

Dear Parents and Students,

As many can attest, Canby School District provides a high quality education for our students. Talented teachers, a supportive community and students brimming with potential make this possible. AND, we know we can be better. Quality organizations seek new and innovative ways to improve and our district will continue to do so as well. One of our Board of Directors Priorities is to increase student achievement. We have been engaged in this effort all year by way of a district wide initiative to support progress in this area. This effort will continue in 2009-2010 as we hone our focus and skills to accelerate student achievement. By building comprehensive skills in 'collaborative teaming' this coming year, we will be primed to further implement our improvement plan.

A quality collaborative process supports the collective knowledge of our teachers and maintains 100 percent focus on student academic growth. In simple terms, the work includes:

- Setting short term, specific academic goals for students;
- Assessing growth in relation to the goal and allowing teachers to determine the learning needs of students throughout their K-12 education; and
- Analyzing data to determine the needs and ideal instructional strategies for each student.

These processes occur effectively when teams of teachers have time to work together.

To be effective in this work, it was necessary to establish a district wide infrastructure to ensure teachers have time to do it well. Therefore, our daily start times next year will shift to create a system for teachers throughout our district to focus on student learning in such a manner. On Wednesday mornings, staff will arrive at their regular time to spend 70 minutes involved in collaborative work processes before your students arrive.

Questions you may be asking and our responses:

Why a new schedule and why now?

- To provide a unified focus and system to support student learning at a higher level.
- Team members can share expertise and successful strategies with attention to individualized student achievement.

How will this time be used?

- This structured time, 70 minutes each week, will allow teams of teachers to develop student learning goals and methods for student assessment as well as learning/discussing instructional strategies to meet student needs.

How will this initiative impact instruction and student learning?

- The process will deliver genuine information about how students are learning.
- Teachers will use this information, along with the collective expertise of their colleagues, to determine the most effective instructional strategies for students.

What is the rationale for starting school late on Wednesdays vs. other options?

- It will have the least impact on school activities and provides a district wide schedule and program model.
- The model provides a very cost effective way for ongoing professional development to focus on every student.

Is the district concerned about the impact on some families?

- Absolutely. Changes in times, even if just an hour, can alter family schedules and childcare needs.
- We believe this effort provides the needed collaborative time to ultimately improve your child's education. We're providing this information now to give an opportunity for you to make arrangements for this change.

I sincerely appreciate your understanding and support as we initiate this significant program to benefit your children. As always, I will continue to share updates and information with you as it becomes available. Have a great summer break and we'll see you in September!

Be well,

Jeff Rose, Superintendent

