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MEMO

Date: 9/1/2016

To: Board of Trustees

From: Don Armstrong, Ed.D.

Subject: Principal's Report for September

First Day of School

The first day of school was very successful with all of the staff reporting having a great day with their new classes. Patty Winkelmann hosted the parent reception in the garden which was very well attended.

Campus Clean-Up

The campus clean up was held on Sunday, August 14. Again, it was well attended and the campus was nicely prepared for welcoming students back to school. Special thanks to Raul Saldana for weed whipping the campus before school. Rob Meckfessel performed some repairs on the swing set to bring it into compliance.

Test Scores

We received test scores from the 2016 Smarter Balanced Assessment given last spring. 70% of our students met or exceeded the standard for English Language Arts. In Mathematics, 45% met or exceeded the standard. This represents a significant drop from last year. I would caution that with a very small sample (35 students) it is difficult to make a judgment about over all student progress using these scores. The teachers will be meeting in their PLC to review and discuss the results and plan appropriate interventions for students in need.

Water Heater

The water heater in the janitor's room broke down over the summer and a new water heater was installed and the set-up was brought up to code in the process.

Ceramic Kiln

A new kiln was ordered for the art program thanks to the continued generosity of the foundation. It will be installed in the next couple of weeks. However, we need to upgrade our electrical to get the 3 phase power needed to run the kiln. In addition, we need to look at the current location, which may not be big enough to provide the clearance necessary for kiln.

New Faces

Aside from my own, there are two new faces on campus. Marla Leland has been assigned by the county office of education to provide resource specialist services for the school. Our new art teacher Jenna d'Anna has begun lessons in creativity for our students. Our PE teacher, Tim Lakose started today.

Teacher Staff Development

On August 15, we had a full day of staff development with the teachers and specialists. We began with a discussion of our own elementary school experiences which evolved into a discussion about the important role we play in our student's life. I showed two videos that showed the importance of building relationships with students from both a teacher's and a student's point of view.

Later in the morning we had a presentation from the Child Protective Services about our obligations as mandated reporters of suspected abuse and neglect. In the afternoon, Nicasio School parent Mike Seybold conducted training in CPR and certified the staff for the next two years. He will return later in the fall to do a First Aid class.

Pillars of Character

Over the course of the school year, we will be rolling out the Six Pillars of Character as a focus for the year. These pillars are respect, citizenship, caring, trustworthiness, responsibility and fairness. The goal is to instill a positive learning environment for students and a culture of kindness making the school a safe environment for students to learn. Each month, we will host an assembly where these character traits are introduced to the students.

PE Teacher

We are interviewing a potential PE teacher yesterday and I have offered the position to Tim Lakose. Tim is currently the Women's Basketball Coach at Dominican University. He has a degree in PE along with a specialty in sports medicine as a trainer. His wife is an adaptive PE specialist working for St. Isabel's. We are in process of getting the fingerprints done and he hopefully will start on the 8th.

Website

We are in the process of upgrading our website. We are looking at a more user friendly interface that will allow Mikki to post items to the site. The new site will be in compliance with the web transparency standards of the Marin Grand Jury.