

March 19, 2009

Dear Legend Feeder Area Stakeholders,

During the past few months, the principals of the Legend Feeder Area and I have been working to address the challenging fiscal environment that exists not only in DCSD, but throughout the educational community in the State of Colorado. We have worked to prioritize programming and services for the students of our feeder area, while maximizing resources to focus on our core mission – providing a world-class education to the students in our community. The LHS Feeder leaders, along with input from staff and School Advisory Councils (SAC), have been working diligently on creating innovative solutions. We considered numerous factors and foundational documents in developing this plan. These factors and documents include, but are not limited to the following:

- Board of Education’s Vision (Ends Statement and Sub-ends)
- DCSD Student Learning Goals
- LHS Feeder and building-level school improvement goals
- Executive Limitations correlated to the Response to Intervention and Innovation and Development funds
- Student Based Budget and Enhancement funds
- Current levels of student performance in the LHS Feeder in areas of mathematics and literacy based upon State, District, and school-based measures
- Special considerations related to individual school student learning needs
- Stakeholder feedback to the DCSD two-year budget reduction

This letter provides an overview regarding the budget impacts on staff and programming.

LITERACY

With Literacy support for students identified as a priority within the LHS Feeder not only by feeder leadership but also by stakeholders, it was decided to maintain specific Literacy support and interventions we had in place. We also added additional literacy support to one of our elementary schools in order to address the individual needs of all students in our feeder. Decisions on future program enhancement will be made through the continued examination and monitoring of our specific needs at each school.

ELEMENTARY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

The LHS Feeder leadership team considered several factors while determining the allocation for elementary instrumental music. These factors included, but were not limited to, the ability to sustain the program at the current level over time and the opportunity costs associated with funds already allocated to supporting instructional services within our feeder. As a feeder, we will be changing how the Instrumental Music program is offered. We will be creating a Regional program to be housed at Legend High School. We will run two sessions of Instrumental Music in the morning. The rationale for bringing the program to Legend High School focuses on strengthening the program in two ways: 1) By combining all of the elementary music students, we ensure strong sectional groupings due to the number of musicians; and, 2) In working closely with the high school music/band/orchestra staff, our students begin to build relationships with them and understand where their music future is going.

WORLD LANGUAGES

Currently, the LHS Feeder offers elementary World Language at Gold Rush Elementary and Frontier Valley Elementary. Through their site-based budget and specials rotation, Pioneer Elementary has also implemented a Spanish program. The LHS Feeder leadership team has agreed that available funding will not adequately sustain current and/or future World

Language programming for all elementary schools within the feeder. This decision is in alignment with feedback provided from feeder SAC members and stakeholders.

In order to meet the Board of Education's goal (DCSD Sub-end 1.8.4) for all students which states, "Students have an understanding of World Languages, including the basic ability to communicate in another language," the LHS Feeder has agreed to expand the elective offerings at the middle level so no student will be denied the opportunity for World Language or World Language experience. We plan to make World Language part of a mandatory course for all middle level students beginning in the 2010-11 school year. We will also be offering World Language enrichment opportunities at the elementary level.

ESL

The LHS Feeder recognizes the educational needs of all students, including those identified as second language learners. Funds will be allocated for ESL programming based on student learning needs at each site. It is our intent to maintain current funding levels at each ESL site for the 2009-10 school year.

ISS/RtI SPECIALIST

In support of serving the needs of all students on the learning continuum, the LHS Feeder leadership team has made the decision to allocate funding for a Regional Instructional Support Services/Response-to-Intervention Specialist (ISS/RtI). The position will be shared between the three Parker feeder areas, (Legend, Chaparral and Ponderosa). This new role will provide collaborative leadership around Special Education programming and compliance, implementation of interventions, process requirements around Gifted and Talented (G/T), English as a Second Language (ESL), and Literacy, as well as staff development and building support needs regarding all of these areas.

While there are additional changes at the District and School level, this communication outlines the impact of the Response-to-Intervention (RtI) and Innovation and Development (I & D) flexible funding to the LHS Feeder. Our feeder priorities for these flexible funds are:

- 100% of all learners making one year of growth or more in all core content areas
- Interventions for K-12 literacy
- Make reasonable progress to close the identified achievement gaps in the feeder (reading, writing, mathematics)
- Maintaining the required feeder induction program for certified staff
- Making reasonable progress on the BOE End Statement regarding responsible citizens

The Legend Feeder plan is the next step in moving decision-making and resources closer to the schools to make the most informed decisions possible with the available funds to support students and staff.

I am grateful for the thinking and heartfelt emotions that were demonstrated by the leaders of our feeder as we navigated the difficult decisions we needed to make. Not one aspect of the process was easy; nor, will it be easy to implement the changes outlined above. I wish we were in a different situation: but, I know that the Legend High School feeder will continue to pursue the highest quality education for your children.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact me, or building principal or attend your schools next SAC meeting.

Sincerely,



Keith Jacobus, Ph.D.
Director of Schools

Corey Wise, Principal – Legend High School
Karen Tarbell, Principal – Cimarron Middle School
Patricia Hanrahan, Principal – Gold Rush Elementary
Ty Muma, Principal – Frontier Valley Elementary
Steve Getchell, Principal – Iron Horse Elementary
Tim Krabacher, Principal – Pioneer Elementary

