

Superintendent Message

December 2013

District Learning Plan Update

This last month has been a month of celebration, thankfulness and change. At the end of this month, we will be saying goodbye to Mrs. Lori Gardner, Associate Superintendent of Teaching, Learning, and Technology. I can confidently say that she has been a wonderful leader for our district; and we wish her happiness as she enjoys her retirement.

Looking forward to 2014 and ringing in a new year, we are actively planning for the next school year. We are critically evaluating all of our programs and how our students are benefiting from each program. During this evaluation, we are keeping high expectations and excellence at the forefront of conversations.

My goal for this year is to complete the comprehensive needs assessment and develop a district-learning plan. The plan will focus on student learning with a commitment to the learning of EACH student. PCSD will create a platform to address the following questions:

- What knowledge and skills should every student acquire as a result of this unit of instruction?
- How will we know when each student has acquired the essential knowledge and skills?
- How will we respond when some students do not learn?

- How will we extend and enrich the learning for students who are already proficient?

In preparation for the district learning plan's foundation, we are undergoing several professional development workshops and conference to build our capacity as a leadership team consisting of district administrators, principals, assistant principals, technology and academic coaches, and teacher leaders. In addition, it is vitally important that we review, analyze, and use our current performance data to guide our decisions.

I have provided links from Marzano, Danielson, and Dufour and Eaker's research that will be embedded throughout the plan and may be useful for future conversations: PLC Article staffdev.mpls.k12.mn.us/sites/6db2e00f-8a2d-4f0b-9e70-e35b529cde55/uploads/What_is_a_PLC._DuFour_Article_2.pdf

Sample Chapter of Classroom Instruction that Works: www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/books/dean2012_part1.pdf

Professional Practice - Presentation of Charlotte Danielson's Work www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/cr/Danielson_presentation.pdf

I also feel it critically important to share information regarding specific areas of need. Below are three critically important areas of need:

Utah Core:K-12 Writing must be a focus across the district. One primary goal in the district learning plan will be specifically directed on how each teacher must increase the levels of writing in our district. I am proposing that we hire a

K-12 Writing specialist to assist in working with us for a two year period.

High Achieving/ GATE Program: The District Gifted Team has completed the initial internal audit of the program. The final audit will be complete at the end of December. I will provide recommendations to the governing board based upon the findings of this audit.

Successful Preschool Program = Need for Rigorous Kindergarten Curriculum and Instruction: As you know, the preschool program is highly successful in preparing our young students for the K-12 educational experience. Our preschool students are coming in ready to do more in kindergarten; and we want to create the best learning structure for them. We are responding to this need by critically evaluating the current curriculum and instructional practice as we increase the rigor because they are entering kindergarten with higher levels of the basic skills (letter recognition, sound, colors, shapes, etc). I will continue to provide information throughout this process.

Dual Language Immersion: Since I have started in the district, I have received many comments and concerns from parents, teachers, principals, and district level staff. Because this program is highly sought after by our elementary parents, it is critical that we move purposefully into the next phase. It is a necessity that we have a full district plan, along with individual site plans that include the action steps to address these specific areas:

- a professional development plan for DI teachers, including support for success,
- a comprehensive communication plan (internally and

- externally),
- assessment analysis of the fluency scores for students to ensure that students continue performing adequately in English,
 - a retention and recruitment plan for staffing the program effectively as we move into full implementation of 1st - 5th grades at the elementary and beginning the the program into Ecker Hill and Treasure
 - begin partnerships with Utah Universities (or others) to provide teachers with language skill and pedagogy

With that said, we have asked Judy Tukuafu to join the Dual Language Team and become the project manager in completing the above tasks. She will serve as a liaison for me to work with parents, staff, and principals. We foresee these tasks to be completed within one year.

As always, if you have questions, comments, or concerns, please call or email me. I will be happy to listen and learn how to best serve our students in Park City School District.