

Prepared Notes for Board Meeting

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We have some committee updates today, but before we get to those, I wanted to recognize those folks responsible for some pretty special events.

First, both commencement exercises were simply beautiful. While district staff attends two of these each year, our principals and their teams never fail to remember that for the students and their parents, this is a once in a lifetime event and they always give it the dignity and respect it deserves. Thanks and congratulations go to Jim Gaskill, Angie Adrean and countless others for a memorable event.

Second, thanks go to Mark Hill and his team for the annual invitation to the WEA Retirement Celebration. Hearing stories of teachers who have spent literally decades in the service of our community is truly inspirational.

Third, I attended the keynote of the district's Next Generation Learning Leaders Academy and it a testimony to the dedication of our teachers how many of them attended as well, on their own time. The topic of the keynote was vocabulary acquisition and as a non-educator, I rapidly concluded that there was a lot more to this than met the eye. Since our SLO's are going to be partially based on this concept and since content literacy is at the forefront of the Common Core, the keynote and the work sessions that followed were particularly timely. Thanks go to Jennifer Wene and her team for this event.

As far as committee updates, we had a technology committee meeting last month and discussed smartboard equity and a possible initiative to support widespread use of media-enriched on-line learning, lesson capture and video streaming. We also discussed our Bring Your Own Device policy and it's those discussions that I wish to surface to the Board this evening.

I've challenged our staff to consider the possibilities if every student, perhaps starting in 4th grade, had Internet access at their desk, all the time. The combination of our elimination of bandwidth constraints and the rapidly dropping cost of tablet computers makes this a real possibility. Anecdotally, many teachers will tell you that it would be a game changer, but the questions of how instruction would change and what the overall goals are still linger. Are there high yield instructional strategies that could be unlocked with Internet enabled classes? A pilot project, perhaps in a willing building or across a willing grade level might be appropriate, perhaps as a renewal project. There is a reality here. The world our students inherit will have this functionality. Even now, Google is preparing to sell Internet enabled glasses in time for Christmas. Our district has made so much progress, technology wise in the last few years, both in equipment and the opportunities we offer for students. The question for our district, including our staff, our parents and our constituents is this: Do we want to become a K-12 technology leader and if so, what are the ramifications of that decision? It's my hope that we can address this topic at a work session or a future board meeting.