Welcome back to another exciting edition of the HRCSD Instructional Newsletter!

Meet Our New TOSA

Hello, my name is Melissa Mimier King and I have recently joined the Hood River County School District as the Collaboration Grant Manager TOSA. I am very much looking forward to learning with each of you through the work of the Collaboration Grant, especially through the Hood River Academy which creates some great opportunities for professional learning for and by our own teachers. I come, most recently, from Aurora Public Schools in Colorado where I taught at a pilot school testing out innovative practices and technology.

The Collaboration Grant (one year funding) supports the work of our district in four main areas: Professional Learning, Compensation, Career Pathways, and Educator Effectiveness.

The next Collaborative Design Team (CDT) meeting is January 4th, and we hope to get the new Hood River Academy class offerings and Professional Development Opportunities (PDOs) ready for ourselves soon after that. Please keep an eye out for courses that are designed to meet the needs we identified in our initial self-reflections and professional growth goals. The PDO system this year will still have professional learning chosen and designed by teachers, with this year’s students at the core. Yay, grant money!

Professional Growth Coaches are already working hard in our schools. Feel free to reach out to the coaches if you have any questions about best practices in teaching and learning. They are Holly Lavoie, Sarah Boadway, Celia Newton, Amalia Shaner, Kris VanDooren, Janice Webber and Derek Gries at the elementary level and Ann McDonald, Michelle Redmond, Emily Kohner, Susan Arechaga, Kathryn Yasui and Kathryn Davis at the secondary level.

Instructional Rounds Teams are an opportunity for us to work with our colleagues to design our own plans for improving our practice at the building level. This protocol is similar to a peer observation model but focused on the whole school as a system as opposed to individual teachers. Westside and HRVHS have already put these into place this year. Ten more of our colleagues are headed to Boston to learn and practice Instructional Rounds next month.

This is exciting work that will make a huge difference in our students’ learning, our teaching, and the future of our district and community. Please don’t hesitate to contact me in the Coe Building at extension 5706, by email at melissa.mimier@hoodriver.k12.or.us or by text at 720-883-7471. I look forward to meeting each of you, in person, in the coming months!
Need Help Pulling Data Reports in Performance Tracker?

Does your team need a quick refresher on how to locate, review or print reports in Performance Tracker? Here’s a link to a support page with some aides to help walk you through.

http://www.hoodriver.k12.or.us/Page/5782

Debbie Hanna, our information systems coordinator, has offered to come work with teams to give hands on support. Just email her at debbie.hanna@hoodriver.k12.or.us to schedule a time.

This should be a tool to help make your work easier. Remember if your team would like to request a report, just send the specific information (what kids, what year, what test, and what view you want to see (pie chart, level movement, columns with scores, etc.)

If you have questions, contact your principal or an instructional coach.
Math Curriculum Renewal Committee Update

The K-12 Math Committee has been meeting and working on the curriculum renewal process for HRCSD math programs since October. You can follow our progress and learning at: http://www.hoodriver.k12.or.us/Page/7081 (YOU MUST LOG IN TO SEE IT AS A CHOICE!)

We have narrowed the pack of state approved programs down at each grade band. We will begin piloting these programs in January.

Elementary:
- Go Math!
- Ready Math

Middle School:
- Go Math!
- Ready Math

High School:
- Houghton Mifflin Alg., Geo., Alg 2 (AGA)
- Big Ideas Alg. Geo. Alg.2 (AGA)
- Big Ideas Integrated

If you want to take a deeper look, check out http://www.hoodriver.k12.or.us/Page/7081 and scroll down the login sheet links.

If you have questions, please talk to your school representatives or send me an email. Here are the committee members.

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<td>Annemarie Umtalan</td>
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<td>Joe Dolan</td>
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<td>Candace Carver</td>
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Kateri Osborne-Lohr serves as the HRCSD School Board representative.
Words from our Librarian

November was National Picture Book Month. For some of us, this is a celebration of our everyday rituals of reading to our children, for others this is a reminder that we are never too old to take part in this experience and to reflect upon the processes of aging. Picture books provide an interactive togetherness that only reading aloud brings to life. They hurdle over language barriers that only images can accomplish, follow simple metaphors that embody lifelong learning and transcend the beauty and art of storytelling which teaches young generations about the world.

The following letter is intended to inspire your creative spirit as teachers to incorporate picture books into your lessons, to take advantage of the opportunities to read aloud to your high school students, to study new math concepts, to talk about how emotions and feelings are affected by others actions and how empathy is still foreign and unknown to many children. This letter is also intended to bring your attention to this year's creative writing contest of Picture books in poetry and prose, due February 12th 2016 and to encourage participation in this activity.

"Picture books are a world where anything is possible. It’s where boys run with the wild things, girls are ninjas, frogs could fly on lily pads, and bugs could be detectives. It’s where the sidewalk never ends, pigeons plead their case to drive a bus, purple crayons could draw anything, and a bull would rather smell flowers than fight.” David Biedrzycki

"Picture books are often built in ‘layers’ and work metaphorically so they cross over all grade levels and genres. While our kindergartner can listen and react with a bit of sadness to a story about a bird outcast from its flock, high school students can parallel the concept to bigger issues of prejudice, exclusion and discuss how we view each other’s differences. We use metaphors in stories to help us understand ourselves and each other—they help us make sense of the world we live in.” Kathryn Otoshi

The following is a list of curated activities for the classroom, for a complete list of ideas and activities visit this The Picture Book Month link.

How I See It ~ Choose a character, other than the main protagonist, and write the story from their Point of View. Use The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs as told by Jon Scieszka and illustrated by Lane Smith, as an example. For another challenge, the students could place themselves in the story and tell their own version.

Reader’s Theater ~ Create a Reader’s Theater version of the story. Cast students as the characters and have them read the book’s dialogue or develop their own lines to best re-tell the story.

Math

• Picture books provide excellent scenarios for word problems, using a plot line and characters that students know and relate to.
• Picture book illustrations serve as wonderful models of how shapes are used to create pictures.

Data Collection & Surveys ~ This activity is a great get-to-know-you activity. As a class, create a survey about favorite things. For example: Favorite character; Favorite book; etc. Take a tally from the class, and then construct a graph to record everyone’s answers. Analyze the graph (9 out of 25 like Little Red, and 4 out of 25 like Rapunzel). Together, make up a list of survey questions to ask 100 people. In groups of 5 ask 20 people each (so you have a sample size of 100) by visiting other classes,
the library, the office, and so forth. Once collected, the groups work to sort and classify the results, and create graphs. Have the groups depict findings in fraction form, too. Using the number 100 allows a brief introduction to decimals and percentages.

**Science**

The Scientist’s Eye ~ Compare the illustrations in a Picture Book to a photograph of the real person, animal, place, or thing. What are similarities and differences between the photo and the illustration? Students take their own photos of something in the natural world (nature, animals, land, etc.) and create their own illustration of that photograph.

**Social Studies**

Find the Similarities ~ Create Venn diagrams of the student and the main character. Focus on the similarities between the two. If possible, add an additional real-life person in the same circumstances as the main character as a third circle.

This is My Story ~ Invite a guest speaker to visit or Skype with the classroom about either a cultural, political, historical, environmental or thematic element in a story.

I am available to help you with your picture book creation activities and lesson planning if you want to take this on as a class activity. You can focus on specific subjects; choose students who would benefit from learning new concepts in depth or for allowing those students who are advanced to take on a creative and rewarding project while you spend some more isolated time with others. You can build research skills, creativity, entrepreneurship, reflection, and inquiry all through picture books.

Happy Holidays,

Matthew Gerlick
Encouraging Positive Behavior

In the last newsletter, I used lessons learned from my athletic challenges to illustrate how our students, particularly those who struggle academically or social/ emotionally often feel in school. When mountain biking, I need a familiar trail where I can anticipate what’s around the corner. To learn, our students need predictable environments so they can focus on the curriculum rather than worrying what happens next. In addition to predictability when riding, I improve most with an optimal environment: when the trail is not too wet, or not too dry, when the sun is shining but not too hot. As teachers, we can ensure our students have the optimal environment for learning by taking the time to carefully plan our classroom layout.

Design a Functional Physical Layout

- Define different areas of classroom for different activities
  - Avoid large open areas that invite inappropriate physical activities
  - Separate incompatible activities
- Plan traffic patterns
  - Keep aisles and pathways clear
  - Avoid passing through work areas
- Create group versus separate work stations
- Ensure visual and physical access
  - Teacher access to students at all times
  - Student access to relevant instructional materials

(Source: Northwest PBIS Network, Tier 1 Year 2 Day 1 Powerpoint Presentation)

Questions for Planning Physical Space

- How many students will you have in the room at one time?
- How should your student’s seats be grouped?
- Do you have immediate access to all areas of the room from any other area?
- Can you visually scan every setting where students will be spending their time?
- What kinds of activities will be taking place in your classroom?
- Do any students need to be isolated? If so, is it for certain activities or for most of the day?
- How is movement in the classroom to be regulated?
- What can you do to create a sense of well-being and safety for students?

(Source: Northwest PBIS Network, Tier 1 Year 2 Day 1 Powerpoint Presentation)

Resources

http://classroom.4teachers.org
A tool for experimenting with the layout of your room

Case studies with Strategy and Resource Sheets to practice problem solving
**KEY PRINCIPLES FOR ENGLISH LEARNER INSTRUCTION**

1. Instruction focuses on providing ELs with opportunities to engage in discipline-specific practices, which are designed to build conceptual understanding and language competence in tandem. Learning is a social process that requires teachers to intentionally design learning opportunities that integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening with the practices of each discipline.

2. Instruction leverages ELs’ home language(s), cultural assets, and prior knowledge. ELs’ home language(s) and culture(s) are regarded as assets and are used by the teacher in bridging prior knowledge to new knowledge, and in making content meaningful and comprehensible.

3. Standards-aligned instruction for ELs is rigorous, grade-level appropriate, and provides deliberate and appropriate scaffolds. Instruction that is rigorous and standards-aligned reflects the key shifts in the CCSS and NGSS. Such shifts require that teachers provide students with opportunities to describe their reasoning, share explanations, make conjectures, justify conclusions, argue from evidence, and negotiate meaning from complex texts. Students with developing levels of English proficiency will require instruction that carefully supports their understanding and use of emerging language as they participate in these activities.

Try these today!

1. **Think or Write/Pair/Share**
2. **Entry/Exit Tickets - Openers/Closers**
3. **Sentence Frames**
4. **Choral Response (Physical/Verbal)**
5. **Faux Random Calling**
6. **Precision Partnering**
7. **I do, we do, y’all do, you do**
KEY PRINCIPLES FOR ENGLISH LEARNER INSTRUCTION CONTINUED...

4. Instruction moves ELs forward by taking into account their English proficiency level(s) and prior schooling experiences. ELs within a single classroom can be heterogeneous in terms of home language(s) proficiency, proficiency in English, literacy levels in English and student’s home language(s), previous experiences in schools, and time in the U.S. Teachers must be attentive to these differences and design instruction accordingly.

5. Instruction fosters ELs’ autonomy by equipping them with the strategies necessary to comprehend and use language in a variety of academic settings. ELs must learn to use a broad repertoire of strategies to construct meaning from academic talk and complex text, to participate in academic discussions, and to express themselves in writing across a variety of academic situations. Tasks must be designed to ultimately foster student independence.

http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html

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**Differentiation = Teaching Responsively to Student Needs**

Recently we worked with a group of teachers on reviewing some differentiation concepts and shared a few strategies to implement in their classrooms. Here are a few of the highlights.

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### Ways to Differentiate:

- **Content:** What is taught
- **Process:** How it is taught
- **Product:** How learning is assessed

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### Teachers can differentiate

- **Content**
- **Process**
- **Product**

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### Differentiation of Instruction

*is a teacher’s response to learners’ needs*

- guided by general principles of differentiation such as:
  - respectful tasks
  - flexible grouping
  - ongoing assessment and adjustment

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“The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners,” by Carol Ann Tomlinson, 1999, p. 15
The first, and most important, concept is knowing what your students know and are able to do. Use quick assessments to know how to adapt the content, process or product.

**Exit Cards**

**Exit Cards** (AKA “Tickets Out The Door”) are used to gather information on student readiness levels, interests, and/or learning profiles. They can be used as quick assessments to see if the students are “getting it.”

**Exit Cards Groupings**

- **Group 1**
  - Students who are struggling with the concept or skill

- **Group 2**
  - Students with some understanding of concept or skill

- **Group 3**
  - Students who understand the concept or skill

**Response Cards**

Response cards are another form of quick assessment. Each student has a card and indicates their understanding of a topic by holding up the appropriate response. Response cards:

- Increase participation level of all students
- Increase on-task behavior
- Provide immediate feedback
- Are highly motivating and fun!

JUST THINK...

If response cards were used instead of hand raising for just 30 minutes per day, each student would make more than 3,700 additional academic responses during the school year.
Finding a student’s ‘zone of proximal development’, that ‘sweet spot of learning’, is where a student can engage in learning. Here are two of our favorite graphics to show that learning zone.

Here are a few strategies to try.

### Tiered Instruction

- Provides teachers with a means of assigning different tasks within the same lesson or unit.

### Think-Tac-Toe

Think-Tac-Toe boards give students a choice in how they demonstrate their understanding of a given topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 1</th>
<th>Task 2</th>
<th>Task 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete a character analysis for the main character of your story.</td>
<td>Complete a character report card.</td>
<td>Name &amp; draw a person who is like one of the characters from the book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build a miniature stage setting for your story.</td>
<td>Draw a picture describing at least 3 settings from the story.</td>
<td>Make up a limerick or cinquain poem about the setting of your story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a sequence chart or timeline to describe at least 7 events.</td>
<td>Write a new beginning or ending to the story.</td>
<td>Make a game board about your story. Include key events (in order).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Strategies Include:
- Differentiated Rich Tasks
- Academic Language Support Strategies
- Menus
- Using Technology
- Engagement Strategies
- Small group work
Flexible Grouping

Flexible grouping is an opportunity for students to work with a variety of students, through whole group or in many different forms of small groups. The key to flexible grouping is in the name…FLEXIBLE. Students have an opportunity to be in different groups depending on the activity.

- Initially use whole group for instruction
- Divide group for practice or enrichment
- Not used as a permanent arrangement
- Use groups for one activity, a day, a week, etc.

Flexible grouping is the cornerstone of successful differentiated instruction – Carol Ann Tomlinson

How does flexible grouping benefit students?

- Gives students and teachers a voice in work arrangements.
- Allows students to work with a variety of peers.
- Keeps students from being “pegged” as advanced or struggling.

Check out the webpage we built with resources, videos and other support materials.

http://www.hoodriver.k12.or.us/Page/7251