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Greetings!

The winter has sprinted past us and we are quickly entering into spring here at Lorna Byrne Middle School. Over the past few months, we have been hopping with lots of quality instruction, learning and various events that target both the students and families. Here are a few of the things going on in at Lorna Byrne, in and out of the classroom.

In the classroom, we completed our first round of OAKS testing during the month of January in the areas of mathematics, English language arts, and science. As a staff, we decided to test earlier this year so we had a better idea where students were performing at and the specific areas they were needing assistance in. Our initial test results show multiple areas for growth and targeted instruction. These findings will help drive our instruction, interventions, and class schedules for students during the remaining months of the school year. The final round of testing will occur in late April and early May.

Teachers are working hard in and out of the classroom. This year we have teachers teaching multiple afterschool classes to support the learning occurring in their classrooms. We have Extended Learning Opportunities for students in the areas of: Brain Bowl, Battle of the Books, SMILE, language arts, math club, and homework/study groups. All of this takes time to plan and prepare for it means a lot when teachers take up these additional responsibilities.

The teaching occurring in the classroom is getting better and better by the day. We have Socratic Circles occurring on a weekly basis in the language arts classrooms and hands on math activities in various grades. It is a pleasure to watch our students learn and engage in the carefully thought out lessons. To help improve our teaching, some of our teachers are attending SIOP training, sheltered instruction, in Medford where they are learning how to help students develop vocabulary and comprehension strategies for students with limited language development. These strategies make up good teaching and work for all students. On any given day, you can observe these strategies implemented in our classrooms.

All core content area teachers (math, social studies, language arts, and science) have recently participated in a professional development that was facilitated by all the middle school principals. During this time, teachers worked to identify vocabulary and reading comprehension strategies for their classroom and content area, reviewed common assessment results, discussed the scope and sequence for this year and the upcoming year considering OAKS testing won't be occurring. In addition, teachers worked to develop and refine the common assessments intended for third trimester. This is the third year that the middle schools have been meeting and working together. We have found that there is power in numbers, especially when it comes to breaking down the standards, creating common assessments, and working to improve instruction.

Near the end of February, LBMS and IVHS worked together with community partners to put on a Day of Respect. During the afternoon hours on February 21<sup>st</sup>, students were exposed to skills

and strategies for dealing with bullies, specifically those found within the Bullies to Buddies program which teaches kids how to empower themselves as they deescalate any situation they find themselves they feel constitutes as bullying. The entire student body also participated in an assembly that spoke to self worth and treating others with respect. Breakout sessions for students that were facilitated by staff and IVHS students followed. An evening parent sessions was also offered, which included dinner.

Lorna Byrne will be hosting a Read In on March 13<sup>th</sup> in the evening hours. We will be giving away free book and door prizes, celebrating Dr. Seuss's birthday, listening to guest speakers read parts of their favorite stories, and eating yummy desserts. Come join us if you are in the Cave Junction area that night as this is a family event for all ages.

The Edge will be visiting Lorna Byrne prior to Spring Break on March 18<sup>th</sup>. For approximately three hours, The Edge and community volunteers will be working with our students to help them develop and understand those around them. The program promotes empathy, respect, understanding, and ways their actions affect others, specifically when it comes to bullying. We are excited to have them on campus and look forward to making this an integral part of the Lorna Byrne culture and yearly events.

Finally, on March 21<sup>st</sup> we are hosting a Speech Day for our entire student body. For the past four months, students have been practicing and training for their Speech Day competition, the day before Spring Break. All students will be participating and many are looking forward to the event. The morning will consist of preliminary speeches with judges coming from the local area. Lunch will be provided for by Taylor's Sausage with finals following lunch in the cafeteria. Prizes and ribbons will be given out to the top three finalists.

We have also been actively working to monitor and track our attendance. During the winter months, our attendance rates dropped to below 92%. This caused a significant level of panic to sweep our school as attendance is a strong indicator of a child's performance in the classroom. Therefore, we have placed a large emphasis on building connections with students, following up on absences, calling parents when students are gone, working with families to provide transportation and support wherever it is needed. The hard work is slowly paying off as we now back above the 93% mark. Our school wide goal is to beat our 93% that we recorded last year. After all, good attendance and good teaching impacts student learning in a positive way!

If you have any questions or need clarification, please don't hesitate to give me a call or stop in.

Respectfully,

Rachael George  
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Lorna Byrne Middle School