



Memorandum

To: Mr. Chamberlin and Members of the Board
From: Michael Bessette
Date: 10/28/10
Re: Principal's Report

Mr. Chamberlin and Members of the Board:

The following are a few highlights of the month of October:

Goals Update:

1. Defined and fully articulated core power standards for the subject of Mathematics grade four through six to define what all students should know and be able to do.

The majority of MSS staff utilized the October 8, 2010 Early Release for the purpose of collaborative development of common assessments related to their newly crafted math power standards and common discussion of math power standards. The effort to refine and develop standards and assessments continues, and will be an ongoing effort over the course of the school year.

Additionally, teachers in the W.I.N. (What I Need) block have been using power standards as their driver for differentiated math instruction planning and collaboration during NECAP preparation. Students in the month of October experienced three separate differentiated instructional blocks of approximately one hour in duration that tied directly to power standards and common assessments.

2. Differentiated and engaging instruction to promote and ensure that all students will learn.

As noted above, W.I.N. and "C" time have both provided students opportunity for differentiated and engaging instruction. To date, I have experienced several walkthrough observations of reading, science, and social studies lessons that utilized multimedia and technology to support or enhance instruction. The addition of ceiling mounted projectors and support technology has been a positive and notable influence in this regard.

In working with Mainstreet Academix, a goal for the MSS Team of Tomorrow student leadership team was crafted that will engage students in action research with teachers in helping teachers to measure and define student engagement. MSA staff will be working with MSS teachers in the coming month to help lay the groundwork for that effort.

3. Improved teacher knowledge of student learning outcomes to understand what students know and can do.

Common assessments were the focal point of the last early release day. These are in development, and will

continue to be refined for the foreseeable future. As noted above, common assessments measure student progress towards mastery of power standards, and assists in guiding instructional practice.

To date, Maple Street has yet to initiate specific work dedicated to the two remaining goals, RTI and Consistency in communications. These goal areas will be addressed in the near future.

Budget Preparation:

The MSS staff has been active in the budget process during the month of October. The process begins with my review of the past year's budget with the office manager. Together, we review all encumbered funds and the expended funds to determine any possible areas of overage or underfunding. We highlight each line item and discuss them in detail to determine whether adjustments in the coming budget proposal are warranted.

At the same time, teachers have been preparing their budget requisition forms. In our world, there are three types of requests that generally are made: items that replace materials that are used each year (student workbooks, social studies periodicals, handwriting program materials, etc.), items that are consumables or supplies (clay, crayons, paper, etc.), and technology / library items that support instruction or enhance student learning.

After receiving all budget requests, the office manager and I review the total packet to determine if we see any overlapping requests or areas for consolidation. Often we find that teachers at different grade levels have made similar requests and, by combining requests or reducing the total order, we can save on cost. Additionally, we look for request areas that may be made in areas that we previously have identified as overage or underage in our final review of the prior year's budget. I then review each teacher's requests to determine if the request is being made to maintain or enhance the instructional opportunities for kids. In analyzing these requests, I determine whether the request is timely, affordable, and necessary. Frequently this analysis requires time for me to sit with the requestor to converse with them about the item and its applications. Ultimately, I look at the potential of the request to positively impact student learning, and will often use the "greatest good for the greatest number" mentality when critically deciding whether we can afford to keep the request in the budget. There are some instances however, when some requests are very specialized, and we will consider those independently. Frequently, those requests are made in relation to special needs or enrichment.

In addition to materials and supplies, I am beginning the process of examining personnel requests. This process involves researching the incoming grade three student population, discussing their special needs, and determining whether there are unknown variables regarding IEP development or referral that may influence the need to increase staffing. I also thoroughly review the MSS caseload and transferring students to determine if reductions in force are needed as a result of students transitioning into the HMHS.

Finally, in preparation for meetings with the SAU, I spend substantial time considering existing programs and resources to determine whether new programming or elimination of resources is warranted. Student population size, demand for accessibility, and the opportunity for program enhancement is also considered and project proposals are developed as a result. While many of these ideas never become reality for a variety of reasons, the discussion that ensues regarding their merit is always a positive event.

Upcoming Activities and Events in October:

- Student Council Halloween Costume Contest – October 29th
- Parent Conferences – November 2nd
- PTA Book Fair – November 29th – December 3rd