

Teaching and Learning Update January 2016

Curriculum / Materials Implementation –

The materials adoption process that is aligned with Washington State English/Language Arts Standards began this month. One of the areas that will be analyzed are the “shifts” in ELA standards. Committee members, including teachers, administrators, community members and parents, will participate in a step-wise process to identify materials that best meet the needs of our learners. The goal is for Literacy and Language Arts materials K-12 to be piloted in the spring of 2016 with full implementation in the 2016-2017 school year. By conferring with districts in the region that have either recently adopted ELA/Literacy instructional materials or that are currently exploring adoption, our process and choice of materials will be better informed.

UPDATE – Meetings have been held with teacher/administration participants this month to gather perception on the need/rationale for adoption of English/Language Arts/Literacy materials. Additionally, each group (K-5, 6-8, 9-12) created a list of “Hopes and Fears” regarding the adoption process and outcomes. Input from these groups will be posted on the Teaching & Learning Director’s page on the district website. Publisher representatives continue to be contacted regarding instructional materials of interest in order to provide examination copies for group participants.

Professional Development –

Our staff continue to be leaders of professional development both in and out of the La Center School District. This month we highlight a few that have been consistent in their efforts to support growth within the profession. First, Rhea Heaton monthly hosts her colleagues throughout southwest Washington with the goal toward fully **Implementing ACTFL Standards in the World Language Classroom**. Second, Lynn Cooke is continuing with weekly support of teachers both and in out of the school district as they strive to meet the rigorous standards required of **National Board Certification**. Finally, Stephanie Holmes continues with weekly after school **Tech Cafe**’ sessions and is extending her support of **instructional technology coaching** with monthly all day availability for in-classroom support. Teachers sign-up for assistance and she shows up at their door. Now that is service. Thank you all!

A couple of the out-of-district offerings that our staff have taken advantage of this month include participation in the **New Science Kit Professional Learning--NGSS Grade Level Trainings** at ESD112 and a multi-district **Math Leadership Training** in which secondary teachers were able to learn aspects of research-based mathematics instruction: Equity and Status in a culture for learning, Socio-mathematical norms, Discourse, Answer-getting versus Learning Mathematics, Argumentation, Worthwhile mathematical tasks, Assessment as a tool for improving instruction

These are just a few of the ways that our staff continue to be life-long learners and leaders!

Highly Capable Program (HiCap) –

A district-wide update of the Highly Capable Program is underway, therefore our website will read “under construction” until updates are ready to become public. The goal is to provide an

invigorated experience for current High Cap students as well as a revitalized process for identifying students. Scott Lincoln, Elementary Principal, has been meeting regularly with a group interested in assisting with this process. The committee is made up of parents, teachers, counselors and administrators.

UPDATE – Thus far the committee has revisited and expects to make recommendations for revisions of the definition and descriptors for Highly Capable students, the parent and teacher recommendation process and screeners as well as more intensive checks with targeted students.

Testing / Assessment –

January brought high school retake season for Makeup End of Course (EOC) assessments in Geometry, Algebra and Biology. With less than 50 (10th, 11th and 12th) students total participating over three days there was no need for a special schedule. Thanks to the coordination and proctoring of Kurt Gray, Building Assessment Coordinator and Assistant Principal, the testing went quite smoothly and classroom impact was minimized. Elementary students were administered MAP and DIBLES testing to identify their levels of performance in order to better meet their learning needs. Testing schedules for Spring Smarter Balanced Assessments should be finalized and shared with parents and staff by the end of this month.

Title I / LAP –

A new Federal Education Law, Every Student Succeeds Act, was recently signed into law to replace the long standing No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. ESSA loosens up many requirements related to Title I. For example districts with even one school in “steps of improvement” will no longer be required to send a letter to parents notifying them that one or more areas were “out of compliance” under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. Additionally, the requirement to set aside 20% of our Title I monies for school choice transportation and supplemental educational services has been lifted. Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year this will allow us to utilize 100% of our Title I funds without delay.

UPDATE - With the addition of two new transfer students and an additional in-district student, a total of six children are receiving Supplemental Education Services (SES) tutor from one of two contracted providers based upon parent/guardian requests. This tutoring is meant to support skills development in both math and reading acquisition.

In conjunction with the English Language Arts/Literacy adoption process Accelerated Club for Education (ACE) intervention materials will be identified and purchased to support each learner’s needs.

Family and Community Resource Center (FCRC) –

In her new role as FCRC Coordinator, Aften Pankiewicz-Waldram has worked with both the elementary and middle school counselors to identify and connect with families that needed assistance for the holidays (gifts, food, cleaning supplies, clothing, etc.). No programs in La Center offer Thanksgiving meals, but thanks to donations from staff within the district, two families in-need were helped. 63 families were contacted about Christmas holiday assistance and 44 referrals

for holiday assistance were made to three community partners: La Center Friends Next Door, Lions Club, and Shop with a Cop. A big thanks to our partners for providing such amazing assistance! Families were overjoyed by what they received and the experiences they had.

Research and data collection on attendance have begun at the Elementary and Middle School. An attendance report for both schools was prepared to explain the effects of absenteeism as well as current attendance levels. Aften presented to LCMS about effects of absenteeism, current attendance levels, and how to potentially increase attendance utilizing school-wide initiatives. This will be an ongoing effort focused upon improving school attendance. She also connected with elementary teachers about students with severe chronic absenteeism (on track to miss 20% or more of their school year) by running 90 day attendance levels at the end of January.

Due to a successful implementation of the “No, Thank You” Table at the high school, K-8 cafeteria staff and students showed interest in starting one as well. Now instead of throwing away unopened, unwanted food items, they can be placed on the “No, Thank You” table to be picked up by other students that are still hungry. Appropriate food leftovers are now brought to FCRC for redistribution. Initially, over 30 cartons of milk were collected per day, plus fruit, cereal, juice, and cheese sticks. The FCRC refrigerator was overflowing! After the elementary school behavior fair, only about 15 cartons of milk are collected each day.

Before the winter break, excess milk was donated to La Center Friends Next Door for their Holiday baskets—they were not able to purchase milk this year, so this donation was extremely helpful! After winter break, milk and other foods collected have been given to elementary and middle school students that missed breakfast, therefore need a “Fuel Up” during the day, or upon teacher request. Middle school study hall students are provided snacks after school. As they work on homework, get tutoring support, or get caught up on missed school work they can have a healthy brain snack too.