and to be aware of which courses at their high school meet CADR guidelines, as determined by the local school district.

WASHINGTON HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

Minimum College Admission Standards

An Overview for Students and Parents

College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADR)	
Through 2011*	**Beginning 2012****
15 Credits (in subject areas below) ***Note:*** *The term "credit" is used to designate that a student has satisfactorily completed a CADR course during the high school academic year. School districts may use alternative or block scheduling that permit students to earn a credit in less than a full year.* *ALL CADR below are effective through 2011, except science-see below.	**15 Credits (in subject areas below)** *Note: The term "credit" is used to designate that a student has satisfactorily completed a CADR course during the high school academic year. School districts may use alternative or block scheduling that permit students to earn a credit in less than a full year.* **See **Science** below for CADR effective in 2010; all other CADR listed below take effect 2012.
English – 4 credits (including 3 credits of literature and composition)	**English – 4 credits** (must include 3 credits of college preparatory composition or literature). Passage of 10th-grade WASL-reading is equivalent to earning the first 2 CADR credits of high school English.
Mathematics – 3 credits (including algebra, geometry, and advanced math)	**Mathematics – 3 credits** (Algebra I, geometry, and Algebra II, or Integrated Math I, II, and III) Passage of 10th-grade WASL-math is equivalent to earning the first 2 CADR credits of high school math (Algebra & Geometry or Integrated Math I and II). ***Note:*** *Successful completion of math through pre-calculus meets the requirement for 3 credits of math and the senior-year math requirement (below).*
Mathematics – Senior-year None currently required.	**Mathematics – Senior year**, during the senior year of high school, students must earn a credit in a math-based quantitative course, e.g., statistics, applied math, or appropriate career and technical courses. An algebra-based science course taken during the senior year also would satisfy this requirement and part of the science requirement below. ***Note:*** *The senior-year math requirement does not mean a 4th credit of math is required, nor does it require a higher level of math. The intent of this requirement is for seniors to take meaningful math.*
Science – 2 credits, including 1 credit of laboratory science. This CADR remains in effect through 2009. ***NOTE:*** *Beginning in 2010, **2 credits** of laboratory science, including one credit of algebra-based biology, chemistry, or physics, will be required.*	**Science – 2 credits** of laboratory science, including one credit of algebra-based biology, chemistry, or physics (required for admission to public baccalaureate institutions beginning summer of 2010). ***Note:*** *Western Washington University specifies that the algebra-based science course be chemistry or physics.*
World Languages – 2 credits of the same world language, Native American language, or American Sign Language.	**World Languages – 2 credits** of the same World Language, Native American language, or American Sign Language.
Social Science – 3 credits	**Social Science – 3 credits** (history or other social sciences)
Arts – 1 credit of fine, visual, or performing arts, or electives from any of the other required subjects.	**Arts – 1 credit** of fine, visual, or performing arts—or 1 additional credit in other CADR subject areas. ***Note:*** *The University of Washington and Western Washington University specify one-half credit in fine, visual or* performing arts; the other half may be in the arts or in an academic elective.

Students should consult with their local high school to obtain complete information about minimum college admission standards, and to be aware of which courses at their high school meet CADR guidelines, as determined by the local school district.

LA CENTER CLASS OF 2008 TRANSCRIPT BREAKDOWN OF STUDENTS MEETING HECB AND/OR PROPOSED CORE-24 REQUIREMENTS

General Information:

The class of 2008 has 91 graduates. Gender breakdown is 40 male and 51 female.

Of the 91 graduates 55 earned 24 or more credits (60%).

The number of graduates that met HECB requirements was 49 (53%).

Of the 42 students that did not meet HECB requirements, 26 were missing credits in one subject only (8 in math and 18 in world languages). All 16 of the remaining students were missing credits in both math and world languages.

Missing HECB credit breakdown as follows:

Subject	.25 Credits Short	.5 Credits Short	.75 Credits Short	1 Credit Short	1.25 Credits Short	1.5 Credits Short	1.75 Credits Short	2 Credits Short	Totals
Math	1	7	1	15					**24**
WL		4	1	10		3		15	**33**

The number of graduates that would have met the proposed CORE-24 requirements was 41 (45%).

Of the 50 students that would not have met the proposed CORE-24 requirements, 34 were missing credits in one subject only (8 in math and 26 in science). All 16 of the remaining students were missing credits in both math and science.

Missing CORE-24 credit breakdown as follows:

Subject	.25 Credits Short	.5 Credits Short	.75 Credits Short	1 Credit Short	Totals
Math	1	7	1	15	**24**
Science		20	1	21	**42**

The total number of graduates meeting both HECB and CORE-24 in Math is 67 (73%).

The total number of graduates meeting both HECB and CORE-24 in English is 91 (100%).

The total number of graduates meeting both HECB and CORE-24 in Social Studies is 91 (100%).

The total number of graduates meeting both HECB and CORE-24 in Science is 49 (53%).

The total number of graduates meeting both HECB and CORE-24 in Math, English, Social Studies and Science is 41 (45%).

NOTE: Of the 8 students who did not meet HECB or CORE-24 requirements in math ONLY, 3 had taken enough math but failed to transfer credit from 8th grade to high school.