

## 2008-2009 School Year Mid Year Report

This report is designed to provide a summary of the activities, events and completed work for the first half of the 2008-2009 school year. Included in this report are some thoughts from the superintendent's perspective regarding the progress the district is making toward meeting its goals and strategic initiatives. It also provides a brief self evaluation of the superintendent's job performance.

As indicated in the 2007-2008 End of Year Report, the district faced several challenges going into this year. I am happy to say we have been able to make significant progress toward meeting those challenges. However, an additional major challenge has been presented to the district in the form of a large state budget reduction for fiscal year 2010. We have been able to rebuild our fund balance over the last few years, and the district was positioned to have a fund balance of 3% to 5% of our budget in the next year. Overall, the district's financial status is strong. The economic downturn and the subsequent state funding reductions will be the number one challenge going into the second half of this school year and beyond. Many of the district initiatives may be in jeopardy and may need to be delayed or reorganized. I am confident that the district will be able to continue to provide excellent educational opportunities for our students. We will develop plans to deal with the budget reductions that will have the least impact on student programs and will protect as many staff member positions as possible. I am confident that our Post Falls School District family of students, staff and patrons will rally to find ways to work through these reductions in the least disruptive way possible. The following is a short summary of district efforts to meet the challenges outlined in last spring's report.

*Drop Out Reduction:* The high school initiated a specific protocol for students considering dropping out that forces numerous interactions between the student, his/her parents and district staff. The goal is to provide the individual planning and support that will help the students and their families make the right choice and stay in school. The high school has also expanded various alternative programs that allow students many options to continue to attend school such as night school with Aventa Credit recovery, Idaho Digital Learning Academy courses and PLATO courses. New Vision has expanded its options for students with the addition of a night school, and its enrollment has expanded from 75 to over 100 students this year.

Obviously the best interventions happen earlier in a student's career. Both middle schools as well as our elementary schools have programs that specifically target at-risk students and provide various support opportunities. The district just received its graduation rate information from the state, and 86.67% of our students complete high school which is improved from the previous year. An analysis of our attendance information indicates that we have 20% fewer dropouts so far this year as compared to last year at the same time.

*Strategic Planning:* The district is currently right on schedule regarding the revision of the strategic plan. The Board of Trustees recently received the Long Range Facility Plan which was revised by a 30 member committee. Almost 1,500 parents completed the school satisfaction survey in November and the tabulated results were submitted to the Board in January. This survey has provided the district and the individual schools excellent information regarding areas of strength and areas that may need improvement which will be valuable for the renewal of the strategic plan. The next step is to organize a committee of staff, parents and patrons to review the other goal areas of the strategic plan. However, because of the pending budget crisis, I am recommending that the committee be delayed in order for the district to focus on the financial problem.

*Student Achievement:* The district continues to fine tune and align its curriculum to the state standards in all areas. There has been a particular emphasis placed on math. A staff committee worked during the summer and fall to create a new district-wide scope and sequence. The committee specifically developed a math problem solving scope and sequence that incorporates common language and strategies throughout the K-12 math curriculum. These efforts, combined with the implementation of the new language arts curriculum, are major initiatives that will assist with student achievement across the district. As you know,

the fall ISAT was cancelled for the majority of our students. The administration of the ISAT will take place later this spring and will provide us one measurement of our student progress.

*Supplemental Levy:* As a result of the state budget reduction problems, the renewal of our supplemental levy becomes even more important. While the district's supplemental levy is relatively small, representing less than 5% of our general fund budget, it makes a difference in the district's ability to provide strong educational programming. The district has to balance the need to enhance the levy with the responsibility to protect our patrons from tax increases in these difficult times. The proposed revised supplemental levy recommendation does provide the district with some additional revenue to help offset the state reductions and at the same time will reduce school tax across the board for our patrons. The successful passage of this levy will be critical if we are to continue to provide quality educational programs. While it will not solve the state budget woes, it will definitely help minimize the depth of cuts the district will need to make.

*Professional Technical Education:* Excellent progress has been made toward the development and construction of a professional technical high school to be shared by the three local districts and North Idaho College. The Board approved a memorandum of understanding that starts the process for the three school districts to receive 20 acres of donated land as the location of the proposed facility. Planning continues and efforts are being made to find sources of funding for the project.

The district will be conducting tours of the high school for the business community in early March. Scheduled for this spring are the expanded Hard Hats, Hammers and Hot Dogs job fair for students and the highly successful Reverse Job Fair for high school juniors and seniors. The new manufacturing class that has been involved in the construction of a Habitat For Humanity home has excellent enrollment and proven to be a win-win-win proposition for all.

*Other:* Certainly a major success of the district during the first part of the school year was the successful opening of West Ridge Elementary School. The district created an excellent new facility for learning and relieved the enrollment pressure for the other elementary schools.

The development of the District Leadership Team continues to be a priority. The 2008 Board Workshop and the development of the Board Code of Conduct is a highlight. The addition and integration of Julie Hunt into the DLT has gone seamlessly and the teamwork and professional development during the ISBA Convention was outstanding. The administrative teams' work to improve our district staff supervision processes has also been a highlight along with the addition of two new principals to our team.

The following is a brief report regarding the status of district initiatives and activities so far this year.

#### Person with Primary Oversight at the District Level

District Leadership Team- DLT

Principals

Donagene- DT

Cabinet- Cab

Jerry-JK

Becky-BF

Barney- BB

Sid-SA

Janie-JA

Jon- JW

JoAnn- JWC

Ed- EA

Dena- DN

Mandy – MS

## **Leadership Activities/Planning**

### Board Workshop and Goal Setting DLT

The district leadership team (DLT) participated in a training workshop on October 18. The focus was on goal setting and further development of a Board Code of Conduct. The Board agreed to visit both Post Falls High School and River City Middle School as part of their yearly effort to spend a day-in-the-life of a student at different schools. They asked that a particular emphasis be put on providing them an opportunity to interact with students in focus group settings.

The DLT began to develop a condensed Board Code of Conduct that would be available for the trustees and others at each Board meeting to remind them of their roles and responsibilities. The Board continued this effort with a special board meeting on November 24 to further develop the code. The new Code of Conduct is as follows:

1. Focus on the interests of students first. Make decisions based on the good of all students.
2. Act as educational advocates. Systematically seek input from all stakeholders, students, staff and community.
3. Develop and maintain teamwork. Respect opinions of fellow board members and superintendent.
4. Practice the governance roles. Delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the superintendent.
5. Act only as a body. Authority resides in the board as a whole and not in individual members.
6. Utilize District Leadership Team self-assessment/evaluation and training. Be committed to ongoing growth both as an individual board member and as a team.
7. Conduct effective and efficient board meetings. Attend all regularly scheduled board meetings insofar as possible, and become informed concerning the issues.
8. Handle student, staff or patron concerns responsibly. Understand the chain of command and refer problems or complaints to the proper administrative office.
9. Avoid being in a position of conflict of interest. Take no private action that will compromise the board or administration, and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law.

The DLT also agreed to complete a book read with The Case for Servant Leadership by Kent M. Keith prior to the end of the school year.

### Idaho School Board Association Convention DLT

The 2008 Idaho School Boards Association Convention in November provided numerous board training opportunities. The attending trustees chose different programs to attend in order to garner as much information as possible. The Board and administration attended numerous workshops including school finance, the No Child Left Behind Act, professional technical education, extra-curricular activities, school law and data analysis. The Board also participated in the business session that is used to establish the 2009 ISBA Resolutions that drive its public policy positions.

The highlight of the convention was the ceremony during the annual banquet to honor the outgoing ISBA president, our own Donagene Turnbow. Donagene served the ISBA with the same intelligence and skill that she uses as the Chair of our Board of Trustees.

### Revised Long-Range Facility Plan JK

A 30-member committee of patrons, parents and staff recently submitted a ten-year Long Range Facility Plan to the Board of Trustees for their consideration. The committee was charged with updating and renewing the district's long range facility planning document originally developed in 2002.

The development of this plan and its recommendations is the first step in the district's efforts to update the entire strategic plan. The committee started meeting in May and completed their work on November 3. The plan was submitted to the Board of Trustees which formally accepted the report during its January meeting. Some of the recommendations made by the committee are:

- X Complete the designed classroom additions to River City Middle School when the total district middle school enrollment meets or exceeds 1,325.
- X Construct a performing arts auditorium and a second gymnasium at Post Falls High School.
- X Construct a new elementary school when the total district elementary enrollment exceeds 2,600.
- X Construct a second high school when the high school student enrollment exceeds 1,800.

West Ridge Elementary School Dedication JK, JA, MS

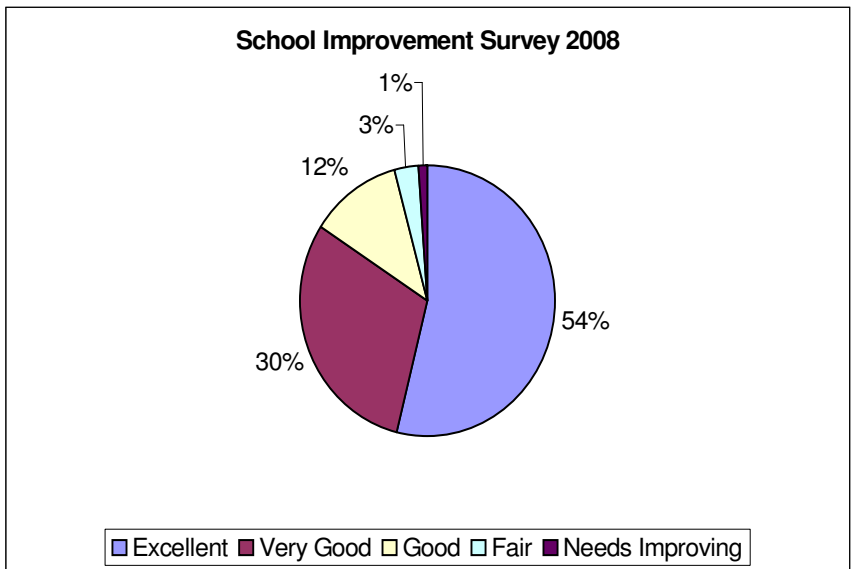
West Ridge Elementary School opened its doors to 396 excited, eager students September 2, 2008. The opening of the school was a great day for the West Ridge students and for the Post Falls community. The construction of the 50,000 square foot building was funded through a bond levy approved by district patrons in 2006. The school cost approximately \$8,000,000 and was built on land donated by the Greenstone Corporation. West Ridge was built to house approximately 500 students.

The opening of West Ridge allowed the district to significantly reduce student enrollment at two other district elementary schools that were overcrowded. Seltice Elementary School, bursting at the seams last year, has a more manageable student population of approximately 350. Prairie View Elementary School also has seen a reduction in student population which Principal Colleen Kelsey says has positively impacted her school climate.

The school district and community celebrated the opening of West Ridge Elementary School on Thursday, September 11, 2008, with a packed gymnasium of families and community members. This dedication was attended by the entire School Board, as well as community members who were instrumental in the campaign to build the new elementary school. Mary Schell, a 1940 graduate of Post Falls High School and local historian, cut the dedication ribbon. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are already using this facility for meetings, and Post Falls Parks and Recreation will enjoy utilizing another gymnasium for its programs. Many other groups will utilize the facility during the after-school hours as well. Board Chair Donagene Turnbow thanked the community for supporting the construction of the school and stated, "Post Falls always makes its children priority number one." Principal Mandy Surratt concluded the ceremony by introducing the West Ridge teaching staff and led those in attendance on a tour of the school.

School Satisfaction Survey JA, JK

The district surveyed parents during parent teacher conferences. Close to 1,500 surveys were returned. That is more than triple the number of surveys that were returned when we did the survey three years ago.



Overall 84% of the participants rated the district's programs as excellent or very good. The comments, which the Board received at the January meeting, are very valuable. This information is especially useful as the district continues its efforts to update the Strategic Plan. The principals and their staff did an excellent job of encouraging parents to fill out the survey. The district sent information home to parents encouraging them to fill out the survey on line as well.

Election Consolidation JK, DLT

The district has taken a lead in the statewide discussion regarding proposed election consolidation

legislation. The Board of Trustees passed a resolution last year recommending that districts be allowed to maintain multiple election dates and continue to run their elections. This resolution included detailed rationale. The rationale section has been adopted by many other districts and organization to use as talking points with legislators and other key decision makers regarding the issue of election consolidation and schools. The superintendent and the executive directors of the ISBA and the IASA met this summer with the legislative authors of the legislation to discuss the schools needs. The authors indicated that they would comply with the request for two additional dates at that time. Also, an ISBA resolution was adopted by the organization during the recent conference that will allow the leadership of the ISBA to support the request for multiple election dates for school. However, we have not yet seen this year's iteration of the actual proposed legislation. We will closely monitor this matter throughout the legislative session.

#### High School Parent Advisory DN

Principal Naccarato has established an excellent Parent Advisory Committee at Post Falls High School. The committee meets on a regular basis with the goal of providing feedback to the high school staff regarding all aspects of its operation. The committee also provides Ms. Naccarato the opportunity to present new ideas for programs and activities.

#### K-TEC Memorandum of Understanding DLT, JK

After months of discussion, the Board of Trustees approved a memorandum of understanding regarding the district's future participation in the development and construction of a Kootenai County Professional Technical High School (K-TEC). The non-binding agreement signed by the three local districts, North Idaho College, the North Idaho Manufacturer's Consortium (NIMC), the City of Rathdrum and the four brothers of the Meyer family formalizes the purchase of 100 acres of land by the Lakeland School District, North Idaho College and the NIMC of which 20 acres will be set aside for K-TEC. Ten of those 20 acres will be donated by the Meyer brothers, and the other ten will be purchased and donated to the three school districts by the NIMC.

The proposed K-TEC facility will be owned and operated collaboratively by the Post Falls, Lakeland and Coeur d'Alene School District. The K-TEC Development Committee is currently exploring all available avenues to fund the facility including grants, private donations, submitting the plan for consideration as part of the federal economic stimulus package and local levy elections. Enclosed is the most recent draft timeline.

#### Boys and Girls Club JK, DLT

The Board of Trustees passed a resolution during its October meeting to convey 1.98 acres of land located east of the district office to the City of Post Falls. The conveyance will allow the city to lease the land to the Boys and Girls Club for the construction of an 18,000 square foot facility. The property was identified as an ideal site for a Boys and Girls Club because it is located within walking distance of New Vision High School, two middle schools and three elementary schools as well as having easy access to public transportation. The land currently has an undeveloped parking area and a ball field.

The conveyance was the conclusion of a nearly three-year process to provide land to the Boys and Girls Club. Upon patron request the Board of Trustees authorized a survey of district patrons to get their sentiments regarding the proposed conveyance. A special newsletter was sent to all district patrons in August that explained the matter and asked for feedback by mail or via our website. The district received well over 200 survey responses. Over 80% of the respondents favored the district conveying the land for the Boys and Girls Club project.

The Boys and Girls Club has agreed that the district may use the facility, once it is built, for school related classes and activities during the time that they are not using the facility. Boys and Girls Clubs are open for business after regular school hours. The district will have the ability to offload various classes and activities from the Frederick Post Kindergarten and New Vision Alternative High School into the Boys and Girls Club facility. This should allow the district to delay the construction of future school buildings at a great savings to our taxpayers.

### Staff Meetings Cab

The district administration presented information to all employees at their individual building staff meetings during late September and early October. Thirteen individual presentations and discussions were held with all employees. Topics included the beginning of school changes, the development of the Long Range Facility Plan and staff professional development. The superintendent introduced the district administrative team and provided a fairly thorough job description for all employees. While most were familiar with all of the district administrative staff, it is important that all staff have correct information regarding job responsibilities. The district administration also met with each employee group over the past three weeks regarding the statewide budget crisis.

### **Fiscal Affairs/Technology**

#### Emergency Levy DLT

Students returned to school on September 2. Approximately 5,600 students enrolled in the district's ten schools. That is 110 more students than this time last year. The enrollment growth continues in Post Falls bucking a local trend that has many North Idaho districts showing stagnant or reduced student enrollment. It was necessary to hire approximately four certified teachers as a result of that enrollment growth. The largest increase of students took place at the Frederick Post Kindergarten, where 455 students enrolled this year as compared to 425 last year. Post Falls High School reported 1,575 students as compared to 1,520 last year. On September 4, 2008, the Board of Trustees authorized an emergency levy of \$540,000 to help defray the costs of the increased student population.

#### 2009 Budget Holdback DLT

In September, 2008, Governor Otter ordered a 1% budget holdback for all public agencies including public school districts. At that time the Governor indicated that the public school holdback will be covered with money from the Public School Stabilization Fund (PSSF). The state had approximately \$114,000,000 in the fund prior to this holdback. Based on the low tax returns as a result of the economic crisis, the Governor announced that all public agencies, including school districts, would be subject to an additional 3% budget holdback for a total of 4% for the year. Again, the Governor indicated the public school budget for 2009 will not be directly affected because of the use of money from the public school stabilization account that will cover the total holdback of \$60,000,000. As a result, over half of the PSSF is no longer available to cover future budgetary problems.

#### 2010 Budget Reduction DLT

During the State of the State Address on January 12, 2009, the Governor called for a 5.3% cut to the K-12 Public School Appropriation for the 2010 fiscal year. A 5.3% cut in state funds could represent as much as a \$1,300,000 reduction from this year's budget for Post Falls School District. However, the next day we received a memorandum from Superintendent Luna that clarified what the announced reduction really means to school districts. Apparently the total reduction really amounts to 4.2% rather than 5.3%. For our district this represents \$1,100,000 less money next year. The state plans to provide \$21,000,000 above last year's appropriation to cover the cost of additional students throughout the state.

Because it will be necessary to make significant reductions to our district's budget, we are preparing for next year's cuts by taking steps to save money in this year's budget. We have already enacted several initiatives to help reduce costs. For example, we are asking all staff to be diligent regarding all issues related to utilities. We have taken steps to activate a software program that allows us to turn off all district computers at 6:00 pm each evening. We have also required staff to turn off lights anytime their particular space is not in use. All appliances must be unplugged when not in use. We are asking them to conserve on all supplies and paper when possible. We have initiated a hiring freeze at this time as well. We are working with all department heads and principals regarding preserving part of their budgets for next year. These are just a few things that are going on right now to help. Any money that we save this year can be applied to next year's budget and reduce the depth of the cuts that need to be made. The good news is that we will be better able to deal with the proposed reductions than most districts because of the efficiencies in our fiscal affairs.

No administrative decisions or recommendations have been made regarding budgetary cuts for next year. While we know that the state appropriation will be less than this year's, the impact can be reduced significantly if the state formats those cuts in ways that allow school districts more flexibility in how they use available funds. Enclosed with this report is a letter that was sent to local legislators and to various state decision makers regarding ways they can help local school districts survive these cuts. Sid Armstrong and I met with local legislators on December 30 to present these ideas and others. As you know, schools are about people, and 88% of our budget is tied to personnel costs. For the district to cut the kind of money being proposed it will be necessary to reduce personnel costs. With teamwork and creativity it is my hope that we will not have to eliminate many positions. However, it is going to take everyone working together to pull this off.

We will not really know the impact of the proposed cuts until the legislature sets the public school appropriation. As a result, we are moving very cautiously prior to recommending any cuts for next year. Once the details of the appropriation become available we will need to move fairly quickly to identify how we will deal with any reductions. The Board of Trustees and the district administration have guaranteed that there will be plenty of opportunities for all of the stakeholders to provide suggestions for savings and provide feedback on all proposed cuts. As always, the district will do everything it can to protect student programming. Currently the district administration is in the process of meeting with all staff groups to discuss the reductions and seek input and ideas.

#### Annual Audit SA

An independent audit report prepared by Magnuson, McHugh and Company, P.A., gave the Post Falls School District high marks for fiscal soundness and internal controls. The audit report showed that the district has an excellent financial management system in place. The district received a clean audit and was commended by the auditors for the financial controls it maintains. A highlight of this year's audit was an improved fund balance. The district is just slightly below its goal of having a fund balance of 3% to 5%.

#### District Technology Grant Award JW, BB, BF

Post Falls School District was recently awarded a \$75,000 grant through a federal program entitled Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT). The project is in the process of being implemented. The ALink@ grant is funding specific supplementary language usage curriculum and materials that students will access via technology. This fall projectors and computers were installed in the fifth grade classrooms that allow students to publish their writing on the district website and other web writing sites. The students practice language usage skills, develop mastery with language concepts and enhance mastery of language usage and the writing process. Through the use of integrated classroom technology and on-line resources, the project will improve students' language usage understanding, vocabulary and writing.

#### Technology Donations JW

The district continues to benefit from the donation of quality technology equipment. Shelly Graham, a district parent, delivered 55 Pentium laptop computers with speeds ranging from 1.6 to 1.8 gigahertz from Fort Lewis, Washington. Mrs. Graham has a relative who is based at Fort Lewis who works with the base's technology. We also received 75 17" flat screen monitors from the Veterans Administration office in Spokane and a large shredder and a 19" color television from the Department of Agriculture Risk Management Office in Spokane (Board member Dave Paul's office). These donations either replaced outdated technology or were used to expand student labs throughout the district. The district was just notified that we will have an additional 50 laptops, 124 desktop computers, 10 projectors and 2 network laser printers donated from Fort Lewis.

### **Curriculum/Instruction**

#### Professional Development Committee BB

The PDC met on a regular basis this school year to discuss several topics. After planning the October 3 inservice day, the committee has been looking at possible courses the district could offer in the spring to staff. It has been decided that Learning Styles, taught by high school teacher Sara Leonetti, will be offered in February/ March. In April/May we will offer the course Adolescent Brain Research taught by a team of

teachers from River City. Also this spring we will offer a course entitled Failure is Not an Option that will be taught by a team of teachers from PFHS and PFMS. These courses were selected after a district-wide staff survey was conducted on possible course offerings. Teachers will be able to obtain a graduate credit upon completion of any of these courses. The PDC continues to look ways to improve our collaboration /inservice model.

#### Aventa Credit Recovery Program BF, JW

Post Falls School District has successfully implemented a credit recovery program through the Aventa Online Learning Program. The Aventa Learning Credit Recovery provides a robust online credit recovery program that adapts to students' learning needs, supports English language learners and provides schools with flexible implementation options to help all students reach their full potential. Credit recovery is designed for students who fail required courses and must make up credits needed for graduation.

The online courses offer a media-rich curriculum with engaging graphics, animation, sound and video, and interactivity to foster comprehension and accommodate multiple learning styles. The online tutorial and immediate email access to a teacher helps students immensely. More than 20 courses in six subject areas are available through this program. The courses are formatted around an eighteen week curricular period and thus eighteen chapters. Each chapter starts with a pretest and, if a student passes the chapter pretest, they will go on to the next chapter and then take a final examination at the end of the coursework. A student is required to get a 70% average in order to pass the course

The Post Falls School District is using the program all day at the high school and New Vision, and in the evening at the high school. Currently we are consistently using all fifty stations. As one student passes a class, we sign up another. Students have expressed that, while the classes are as difficult as any regular classroom setting, they appreciate the additional opportunity to recover the credit they have lost.

#### District Math Committee BB, Principals

The District Math Committee, composed of teachers from all levels, K-12, initially met in the spring of 2008 to look at creating a district-wide scope and sequence. The committee agreed that the state scope and sequence was adequate for our needs except in the area of problem solving. Problem solving, as delineated in the state content standards, is not a separate goal area but is integrated into the other areas. After pulling the problem solving objectives out and looking at them as a stand alone goal area, it was agreed that the district needed to develop its own problem solving scope and sequence. A sub-committee of six teachers met over the summer and fall to create a district-wide document on problem solving that incorporates common language and strategies throughout the curriculum.

Other topics discussed have included the Idaho Math Initiative, the Final Report of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel, and next year's scheduled math adoption. Currently, eight teachers at the 4th and 5th grade levels are piloting new math curriculum.

#### Language Arts Adoption BB

The Post Falls School District adopted Harcourt Storytown as its new elementary language arts program beginning in the fall of 2008. This followed a rigorous process of selecting a new program performed by our Language Arts Adoption Committee composed of administrators, teachers and parents. Training for staff was held on June 9 and August 27. Additionally, much of the October 3 inservice day was devoted to teacher discussion of the Harcourt implementation. All elementary staffs are devoting most of their collaboration time to this implementation. This adoption has entailed a significant amount of work for our teachers as the program involves not only reading but writing, spelling and grammar.

#### October Inservice BF, BB, Principals

Various activities took place on October 3, our district wide inservice day. At the elementary level, grade levels met to discuss the implementation of Harcourt Storytown, our new language arts series. After a month of using the program in the classroom, teachers met to discuss any changes that might be warranted to meet the needs of our students. Satisfaction with the new program is high with just a few areas needing

“tweaking.” Teachers returned to their respective buildings in the afternoon to work on any changes discussed at the grade level meetings.

Assessment was the main topic of activity at the secondary level. Post Falls High School and Post Falls Middle School spent the majority of the day working on common end-of-course assessments in each department. River City Middle School elected to focus more on daily and weekly assessments before moving on to end-of-course-assessments at a later date.

All sites reported a high degree of staff satisfaction with the activities of the day.

#### Teacher Supervision BF, BB

The district administrative team has been continuing its efforts to improve teacher supervision and evaluation processes and protocols. The state has had an ongoing task force examining state wide teacher supervision and evaluation and has now formulated recommendations that will be moved forward to the state board and ultimately to the legislature for approval. The basis of the state recommendation is that district should have an adopted teacher supervision model that closely follows the tenets of the model developed by Charlotte Danielson called Framework for Teaching. She divides the complex activity of teaching into 22 components clustered into four domains of teaching responsibility:

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

Domain 3: Instruction

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

The good news is that our Board adopted teacher supervision policy and protocol which closely mirrors this model. However, after extensive review and discussion, the administrative team is recommending that our existing format be changed to more closely align with the Danielson model. The team also is recommending that a few deletions and additions be made to update our current system.

The teaching staff has been requesting that the supervision and evaluation process be as similar as possible from school to school. The administrative team developed a standardized goal setting protocol and a standardized observation form that will be shared with staff after an observation in an effort to add consistency throughout the district. The administration has been meeting the leadership of the PFEA to seek their input regarding the possible revisions. The administration will be presenting this information to the Board in the spring as part of DLT goal updating the 400 section of the policy manual.

#### Post Falls High School Apprenticeship Program BF, DN

Students in the Post Falls High School manufacturing class are in the process of building a home with Habitat for Humanity. The new “Learn to Earn” apprenticeship program will allow high school students to explore the construction trade at a job site to see if it is a career choice for them while supporting Habitat for Humanity in the process. The program is the result of collaboration between the Post Falls School District, Riverbend Professional Technical Academy, Habitat for Humanity and the North Idaho Building Contractors Association. The class is taught by Post Falls High School teacher Colby Mattila. The program goes hand-in-hand with the effort to create more professional technical opportunities for students. Students from Coeur d’Alene School District and Lakeland School District are expected to participate in the program in the near future.

### **Safety**

#### School Safety Protocols Cab, Principals

The Post Falls School District annually reviews and revises the district and site safety plans to reflect site building needs as well as recommendations from local safety agencies. The goal is to continually improve safety procedures that will be strictly followed in the event of an emergency. In the 2008 annual review, building maps, evacuation routes and emergency shutdown locations were standardized by the district technology department with new mapping software. This software allows the district and building

administrators to have accurate maps for drills as well as in the event of a real emergency. School administrators then train all staff in the safety procedures.

Safety protocol is practiced with monthly fire drills, one or two lockdown or evacuation practices at each site during the year, and review of the practice and the plans throughout the year. During a lockdown or evacuation practice, the Post Falls Police Department participates to analyze the effectiveness of the procedures and any potential concerns that need correction. All schools conducted lockdown practices this fall. Students and staff are directed to go into lockdown mode during the practice. Each school strives to make the practice as authentic as possible in order to better evaluate school safety practices.

#### Drug Dogs BF, Principal

Drug Dogs were used at Post Falls High School in October as part of Red Ribbon Week Activities. The dogs were used to detect drugs in the school and for the first time in the student parking lot. The use of the dogs is designed to discourage students from bringing drugs on campus, identify any students in violation of school district policy and/or state and federal laws, and to provide information regarding the use or possession of drugs on our campus. The police handler of the dogs indicated that PFHS was as clean a school as they had witnessed as shown by the minimal number of hits identified by the dogs. No drugs were found on campus.

#### Freshman Link Crew BF, Principal

Post Falls High School again implemented the Link Crew freshman orientation and support program. The program is designed to link freshman with junior and senior students who will mentor and support each student during their freshman year. Ninety-six junior and senior students participated in a three-day training this summer to prepare them to assist the freshmen on an individual and group level. Each of the 96 Link Crew students works with a small group of freshman to help them transition and be successful at the high school. Over 480 freshmen participated in an all-day team building and orientation program prior to school. The program is facilitated by Principal Dena Naccarato and teachers Samantha Cooney and Rob Rowe. The program is in its third year.

#### Reverse 911 Access JW, JK

The Post Falls School District is the first school district in the area to have the capability of notifying parents or guardians of a school emergency through the Reverse 911 calling system. The Mapstorm program has been offered by Kootenai County to the district. The system has the ability to make automated calls to all citizens in the county regarding emergency information. The district would have the ability to use the system to call parents at one particular school or all parents regarding emergency information. It is possible to enter data from the district's School Master student information system via the internet and actually activate a call from the school district administrative office. The system can be tailored toward specific schools and is capable of making 24 calls at one time to land lines and cell phones. For example, the district has the ability to notify the parents at one or multiple schools regarding a lock down situation. Reverse 911 has been available in the county for about a year.

#### Emergency Information Link JK, JW

The website emergency information link allows parents, staff and patrons to receive up-to-date information during a school emergency. If an emergency occurs in the Post Falls School District such as a school lock-down, parents can click on [Emergency Information](#). The [Current Emergencies](#) link will have all available information about the emergency that is occurring as well student safety. The link also features the district's general emergency plan.

Any weather related school closings will be posted on the emergency information link as another way to get information to the public as quickly as possible. The district will continue to relay school closure information to radio and television stations.

#### Surveillance System Update JW, BF, DN

The district updated the high school surveillance cameras and system this fall. Ten existing interior cameras were updated and repaired. Four additional exterior tilt/pan/zoom cameras were added to the

exterior of the building (one on the east side, two on the south side and one on the north side). A new thirty port DVR system was installed in the control room to accommodate the new cameras and create space for future cameras. The high school has a total of 27 cameras in place, seven exterior cameras and twenty interior cameras.

## **Personnel**

### New Teaching Staff BF

Twenty-seven new teachers were hired to replace retiring or resigning staff and to provide for the student population growth in the district. The school district welcomed the following new staff:

Laura Arner, PFMS 6th grade  
Harrison Bertsch, PFMS Health/PE  
Laura Bradley, PFHS PE  
Alicia Canger, Kindergarten  
Sandra Colquhoun, PFMS librarian  
Courtney Curtis, MTE Resource  
Kristina Davenport, RCMS 6th grade  
Mary Gerringer, Ponderosa Resource  
Scott Hamilton, PFHS Math  
Willow Hanna, Ponderosa 3rd grade  
Kirk Hartzell, PFMS Math  
Kelly Kiser, Mullan Trail 2nd grade  
Sarah Lemaster, PFHS Spanish  
Jamy Loy, Ponderosa 1st grade

Cassi Mason, PFHS English  
Mark Mason, PFMS 6th grade  
Michelle Mabraten, WRE 1st grade  
Shawna Naff, Special Ed  
Steve Reeves, PFHS English  
Amy Rippee, PVE 2nd grade  
Jessika Roletto, PFHS Math  
Ann Rosenbaum, PFHS English  
Saprina Schueller, RCMS 6th grade  
Trina Scott, WRE Counselor  
Shawna Snyder-Jamison, MTE SLP  
Kathy Wilkerson, Ponderosa Title I  
Heather Wood, Kindergarten Title I

### PACE Program BB

The district completed its second year of participating in the PACE program (Pathways for Accelerated Certification and Endorsement). PACE is a cooperative program with Lewis Clark State College involving non-traditional student teachers. LCSC has an elementary education endorsement program that caters to non-traditional students, especially working school district paraprofessionals. This program provides opportunities for education majors to participate in an internship (student teaching) during the summer months. Over 20 student interns worked with our summer school students. The program is an opportunity for summer school students to receive intense one-on-one and small group assistance with the help of the interns.

### Employee Relations DLT

The district leadership team has been exploring the potential to partner with the Post Falls Education Association and the Idaho Education Association in a program call Interest Based Communication. Several board members and district administrators attended a forum set up through the Coeur d'Alene School District that allowed participants to understand the program and its value to the district. The concept of the program is to improve communication through training that teaches participants how to identify their own interests and how those interests influence communications and decisions. The district administration and representatives of the IEA and the PFEA continue to discuss how the model could work in Post Falls.

Members of the district administration and the PFEA attended a conference entitled The Nuts and Bolts of Negotiating When There is No Money. The team heard experts in the field of negotiation, and specific time was set aside for each team to discuss their local situation. Two expert presenters facilitated the team's conversation. The district administration and the leadership team of the PFEA are meeting in February to discuss negotiations in context to the recent budget reductions from the state.

### Wellness Activities SA

For the past several years the district has run various challenges for employees to participate in exercise programs to lose weight, body fat and inches. We have incentives for participation and prizes for the

overall winners. The programs have always operated for a period of eight weeks. This year we took this concept to the next level and are currently running the APFSD Change Your Body Challenge® for an eight month period. The goal is to make wellness a permanent part of each employee's lifestyle. The District Office has 100% participation in the current program, and we have over 55 employees across the district participating. I continue to send e-mails to all district users encouraging wellness activities and the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. Our medical plan continues to do well from an experience standpoint. We have had two consecutive years of decreases in premium for our health plan.

## **Other**

### Summer Activities

On July 14, 2008, Donagene Turnbow was re-elected as the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and Dave Paul was elected as Vice Chair. Julie Hunt was sworn in as the new trustee representing zone 5.

As is now the norm, Post Falls School District is very busy during the summer. The following is a short list of other summer activities:

- X Construction of West Ridge Elementary School completed.
- X Seltice Elementary School remodeled.
- X Language arts and math staff committees further developed K-12 curricular alignment and curricular mapping.
- X Post Falls students significantly increased their scores on the spring ISAT and IRI.
- X 140 students attended summer school at Post Falls High School.
- X 100 kindergarten students completed the KinderPlus summer program.
- X Magnuson, McHugh and Co. completed the annual onsite portion of the independent district financial audit.
- X The Board adopted revised policy related to changes in state law during the past legislative session.
- X 140 students attended Middle School summer school.
- X Ponderosa Elementary School exterior wall remodeled.
- X Post Falls High School exterior block resealed.
- X 23 student teachers from LCSC participated in the PACE program that included direct instruction to 5th and 6th grade students.

### Summer School BB, BF

Over 150 students participated in the high school summer school program this year. Students had the opportunity to take classes to assist them with demonstrating proficiency on the three sections of the ISAT both with direct instruction and via the Plato Computer Learning program, and to recover credits in classes in order to meet graduation requirements. One hundred thirty middle school students participated in summer school this year. Most of the 8th grade students were required to attend and be successful in order to move to the high school in the fall. If they were not successful they were referred to the Connections program. One hundred thirty elementary students participated in summer school designed to assist those who need additional help in math, science, language usage or reading. One hundred students participated in the fourth summer of the KinderPlus Program.

### Elementary Cross Country

More than 55 volunteers helped make the sixth year of the Post Falls Elementary Cross Country program a huge success. These individuals donated countless hours to introduce young people to an activity that promotes a healthy lifestyle.

The All District Meet, held on October 9, 2008, at Post Falls High School concluded the five week season. Approximately 600 children participated, representing the five elementary schools in grades 1-5. Jim Wyatt and Sharon Wagner coordinated the program with their team of coaches at Ponderosa Elementary. David Hirsch of Seltice Elementary was instrumental as a site leader. Prairie View Elementary teachers Mary Knight and Mary Emmett orchestrated a large team of volunteers. Mullan Trail Elementary's lead

coaches included Eydie Kendall, Lorali Holt and Judi Owens. At West Ridge Elementary, Steve Somers was at the helm.

The program is funded by grants which provide a free school/team t-shirt for each child. The participating businesses were thanked for their generous contributions: Trading Company Stores, Pepsi Bottling Group, and Eclipse Traffic Control and Flagging, Underground Expressions and Northwest Logo. Through the efforts of these individuals and businesses, the elementary cross country program in Post Falls has continued to grow and excel.

#### Ponderosa Receives Fruits and Vegetables Grant AM

Thirty Idaho elementary schools, including Ponderosa Elementary School in Post Falls, have received grants to fund Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Programs that will provide healthy and nutritious snacks throughout the school day. The \$24,000 Ponderosa grant was awarded through a competitive application process. The grant funding for these schools will begin October 1, 2008 and last until June 30, 2009.

“The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program grant money will allow us to serve healthy snacks to our students. The obvious goal is to help our young people develop healthy eating habits at a young age. We will work hard to present these snacks to students in such a fun, positive way that they will make fruits and vegetables their snack of choice,” Director of Child Nutrition Annie Mader said.

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program is part of an initiative by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to offer schools a wider variety of fresh produce than would be available through normal USDA programs, such as the National School Lunch Program. Idaho was one of thirteen states to pilot the program, which has now been expanded to all 50 states this year. The goal of this program is to create healthier school environments by providing healthier food choices, expanding the variety of fruits and vegetables children experience, increasing children’s fruit and vegetable consumption and making a difference in children’s diets to impact their present and future health.

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program will provide students with a variety of free fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the school day. It is an effective and creative way of introducing fresh fruits and vegetables as healthy snack options. Schools receive reimbursement for providing the fresh fruits and vegetables to students throughout the school day, but the fresh fruits and vegetables must be provided at a different time than the school lunch or breakfast programs.

#### Idaho Gem Award

Frederick Post Kindergarten Principal Julie Billetz was honored for her outstanding work at the Idaho Association of Elementary School Principal Conference in October. Mrs. Billetz received the Idaho Gem Award, given to an Idaho elementary principal who demonstrates excellent leadership and whose efforts have improved the profession.

Mrs. Billetz has been the principal of the Frederick Post Kindergarten School for the past seven years. She served as assistant principal at Seltice Elementary School for four years prior to her current assignment. Mrs. Billetz has developed a school environment designed for academic achievement while encouraging joy in the lives of its students, parents and staff. The school was awarded a 21st Century Learning Community Grant in 2005. The five year grant is designed to provide direct support through the Kinder-Plus program to pre-kindergarten students that are not ready to enter school. The student achievement data clearly shows that students are making great strides.

#### Veterans Day Activities Principals

The district conducted a number of Veterans Day activities and assemblies to honor veterans for the sacrifices they made for our country. The following is a list of Veterans Day activities:

- X Post Falls High School: Veterans Band Concert; Breakfast for Veterans; Wall of Fame
- X New Vision High School: Delivery of hand made cards and letters to veterans
- X West Ridge Elementary School: Veterans Day Assembly and Wall of Fame

- X River City Middle School: Veterans Day Assembly
- X Mullan Trail Elementary: Veterans Day Assembly
- X Prairie View Elementary: Fifth Grade Concert
- X Ponderosa Elementary: “We=re Writing the Constitution” program and school wide assembly
- X Seltice Elementary: Veterans Day Assembly
- X Frederick Post Kindergarten: The names of student’s family members who are serving or have served in the armed forces were written on red stars and placed on the appropriate classroom door. Students engaged in a discussion about heroes and the significance of the colors on the U.S. Flag.

### Channel 13 JK

The district continues to utilize Channel 13 to communicate with the community. The City allows the district to tape a 10 to 15 minute television program each week called Focus on Schools. The program is taped about every two weeks during the school year and airs immediately following Post Falls Today. So far this year the superintendent has interviewed the school resource officer and Becky Ford regarding school safety plans. Each program contains a general overview of district activities and programs going on during that time period.

### Federal Programs Review BB

The Post Falls School District participated in a Federal Programs Review from January 20-22, 2009. This involved a team of four representatives from the Idaho State Department of Education visiting the district to review district and school compliance with federal rules and regulations and do on-site visits to our Title I schools. The programs reviewed included Title I, Homeless, and Safe and Drug Free Schools. In particular the team analyzes whether the district is following the strict federal guidelines for the funds. The district had no fiscal findings. The visiting team made recommendations regarding upgrading district policy related to equal access to our facilities and more widespread use of the federal equal opportunity statements. The team was very impressed with programs, staff and their dedication to our population of at-risk students. They also commented on the openness and hospitality they experienced at each site. The district passed the review with flying colors, and we commend all of our hard-working staff that participated in the review.

### Superintendent of the Year Information

I thought the Board of Trustees would be interested in seeing part of the Superintendent of Year application that is required prior to submission as a nominee. The candidate is required to respond to a series of questions. The responses reflect not only my philosophical positions but our district philosophy as well.

Q. Since education was not a high priority in the election process this year, if you were given the opportunity to talk to the incoming president, what would you say?

A. I would respectfully want to discuss general philosophical matters as well as discuss specific existing federal programs related to not only the composition of those programs but how they are funded. Along a more philosophical line I would ask the new president to define the role that he sees the federal government playing in K-12 education during his tenure. I would like to engage in a conversation that allows me an opportunity to express the concern related to local school boards losing the ability to effectively set the course of their districts because of both federal and state mandates. While I believe there is a role for the federal government in public education, it should be limited and should be targeted to specific programs such as special education. The discussion of the establishment of a federal graduation test similar to the NAEP is particularly concerning. It would be a giant step away from education being the state and local function that our founding fathers clearly articulated.

I would share some thoughts regarding No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). While the philosophical basis of accountability and achievement of the No Child Left Behind Act has merit, the different components of NCLB do not work in application. I do appreciate the focus on closing the learning gaps between students of color and the rest of our students. However, the

punitive nature of NCLB does not promote positive change. Rather it has created an environment of fear and caused many districts to teach to a test at the cost of providing a well rounded educational experience for children. If NCLB is reauthorized by congress, I would suggest that changes be made regarding the inclusion of special education students in determining adequate yearly progress in NCLB at all. Special Education students are fully covered and provided for in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The development of Individual Education Plans as prescribed in IDEA clearly takes priority regarding educational decision making for special education students. I would also suggest that all measurement of student achievement related to NCLB should be based on a growth model rather than benchmarking. School and districts should not be penalized if a single sub group does not reach the prescribed standards. Very good schools are being described as failing because of one small group of students' academic performance.

The last issue I would discuss with the President would be the funding for IDEA. When the Education for All Handicapped Children Act PL 94-142\* was first authorized in 1975, Congress agreed that the federal government should fund 40% of the cost of educating special education students. The funding was not available at that time but a commitment was made to move the funding to 40% over time. It is now 2008 and the total federal funding for special education covers 18% of the cost. Districts are struggling to fund the cost of providing the needed programs. It is time for the federal government to live up to its end of the bargain and help states and local districts fund these often times tremendously expensive programs.

\*Retitled as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as amended in 1997.

Q. The theme for this year's program is Democracy's Promise: Educate Every Child. @ As a superintendent, what does that mean to you?

A. There is no doubt public education has been the main reason America has become the greatest democracy the world has ever seen. America is not great because of its economic strength or its military. Its strength lies with its unbending commitment to the concept that all men and women are created equal and that the democratic political system is designed to ensure that principle is never compromised. Public education has been and must remain the great equalizer. It is the one constant that has helped America's children understand and internalize Democracy's Promise. Democracy's Promise is that every child and citizen will have the opportunity for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Public education has been the only route many of our citizens can take to fulfill the American dream. Public education is not only providing children with the necessary skills to be successful but it provides the forum for great ideas to be discussed and developed. The higher level thinking that is promoted in public education prepares our young people to be the leaders of tomorrow. That is why there is so much angst regarding the emphasis on standardized testing taking away from the development of big ideas that perpetuate Democracy's Promise.

Current educational policy trends are undermining the ability for public schools to deliver on the promise of providing children with the opportunity for a well rounded educational experience. However, the one component of the No Child Left Behind that does address Democracy's Promise is the push to close the performance gap between students of color and the rest of our students. In particular, the efforts to close the achievement gap for African Americans, Latinos and American Indians are paying dividends. Of the many accomplishments of the staff and students of Post Falls School District, I am the most proud of the progress that the above three groups made on the Idaho Student Achievement Test. On average, students of color improved their performance in the areas of math, reading and language usage by ten points. These efforts will help all students take advantage of Democracy's Promise.

I had the great privilege of teaching social studies to secondary students. In particular I taught students Civics. The focus of those classes was to have students explore the concept Democracy's Promise. An emphasis was placed on the duty that citizens have to make democracy work, and that they have an obligation to give back to their community as a basic responsibility of citizenship. There is a dangerous trend to sacrifice social studies education at all levels in order to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind and other state mandates. This pattern, if it continues, will ultimately undermine our democracy

and will create a nation with no purpose and passion.

On a larger scale, efforts to undermine public education in America, if successful will ultimately undermine Democracy's Promise for millions of American children. Ultimately people are forgetting that public education is what has made America great and that it must continue to thrive in order for our country to continue to be a country that provides everyone an opportunity to have life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

## **Conclusion**

I am very thankful for the excellent leadership and support that our Board of Trustees has provided the administration, teachers, support staff and students of the district. The diverse backgrounds of the members of the Board of Trustees provide for excellent discussions and result in thorough and well thought out decisions. This team work will be even more critical as we prepare to deal with the state budget reductions.

One of the superintendent's goals coming into this year was to "improve communication with the Board of Trustees. The addition of a new trustee will require more and better communication." The number one goal of the superintendent and the administration this and every year is, and will continue to be, to provide thorough, timely and accurate information to the Board. Overall, I am satisfied with the administration's efforts in this area. However, it will be necessary to double these efforts because of the fiscal crisis and the many issues that it will cause throughout the district and the community.

Another of the superintendent's goals for 2008-2009 was to "continue to meet with students in formal and informal ways to seek input regarding how we can improve the quality of their educational experiences." This goal has not been met to the degree that I would want. I have sat in on specific classes and met with student leadership in several schools but I believe I need to do more during the remainder of this year.

So far the 2008-2009 school year has been very successful. I am very proud of the accomplishments of the district and the progress it continues to make. While there is no doubt the budget reduction problems we face are significant, it is critical that we face those challenges with calm, systematic and empathetic leadership. We can continue to provide excellent educational opportunities to our students and that must remain our focus during these difficult times.