Educational Services News
Battle Ground School District
June 2009

August Inservice Schedule:

Please see the enclosed August Inservice Schedule at the end of this newsletter. Registration information will be posted on the website http://www.bgsd.k12.wa.us/EdServices/pd/pd.html by June 18, 2009. Please check the website for updates to the schedule.

Focus on Learning:

Professional Learning Communities and the Three Big Ideas….It seems so long ago since these concepts were presented in April on the Learning Improvement Day. Just as a reminder, we learned about the professional learning community model and the following three Big Ideas:

1. Focus on learning -- rather than teaching;
2. Opportunities to work collaboratively related to student learning
3. Holding ourselves accountable for continuous improvement

As you reflect on this past year and what you might do differently, ask yourself the following questions about the first Big Idea:

1. Focus on learning -- rather than teaching:
   - Am I teaching the curriculum standards?
   - Are there things that I currently teach that are not part of the curriculum standards?
   - What can be dropped from what I teach because it does not align with the standards?

Curriculum Standards:

Curriculum standards can be found in the Battle Ground Scope and Sequence Documents and Instructional Resource Guides. Because the Washington State Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) at each grade are far too many to be directly taught to mastery, the Battle Ground Scope and Sequence Documents focus on those GLEs that are most frequently tested, those that are prerequisites to later learning, and those that curriculum committee members have identified as knowledge or skills essential for student learning.

Instructional Resource Guides align each student expectation to available teacher resources, delineate prerequisites to the learning and academic vocabulary, and provide suggested teaching strategies and/or aligned activities.

Over the past few years, several teachers have participated on districtwide curriculum committees to develop this work for: Reading/Language Arts, Writing, Social Studies, Media Literacy, Math, and Visual Arts/Music. Next year the district will begin a new curriculum committee for Science and possibly Health & Fitness, if funding allows.

This work will be available on the district website by July 15, 2009 under Educational Services, Curriculum, and then within each discipline. If you want copies right now for a specific program area, please feel free to contact Cheri McKnight at McKnight.cheri@bgsd.k12.wa.us.

Career and Technical Education – Creating a New Future:

Successfully Connecting Students to a Dynamic World! That's the vision of Career and Technical Education Programs in the Battle Ground School District. Following a two year process in which information was collected from students, staff, parents, and business and community members, a plan was developed around five goal areas: Strengthening CTE Programs, Access, Curriculum, Communication and Marketing and Partnership with Business. The goals, strategies, and action plans identified will insure that BGSD Career and Tech Ed programs are aligned with state and national program standards.

The plan was presented to the BGSD Board of Directors at a May 18, 2009 board meeting. All planning team members and CTE staff were invited to attend a celebration and presentation of the plan on Monday, June 8, 2009.

ESL Program Update:

The Battle Ground School District ESL Program serves approximately 650 students with more than 40 different Native Languages. Russian/Ukrainian constitutes the home language of almost 65% of the students in program and Spanish is the second highest language represented at 22%. An additional 1000 students are monitored and served as PHLOTE (Primary Home Language Other Than English) students.

Martin Parrao is a student success story from Battle Ground High School. When he arrived approximately 3.5 years ago from Chile, he didn't speak any English. Now he is a senior and is accepted into WSU next fall. When asked to write a "reflection" about his experience he wrote…

"This school year, our class worked very hard, and we learned a lot. The ESL Department has done an amazing job to improve the English language of immigrants and to make their first years in high school more easy. I've learned many things this year. When I came to the United States, I never thought that I would learn English so fast. That on my third year in high school I would be studying Shakespeare and literature. I've also learned that by learning English I've expanded my mind in such a great level. Another thing I've learned is that no matter what a person's race is or how much knowledge he or she has, they deserve the same opportunity."

Martin also passed the WASL and the WLPT this year and his teacher, Bev Hart, said he was a very positive influence on the other students in our ESL classes. Today, in fact, during a writing assignment about a person who has impacted your life, another student chose to write about Martin.

Highly Capable Program Update:

The Battle Ground School District's Aspire Highly Capable Program, serves gifted students in grades 3-7. The Program serves students in one of two program models: cluster grouping within the regular classroom and the new self-contained magnet classes at Captain Strong Primary and Chief Umtuch Middle School. A full-time Coordinator for Advanced Studies, April Dalrymple, and a Program Assistant, Amy Blankenship, provide direct support for the Aspire program.

Cluster Model: Using the cluster model, a small group of highly capable students in each grade, grades 3-6, are placed in a regular classroom at their neighborhood school and taught by a teacher trained to work with gifted learners. Students in grade 7 are clustered for language arts, math, and other core subject areas as students move from class to class.

Magnet Model: The magnet program model has a multi-age class of students in grades 3-4 at Captain Strong Primary and a multi-age class of students in grades 5-6 at Chief Umtuch Middle School. The magnet classrooms provide students with a challenging, accelerated, and integrated curriculum and allow students to form positive interactions with their peers. The classes also have become an integral part of the school by having the same lunch, recess, assemblies, and other related activities. In-district students are provided transportation to Captain/Chief and beginning in the fall of 2009, 7th grade will be added.

Due to the success of the program this year, identified highly capable students from our district that left to attend a gifted program in Vancouver or Evergreen School Districts are now requesting to enter the magnet program in our district. The following quotes are directly from the magnet students when asked about their experience this year:

"I have friends this year that understand me and I understand them."
"If you were bored before, you don't get bored here. It's great to have others that learn like you do."
"I like going at my speed. It makes more sense to me when I don't have to wait all the time.
"I enjoy the projects and the time we spend figuring things out."
"The way off base discussions are the best. We start on a topic and end somewhere else, but it always applies to our real life somewhere."
"The field trips are so great! It's really cool to learn about something and then get your hands into it."
"You learn a lot."
"It's been really fun and its nice being around people that think the way you do."

Storytown News:

Educational Services is thrilled to announce that new Storytown leveled readers for K-5 teachers will arrive over the summer - Yes first grade this includes you! Many of the leveled reader books from our original shipment arrived with printing/editorial errors causing them to be incompatible. Our incredibly patient First grade teachers had the additional challenge of having their readers on backorder for the entire school year. Harcourt has notified us that corrected versions of all K-5 leveled readers will arrive to us this summer. Good news for all of us!

Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling:

Guidance and Counseling staff have been working diligently to create a district guidance and counseling plan that is based on the American School Counseling Association. The vision for guidance and counseling staff – "We Maximize Student Success by Guiding and Empowering them to be Confident, Proactive, and Future-Oriented" has provided guidelines for the development of goals and strategies that will help counselors create a delivery system that addresses the four components of the national model: school guidance curriculum; individual student planning, responsive services; and system support. One of the accomplishments for this year was the creation of the "We Care…" brochure designed to provide resources and information to students and staff during this tough economic climate.

The Battle Ground School District complies with all federal and state laws and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability or use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability, age, familial or marital status, and veteran status. This holds true for all district employment, programs, activities and opportunities. Inquiries regarding compliance and/or grievance procedures should be directed to the school district's Title IX Sexual Harassment Officer, Marcia Christian 360-885-5415; Title IX Equity Coordinator, Pam Judd, 360-885-5395; Section 504/ADA Coordinator, Jane Mercier, 360-885-5318; or submitted in writing to the designated coordinator at PO Box 200, Battle Ground, WA 98604.