

Carbondale Attendance Center / Santa Fe Trail Junior High School

To: Dr. Steve Pegram, Superintendent
From: Mr. Michael Flax, Principal
Date: 6 November 2013
Re: November BOE Report

Instructional Strategies – At the staff development day this past Monday I introduced (or reintroduced, as we have been studying these for the past two years) our fourth instructional strategy from the Marzano research. We are using the book *Classroom Instruction That Works* as our guide with these strategies. The strategy that teachers will be implementing into their instruction is that of “Cues, Questions, and Advance Organizers.” I have two teachers (Nicole Prochaska and Beth Smith) who are enrolled in a three-part conference on the instructional practices from this book. They attended a session in October, and will also attend once in November and once in December. They spoke during the faculty meeting as well about their experience with the training, and said that they felt ahead of the game due to the focus we have put on the research-based instruction in the district.

McREL – The teachers were trained on the second and third standards of the McREL Teacher Evaluation System at the past two staff development days. In October we covered the second standard, Teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students. And this past Monday Mr. Fernkopf and Mrs. Hamit provided training for the third standard, Teachers know the content they teach. The teachers were directed in both workshops to divide themselves into groups of five, with the requirement that at least three buildings in the district were represented in each group. Discussion among the faculty was productive and the cross-department and cross-grade level groupings facilitated district-wide ideas and insight. Teachers worked on the self-assessment of the third standard, and meetings between teachers and administrators have begun to discuss these. We will cover the remaining two standards during the January and February staff development days.

Activities – Our fall activities are moving right along. The volleyball teams will finish their season tomorrow with the Big Seven League Volleyball Tournaments. 8th grade, the third seed, will play in the tournament at Perry. Our 7th grade team is the six seed, and will travel to Jefferson County West for their matches. Cross country continues to do well at their meets. Hannah Honeyman, 8th grade, has finished first in every run she has competed in this season. Overall we have three students who have won races so far. 7th grader Regan Sisson and 7th grader Mark Huddleston have both won at least one race. The football teams are both competing well. The seventh grade team is on a winning streak sitting at 4-0 so far this year. The eighth grade team is 1-5 for the season so far. The eight grade team has struggled to keep students healthy and grade-eligible, having only 11 boys suited up last night against Perry-Lecompton. We are hoping that next week we are able to field a full team. Girls’ basketball practice begins next week.

Parent-Teacher Conference Report – The fall parent-teacher conferences came and went with lots of parents and students in and out of the building. Prior to the end of the quarter teachers were required to make contact with the parents of any student who had earned a *D* or *F* in their class. We hoped that would lead to a conference during the week. Several of those did come in, with some opting to use the phone call as a conference. It will be the practice here that when midterms are sent out in a couple of weeks that teachers will make those contacts again if students are receiving deficient or failing grades. A brief summary of conference attendance is as follows: Junior High Core Teachers averaged 23 conferences; Teachers of specialties (art, pe, music, etc.) averaged over 7 conferences; Elementary teachers averaged

16 conferences. The average class size for the elementary rooms is 18, so averaging 16/18 conferences is a good showing.

Discipline Report – We had a fairly quiet first quarter as far as student discipline issues. There were 27 total office referrals, which includes 2 bus referrals. 21 detentions were issued, two suspensions for fighting, and otherwise conferencing by teacher or administrator. It is my belief that there are several reasons for the low number of referrals. Among those reasons is the fact that first quarter is usually quieter as far as discipline (kind of the honeymoon period) to start the year. Also, it is noticeable that teachers are engaging the students more fully in classroom activities on a daily basis. I believe this is a by-product of our focus on instructional strategies, increased administrative presence in the classrooms, and the expectations on teachers for improved classroom management. Always the optimist, I look for an increase in office referrals during second quarter.

Veteran's Day Assembly - We are preparing for the annual Veteran's Day Assembly, which will be held Friday, November 8. Local and area veterans are invited to join us for the afternoon assembly. Mr. Ed Hug, 7th grade social studies teacher, has planned the event. The assembly will feature three of our music groups, an introduction of our guests of honor, and a special address by Dr. Ed Gerhardt. We are hoping to have many veterans present, as this has become a special assembly for our students over the past several years. If you have time, feel free to stop in. The assembly begins at 1:30.

Explore Testing – This year both the seventh and eighth grade students will be taking the Explore Tests. These are scheduled for November 13 for eighth grade and November 20 for seventh grade. Mrs. Maggie Mead is facilitating the tests and managing the interest inventory that is part of the survey. Mrs. Mead, Mrs. Hamit and I (along with other faculty to be determined) are going to meet this month with the high school group to be trained in conferencing with parents. These parent-student-administrative conferences will be held after the first of the year. Hopefully we will have them completed by the end of January. I am excited to add the seventh grade to this testing regimen.

Campus Tours – We have completed our campus visits for the year. Last year we made these trips in the spring semester. This year we decided to take them in the fall, as it would help us create an atmosphere where careers and college planning are at the forefront. Our rotation is that fifth graders go to KSU, sixth graders go to KU, seventh graders visit Emporia State and the Osage County Law Enforcement Center in Lyndon, and eighth graders travel to Washburn University and Washburn Tech. The students and parents have been very positive in their feedback about the trips the last two years. At morning assembly last week students from each grade level shared their college trip experiences with the rest of the student body and the entire staff. Last week, the fifth and sixth grade teachers had four career professionals come in for a morning and address the elementary students. These professionals represented the military, the medical field, banking, and a temporary job placement manager. These four rotated through the classrooms, and spoke of their careers. They also took questions from students about the education required and their experiences. I am glad we have begun to help students begin to think about what choices they have as they prepare for high school and life beyond.

Submitted by Michael Flax