



July 26, 2013

KFCS' District Newsletter
A Grant to Enrich our Children's Lives
By Paul Hillyer, KFCS Superintendent

Study-after-study has shown that outside of the parents, teachers are the key to children's academic growth. There is simply no substitute for the influence of a teacher in the classroom when it comes to improving student performance. This knowledge spurred several foundations in Oregon to create an organization called Chalkboard.* This institute in turn developed the CLASS (Creative Leadership Achieves Student Success) Project to help selected districts support and develop the abilities of teachers. KFCS was notified in June that they have been selected to be one of the two districts in the state to be added to the CLASS consortium. This resulted from having the top-rated grant proposal for 2013. What does this mean for our district and, more importantly, for our children?

The Chalkboard organization will assign a consultant and seed money to KFCS for the 2013-14 school year. This consultant will help a group of teachers and administrators design systems in four areas that research has shown result in teacher growth, school improvement and ultimately higher student achievement. Once the design work is completed, KFCS will qualify to receive additional funding to implement the improvement initiatives.

Here is how the Class Project explains the four-pronged approach to spur teacher effectiveness:

1. **New career paths** create significant leadership roles that include responsibilities such as mentoring and instructional coaching.
2. **Meaningful performance evaluations** rely on clear standards and advance the quality of teaching and learning.
3. **Targeted and relevant professional development** give teachers the resources and support they need to improve their teaching practices and stay at the leading edge of their craft.
4. **Expanded compensation models** tied to new roles, responsibilities and student-learning outcomes offer alternatives to traditional salary schedules through career-based pay and bonuses.

There are 197 school districts in Oregon. As one of the selected 25 in the CLASS Project consortium, KFCS will benefit from the work and research in the four areas described above.

Chalkboard's analysis of the student achievement improvement of Class Project districts compared to the rest of the state is impressive:

- Districts who have implemented the Class framework for three years have shown a 15.8% improvement in the percent of students reaching proficient levels in math and a 9.5% improvement in reading. This compares to a statewide average of 8.5 and 6.0% respectively.
- Even more impressive is a 17.4% math improvement for economically disadvantaged students by these Class districts compared to an 11.4% improvement in the rest of the state. In reading the improvement for disadvantaged students in Class districts vs. the rest of the state is 12.8% vs. 9.3.

Districts chosen to be in the Class Project are a very select group. To become a member, each district must demonstrate a strong working relationship between teachers and administrators. In other words, a collaborative culture must characterize a CLASS district. KFCS demonstrates this collaboration in many ways including the Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB) approach to contract negotiations started this past year. It is also evident in the Professional Learning Community (PLC) work used at each school. This approach creates teacher teams to plan and implement student academic growth strategies. Finally, it is seen in the way the district conducts business utilizing the ideas and input from staff whenever possible.

Selection is both an honor and very good news for the Klamath Falls City School District. Judging from the record of accomplishment of the other Class districts, KFCS can expect to see great benefits. This happens primarily by supporting teachers to develop their teaching abilities to the fullest. It also occurs through more fully utilizing the leadership skills and talents of teachers to improve their schools and the district as a whole.

Maximizing teacher performance is the most effective way to improve student learning. Therefore, becoming a CLASS district is a real coup for KFCS' students and families.

Other News:

- KFCS received more good news late last week: We have been awarded one of the 21st Century Grants. Our application was the top-rated application in the state. It will provide \$484,000 for each of the next three years, \$363,000 the fourth year and \$284,000 for the fifth year for a total of \$2,057,000. This will provide after-school programs that include tutoring, arts and crafts, fitness activities, mentoring, hands-on science, parent education, therapeutic services, and other supports for about 1/3 of the students in the school; bus transportation will also be provided.

All schools except Roosevelt qualify for the grant. KU's portion will also include credit recovery and elective class options. For Mills, Pondo, and KU a significant ELL component will also be included. Pondo will have a strong career education component that will be provided by KCC and Junior Achievement.

This will go a long way toward helping all students leave their current grade ready for the next one, providing enrichments that are missing during the school day, and helping all students progress toward graduation. This very exciting opportunity will be provided in cooperation with many community partners including Citizens for Safe Schools, KYDC, YMCA, Kingsley Field, OIT, KCC, Junior Achievement, the sheriff's office, IYS, and SMART reading.

- **“The Klamath Promise” Survey:** Participate in this survey for a chance to win a Fred Meyer \$100 gift Card! The purpose of this survey is to get your opinions about high school graduation in Klamath County. “The Klamath Promise” will use the results of this survey and other information to identify the most pressing problems which can be addressed through community action: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/klamath-grad-survey>.

*“Launched in 2004, Chalkboard is the first initiative of Foundations for a Better Oregon (FBO). FBO partners include: Meyer Memorial Trust, The Oregon Community Foundation, The Collins Foundation, The Ford Family Foundation, JELD-WEN Foundation, and the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation.” From www.chalkboardproject.org.

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