



Superintendent's Report

To: Board Members

From: Leah M. Christman

Date: October 8, 2012

- The Superintendent Communication Council meeting with parent representatives was held on Oct. 3. Topics discussed are posted on the website and included, Keystone exams & PSSA changes; ideas for parent workshops; district and building/department goals; district budget status; BrightByte technology surveys (coming soon); and the high school 1:1 project.
- Oct 8 was an in-service day for teachers and workshops were well planned and engaging. The high school hosted Mike Rettig, from James Madison University who worked with staff to prepare for the new alternate day block schedule coming next year. Mr. Rettig shared the history of scheduling in the US noting that about half of US schools use a traditional schedule and half use a block, with the A/B alternate schedule being the most prevalent. He also shared info about the historical rationale for 5 to 8 period days. Strategies for effective use of time and ideas for engaging students were shared, and teachers participated in a variety of activities to aid in their planning. The MS focused on reading and writing across the curriculum with two of our teacher leaders, facilitating the workshop. Following up with work done early this year with Cathy Kim on literacy strategies, teachers worked in large and small groups to plan strategies to improve literacy in all content courses. Time in afternoon was devoted to data analysis and planning in teams for improved achievement. The elementary teachers convened at the IS for workshops on integrating new technology tools, planning to increase rigor and understanding of Common Core standards, and working in grade level teams on Interactive Science and report card review. Specialist teams also met to discuss topics related to their unique content. Again, our internal expert teachers, technology staff, and curriculum leaders facilitated the workshops.
- We have been presented an opportunity to once again host a free community event through the World Artists Experiences <http://www.worldartists.org/waehome/index.cfm>

A dance group from Hong Kong will be performing at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, and WAE through BCIU has offered the community presentation to SLSD. Last year's Chinese dance performance was very well received by the community. I make the recommendation to support this activity (if we can meet the facility requirements) and run it in a similar fashion to last year. Our only costs were providing dinner in the cafeteria to the performers.

Qingming Riverside: A Dance Poem

The dance poem *Qingming Riverside* is a living scroll painting. The production explores traditional Chinese culture through tapping into the rich dance culture of China as the basis of performance.

In *Canal Willows*, female dancers on chopines imitate the willows swaying in the breeze. *Spring Countryside* draws on vernacular donkey dance to recapture the scene of donkey caravans carrying charcoal into the city as depicted in the painting. *Rituals and Festivities* incorporates a variety of traditional dances, including a ritual parade and stylized horse-riding movements from Chinese opera, to portray the lively, bustling capital city bursting with buskers, acrobats and opera performers showing off their skills. Together with traditional and ritual dances such as boat rowing on land, fish lantern parade, fish watching, lever dance, stilt walking, and squat dance, this kaleidoscope of vernacular dances come alive on stage, reinterpreted with modern aesthetics.

The dance poem depicts the lives of Bianjing citizens during the Northern Song Dynasty in broad painterly impressions, inviting the audience to travel through time to the dynamic city on the River Bian. This living painting salutes to the long and profound history of Chinese culture through contemporary expressions.

Enter the opulent spectacle and utopian past with the dancers of *Qingming Riverside*.

- Mark the date! The dedication/ ribbon cutting for the Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School is set for the Friday morning, November 2, 2012. Details will be shared as plans develop. We are planning to electronically stream the ceremony into all IS classrooms so that all students can participate from their homeroom.