

Browning Middle School Board Report August 2016

Positives

It is hard to believe we are already back at work and preparing for the new school year! We welcome many new staff members to BMS this year, which will be quite a change for us since we've had very little turnover in the last 10 years. For classified staff members, we have two new teacher assistants, a new security person, and a new custodian. We will have "new to BMS" teachers in the following positions: technology, choir, math intervention, reading intervention, language arts (two 7th grade and one 8th grade), math (7th grade), social studies (8th grade), BJA (2 positions), and self-contained special education. Additionally, we've moved Brenda Kramer from ELA into the library media specialist position. Whew! This will be a lot of change for us! However, all the new teachers are either high quality transfers from other schools in the District or come to us with great references, so the changes should be fairly seamless as we move into the new school year.

Curriculum and Instruction

Our BMS leadership team has been working together during leadership week to develop math and ELA instructional plans for the year. Our decision-making for this upcoming school year has been focused by our Instructional Framework and our Action Plan. Our biggest changes in curriculum will be adding intervention teachers for our supplementary classes for our tier 3 students. We are adopting *Math 180* and *Read 180* for our intervention programs, both of which have been successful at the high school.

We will be preparing to use iPads early in September. In order to fully implement use of the iPads in a manner that will enhance instruction, we will once again be have a "roll-out" with the students where they will receive their iPads and have a series of mini-lessons in one day. During that day, they will learn about safe Internet use, proper use of the iPads, various educational apps, and how to use the iPads as a learning resource. As part of the Apple ConnectEd grant, we've received eBackpack licenses for all our students. eBackpack is a learning management system that allows teachers to engage with students and parents through assigning, collecting, commenting on and grading student work online. According to the eBackpack website, "eBackpack is the easiest way to assign, share, collaborate, collect, and review assignments across any internet connected device including the iPad. Offering complete classroom workflow, assignments can be viewed online, graded, marked up with notes and annotations on top of the document, and returned to the students within the eBackpack application from our native iPad app or our website."

We will also be utilizing a brand new program called Apple Classroom 1.1. With Apple Classroom, teachers can easily launch the same app on every student iPad, or launch a different app for each group of students. In other words, if students are assessing using STARmath, the teacher can utilize Apple Classroom to assure that STARmath is the only app that students in classroom can access during testing. Teachers can also view every student iPad from the teacher iPad or Macbook, which will help the teacher better monitor iPad use during instruction. I think Apple Classroom will really change the way we use iPads, making the iPads strong instructional tools rather than just fun accessories to learning.

Attendance

One area of our action plan that we will be putting a strong focus on this year is parent and community involvement. As part of MBI and GearUp, we will be using the *My Voice* survey to help determine

parent and community attitudes about BMS, and to guide decision making on how to make parents feel more welcome and involved at BMS. Our hope is that giving parents an avenue to expressing their opinions about BMS, and then acting on the information we glean from the parents, our climate will be perceived as more positive and welcoming, thus increasing attendance and community involvement.

Behavior

We had a strong team of staff members attend MBI this summer in Bozeman. We will be using the information from MBI to more fully implement positive behavior supports to help students make good decisions. Ms. Siliezar and I have been discussing alternatives to out-of-school suspension that were presented during MBI. We will be developing those more fully as we move into the new school year, and I will be sharing our plan with you in later board reports.

Planning

As stated above, we will continue to use our Instructional Framework and Action Plan to guide us as we move through the 2016-2017 school year. We will also continue to implement both our Apple ConnectEd grant and our SRI grant. During the summer we submitted a math school improvement grant, which if received will help us to continue our efforts of providing support for our math teachers and increasing student achievement in math (which, as you know, is a very high need in our school!)

As we move into the new school year, I am excited to welcome our new and returning staff members and all our students. I am also confident that we will see good growth in student achievement as we continue to focus on improving instruction. Additionally, I look forward to working with the new and returning BPS board members and District administrative staff. I know this year will be even more exciting and productive than any year so far in my tenure as the BMS principal.

Submitted by: Julie A. Hayes, BMS principal