

Teaching and Learning Update February 2016

Curriculum / Materials Implementation –

The instructional materials adoption process for K-12 English/Language Arts/Literacy continued this month. Regularly Scheduled Late Student Arrival (RSLSA) time is being utilized to meet separately with elementary, middle school and high school teachers. Each group has established the need and rationale for updated instructional materials, expressed their “hopes & fears” regarding the process/results, drafted group norms for their collaboration time, and examined the “shifts” in state ELA standards through publisher’s criteria.

The elementary team is made up of more than a dozen individuals representing grade levels preK-5, administrators, ACE and Special Education. In addition to the activity previously mentioned, the elementary team considered the recommendation of the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) by utilizing an article entitled, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice and the Common Core State Standards: Framing the Issues*. The conversation was meaningful and robust as we strive to maintain balanced learning environments in the light of more rigorous standards. Three sets of publisher examination copies have been distributed to teachers at each grade level Kindergarten through fifth grade to allow teachers to informally begin looking at available options.

The middle and high school teams are made up of all teachers of English Language Arts, including teachers of students receiving special education services. In addition to the activities previously mentioned, some secondary teachers are interested in further exploring Open Educational Resources (OER) as a possible next step in the adoption process. Lynn Cooke and I attended a two day workshop on *OER Commons* and will continue to share our learning in after school session(s) possibly in conjunction with previously scheduled *Tech Café* sessions.

Professional Development –

Below are a few of the inter-district and ESD offerings that our staff have either taken or will take advantage of this month:

- *New Science Kit Professional Learning: Next Generation Science Standards Grade Level (K-5)* Trainings sponsored by ESD 112 are focused on the Science and Engineering Practices and Crosscutting Concepts at all grade levels.
- *Math Leadership Workshop* sponsored by Woodland School District was focused upon research-based mathematics instruction and assessing the extent to which teaching practices foster meaningful, and mathematically productive student engagement leading to confident, powerful, independent mathematicians.
- *North County BOOT CAMP: Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)*
 - Part 1: An Introduction to the Washington State Learning Standards
 - Part 2: Deep Dive into NGSS Practices and Crosscutting Concepts

- Instructional Materials Evaluation Tools (IMET) Training at ESD 105 will inform evaluation and decisions about purchasing “textbooks” by building the capacity of educators to better understand how to identify materials aligned with Common Core State Standards.

Highly Capable Program (HiCap) –

Once the district-wide update of the Highly Capable Program is completed Procedure 2190P will be revised as part of efforts to revitalize the process for identifying students and better meeting their needs. Scott Lincoln, Elementary Principal, continues to meet regularly with a group of LCSD staff and parents interested in assisting with this process.

Testing / Assessment –

Because elementary students tested using pencil-paper for the Spring Smarter Balanced Assessments in 2015, their teachers did not need access to the testing portal previously. Elementary teachers of 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students were given access to the WCAP (Washington Comprehensive Assessment Program) portal. Once trained all 3rd-12th grade teachers in the district will be able to administer both interim and comprehensive Smarter Balanced Assessments as well as track student progress through the Online Reporting System (ORS).

Title I / LAP –

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) elementary meetings and identification of ACE students for second semester occurred over several days this month. Teams of grade-level teachers with the support of Effie Triol, ESD 112 MTSS/Literacy Expert, worked together to reaffirm the process of goal setting, intervention strategies as well as identification of ACE students in light of recent student data collection.

The Title I team (Scott Lincoln, Amy Neiman, Megan Bright, Colleen Wing) met to prioritize the use of remaining Title I funds, including roll over from last year’s budget and the remainder of the 20% SES Set Aside funds. Our goal is to have these funds spent or earmarked for specific expenditures by Spring Break in order to utilize these important federal funds for student learning during the 2015-2016 school year.

Family and Community Resource Center (FCRC) –

Research, data collection and meetings of attendance teams have continued at both the elementary and middle school. The attendance report created by Aften for both schools is already being used to strategize three tiers of student support. Chronic absenteeism, including tardiness, has been shown to be predictive of decreased graduation rates.

FCRC compiled 90-day data, researched best practices for absenteeism interventions, and reported it to the Elementary School attendance team and the Middle School staff. Tardiness was also calculated as it is considered a behavior or risk indicator that can lead to absenteeism. Teams have begun to identify appropriate and timely interventions to address needs at the universal (Tier 1/all students), small group (Tier 2/moderate chronic), and one-to-one (Tier 3/severe chronic) levels. This attendance work is ongoing, so please stay tuned.

There has been a marked influx into the district of families in need of resource referrals, especially at the elementary school. The FCRC Coordinator has spent significant time operating as the *Welcoming Center* by providing tours, connecting and building relationships face-to-face with new families and students, and providing resources, such as school supplies, and referrals to outside resources, such as counseling, housing assistance, food pantries, and job connection organizations.

There has also been an increase in families/students qualifying for McKinney-Vento status. The housing situation in La Center is limited and quickly becoming unaffordable to some of our low-income families. FCRC worked with multiple families to connect them with homelessness-prevention assistance, as well as homelessness resources.

Through the *Fuel Up Program*, FCRC continues offering food items to ensure students that have missed breakfast or need an afternoon snack are getting their needs met. We are grateful for our community partners that make this program possible.

FCRC is getting a fresh look. In order to create a more user-friendly and inviting space to meet program needs, some changes have been occurring. To name a few... the desk has been moved near the main FCRC entrance in order to provide more immediate attention to visitors and clients. A large unit with cubbies delineates the "reception area" from the "children's corner". A small white board/chalk board easel has been added to the large, colorful learning rug and red, preschool table that was already in this space. A comfortable seating area in neutral tones now provides a quiet place for conversations with families, clients and partners. Special thanks goes to students in high school shop classes for assembling and arranging furniture.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Neiman
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