

The Poore Page

November, 2016

I hope that you each had a great Thanksgiving holiday. It is one of my favorites - I love the opportunity this holiday provides for family, food, and fellowship. In just three short weeks, we will enjoy our next holiday break. I know that these three weeks will be a bit crazy as we juggle wrapping up our semester, attending concerts, going to games, and handling our own personal preparations for the holiday. Despite the hectic pace of the season and jam-packed calendars, I hope we will continue to find ways to support each other, while keeping our focus on helping our students grow each day.

Academic Performance:

We were applauded in November for our reports to the State Board of Education on our efforts to impact schools that are labeled as “Distressed”. Principals Wanda Ruffins (Cloverdale), Frank Williams (Henderson), Michael Anthony (Fair), Larry Schleicher (Hall), and Gabriel Jackson (McClellan) did an exceptional job of sharing how their staffs have tackled getting this tag removed through Professional Development, collaboration, and partnerships. Compliments came from the State Board and the Commissioner, who stated they appreciated that we used data to guide actions, were real about the data, and had specific strategies to improve academic achievement.

I had a very interesting experience at Dunbar Middle School recently. First, let me share that Dunbar students did an exceptional job with their Career Day exploration. Following that event, I had a conversation with a representative from Paul Mitchell (from the hair care and cosmetology industry) about how they work to understand the learning style of each of their employees. The company even has the employees add decals to their nametags that reflect their individual learning style so they are visible to the management team. The company has each employee engage in a *learning style inventory* and then prepares training to support the needs of that employee. Imagine the intentionality behind that effort and the understanding of the need to differentiate. I think this is something that master level teachers do, and it is something on which we should always focus discussion within our Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams.

Organizational Effectiveness

I am pleased to announce that we have hired an attorney for the school district. Attached you will find a press release we shared with the media about Eric Walker. He is a Little Rock product and we are excited to have him join our LRSD team.

Our Utilization meetings will finish by December 6. My hope is that you each participated in at least one of these meetings. I know that many think a Utilization Study is just to determine how to potentially close certain facilities, but it is much more than that. We must continue to create approaches that will attract families to us, and determine the best use for sites that need to be repurposed. Good examples for determining future use of facilities include McClellan and JA Fair high schools. When we build a new high school in southwest Little Rock, the plan would be to combine those two high schools at the new site.

The District certainly has several great partners that support us and impact our students each day. One partnership I would like to highlight this month is City Year. Do you realize that this is the 15th year that City Year has been a part of our school district? Corps members started their work at Baseline Elementary, and now support seven of our schools (Baseline Academy; Mabelvale Elementary and middle schools; Cloverdale Middle School; and Hall, Fair, and McClellan high schools). The key to their success is a commitment to mentor/tutor students who need help by providing them with 15 hours of intense support. This is great stuff of which we should all be proud.

Financial Information:

I hope that all of you have now heard that we are giving strong consideration to ask voters in 2017 to support refinancing our current debt. Think of this as getting a second mortgage - we extend the debt, and create resources to support building a new high school in southwest Little Rock, and a significant renovation of McClellan so it can be repurposed. This would also allow us to inject resources for capital projects throughout the school district.

Specific Superintendent Activities:

I had the pleasure of joining with King Commission Executive Director DuShun Scarbrough and Education Commissioner Johnny Key to shoot a public service announcement for the upcoming Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday celebration. This year's event, January 16, will be hosted by Little Rock Central High School. I'd like to say a special thank you to Principal Nancy Rousseau and team for their work in supporting this huge effort. Mrs. Rousseau's staff is called upon regularly to host community events, all while maintaining the day-to-day operations of a 2,000 plus student school. I also enjoyed the medieval feast and performance, hosted by Parkview's theater department this week. We have some talented kids! Next week, I am looking forward to "Operation Warm," which will benefit Baseline Academy students. Thanks to Operation Warm, Entergy and the local firefighter's union join efforts to donate a brand new coat to each student. Talk about community support!

Celebrations

- Believe it or not, Central has done it, again! In an unprecedented back-to-back appearance, LRCH's debate team has a bid to the national tournament of champions. Juliette Jung won Top Speaker in the regular tournament and her partner, Christina Jung was 4th - out of 196 speakers from across the country! Way to go, ladies!
- Congratulations also to LRCH's SECME Robotics Team who competed at the Frontier Trails BEST Robotics Championship. LRCH was one of 38 teams that represented 9 hubs and 1,200 teams from 7 states. The team won 3rd place in the "Most Robust Robot" category.
- We also celebrate the accomplishment of Mr. Marquis Cooper, JA Fair counselor, - recipient of the ***Citizen of the Year Award*** from the Pi Omicron Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

Did you Know

- **City Year** is a national program that is tied to AmeriCorps. One-third of the group's funding comes from the school district, 1/3 comes from the national agency, and 1/3 comes from donations solicited through fundraising by the local agency. A key funder in Little Rock is the City of Little Rock.
- Every week **Goodwill Industries** puts 87 people to work, and this past year served almost 28,000 individuals.

- **Our House** does a great job in our community supporting those who are homeless. This past year, the non-profit helped 519 adults find full-time employment. Maybe more importantly, 80% of the agency's housing clients moved out of homelessness after exiting from the program.
- Interesting stat - each day, over 10,000 Americans turn 65!

The holidays are often challenging times for families. This means we should be astute in supporting the students and families we serve. We should also remember that the holiday season can even be challenging for some employees. The reasons vary- isolation, financial hardships, etc. Let us continue to be mindful of ways we can be compassionate.

Here's a quote on which to reflect this holiday season, "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." ~Henry Stanley Haskins

Have a restful break and enjoy the time you spend with family and friends.

Join Me- Dates for the week of November 2-7

Dec. 6	Facility Utilization Meeting (SW Comm. Center)	6:00 p.m.
Dec. 7	Twitter Town Hall #LRSDListens	7:30-8:30 p.m.
Dec. 8-10	Jammin' for Jackets (Hall High)	4:00 p.m. (First Game on Thursday)
Dec. 8	Community Advisory Board Mtg.	5:30 p.m.