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Community Consolidated School District 15

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Dear District 15 Board of Education Members,

This is a summary report of the progress I have made on the first three months as superintendent. I identified specific actions I would undertake in this initial period. The attached checklist indicates that I completed the actions (save the few in italicized red ink.) As outlined in my Entry Plan, the following were the goals I listed that were to be worked on during the first 90 days in District 15:

- Goal #1 Develop and ensure effective district governance through effective and positive board-superintendent relations
- Goal #2 Maintain and increase academic excellence for all students
- Goal #3 Improve public trust, commitment, and confidence through open, direct, honest communication and action
- Goal #4 Examine current operations and identify opportunities for increased effectiveness and efficiency
- Goal #5 Establish a supportive, positive, and effective district climate and culture singularly focused on success for all

The accomplishments listed below indicate progress in attaining these goals.

Team Building

The Cabinet has coalesced into a tight-knit, effective team. Members feel valued and have expressed appreciation for the work we are doing together. I believe each has grown individually, as well as becoming a better team member. Our work is performed at high levels of collaboration which has led to better outcomes. (Goal #5)

The Leadership Team (Principals, Directors, and Cabinet members) has been transformed into a cooperative, positive, and unified group focused on making improvements to our schools. Our time together has been primarily for professional development that has offered concrete learning that can quickly be taken back to the schools to impact learning. Our sessions have involved group problem-solving, learning, and rich discussions that benefit all the members. The reports from the members indicate that these sessions have been helpful, and the new format has empowered them, improving personal performance in their perspective roles. (Goals #2 & 5)

Connect with Community

I have been warmly welcomed into the community (even by those who have typically been wary of district personnel). I have enjoyed increasing the trust through open, honest, and direct communication. I feel a part of many aspects of the community; Rotary, Chambers of Commerce, District 211/54 articulation, village personnel, PTAs, Foundation and others. I feel that I have been a positive spokesman for the district, eliciting support and partnerships with many members and organizations in the district. It has really been enjoyable to connect with so many in a relatively short period of time. (Goal #3)

Community Engagement

I am excited about the potential of the Navigate 15 process. I am confident that the results of these two-way communication events will produce valuable information to assist the administration in suggesting long-term strategic plans, as well as increase the partnership of community members in the work of the school district. I am also confident that the process will produce lasting avenues for continued communication with many segments of our constituency. The process has already produced positive press and responses from the community. (Goal #3)

Principal Evaluations

The principal professional development and evaluation plan that I shared with the principals was well received. It has specific timelines, benchmarks, and processes which I believe will lead to more effective leadership at the buildings. I am in the process of meeting with principals a second time to evaluate their progress on the goals that we established in our first meeting. (This process has resulted in the identification of outstanding administrators.) The learning that has occurred in our Leadership meetings dovetails with the plan. (Goal #2)

Union Relationships

The relationship that I have established with the teachers union has begun to repair some fairly significant rifts. We have had professional and productive times together, even laughing and talking casually on occasion. I have shared with them the financial forecast and begun to lay the groundwork for a partnership in keeping the district in a strong financial position. Likewise, I have met with all the leaders from the other unions, establishing lines of communication and productive relationships. (Goals #3 & 5)

Visibility in Schools/Valuing Staff

My calendar has included regular visits to schools. I have also created a calendar for visits by the Cabinet members. I have enjoyed going into classrooms, meeting the teachers, staff members, and students (as well as many parents). The staff members value the visits and invite me to return frequently. I send out employee notes weekly to commend staff members that are working to better the organization/children's experience. Principals and directors send me information about their staff members, and I send a hand-written note home to the members thanking them for their service and acknowledging their exceptional work. This small gesture has greatly promoted the image of the superintendent's office! (Goal #5)

Exploring program improvements

The Cabinet members have begun brainstorming some possible programs to enhance children's experiences in our schools. We have talked about a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) program or academy as one idea. We have a group going to Northrop Grumman next week to explore this kind of program at a Connecting Educators to Engineering seminar. (Goal #2)

Communication with the Board

I have consciously worked on providing adequate, informative communication with Board members. The Beacon has been an attempt to create clear, concise information that Board members would need to stay informed and up-to-date on current issues/events. Likewise, I have responded promptly, thoroughly, and directly to inquiries from Board members. Board member communication to me has been carefully listened to and acted upon. (Goal #1)

Summary

My first three months in the District leave me with some distinct impressions. The District has a great deal in which to be proud. It has served the community's children by providing an outstanding education and creating the foundation that has led to future academic success. Speaking with people in the community, there is a resoundingly warm and appreciative feeling for District 15. This community support for the schools is unmistakable, and it provides an optimistic base to move forward in the future. It is somewhat rare to have such a strong endorsement from a wide-range of constituents.

District 15 is an organization that is made up of people. I have been struck by the quality and professionalism of the individuals serving in the system. There is an overwhelming commitment to excellence and a desire to make the District an outstanding place for kids to learn. People possess pride in what has been accomplished and dedication to continuing to improve as individuals and as an organization.

The parents and community members want to participate in moving the District forward. Parental involvement in the schools is strong, yet many want to be involved in a more comprehensive way. As our demographics change, it is imperative that the District involves stakeholders in meeting the new demands of our student population in order to build upon the excellence from the past. We will need to seek ways to elicit that involvement to make them partners.

I feel extraordinarily fortunate to be leading District 15. I believe my leadership style is what the District needs at the current time. It has been satisfying to see some positive changes during my short tenure. I anticipate the organization will continue to improve, and I appreciate your confidence and support as we continue together in the future.