

Principal & Director Reports September 2008

A.C. Houghton Elementary

I am sending the information below as our board report because I wanted to share with the board the process that we're using to prepare for our reading programming and goals this year. These were minutes from a half day meeting process.

August 27, 2008

School Wide Reading Meeting
2008-2009 School Start - Up
Grade Level Reading Meetings

Meeting Objectives:

- Determine grade level criteria for moving students amongst reading groups based on need; are the students excelling and need to move up or are they struggling and need to move down?
- Discuss with the grade levels that have Scott Foresman groups to determine what formative assessment will be used and how we will dovetail that with A.R. and ZPD scores.

Grade Level Meetings:

Kindergarten –

1st & 2nd weeks (dependent on need) the teachers will conduct their beginning of the year assessment. This will include Language for Learning placement, Reading Mastery placement as well as the Kindergarten Assessment Packet.

They intend to begin Reading Instruction the 3rd week of school and once it is underway we will revisit the issue of what their criteria will be for moving students among the reading groups.

Reading groups will consist of the 4 Kindergarten teachers as well as Stacy serving as a classroom teacher/reading specialist for kindergarten reading groups. Each of the 5 teachers (4 K teachers + Stacy) will have one assistant assigned to them in their classrooms.

1st Grade –

After the team recognizes the move is necessary, we will look at the child's check outs and assessment and make a determination as a team. Immediately after the decision is made we will email the changes to the first grade teachers and Stacy. A child will need to be exceeding criteria for 2 consecutive weeks due to the fact that it takes 2 weeks to get two check outs completed.

We will also continue our implementation of the A.R. program based on the student's STAR test results. This will be implemented at the beginning of the year for advanced students and on a need basis throughout the year.

2nd Grade –

This is the criteria that 2nd grade will use to determine when a child should be moved up:

- Check the student's scores of their check outs. This will occur every 5 lessons.

- The speed in which a child completes their work books will be considered.
- The accuracy of in which their work books will be considered to check for comprehension.
- Consideration regarding how the student fits in the group, any behavior issues, whether the student is working better or worse than the other students in the group

This criteria will be considered for 10 lessons and if the teacher feels the student is exceeding the criteria they will be moved.

3rd Grade –

Reading Block Movement:

1. Consistent 90% or better work book and passing check out over a 10 day maximum time period to consider moving to a higher group.
2. Students also need to be independent learners exhibiting self control.
3. Scotts Foresman groups will consider assessment and independent work being evaluated.

A.R.:

1. Beginning of the year test
2. Test at the end of each grading period
3. AR folder to monitor ZPD and scores for each book
4. 60% or lower on a test they must reread and retest on that book
5. Encourage a variety of fiction/nonfiction books
6. Encourage reading at upper range of ZPD when appropriate (excelling)

4th Grade –

Criteria: To move out of Reading Mastery the student must be able to read 110 wpm, Pass the OAKS, and complete Reading Mastery III.

Students in Low Reading Mastery III can be moved up to a higher level of RM III if they pass 2 sequential checkouts in a row, have 90% or better on their workbook over time, and have good attendance.

Students in Scott Foresman Groups will:

- Have a ZPD folder with library book in their reading classroom
- Need to grade 90% or better on their work books for the quarter
- Have Benchmark passing scores
- Be assessed based on the teacher's observations

Heppner Elementary School

It is our first day back and we are off and running here at Heppner Elementary. It was a fast and furious start from 7:30am to 8:00am, but once the kids hit the classrooms it was like a well oiled machine and everything was running smooth by 8:15am. Our current start-up enrollment appears to be about 185 students. As always we will continue to promote the importance of regular attendance to the students and parents of Heppner Elementary School.

The HES Staff and I have enjoyed the past couple of weeks preparing for the start of the 2008-2009 school year. We had a very focused and productive in-service last week planning and preparing for another rigorous and fruitful year with school wide achievement at the top of our priority list.

Here are some September dates of interest:

- September 9, 2008 - HES Site Council Mtg. 4:30pm.
- September 9, 2008 - HES Parent Teacher Club Mtg. 5:30pm.
- September 10, 2008 - Picture day at HES.
- TBA - HES Open House?

I would like to end by again thanking each of you for your support of Heppner Elementary School, and your commitment to all students of the Morrow County School District. Have a great month!

Heppner High School

- Our school looks great inside and out. The custodians have done a great job getting our facility put together and addressing maintenance issues. Kudos to Mike Doherty, Theresa Parret, and Kelly Fox for making our building looking great!!
- We had a wonderful time during our in-service week. Teachers got to work their classrooms and we had some great time as a staff team building for the school year. Our staff really appreciated the post Labor Day start to get ready for the busy job of educating our kids.
- Fall sports are up and running- with both volleyball and football having already played- it looks as if this fall is going to be another positive experience for our kids and our community. Our numbers are high in both programs with 57 out for football (which is a record) and 28 out for volleyball.
- During in-service, our staff did a personality analysis to show how we work together and that it takes every type of person and their perspective to be highly effective. We have formed small Professional Learning Communities within the building that will meet Bi-monthly and tackle issues that need improvement. We will be looking at data, student management, programs, and Positive Behavior Support (character education). We will also read a book (Fish) as a staff that concerns morale and working together. Needless to say, I am beyond excited about some of the work and time set aside to get this meaningful work accomplished.
- We will be having class elections next week and preparing for JR High ASB elections in two weeks.
- Our enrollment is up a few kids from last year. We currently have 23 exchange students from all over the world attending our school. The rubric that myself and our community coordinator have used is working. We have chosen students that have a very high SLEP

score (English proficiency) that will fit in our community. When we started looking at accepting these types of students, it was important to put a cap on the number of students we have and to deal with only one company. Last year we used several companies and found one to be the best. It is ICES. Their website is <http://www.ices-services.org>. They do things right by setting up host families and then selecting students. This was a breath of fresh air concerning how most companies do business. In meeting with Linda Corbin, our coordinator this spring- the commitment we agreed upon was to place 15 year round students for the 2008/09 school year at HHS. Currently, we have more than that- but it is due to 8 of our students being 5 month students that will go home at Christmas which were students that came last year at Christmas. We will no longer accept students in the middle of the year based on what we learned last year. Overall, the experience and set-up is a positive one for our students and community due to the way we are selecting students that benefit our school and community.

- There are some major changes happening in the way we communicate to our patrons that carry real improvements for most people. Erika Lassiter is our data manager with our website. She works for us through the ESD and she is highly skilled in helping us with our website. There are big changes coming with scheduling our calendar, sporting events, communication, etc. If you log on to our website and click on the athletic button it will take you to www.highschoolsports.net where all of our schedules are. We manage this through a fee based program called Schedule Star. Erika will be working on a school calendar that interfaces all of our schedules on the school calendar and it will be updated as THE calendar on the website through our Outlook program. Currently, we have three documents being created and mistakes happen frequently. This should remedy our current issues with our system- moving towards one instead of three. This tool has some helpful things you can do as a parent as well. For instance if there is a change on the calendar with a schedule, etc., it can send an automatic email to the subscriber (parent) of the update. It is amazing how many parents and patrons that use our website daily. This shift is a way to incorporate more use with fewer places to go to find out information 😊.
- We are looking ahead to a great school year and I am enjoying the start of the school year in part to starting school after Labor Day weekend. The extra week in August made a big difference in preparing for students and staff 😊.

Irrigon Elementary School

Members of the Board, this last month has been one of preparation and quick processing. After my first year of being a building principal, I now know what it is truly like to be in the driver's seat of a school building.

I have my challenges ahead of me. They are getting every child to reach the RIT gains in Math, Reading and Writing to either the 5th or 6th grades or more. I prefer the more. We have been working hard to get school started and also to be confronted with a new challenge. Those are the new state graduation requirements.

I feel the weight of the high schools that now must have a 236 in Reading and Math in order to receive a standard Oregon diploma. This means to us here at IES that we must do everything in our abilities to get our kids to the standard benchmark of 218 or 222 or more. Again, I prefer the more.

Our class enrollment is good. We are excited, ready and I have a solid knowledge of what I am doing and how to do it better. I have set my goals this year of beating last year's AYP scores, and I know that we can do it. That's what makes it so exciting!

I keep the School Board Goals before my eyes every day, and I keep it before our staff as much as possible. We're focused. It's going to be a good year!

ESL

The ESL program is another focal point all across the district. Our ELL students need to progress. Also, those who were once ELL, but have exited the program need to keep on progressing and meeting state benchmark tests. All across the district I am making a focus of English Language Development continuously being applied, and assuring that all our ELL students are involved in every academic program available for their support.

With the new state requirements for graduation now at hand, I feel the need to discourage parents from taking their children out of school during the winter months, so that kids do not miss large amounts of time from schooling. We must make every effort to inform parents of this new change upon us, and how it can affect their children's' education.

Our last AYP report showed us the need to give all our educational supports possible to our district ELL population. We have done well, in some areas even very well, but as the target measuring stick keeps going up we have to always keep on our feet leaving no room to rest on our past achievements. We can conquer our future.

I have faith in our abilities.

Irrigon High School

Our custodial staff did an excellent job preparing the building and grounds over the summer for the return of staff and students. Our staff returned charged up and ready to face the new year. Mark Christianson and Alice English, our new staff members, have fit in wonderfully with our staff. Everyone is excited for the coming school year. We are starting the school year with 336 students which is up slightly from last year.

We mixed things up a little this year by having student pictures during registration. This has been advertised all summer and almost 70% of the students had their pictures taken. This change was made to help minimize out of class time for students and staff.

Our Gear-Up Grant team has met several times this year including a one day training in Eugene as well as a trip Hermiston High School to view their Gear-Up program. We will continue to promote and develop this program throughout the school year. This grant was awarded last spring and is targeted towards our 7th graders. However, by the nature of the grant it will affect all grade levels as it requires us to build and promote an atmosphere of continuing education beyond high school whether it is a college, trade school, apprenticeship, military, etc.

Improving parent and community communications continues to be a focus this year. Teachers are required this year to make at least one parent phone call a week. We are also bringing back the monthly newsletter, 'Knights Tales' that will be posted on our school web page. The newsletter has also been sent to the Irrigon Irrigator for publication. With their help, this will go a long ways to improve communication with all of our patrons.

An increase in academic rigor has been added to our schedule this year through the addition of AP Spanish, U.S. History, and Literature. Students will still have dual credit opportunities with Blue Mountain Community College for biology, pre-calculus, and calculus. Psychology, business law, graphic design, and music appreciation have also been added to our schedule.

We are continuing our efforts to promote academic success by providing students more opportunities to be successful. M.A.I.N. Street will continue to be offered during lunch and advisory to students who are failing multiple classes. We have also added '5th Avenue' program which is available on Fridays throughout the year where students can come in for additional help from staff members. Brochures were available during registration outlining both programs with a lot of interest by parents for these additional opportunities. Students and parents will also be able to visit with the counselor during 5th Avenue to receive help on scholarships, FAFSA, applications, and other post-secondary items.

Riverside High School

Riverside Welcomes New Staff-

Kyle Carpenter-Kyle comes to us from The Dalles, Oregon where he graduated from high school in 2001. He attended Linfield College and University of Oregon for his undergrad work, where he played football at both colleges. His master's degree was acquired at Eastern Oregon in LaGrande. Kyle will be teaching Advanced Placement Language Arts, sophomore LA and LA lab. He will be an assistant coach junior high football.

Joleen Odens- Joleen is our new custodial assistant replacing Jerry Barry. Joleen has had extensive experience with ODOT.

Riverside Student Population -As of 9/2/08 our enrollment numbers are

7th graders-84
8th graders-66
9th graders-62
10th graders-63
11th graders-73
12th graders-64
TOTAL-412

Opening Day Plan-For the second year in a row we will be taking student photos on the first day of school. Students will first attend a welcoming assembly, and then divide into their homerooms. They will take pictures by grade level. In the homerooms, the students will be going over the student management book, having class meetings and reviewing their advisor folders. Students will go through an abbreviated schedule, touching base with all their teachers on the first day with class periods of about twenty-five minutes each.

Junior High Accountability Report 2007-2008-This past year thirty-one junior high students failed a core class. Eighteen of them attempted remediation and completed it. Everyone who attempted remediation, remediated. Four moved, seven are repeating their grade without remediating and two will be attending MEC.

RHS Open House-Riverside Open House will occur on Wednesday, Oct. 1 combined with 1st quarter conferences. Parents will be able to visit with teachers in their classrooms as well as see what students have accomplished so far this year. There will be a BBQ available from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm for students, parents and staff.

Friday Plan-This year almost every Friday at Riverside will be staffed by six teachers so that students will be able to come in and obtain help, complete labs or work on homework. Each of the six working half days on Friday was divided up by the staff, with one teacher from math, science, social studies, language arts and two elective teachers each Friday. Teachers will be here from 8 am to 12 noon and students will be in from 9 am to noon.

Site Council-The RJSHS Site council is currently holding elections. The council will be working on School Goals and the 2008-2009 School Improvement plan. They will use the district goals established by the School Board and Administrators as a guide.

Windy River Elementary

On August 22, 2009 at the Port of Morrow WRE teachers attended a Judith Gould workshop “**The Four Square Writing Method**” This is a framework for teaching writing to children in school. The method is primarily a visual framework for assisting students with formulating ideas in an organized manner prior to writing an essay. Judith Gould was an outstanding presenter. “The Judith Gould Writing workshop was AMAZING! She was very informative about the writing process at all grade levels with just the right amount of humor and sarcasm...which kept the high school folks engaged.” (Phyllis Danielson)

This is the second year the WRE started the year off with a staff breakfast. We had made to order omelets with onions and mushrooms, ham, sausage, and locally grown cantaloupe and watermelon on the side. The staff raved how delicious the omelets were. The chef did an outstanding job. He made over twenty omelets and didn't even complain. During this time I introduced new staff members. After introductions the staff was able to catch up on the latest family events and summer activities. The staff worked in their rooms all day and no meetings were held this day.

The second day of inservice, during the staff meeting, I introduced my new staff development plan, a book club. I handed out the book “A Framework for Understanding Poverty” by Ruby Payne. Payne's principal message is that poverty is not simply a monetary condition. She describes the particular rules,

values, and knowledge transmitted from one generation to the next that inform people how to live their lives successfully — how to build and keep relationships, how to get one's needs met, how to entertain and be entertained, and more. Payne asserts that children growing up in a culture of poverty do not succeed because they have been taught the "hidden rules of poverty," but not the hidden rules of being middle class. WRE book club will meet the last Tuesday of every month after school.

WRE is trying to improve parent involvement in our school and improve student grades. We are going to have parent/teacher conferences at mid-term and at the end of each quarter. The fourth grade is going to parent Friday once a month.

Fourth Graders will host a Parent Party each month. This is an opportunity for students to show what they have been doing here at school. At each party, students will present something...Math facts, poetry, research projects, etc...which they have been working on. Parents are sometimes an audience, sometimes actively involved (such as playing educational games). Snacks will be provided. Teachers will present a SHORT example of a way in which parents may help their children learn at home. This may include such activities as how to set up/what to have in a study area at home, Math flash cards, discussion ideas for stories, and so forth

Sam Boardman Elementary

Welcome Back Inservice: Quiche and sticky rolls greeted all staff. Introductions and announcements were followed by a motivational video by Dewitt Jones, National Geographic photographer. To be successful, according to Dewitt, we need to have passion, choose the right lens, hone technique, and maximize opportunity. His photographs and commentary promote risk taking, intuition, perseverance and positive perspective.

Meet the Teacher Night: Kindergarten teachers opened their classrooms from 2:00-5:00 on Wednesday, August 27th, to invite parents and students to see the classroom and meet their teacher. Questions and concerns were addressed personally.

Students' First Day: Teachers prepared, meals were ready, and students arrived happy and ready to learn. The new playground equipment is a hit!

Enrollment: 323 (96.9% attending)

Starting the year with a MAP: Teachers specialists use MAP (Measures of Academic Performance) assessment results from last spring to monitor student growth and inform instruction. Patrick



and

Dugan from NWEA will be at SBE on Sept. 19th to train teachers and discuss how schools use MAPs data.

Working with Parents: Students took home their SBE Parent/Student Handbook (with side-by-side translation) and Parent-Student-Teacher Compacts. We are off to a great start!

Morrow Education Center

Greetings from Morrow Education Center! We are ecstatic to be offering a very important program to the success of our district for another year. Coming off of a graduation ceremony that saw over 33 students walk across the podium and receive their high school diplomas, we are delighted to report our first week enrollment is up 100% from last year. The conclusion of the first week last year saw us at 22 students enrolled, as I type this report we are sitting at 45 students (100% increase in first week enrollment).

I am extremely pleased to announce that we have had NO staff turnover in our program and we are returning all of the old veterans that have worked long and hard to develop a program that is great for kids. While we have no change in staff, our building and website has under gone a few face lifts. Thanks to Grace and Jose we started the year with a spotless building, new water fountain, new tile in the serving area, and a multitude of new books. Our website also has a new look including a "virtual tour" of the building on our homepage and a vastly improved "Enrollment Portal" that has gathered rave reviews. I invite you all to check it out!

As a staff we have dedicated the year to unwrapping the "data" our students have generated over the past few years. In specific, we are researching ways to increase test results and RIT gain among those subgroups whom have not fared well in the past. With Mr. Melville taking over as the ELL Site Coordinator I am confident he will do everything in his power to improve test scores among our ELL and Migrant populations. With the data also comes a lingering cloud by way of the new graduation requirements set forth by the state. These requirements almost certainly will affect our population and we are digging to uncover ways to continue to make our students successful.

As always we welcome the unique challenges as they come through our doors this school year and will continue to work towards building a successful educational environment that harbors students understanding and achievement. We are truly excited about the 2008-2009 school year.