

LCSD Academic Achievement Strategies Aim Toward One Goal...

Whole Student Success

Imagine for a moment that you are a third-grade teacher with 27 students in your classroom.

After initial reading assessments in September, you find that one-third of your students are performing at grade level; one-third are below grade level (some as low as kindergarten or prekindergarten skill levels); and one-third are above grade level (in fact, one of your students has ninth-grade reading skills).

So, how do you effectively teach a classroom like this?

How do you help lagging students catch up, keep other students on track, and continue to engage the exemplary students? How do you educate the whole child – not just in core academics but in social, emotional and physical

growth?

This is the challenge facing teachers and administrators in Lincoln County School District.

Under the guidance of Superintendent **Steve Boynton**, who is in his first year with Lincoln County School District, several processes and programs are being put into place, with an overarching goal in mind:

“Our job is to create options for kids and open as many doors as possible for them,” Boynton says. “Learning is a birth through adult process, a daily effort of improvement and growth. By building partnerships with our families and the community, and converting learning to real-life application, we can prepare our students for the best possible future.”

At the beginning of this school year, Boynton pre-

“Our job is to create options for kids and open as many doors as possible for them.”

– Superintendent Steve Boynton



MUSIC, P.E., ART & MORE are important components in educating the whole child. This year, more than 100 Lincoln City sixth-graders are participating in band including Oceanlake Elementary classmates **Sarah Swisher**, left, and **Izzy Mackie**, right. *Photo courtesy The News-Guard*

sented a “Welcome Back” message to 250-plus teachers and several other district staff. For many, this was the first **continued on Page 3**

Letter from Your Superintendent



BOYNTON

Dear Lincoln County School District Residents:

School is underway, and we had a great start to the year. It has been fabulous to go around to the

schools and see the smiles on the faces of students who are excited for the opportunities to come. Those opportunities are enhanced when our teachers have an ability to target individual student needs and measure growth on a regular basis.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE & TECHNOLOGY. Our teachers are working diligently to get a better understanding of the current performance levels of each of our students through the use of the STAR assessment. This assessment is used on a three-week rotation to measure reading

and math performance. The test measures student performance against a continuum of skills, and informs the teachers which skills to target next for development. The teachers can use this information to design interventions for all students that focus on continuous growth. In this way, we hope to serve the entire range of students in a more meaningful way.

Technology has eliminated the need for students to sit through lessons they have already mastered simply because we hadn’t measured that learning yet. Technology also provides us with more precise information on how to build a plan to bring students with deficiencies back to grade level expectations in the most efficient way possible. The reports that the STAR program creates also provide us with yet another communication tool for parents to stay abreast of their child’s progress and growth.

CREATING CONSISTENT LEARNING.

Several of our teachers are also involved in work to create consistent learning progressions to be used across the district for our K-8 students. They are using the common core standards and breaking them down into skills that create a logical progression. They are also using Bloom’s Taxonomy to be sure that all skill development is appropriately scaffolded to increase the rate of student success in developing the skill. By doing this, teachers will be able to use the information gained from the STAR testing to individualize learning plans and maximize growth efforts for every child.

This mass customization effort will create a much more effective and efficient educational system. It is very difficult work for our teachers and administrators to develop systems and procedures to deal with the new information we now

have available. In the end, our schools could end up looking much different than when you and I were in grade school. This can be uncomfortable, as we have a certain expectation for what a school should be, based on our own experience. Before making assumptions that could be distracting, I encourage you to engage with your local school – ask questions and seek clarification.

I also welcome your input. Feel free to contact me by email (steve.boynton@lincoln.k12.or.us) or by phone (541-265-4403). You can also visit us on the Web (www.lincoln.k12.or.us), find us on Facebook (Lincoln County School District - Oregon) and follow us on Twitter (@LCSD_Oregon).

Sincerely,

Steve Boynton
Superintendent

Lincoln County Schools
P.O. Box 1110
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TAKING NOTE

NEWS OF INTEREST
from around the district

Community Invited to Annual Turkey Bingo & Silent Auction

It's time again for the hugely popular Turkey Bingo & Silent Auction at Toledo Elementary School. This annual event has been bringing together community members and school families for an evening of fun fund-raising since 1997!

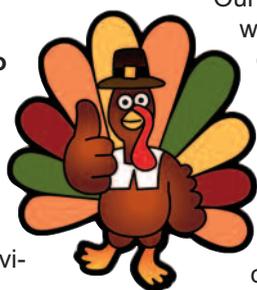
This year's Turkey Bingo takes place from **5:30 PM to 8 PM Friday, Nov. 21**, with doors opening at 5 PM.

Refreshments will be available for purchase at the Sixth Grade Concession Stand, and there will be activities for all ages of kids.

Bingo cards are \$2 each, or three for \$5. Prizes follow the Thanksgiving meal theme – frozen turkeys, sacks of potatoes, canned cranberry sauce, etc.

The Silent Auction keeps getting bigger and better each year! With a wide range of donated items from businesses near and far, some bidders have been known to take care of their holiday shopping at the auction.

Proceeds from Turkey Bingo support the



school's swim program, technology, playground equipment, and cultural opportunities for students.

WHS Students Gearing Up For Lawnmower Racing

On your mark, get set, ...MOW?

Daniel Wirick, career technical education teacher at Waldport High School, reports that his students are rebuilding and modifying lawn mowers with the ultimate goal of competing in lawnmower races later this school year.

Through this process, they are learning about engines, chassis and transmissions; they are machining their own parts; and they will be working with the community to host an event similar to the Big Back-In held in Idaho (check it out online at bigbackin.com).

"Our goal is to promote Waldport High while providing a fun and exciting event for the community, and a learning opportunity for our students," Wirick says. "So far the response has been great! This is one of my biggest classes, students are very excited and engaged, and everyone we've approached in the community has been supportive."

This is a multi-year project, but Wirick and his class hope to hold an event toward the end of this school year.

Meanwhile, they welcome supporters who would be willing to assist with acquiring hand tools, tool boxes, engine parts, and lumber for storage shelves and cabinets. If you are interested in helping, please call the school at 541-563-3243 or send an email to: daniel.wirick@lincoln.k12.or.us ♦

Full-Day Kindergarten & School Realignment

Beginning in September 2015, Lincoln County School District (LCSD) will offer full-day kindergarten. There are two reasons for this.

First, the state of Oregon is strongly recommending and encouraging all school districts throughout the state to offer full-day kindergarten. Second, and most importantly, the school district feels that this is what's best for kids. Many of our students are arriving in kindergarten lacking basic early learning skills. The extra academic and social / emotional learning provided in a full-day kindergarten classroom would give our young students a strong foundation for future success.

By moving from half-day kindergarten to full-day kindergarten, the number of students we serve would remain roughly the same (approx. 370). However, we would require additional teachers, resources, and classrooms because these children will be in the school for full days. Our schools in Toledo and Waldport have classroom space available to meet this additional need. Our schools in Lincoln City and Newport do not.

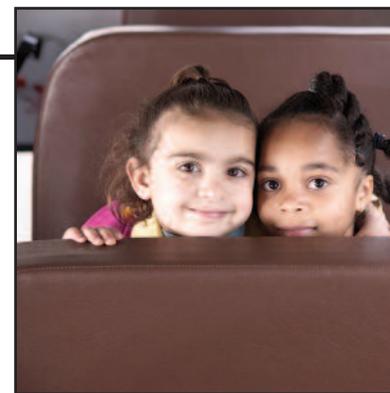
District administrators have begun exploring possible solutions. When reviewing options and their impacts, many variables must be considered: teacher and support staffing, academic programs, special programs (i.e. special education, English Language Learners, Talented and Gifted, etc.) bus routes, food service, custodial, office staff, finances, infrastructure, and more.

At this point, no final decision has been made for any area of the school district. The hope is to address parents' concerns while gathering good, solid information to make the best decision for students and the district as a whole. Some community meetings have been held in Lincoln City and Newport prior to the publication date of this newsletter. However, two more meetings are coming up:

- **6 PM Tuesday, Nov. 4, at Taft Elementary School, Lincoln City**
- **6 PM Thursday, Nov. 13, at Taft High 7-12, Lincoln City**

"Full-Day Kindergarten Planning & Options" has been posted on the school district's Facebook page, Twitter account, and on the home page of the district website (www.lincoln.k12.or.us).

If you have specific concerns or questions, feel free to ask your principal or contact Superintendent Steve Boynton directly by calling 541-265-4403 or sending an email to: Steve.Boynton@lincoln.k12.or.us ♦



Academic Strategies continued from Page 1

opportunity to hear the new superintendent's educational philosophy and to learn about his short-term and long-term goals.

For instance, one of Boynton's five-year goals is to have at least three LCSD schools in the top 10 percent in the state for student achievement. Another of his five-year goals is for LCSD to be among the top 35 school districts in the state for student achievement. Steps to make this happen include having schools that are safe and welcoming; engaging all students by developing their life skills along with their intellectual capacities; and rethinking the way we teach and learn.

Optimistic that these changes can happen, Boynton said: "Our school district is primed for this positive change, with talented people at every level and at every school."

Boynton believes that once parents and teachers begin seeing positive results – witnessing the "ah ha!" moment when kids understand and apply concepts, and seeing hard data that supports the gut feeling of success – the momentum will spread throughout this school district.

One principal, **Libba Sager** at Sam Case Primary School in Newport, notes that many teachers and administrators have already caught on to the wonderful possibilities for academic achievement for each child.

"It is exciting for me to see so many teachers from throughout the district attending the grade level work sessions in order to gain a deeper understanding of what they are expected to do in order to focus on growth for all students," Sager says. "Their responses have been very positive. They have appreciated the opportunity to stretch their learning around what it will take to ensure that all students are growing every day."

To help parents and community members navigate through some of what is happening, here are some quick explanations...

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS. This sounds a bit complicated, but it's rather simple – the state of Oregon has adopted standards of learning expectations in the common core subjects of English/Language Arts and Mathematics for students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.

"The standards guide what students should know and be able to do. When all schools follow the standards, it ensures that students are learning the same skills. There should be no gap in knowledge when a child moves from one school to another within our district, or to a school outside of our district, or even to a school across the country," says



WILCOX

Betsy Wilcox, LCSD administrator for curriculum, instruction and assessment.

"It's important to note that the standards do not tell teachers how to teach, but what to teach," she added.

During the first several weeks of this school year, LCSD teachers in grades K-8 have been meeting in the evenings and working together to develop curriculum guides that will help coordinate teaching. Part of this is a detailed process known as "parsing," in which each standard is broken down to the smallest part. Each standard is then "bloomed" into six levels of learning. (Search "Bloom's Taxonomy" online or in your local library for an interesting breakdown of the six levels of learning.)

SMARTER BALANCED. Last year, Lincoln County School District was a pilot district for Smarter Balanced. This is the new statewide student assessment that students in grade 3-8 and grade 11 will take one time near the end of the school year. Smarter Balanced replaces what was once known as OAKS (Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills). This new assessment will give teachers and parents pinpointed information about what individual students are learning, in relation to the common core standards.



Fifth-grader Sam Cortes is excited about music and his new teacher at Taft Elementary School.

"Music is my favorite elective," Sam said. "We have music every other day of the week, which I love. Our teacher, Ms. Fuson, is the best teacher EVER!! She lets us play a ton of music and she makes us work hard!"

In her first year of teaching, **Lindsay Fuson** is looking forward to a successful year at Taft Elementary, introducing young students to vocal and instrumental music.

"My goal is to foster a life-long love of music and to share my passion for music with each student," Fuson said.

Music instruction in Lincoln County School District's north area schools is receiving a big boost this year from a Studio to School grant. The \$210,000 grant was awarded to the schools in partnership with the Siletz Bay Music Festival and the Lincoln City Cultural Center. New instruments and music

Making Music Relevant for north area Students

programs were purchased along with nine new tubano drums, scarves used for musical interpretation, a recorder curriculum called "Recorder Karate," as well as several boomwhacker percussion tubes.

The elementary students receive music instruction two or three times per week for 40 minutes. Students in grades 1-3 are receiving vocal instruction and have been eager to learn how to read the music that they're singing.

"I like to play! Ms. Fuson says anything can make music and I have fun trying different things to see what sound it can make," second grader Abby Nunes said.

Students in grades 4-6 have been participating in "Recorder Karate," in

which they test out of different levels to receive their "belts." This program requires students to read rhythmic and staff notation – and students have been exceeding in learning this new language, Fuson observed.

Taft Elementary School **Principal Nick Lupu** welcomes the opportunities music creates for his students and teachers.

"Taft Elementary is thrilled to have a great music teacher and is grateful to have all students benefiting from this music program," he said.

Along with her work at Taft Elementary, Fuson is collaborating with Taft 7-12 High School music teacher **Andrew Hordichok** on launching sixth-grade band, with students from both Oceanlake

and Taft Elementary. She also will offer the vocal/instrumental music program at Oceanlake Elementary School during the second semester.

"I'm so thrilled to be part of this exciting period of growth. Andy Hordichok and I are working closely to make sure that music in Lincoln City is relevant and thriving," Fuson said.

The \$210,000 Studio to School grant will be distributed over three years by the Oregon Community Foundation with a possibility



of \$70,000 for an additional two years, according to Christine Tell, chair of the Siletz Bay Music Festival.

SHARING WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED

All students will have the opportunity to perform in front of their peers and their parents. Fuson will collaborate with the first-grade teachers to put on a performance called "The Holiday Show."

Second- and third-graders will perform a musical play called "Go Fish," which is a story about the unique collections of sea creatures.

Fourth-graders will perform "Compose Yourself," which is an introduction to the great composers of the past.

And, finally, the fifth- and sixth-graders will be working together to put on a "Stomp" themed concert in January. ♦

MUSIC EDUCATION THRIVES AT TAFT.

Music teacher **Lindsay Fuson**, top right, is teaching vocal and instrumental music to Taft Elementary students including fifth-graders **Levi Cotter** on the drum, bottom left, and **Cypher Kaee** on the recorder, top left.



FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT & STAR. Describing himself as a "data-driven guy," Superintendent Boynton stresses the importance of regular testing – not just once or twice a year – to show what each individual student knows and does not know so "we can fix things that need to be addressed," he said.

The district is using a computerized formative assessment tool called STAR for reading and math in grades K-8. Every three weeks, students are taking a STAR test to gauge their proficiency in reading and math, and results are shared with parents.

"STAR gives very specific information on what students are able to know and do," Wilcox says. "The data will help teachers prevent gaps or holes in a student's understanding early on, rather than finding out six months or a year later that a child is not proficient in a certain skill."

"Data will help teachers prevent gaps or holes in a student's learning early on."

– Administrator Betsy Wilcox

Using STAR data, the teacher can set short-term goals to encourage continual growth and improvement. As explained by the

company that developed STAR, "Imagine looking into the mind of every student: what inspires her, what makes him turn the page, where he struggles, where she could use a hand. STAR assessments provide valid, reliable, and actionable data in the least amount of testing time—usually 20 minutes or less. That empowers educators to focus on what matters most—individualizing instruction to accelerate learning for all students."

BALANCED MATH. Balanced Math is a five-step instructional approach for student learning that focuses on reviewing key concepts of mathematics, problem solving, conceptual understanding, foundational math facts, and common assessments. All LCSD elementary school teachers are being trained by building leaders in using the Balanced Math program in their classrooms, and teachers from different schools are collaborating with each other to sharpen their skills. *But... what does this mean for kids?*

"Students really understand math at a deep level and learn how to apply it to their lives," says **Majalise Tolan**, principal at Taft High 7-12 in Lincoln City. "Students don't just answer problems or show their work – they have to justify why their answer is the best answer. They have to show more than one way to arrive at the answer. When they can do that we know they have a strong conceptual understanding."



Tolan says the Balanced Math approach was implemented at Taft High last year and the school saw strong gains in all grade levels in math. Other LCSD schools that have implemented Balanced Math also have seen gains in math learning.

CHANGING THE CLASSROOM STRUCTURE. Acknowledging that students learn at different rates, classrooms are moving away from mass group instruction, in which a teacher lectures and students listen and take notes. Rather, students often break out of the traditional classroom setting into smaller groups to learn with other students who are in the same learning progression (whether it is advanced, on pace, or needing additional work).

"Part of the philosophy of individualized education is having students be responsible for their own learning, with the teacher acting as a guide or a coach to ensure that each student is on track," Boynton says.

Parents are an integral part of their child's education, too. Parents of LCSD students are encouraged to monitor their child's progress through the online Pinnacle system; to attend Parent-Teacher Conferences prepared with questions and comments; and to ask questions of their child's teachers and principal whenever necessary. ♦

Problem-Based Learning in Action...

TECHNOLOGY ELECTIVES INSPIRE STUDENTS

This fall, some seventh- and eighth-graders at Crestview Heights School in Waldport are intensely focused on learning technology skills in two new electives. In fact, they are so engrossed that they don't realize how hard they are working and the broad scope of the knowledge they are gaining, says **Holly Schell**, social studies/technology teacher at Crestview.

"It's awesome to see the students so super excited, yet they're taking it very seriously and are focused on learning," Schell says. "I am a stickler for perfection and they totally rise to the occasion. It's something fun they want to do so they don't even realize how hard I'm making them work."

The two classes – digital photography and video production – center on technology but encompass so much more, she said. Students are learning photo composition, elements of art, teamwork skills, professionalism, interviewing skills, and graphic design, to name a few.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY. The school used technology funding to purchase 10 digital cameras – the Kodak Pix-Pro, which is a few steps above a basic "point and shoot" camera. As the students become proficient, they are taking on the role of "school photographers," shooting photos that will go into the student-created yearbook.

VIDEO PRODUCTION. The video production students

are using the same cameras to create public service announcements to share with the school. For example, one group identified the common problem of some freshmen arriving in high school unprepared for the level of work that is expected. So, they began video interviewing high-schoolers to create the message: *What you do now in middle school DOES matter for a successful transition into high school later!*

REAL-LIFE LEARNING. Along with teaching practical skills, the classes are great examples of Problem Based Learning (PBL) in action.

"PBL is doing a project that produces something used in 'real life' or solves a problem of some sort," Schell says. "In creating the yearbook, they will produce something that will be used in real life, and the school motivation PSA is working to solve a problem of middle school motivation."

Not only is Schell impressed with the students' hard work, she and others have been impressed with the *quality* of work they are producing.

Class members selected one example for this article to represent their work. Student photographer **Katyna Pliier** created the photo, above, featuring fellow students **Raeven Dougherty, Zander Mullen, and Mariah Davis** in an interesting color composition with a black and white backdrop. ♦



BYOD: USING TECHNOLOGY AS TOOLS, NOT TOYS, IN THE CLASSROOM

Students and teachers at Isaac Newton Magnet School in Newport, as well as many other LCSD schools, are forging ahead into a new learning environment that emphasizes one-to-one student access to technology and classwide collaboration (sometimes written as 1:1).

"Our teachers and students are doing great things with the devices," says Principal **Tiana Tucker**. "They are successfully using technology as a tool to support learning."

One teacher using the 1:1 device program in her classroom is INMS math teacher **Chloe Ruffin**. During a recent advanced math class, the eighth-graders pulled out laptops, tablets and iPads to work on the assigned project. Those without a device are able to borrow one from the classroom.

Working in small groups, the students talk, type and tap; they share ideas in conversation and online through a shared document. Meanwhile, Ruffin walks among the students, answering questions and offering suggestions to keep everyone focused on the assignment – creating a class study guide that include sections on such things as integers, irrational vs. rational numbers, estimating square roots, exponent rules, and more.

"This is an exciting process," Ruffin says. "It's not about learning how to use the device; it's about using the device to learn. Through the internet, students can do research, create documents and videos, and work together. Learning through collaboration is a big thing with technology."

At the beginning of the school year, written guidance

was prepared to help INMS parents and students understand the expectations and responsibilities of BYOD – Bring Your Own Device. It discusses acceptable uses, digital citizenship ("netiquette"), policies, and more.

"We support the equal access of technology for all students," Tucker wrote in the guidance. "We believe the opportunities outweigh the risks and we look for opportunities to differentiate learning for all students."

The INMS BYOD Guidance is posted online at the school website, for those interested in reading more: go to www.lincoln.k12.or.us, click on the Schools drop-down tab, then click on Isaac Newton Magnet. ♦



1:1 DEVICE LEARNING. INMS students **Maddie Lehrer, left,** and **Lupita Martinez, right,** along with other eighth-graders in an advanced math class, work together on a class project.

IMPORTANT DATES

■ **TEACHER INSERVICE DAY**
No School for Students Monday, Nov. 10

■ **VETERANS DAY HOLIDAY**
No School, No Staff Tuesday, Nov. 11

■ **SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**
Toledo Jr/Sr High | 7 PM | Tuesday, Nov. 18

■ **THANKSGIVING BREAK**
No School, No School Staff Nov. 24-28

■ **END OF 2ND PROGRESS***
Depending on school, either Dec. 3 or Dec. 5

■ **SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**
Newport High | 7 PM | Tuesday, Dec. 9



■ **WINTER BREAK**
No School,
No School Staff
Dec. 20-Jan. 4

■ **SCHOOL BACK IN SESSION**
Monday, Jan. 5

■ **SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**
Sam Case Primary | 7 PM | Tuesday, Jan. 13

■ **MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY**
No School, No School Staff Monday, Jan. 19

■ **END OF 1ST SEMESTER** Friday, Jan. 30

■ **RECORDS DAY**
No School Monday, Feb. 2

■ **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT DAY***
No School Tuesday, Feb. 3
No School at Toledo Jr/Sr High Feb. 3-4

■ **SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**
Newport High | 7 PM | Tuesday, Feb. 10

***PLEASE NOTE:** All LCSD school calendars follow the same basic schedule, with some differences for staff development, early release, end of progress, etc. Please verify dates by checking the calendar at your child's school or online at:

www.lincoln.k12.or.us

Your School Board

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LCSD VISION:

Quality Learning For All

LCSD MISSION:

To Develop Passionate Learners
and Responsible Citizens

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