

Second trimester Board Report, February 28, 2010
Hidden Valley High School

Dear Members of the Board and Superintendent Huber-Kantola,

The second trimester of 2009-2010 has been a refreshing and challenging period of time. We have had many things that tried our professional skill in terms of student intervention, we experienced a major change in our special education department, we began a set of conversations among our teachers that are the heart of our professional development plan, we have increased the size and scope of our PBS team, and we have continued to monitor the day to day operation of our students and staff. I personally have done a lot of intensive intervention with a number of students who teachers have identified as “too angry to be in class” and all of them (6) are making progress. Some of our students who are not SPED identified come to us with large quantities of emotional baggage and we do our best to help daily or refer them on to get the help they need. The work of intentional relationship building in my office often allows teachers to conduct smoother classes without having to deal immediately with kids in crisis. We have made several referrals to Josephine County Mental Health and we currently have an anger management group in process. I am blessed to be able to reach troubled high school kids and see them grow.

I am very pleased with the efforts of our staff to embrace the idea of observing one another as they teach and have reflective conversations at the end of the day. In the months of January and February, 10 teachers have observed other teachers at work for at least one class session and several have observed three classes. The mix of early experience (rookie to third year probationary) and seasoned professionals who are among the strongest on our staff, have seriously begun the process of learning how they can learn from one another and work collaboratively to improve the academic achievement of our students. Another group of teachers has begun to pioneer different strategies of instructional delivery through technology (Active Boards), another pair of teachers is teaching our staff the Kagan strategies that help students become much more active learners, another group has reorganized the sequence of math lessons in Algebra I to include geometry concepts for 9th and 10th grade students, and our language arts teachers have begun the process of making sure that content standards for reading and writing are reinforced on a daily basis. This last group will be working through the 3rd trimester to focus on reading skill and writing strategies instead of the traditional focus on novels and discussion.

Overall, our staff is energized by this work and I will stay the course over the next couple of years so that our OAKS scores show positive results from our efforts. We have seen that we have areas of improvement and we have set ambitious goals for achievement. John George has been especially beneficial in helping us to decipher the data we are collecting and using to make sound decisions about our curriculum and instructional strategies. We plan to continue this work through the remainder of our late starts this year and on into the fall in service in August 2010. My role is to guide the progress and keep things in focus. I enjoy that part of my work as well.

In addition to the daily work of education and parent communication, we have seen another season of success from our sports teams. Boys and Girls Basketball won the Skyline Conference titles and will be hosting State playoff games on March 5 and 6. Should we win those games, we will be attending the State Tournament in Corvallis. We had three wrestlers go to State, our bowlers did well at the state level and our swimming team had one person qualify for State. When we add in our cheerleaders and the active support of our band, we have more than a quarter of our kids involved in winter sports. We had about 70 students earn a varsity or JV letter and earn a 3.5 GPA.

More than 25 kids are fencing two days per week and three of them scored very well in a tournament in Ashland. We offered our school play to the public and about 25 kids were involved with that. Our Art in Poetry class had an evening event and our language arts department held a memorized poetry night for students and families. Two different groups of kids were taken to college visits by Ms. Marks (to U of O and OSU, and on a different day to OIT). We have a two tiered Mathlete team and Mock Trial is being performed. I am sure I have missed something of praise but I know that our AD, Mr. Schaefer and I have been to many, many events and enjoy seeing our kids have success and enjoying what they do. It adds a lot to our school and to the lives of our kids.

If you get an opportunity to see our school in session, I would be happy to take you on a tour and see our classes and students in the daily work we manage. I enjoy each day I work at Hidden Valley and know it is a safe, respectful school that deals with the everyday issues of life for our kids. Thank you for the opportunity to serve kids in our school.

Sincerely,

Dennis Misner, Principal