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Lame Deer OPI Team - Planning for Improvement February, 2011

School change is like growing a garden. The first step in quality crops is preparing the soil. The ground work takes time, but is essential in cultivating productive results.

School Board Involvement --- Nancy

Coleman & Jo Swain:

- **Special meeting** – Thank you to Jo Swain for attending the last ‘special’ board meeting. I was unable to attend because of illness so I appreciate her willingness to sit in for this meeting.
- **District Leadership Team (DLT)** – We have two representatives from the board that attend these meetings: Bertha Other Bull and June Beartusk.
- **Board Training** – We are currently working with the school’s attorney Jeff Weldon and the Lodge Grass School Board to arrange training in Billings. The tentative dates February 4-6th were relayed to the board at the special meeting, and follow up was provided by Superintendent Kott as to time and place. We hope to share this type of training several times during the course of the school year.
- **POLICY**- The board had several policies up for the first reading. I am currently re-reading these and will have some feedback for board members at this next scheduled meeting.

Transformation News--- Jo Swain:

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Mr. John Bole who has recently been hired to serve the Lame Deer School District as the full-time Transformational Leader through the Schools of Promise initiative. John and I are spending time sharing information, meeting staff, parents and board members. John’s office is located in the Lame Deer High School. John and I will be working collaboratively to make sure the duties and responsibilities of the Transformational Leader are uninterrupted. We are committed to the tremendous amount of school improvement work the entire K-12 staff

has completed thus far in this journey!

Welcome, John!

The Lame Deer staff has received information about the newly acquired SOPPAS (Schools of Promise Performance Appraisal System) process. All classroom teachers, librarians, counselors, and school psychologists will participate in this evaluation process. Mr. John Moffatt and Dr. Boyd Dressler will be working collaboratively with the building administrators to implement the process.

High school students are now being provided the opportunity to participate in before- and after-school tutoring. Please contact Mr. Frank No Runner or Mr. Aundre Bell about the specifics of how to get your child involved in this process. This is a tremendous benefit for all 7-12 students to improve their overall achievement levels! We would like to strongly encourage this program as an option for your child’s school day!

Upcoming SIG Team Meetings—All meetings are held at the District Administration Office, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

February 2, 2011

February 24, 2011

Transformation News--- John Bole:

"A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." Henry Brooks Adams

The above quote has often informed and motivated major decisions in my life and it once again was a significant part of my desire to join the SIG team at Lame Deer. Over the last few days I have been introduced to the Lame Deer community and the remarkable opportunity that the SIG team and the District have set before them. I am thankful for the opportunity to engage a challenge that has the specific focus of helping young people prepare for personal and community success. I am also excited to be able

to live in the Lame Deer community while working with the district and SIG team. The last several days have been full of meetings, introductions, and pages of notes. I have collected reams of reading material that I hope to digest over the coming months. The learning curve will be steep but the SIG team and school personnel seem ready to get behind me and prod me along. The individuals at the central office have been very helpful and encouraging in many of the practical issues of housing and related questions. Everyone I have encountered at school has been open and encouraging. Last evening I attended a basketball event at school and enjoyed the initial encounter with families and school supporters. I had an insightful and enjoyable conversation with one of the evening custodians. We shared some common stories of family and community.

Dr. Jo and I have initiated the process of taking the steps necessary to keep the project moving toward the stated goals. I look forward to the opportunity to work with Jo over the coming days. There is much to be accomplished as we build on the foundation already established.

This is a unique opportunity for me and for all involved. It is my hope that we will all, from our own perspective, see the uniqueness of our specific area of service while seeing at the same time the special way in which our unique contribution contributes to a far greater whole. The task is large and will take a united effort....

Now join your hands, and with your hands your hearts. William Shakespeare

Instructional News – Deb Glass:

January has traditionally been a month where educators can catch their breath for a moment and then move on to the big push towards March. As usual, this month was an exception to traditional expectations and been a whirlwind of activities. The most exciting was the gathering of the SIG schools and the OPI in Billings to finalize our District Action Plan,

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learn about the Solid Foundation home visiting program, continue corroborating on the SOPPAS, and work on building strong relationships between schools.

The math consultant from Algebraic Thinking has been to the school twice this month. Our reading and language arts consultant has been here once and will return the first week of February. I have observed and coached in all of the participating classrooms and branched out into the science and social studies classes. Our preparation period Professional Learning Community (PLC) resumed after the holidays and will be reconfigured to reflect the changes in schedules based upon the second semester schedule. Part of the math department and I have begun a departmental meeting that takes place weekly after school. I hope to do the same with the language arts program.

Corrective Reading, I am proud to say, is running smoothly and the participating students are beginning to notice that their reading is getting better. Our Bridges transitional literature/reading program provides the students with interesting and appropriate materials. McDougal Littell literature has some wonderful works of both literature and art to support the exploration of literary periods and answering global questions of “Who am I?” and “How do I fit into the big picture of the world?”

Mathematics, what can I say? The Algebraic Thinking program that is in place for the middle school students is a dream. It involves solid mathematical instruction with games and manipulatives which makes learning math a joy. Carnegie Math is also a strong instructional component for the older students, and the math consultant is helping the upper level teachers incorporate some of the techniques from the middle school into appropriate activities for high school.

As an Instructional Leader, I have been working on aligning the content standards and benchmarks to the 10th grade Literature book.

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Each Instructional Leader and our field consultants have a grade level to work on. We are beginning to do the same with the mathematics programs.

As you know John Bole has joined our OPI staff and will share the office to the east of the cafeteria (where GEAR UP had been) our extension is 1236.

Community Liaison News--- *Robert Simpson:* This month we helped organize the Good Road of Life trip to Riverton, Wyoming, for a small group of students of Lame Deer High. This training is designed to provide American Indian students resiliency and self-motivation skills in life. The list of students for this trip was recommended by the school. We established the ground rules early with the help of teachers and staff, we worked to get the youth prepared by getting in their homework before hand. Two teachers attended the training with great potential to begin some strong mentoring between these teachers and the kids.

Working on the planning for the Wyoming trip has been very good for building trusting relationships with students, as well as their families. It has also been really good in building community support for strong connections between the school and the community.

The Good Road of Life training went very well. It was good to see the kids starting to be more positive. All the students that attended opened up in their groups and started to participate more. Relationships between the students and teachers were being built during the training and it helped them understand each other more. On the way home, the kids said they want to start their own support group for each other in Lame Deer that meets weekly. This is something I will be working with them on and even recruiting others for a possible after-school program.

Northern Cheyenne culture is also important and many youth show interest in this. I look forward to identifying people to help with

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incentives through culture. I am encouraged to see these things happen and welcome any suggestions or assistance by all.

Last fall, the OPI community liaisons attended training on a national effort called the Parent Home Visit Project. We are in the beginning stages of doing this important work that connects families and staff from the school around our students' hopes and dreams for the future. More information and training on this project will be coming soon. Overall, in my interactions, parents and families are really excited about the youth opportunities we are bringing, and very grateful to the OPI and schools for making opportunities available to their kids.

From the Helena Office -- *Nancy Coleman, SIG Unit Director:*

District Leadership Team (DLT) – The DLT is the SIG district-formed team. This team is made up of representatives of all stakeholders in the district. Their goal is to work on school improvement initiatives and determine through local action where to put resources to work. The action plan details that are collaboratively developed at the meeting which outline the use of SIG funding should be fully supported by the administration and the board of the district.

College Goal Montana – Wednesday, February 9, and Sunday, February 13, get FREE, one-on-one help completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at any of 18 College Goal Montana locations. For more information, contact Student Assistance Foundation at 1-877-COLG4ME or visit www.CollegeGoalMT.org.

Grant Requirements for February & March:
For the board's information we are providing a listing of things that need to be accomplished at various levels. Much of the work is a continuation from the previous month.

For the On-site OPI Employees:

- Support the use of the CRT released items in classes for the state test in March;

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- Continue to provide planning for the implementation of the District Action Plan (DAP);
- Continue work with SIG District Leadership Team (DLT) to establish District Action Plans details;
- Continue to assist with organizing the collaborative Professional Learning Communities (PLCs);
- Continue to support actions steps within the Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI);
- Continue to schedule external professional development providers; and
- Continue to provide job-embedded professional development through training and coaching for all staff.

For the Principal:

- Continue to attend School Improvement Team meeting(s); coordinate professional development of the PLCs;
- Begin the planning the Assessment protocols for CRT testing coming up in March;
- Continue to lead, along with the MBI facilitator, action steps within the MBI;
- Begin getting a plan in place to accommodate the 3rd party evaluator using the SOPPAS (Schools of Promise Performance Assessment System) and provide support and feedback to teachers on effective instruction;
- Begin the work with SIG DLT to establish District Action Plan details;
- Continue to monitor a system to determine ‘at risk’ students based on – attendance, past class grades, discipline, support systems for success (student information system); and
- Put a plan in place that will accurately gather the required reporting data for grant compliance.

For the District/Superintendent:

- Begin the evaluation process for principals through the SOPPAS process;

- Continue to support the implementation of the DAP through resources, etc.; and
- Continue to participate in the finance calls that are provided by the OPI once a month.

For Teachers:

- Actively participate in collaborative PLCs;
- Continue to plan and implement lesson plans that include standards alignment with ongoing assessments;
- Continue to implement the programs for communication arts and mathematics with fidelity;
- Continue to actively participate in school improvement teams which you are involved with;
- Begin to use the released items for the state required test (MontCas); and
- Start the evaluation process with 3rd party evaluators.

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Statewide Youth and Community

Outreach – *Don Wetzel, Jr.*: This month has been very progressive in our youth and community outreach. We have begun to work with the tribal governments and tribal programs to work together on some of the issues in the schools. Funding has been a big topic and we are working with many programs trying to share resources to develop incentive programs for the youth. We have also started to speak directly to the students by engaging them to identify the solutions on attendance and grade improvement. We have some of the most talented students walking our halls and they have many of the answers we seek. Some youth want to push an incentive-driven student lounge with snacks and games that they could buy from fundraising. They want to develop after-school programs and clubs such as rodeo, drama, and break-dancing to name a few. They are interested in making things more interesting, such as pep assemblies and open gym. There truly is nothing better than

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to see a student's eyes light up when they feel empowered.

Our Community Liaisons are working with them to put words into actions. We are encouraging the schools to look at a process for recognizing students, teachers and staff in appreciation for the work they are doing. Mutual respect is so important in making this all work and that is why we want to bring in Elders to speak at the schools and share their wisdom and stories. Many ideas are coming out of this with the main focus being on identity. Our Community Liaisons will be implementing the Home Visiting Project for the remainder of the year as well. This project will benefit the relationships between the school and the parents. If you are interested in what this is, visit with your Community Liaison and they can show the video of how this has worked around the country. We have started community feeds too to get better acquainted with teachers, parents, and staff. We are helping the youth get ready for college by sitting down and helping them with paperwork or even giving them a ride to take their ACT or SAT.

We appreciate the opportunities that are given to us every day with the community, staff and students and hope to continue to grow and progress in a good way to better the futures of our children and communities. Donnie Wetzel, dwetzel2@mt.gov, Phone: 281-5092 Cell: 438-1733

SIG Field Consultant News -- Courtney Peterson:

- Instructional Leader communications including weekly calls and monthly meetings
- Research upcoming indicator topics such as science implementation, advisory, and summer institutes
- Coordinate program-specific professional development and external consultants
- Assist with district action planning guidance and templates

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- Facilitate teaming activity at January 14 SIG meeting
- Support and assist with implementation of general SIG efforts

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