



The Apple Core



March 2011 Issue

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Superintendent's Message – The New Common Core

Superintendent
Mark Dockins

Over the past few years we have seen many new programs imposed on our public schools. Many of these programs required more accountability for student learning, but they did not clearly define what students were expected to learn. In some cases this led to weakened standards and huge differences in expectations among states and regions of the country.

Educational and business leaders across the country recognized the need for common standards among the states. Thus, the "Common Core State Standards Initiative" came into being. New standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and business leaders to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce. These standards were not created by the federal government. Utah, and nearly 40 other states, will be adopting these new K-12

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Mathematics and English / Language Arts (ELA).

Transition to the new ELA Common Core should not be difficult because Utah's current curriculum has many similarities to the new CCSS. However, the new ELA Common Core requires more rigor, focuses on reading comprehension, and includes a heavier emphasis on writing, grammar, informational text, thinking skills, and literacy across the curriculum.

Implementation of the new Common Core Standards for Mathematics will prove more challenging. The new standards will be implemented over the next three school years, beginning with 6th through 9th grade next year (2011-2012). The new math curriculum does not isolate math skills into specific categories such as Algebra, Geometry and Algebra II. Instead, math concepts are integrated with one another

and taught based on a highly successful instructional model (similar to the elementary model). The new 9th through 11th courses will be Secondary Math I, Secondary Math II and Secondary Math III. In addition to these courses there will be "Honors Courses" offered to all students in 7th through 11th grades.

Parents of current 6th, 7th, and 8th graders will receive detailed information from their school on what math will look like next year.

Utah School District is committed to making certain that all stakeholders receive accurate information regarding the Common Core. In the next few months, prepare to receive information from your school administration regarding expectations for the Common Core.

For more information about the CCSS such as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and timelines for implementation please go to www.uintah.net (click on "The New Common Core") or contact your school administration.

One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.

Carl Jung

Read a Good Book Lately?

- Kevin Dickson, Student Services Director

One of the best parts of having a non-intellectual major in college, is that I didn't have to take the extremely difficult classes others had to master in order to get the same diploma. While most of my fellow students were reading the great works of medieval Eastern European authors, I took

classes in children and adolescent literature. At best, their books contained bizarre sketches, while the books I studied had pages and pages of colorful pictures. Because I matured, and classic books with misleading titles became available on tape, I did have a chance to listen to some of

them. To be honest I find the messages of Seuss, Hinton, and Kipling far more meaningful than the pseudo intellectual things others had to read that prevented them from attending ballgames, parties, and watching reruns of "Green Acres" (my favorite college memories).



There is a passage from the "Jungle Book" that has inspired the way I live, the way I teach, the way I coached, the way I directed, and the way I raised my family. "For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack." As we continue our journey in education, this statement has more meaning today than it ever has before. As the demands placed on educators grow every year, we must be powerful individuals and we must have the strength of teams to have an exceptional educational system.

"Green Eggs and Ham" is another book that is a far better source for educators than the big books we had to read in our education classes. Hunter, Glasser, Plato and Socrates wrote volumes in what Dr. Seuss was able to teach in rhyme. They all teach the same educational steps. When kids don't like something, bug them until they do, and they will thank you.

"I do like green eggs and ham! Thank you! Thank you, Sam-I-Am."

"The Outsiders" inspired me to become a better educator. When I first read this book in the late 60's, it taught me to look at my fellow classmates differently. When I read it again in college, it was an entirely different book. Even though I was going to college to become a teacher, this second reading made me want to be a teacher. I recently read it at the age of 53, and although I again took different lessons from it, the book continues to provide inspiration to me. The problems Ponyboy, Sodapop, and Johnny Boy faced are challenges too many of our students have today. As educators we are some of our students' greatest hope to find success and happiness later on in life.

After writing this month's Apple Core, I am going to re-read those books that inspired me to join the teaching profession. I invite you to do the same.

One is too small a number to achieve greatness. You cannot do anything of real value alone. There are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few that we can solve by ourselves.

*John Maxwell,
The Seventeen
Indisputable Laws
of Teamwork*

Uintah School District Wellness Program

– Randy Upton, Business Administrator

Last year the Uintah School District Wellness Council was created. The council was asked to plan activities and recommend policies and environmental changes that create a culture of wellness at the workplace. To do this, the council developed a Mission Statement, established a very specific set of goals, and sought out the resources provided by Healthy Utah. You can read the Wellness Council's Mission Statement and Goals on the district webpage under "Wellness Council".

Healthy Utah, through its annual health screenings, helped the council identify the specific health risk factors facing district employees. These factors are cancer, nutrition, weight management, coronary risks, fitness, stress/coping, and safety. In turn, the council then focused on these risk factors and came up with this year's quarterly health incentives and is currently working on next year's activities.

We began the health incentives with the Biggest Loser Competition, where each work location competed against each other to see who could lose the most weight. Weight loss was determined by the number of canned goods collected. With the Maintain Not Gain Challenge, the goal was to help partici-

pants maintain their weight during the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays. Both incentives were very successful with an overall participation rate of 94%, and not only did we help ourselves by becoming healthier, but we donated a total of 1385 pounds of food to the local food pantry to help those less fortunate. We are currently involved in the Five a Day Challenge. The purpose of this incentive is to increase awareness of



proper nutrition and the importance of healthy food choices. This spring, we look forward to our annual Walkabout where we will attempt to walk 10,000 steps a day. Along with the quarterly incentives, the council will continue to provide the monthly "Top Health" elec-

tronic newsletter, the Wellness Tip of the Week, and the prize drawings for gift cards at the end of each health activity.

Some may ask why we do this. Studies show that promoting the benefits of a healthy lifestyle at the workplace can help improve morale, reduce absenteeism, improve the health status of employees, and assist with the containment of health care costs. The school district has had an established wellness program for one year. Within that year, we have already begun to see the rewards. Some of you have shared your individual success stories; stories that were brought about by participating in a health incentive or a Healthy Utah screening. Council members have reported that staff at their work locations are talking and having fun during events such as the Biggest Loser. As we continue on our path to becoming a healthier school district, not only will we as teachers and staff reap the benefits, but so will our students in the classroom!

I would like to leave you with this quote from William Londen "To insure good health: eat lightly, breathe deeply, live moderately, cultivate cheerfulness, and maintain an interest in life."