



LEARNERS TODAY. LEADERS TOMORROW.

November 2014

Dear Parents, Families and Patrons of Chehalis School District:

In the last year, you received letters about the following District initiatives: 1) The school district's focus on Middle School Math and STEM education (science, technology, engineering and math), and 2) our new Student Achievement Initiative focused on improving and modernizing instructional practices and preparing all students in the Chehalis School District for success in college and meaningful careers. We told you that our goal is to go from our current 20% of W.F. West graduates going on to earn 4-year college degrees to 60% over the next decade and to make every student better prepared to work in today's competitive job market.

The expectation for future success for our students is now dramatically higher. We can only achieve these goals with the support of parents and the community.

The purpose of this letter is to let you know what has been done in our schools since undertaking the steps to improve middle school student math skills and our Student Achievement Initiative. The District has taken the following steps:

1. Middle School Math focus

The District identified the need to improve math skills for all students at the middle school level and to increase the number of students accessing higher level Math (Algebra) in the 8th grade.

- Math Tutors are made available to middle school students needing help.
- We have a math curriculum expert helping our teachers and students align and improve math instruction.
- In Algebra, we increased the number of students last year from 50 to 67 and the year-end test scores went up significantly. This fall, we have 72 students taking Algebra.
- The first Summer Math Academy was a tremendous success, this past July and August, with an average of 100 students who participated in each week of a six-week program that included classroom instruction followed by a field trip that allowed students to use their classroom learning in a practical situation.

2. Student Achievement Initiative - **IMPROVE MODERNIZE PREPARE**

The District goal is to provide an educational program for our students that **prepares** them for careers and/or college. This preparation begins in kindergarten and continues through 12th grade.

A part of this initiative includes work to dramatically increase the number of students from lower income families registering for the College Bound Scholarship (a program that promises college tuition for eligible students). Thanks to an enormous effort from middle school staff and parents, we can report that 100% of last year's qualified 7th grade students did register. We intend to repeat this effort each year. This is an example of preparing our students for success after high school.

We also implemented strategies to **improve** our instructional practices, then **modernize** those practices through the use of technology.

Ed Rothlin
Superintendent

Mary Lou Bissett
Assistant Superintendent

Heather C. Pinkerton
Director of Business & Operations

Instructional Strategy Goals -

Improve - Last Spring, the District staff implemented recommendations resulting from an academic audit by the Baker Evaluation Research Consulting (BERC) Group. Staff has since been participating in a program called Learning Walks (watching live instruction), throughout our District and neighboring Districts, as a tool for improving instructional practices. Next month, BERC representatives will be revisiting classrooms to review the work of our instructors based on these Instructional Strategy Goals. A report will be made in December to the Chehalis School Board, the Chehalis Foundation and supporters Orin Smith and Jim Lintott (who are funding a three-year contract with the BERC group.)

Modernize – We have dedicated a specialist to assist teachers for the purpose of enhancing instruction by integrating technology into everyday teaching and learning.

Prepare - Career and College Readiness

Last year, the District started a Career and College Readiness effort to help the District with the goal of ensuring all students are eligible for the College Bound Scholarship, as described above. Also, at the middle school and high school level, an online program is being used to help students and their parents with planning for college and careers. As a reminder, our goal over the next 10 years is to increase the number to 60% of Chehalis graduates earning a four-year degree (up from 20% the past ten years).

STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

For many years now, STEM has been an ongoing focus for the Chehalis School District and that focus will continue. Another District goal is for W.F. West High School to have the #1 STEM program in a comprehensive high school in the state of Washington. Last summer, the District held its 2nd weeklong Summer STEM Camp at W.F. West. Eighty high school students throughout the Southwest Washington region participated in higher-level science, technology, engineering and mathematics activities.

We want you to know the steps we are taking to achieve this goal; it is our desire that our students receive a high quality education, so that they have the widest possible set of opportunities for success in life.

Sincerely,



Colleen State
Board President



Ed Rothlin
Superintendent