



Corvallis
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent's Update

Shared with the Corvallis School Board September 12, 2016

Introduction of New Administrators

Kyle Mabry joined the district this year as Cheldelin Middle School's assistant principal. He holds a Bachelor's degree in athletic training from Southern Oregon University (SOU) and a Master's degree in special education from SOU. He has also completed the administrator program at Portland State University. Kyle worked as an athletic trainer in Ashland for several years. More recently, he has worked in the Salem-Keizer School District for five years as a Special Education Teacher at the middle school level, and for the last two years as a behavior specialist/TOSA at McKay High School. He is experienced with AVID and RTI. His references spoke highly of his communication and relational skills, and said that he's a creative problem solver.

Lynne Griffin is an assistant coordinators in the Teaching and Learning Department. She started in Corvallis in 2013 as a speech-language pathologist and most recently served as a teacher on special assignment supporting our special education staff. She holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in communication sciences and disorders from the University of Texas, and completed her administrative program at the University of Oregon. Before joining the district, Lynn worked for 13 years as a speech-language pathologist and special education director. She is extremely knowledgeable in special education and has relationships already established with our staff.

Brikena Haxhiraj is the second of our assistant coordinators in the Teaching and Learning Department. She comes from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), where she supported districts implementing the Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT). Previous to ODE, Brikena was a middle school special education teacher in Springfield. In that role, she supported the move from a self-contained program to an inclusive model for students with behavioral needs. Brikena holds a Bachelor's degree in international studies, a Master's degree in special education and doctoral degree in education -- all from the University of Oregon. Her references raved about her problem-solving skills and her special education expertise. They said she is an individual who will work side-by-side with you until you find the right solution to help the student.

Start of the 2016-17 School Year

I would describe the start of the school year as both smooth and productive. There is a feeling of excitement throughout our schools, and also a sense of calm and predictability, because our overall systems and process are in place and working. This allows our staff to quickly establish positive rapport with our students and engage students in learning.

I want to thank our staff for creating this environment for our students. We have a tremendous staff that is committed to the students of Corvallis. In one of the classrooms I visited on the first day of school, a teacher was incorporating math into her get to know you activity. It was fun and not a minute of class time was wasted.

Overall, our enrollment is 48 students below our projection from last spring. However, last spring, we developed projections for our 5th year students with uncertainty. Due to the more limited enrollment criteria, our 5th year projection is down 139 students overall.

If we remove the 5th year program from our student count projections we are up by 91 students K-12. Due to this increase, several schools required additional staffing. Most recently, we added a kindergarten teacher at Wilson Elementary. Initially, we considered providing kindergarten slots at Hoover, but our data shows that the numbers at Wilson will continue to grow throughout the year. This meant our short term decision, would not work long term. Based on reviewing all potential solutions, we determined the best plan moving forward was to add an additional teaching position at Wilson.

The school year starts with a 'kindergarten gentle start' with teachers interviewing and getting to know their new students and families. Full day kindergarten classes begin this week. With the addition of our kindergarten students and the start of our three head start preschools, we are officially back to school in Corvallis.

Back to School Rally

The back to school rally and professional development day was attended by all staff and was a successful launch for the school year. The rally was hosted at CV, which provided a welcoming environment for staff from across the district and a great open space for us to come together. In the remarks that I shared with staff, I focused on a spotlight, identified by each principal, from each of our schools.

I also shared our core values of educational design, which you heard about at a board meeting last spring. We memorialized the morning with an all-staff photo that will be printed for display at each school. The picture is meant to represent the whole of the Corvallis School District and the interconnected nature of our work.

For the remainder of the day, staff participated in sessions lead by teacher leaders and community members. The teaching and learning department identified professional development sessions for both certified and classified staff. With over 80 sessions, there really was a session for everyone. At lunchtime, there were food carts and a wellness fair to keep the staff together at CV. I want to thank our staff in the Teaching and Learning Department for their overall coordination of the day.

Technology

Over the past year, we have increased our connection speeds between our provider and district from 100 MB per second to 1,000 MB per second. Between schools, we have increased the connection speeds from 100 MB per second to 500 MB per second.

We have developed an independent connection to Adams, and will have one established for Garfield next week. These improvements allow us to limit wait times for our students and staff and diagnose and correct problems with our network.

Our building technology SPOCS (single points of contact) returned 15 days early this school year. They were able to support new teachers by providing them with access to technology during their orientation. This additional staff support provided the quickest access to technology in recent years.

Last spring the district began work with the OSU Center for Research on Lifelong STEM Learning, to conduct a research study to further inform our instructional technology practices:

- 196 teachers participated in the survey last spring. In addition, seven individual interviews were completed with a variety of district administrators, a school board member and the CEA president.
- A preliminary analysis of the data is completed, and will be used to design questions for the upcoming focus groups.
- OSU researcher, Nancee Hunter shared that there is good information that will be useful for the district. We will release specific findings after the focus groups are held. We can share now that infrastructure is the biggest challenge to effective implementation, according to the survey, and, overall, there is strong teacher support for the use of devices in the classroom.
- We are currently scheduling the teacher focus groups for the last week of September and the first week of October. The parent and student focus groups will follow later in October.
- A written report with the findings of the study will be submitted to the Superintendent by late November, followed by a report to the Board in a December or January board meeting.

Smarter Balanced Results

The Oregon Department of Education released Smarter Balanced Results last week. Smarter Balanced is our end of year summative assessment administered to grades 3-8 and 11 in English language arts and math. Educators look at this assessments through the lens of college and career readiness. In all grades, Corvallis students taking the Smarter Balanced (English Language Arts and Math) and OAKS (Science) tests outperformed the state.

While the district performed above the state, we still have room for improvement. Last school year, you as the school board, adopted new curriculum in ELA and math, which creates a closer alignment with the career readiness standards of the common core. We are focused on helping every student make progress and graduate from high school prepared for college and career. Our teachers utilize a number of key formative assessment tools throughout the school year to guide instruction and to ensure students are supported, along the way, for educational success.

At an upcoming board meeting, we will provide additional information on these results, related to student growth and the progress of student groups. Later this fall, school report cards will be released with more detail about student progress towards meeting state standards. Graduation rates for 2015-16 will be released in late January, 2017.

Water Testing

We have a dedicated facilities team who do a great job of maintaining our buildings and keeping them safe for students and staff. Facilities staff worked hard to replace and re-test fixtures at all of the elementary schools this summer. The work is continuing at the remaining schools and we will continue to provide updates as results are available. To this point, we have spent \$60,000 on these efforts. Impacted schools are well signed and staff have received a water safety fact sheet. Facilities Director Kim Patten will provide more information about the Healthy and Safe Schools Plan later tonight.

Transportation

Our student transportation services are contracted to First Student. Facilities and Transportation Director Kim Patten, Joni Olsen, and Becky Brown provide excellent support and coordination for families that utilize transportation services.

Nearly 1,000 students travel to and from school by bus. First Student is currently running 32 Regular Routes and 10 Routes for students with disabilities. Ridership numbers for the first two days of school:

9/7/2016	904 student to school; 1093 students from school
9/8/2016	1090 students to school; 1229 students from school

During the first week of school, the district had ongoing contact with our transportation provider, First Student. At this time, First Student has 33 regular drivers. This is below the driver numbers the district would be comfortable with of 55-60 drivers. At the same time, with the limited number of drivers, there have been limited problems and concerns overall. In addition to their regular drivers they have reported the following staffing update:

- 9 Substitute Drivers
- 5 Additional Staff who can drive
- 4 Trainees in classroom. Will be at least 2 weeks before tested.
- 2 Trainees in Behind the Wheel Training that will test next week.
- 3 Applicants not started training yet.

Local Option Levy

Last month, we shared with the board that the Local Option Levy had been filed and assigned measure number 2-97 for November 8 ballot. We were concerned that the levy number could be confused with measure 97, a statewide measure. We re-submitted our levy request and have been reassigned measure number 2-104, on the ballot for the November 8, 2016 general election.

School Liaisons

I am looking forward to starting the school board liaison program. Each board member has been assigned to schools for the 2016-17 school year. As a liaison, you will have the opportunity to familiarize yourself with your school's programs, principal, and parents. I am excited to hear about your experiences and the amazing things you experience in our schools. Also, this programs provides you with the opportunity to share information on the work of the school board and connect our community with this work. I see this as a valuable way of bringing greater articulation and connection between the work of the board and that of our schools.

Student Art and Music

We are fortunate to have excellent art and music educators in our district. This year, we have art teachers in all schools, teaching all grade levels. We will be seeing student art work in the board room throughout the year. This display is an opportunity for our students to exhibit their work and for board members, the community, and staff to see the results of art education in our schools and appreciate the creativity of our students. The art exhibited this month was created by middle school students at Cheldelin, Linus Pauling, and Franklin.

Another highlight to share is that our combined high school Camerata Orchestra, directed by Kristine Janes, has been selected to perform at the National Association for Music Education's Northwest Conference. The conference will be held in Bellevue, Washington and the performance will take place on February 17, 2017. This is an honor for our students and a reflection of the high quality musical education taking place in our district.

Conclusion

As always, there is a lot happening in the Corvallis School District. I can honestly say it feels great to have the school year underway. This is the time we are able to see all of our planning and preparation in action and what we have been working toward since planning for the 2016-17 school year last spring.

Presented by Ryan Noss, Superintendent