

Superintendent Evaluation **Sheldon H. Berman, Ed.D**

2009-2010

The Jefferson County Board of Education met on July 15, 2010 and again on July 16, 2010 to conduct Superintendent Sheldon Berman's annual performance evaluation. The Board based its evaluation on the broad areas of responsibility encompassed by the superintendent's role in the school district and community, the superintendent's progress toward meeting the goals outlined in the 2009-10 Comprehensive District Improvement Plan and Strategic Action Plan and the areas for improvement identified in the 2008-2009 performance evaluation.

We commend Dr. Berman for his unwavering focus on improving school cultures, enhancing classroom instruction, embracing innovation in education and promoting policies that support real student growth. The test of bold vision, however, is in the implementation of strategies to support those goals, and our job is to analyze if the work taking place is achieving the desired outcomes.

The past school year has seen dramatic change to the federal and state accountability system culminating in the passage of HB 176 into law and the identification of six of our schools as persistently low achieving. While the Board has concerns with how the new accountability system measures success, we believe that it is unacceptable to continue to have some of the lowest performing schools in the state. To address this, the Superintendent must refocus his goals and vision on strategies to improve student achievement toward meeting accountability measures and ensuring that every child receives the services and instruction necessary to reach their potentials. Further, we ask that the superintendent convene the appropriate staff members and prepare a report to the Board that addresses District deficiencies identified in the 2010 District Leadership Assessment Report, and deals with the schools that will be targeted in upcoming audits. We want to operate proactively to identify struggling students and low achievement and employ our best efforts and educators to address these issues. We know that JCPS has the history and knowledge to set examples of high achievement for all student groups.

Dr. Berman's four goals for the district are to enhance effective teaching, enhance effective leadership, strengthen organizational culture and improve organizational effectiveness. It is our desire to join with Dr. Berman and the Cabinet to further clarify stated goals and strategies, as supporting overall Board goals and that resonate with the community. It is imperative that the District speaks with one voice and one vision to support the success of all students.

Dr. Berman's strategies are ambitious and include many initiatives and activities. Last year, the Board requested that Dr. Berman develop measures of the progress toward measuring these goals and this year he produced the Quality Indicators. The Board recognizes the work to develop this tool and sees the Quality Indicators as not only a measure of schools' progress but as a measure of the Superintendent's progress toward increasing student achievement. However, the Quality Indicators also

reveal a downward three-year trend in student achievement in some areas in Reading and Math and the Board is disappointed in this loss of ground for student progress in achievement. We do note, however, the promising results of the NAEP assessment that compared our district favorably with other urban districts.

Implementation of the new elementary student assignment plan met a rocky beginning last school year and the Board recognizes that Dr. Berman has reacted to the concerns by working to improve the assignment and transportation processes. The Board believes that there is a need for ongoing review of the plan, its effectiveness in meeting guidelines, and potential consequences of this particular system. Dr. Berman has additional work ahead in ensuring that the plan is adequately implemented, addressing parent concerns in the upcoming school year, building support for the plan throughout the community and allowing for a process that accepts and encourages review and improvements. The Board wishes to reiterate its commitment to diversity among the district staff and student body.

The Board is pleased with Dr. Berman's initiatives in curriculum and instruction, including the work on formative assessment, professional development on differentiated instruction, the deepening of inquiry-based math and science programs at the elementary and middle school level and the work to develop the elementary social studies curriculum- One Community, One Nation. Once these initiatives are fully implemented, the Board expects to see the programs measured to track how they affect student achievement.

Dr. Berman has continued his strong emphasis on improving school culture and the development of CARE for Kids in 55 elementary schools and all of the district's sixth and seventh grade classrooms. The Board supports this initiative and looks forward to seeing continued improvement in the indicators of a positive climate in our schools. Although the Board appreciates Dr. Berman's concept for "nurses in schools" initiative as a collaboration with community partners, we don't want to lose sight of other successful collaborative programs like Every1Reads. The Board looks forward to further clarification of the next phase of this award-winning program, and asks that we not lose the momentum, which brought thousands of volunteers to our schools and supported improved literacy instruction.

The Board continues to have confidence that the district's budget is well prepared and well managed. The Board supports the hard work of district staff in planning for a budget during a continuing poor economic climate. Although the Board recognizes Dr. Berman's efforts to seek additional funding through grant applications, the Board continues to encourage Dr. Berman to ensure that time and effort dedicated in seeking grants are spent on those that fit within our goals and objectives, and that support the needs of our schools. The Board expects Dr. Berman to continue to focus on the fiscal management of the district in partnership with our CFO and to ensure that the district maintains sufficient reserves to see the district through future budget cuts. The Board will work with Dr. Berman to follow through on our commitment to facilitate a management audit of the District.

The Board believes that Dr. Berman currently maintains the district's physical facilities and has developed facility changes needed for the success of the district's magnet programs. However, the Board is concerned that recent recommendations to expand small class size efforts district-wide, were not adequately vetted with the Board prior to making recommendations for construction. Such construction recommendations should be made only after discussion with the Board, which included a facility capacity analysis, and growth patterns taking into consideration population shifts and assignment plan goals.

The Board encourages Dr. Berman to take greater responsibility for board of education meeting agendas and recommendations proposed to the Board for approval. These recommendations must be well considered with input from appropriate staff and the Board urges Dr. Berman to ensure that his information is complete and that he is fully informed before responding on an issue. The Board urges Dr. Berman to take greater responsibility in leading the Board, engaging the Board and involving the Board as part of the "team".

JCPS has seen great success in student engagement through partnerships with community and business leaders. We applaud the continued emphasis on developing these relationships that mean so much for kids. The Board wishes to continue to strengthen and expand these partnerships. The Board recognizes Dr. Berman's efforts in seeking financial support from community businesses and organizations, but encourages him to continue to seek ways to keep these organizations meaningfully involved in ongoing activities that can impact student success, including increasing volunteers in schools. We value our community partners for the invaluable expertise, time and energy they bring which make our schools better and help prepare our students for the 21st Century workforce. We urge Dr. Berman to employ his leadership staff to support these relationships with professionalism, knowledge and respect.

The Board is pleased with the efforts in keeping parents and the community well informed on district programs, and is pleased with the creativity and energy exhibited by the communications staff and its leadership. We appreciate the efforts to tell the story about schools' and students' successes. We recognize the effort in place to renovate the District's website, but we encourage Dr. Berman to be mindful that not all families have Internet access and to continue communicating information to parents by a variety of media. The Board continues to believe that family and community involvement is an essential element of JCPS success, and we respect and applaud those who spend time in partnerships with us, and we expect our leadership to reflect that value.

The Board notes with some concern that the Comprehensive District Survey showed a 10% drop in certified employee confidence in the district leadership between 2007 and the present. Based on this and other observations, The Board believes there can be improvement in the area of leadership, management of the district and employee morale. While the Superintendent has established the appropriate goals and vision for the district, he must strive to establish effective and coherent processes for implementing those goals and vision. As he continues implementation of these important initiatives, the Board encourages Dr. Berman to spend more time building a cohesive leadership team needed to ensure the success of these initiatives. The success of JCPS is built on the effectiveness of its human resources, and our leadership must support that value. We continue to encourage Dr. Berman to have a larger presence in the district, to increase his collaboration with appropriate district staff in order to address morale issues and to make decisions that support an organizational structure that promotes efficient and effective operations at the school level. Furthermore, the Board asks Dr. Berman to continue to strive for productive labor/management relations, knowing that successful partnership in this area is key to our success. While relations with JCTA have improved, the Board encourages continued analysis between labor and management of issues that need to be addressed to ensure a supportive professional culture, and high educational attainment.

The Board appreciates receiving reports of visits to schools and collaborating with principals and other administrative staff. We encourage this important work to continue. We are also pleased to see more

opportunities for involvement of principals in decision-making, such as the work of elementary principals on teams to address transportation and student assignment issues. Staff communication including opportunities for involvement in decision-making is essential to facilitate understanding and support. We believe this practice will go far towards improving the morale of district staff. The Board values a positive climate of respect and support for staff members so that they can perform at high levels, as well.

Dr. Berman has begun the implementation of many laudable initiatives for the district that address the whole child educational philosophy. While addressing the needs of the whole child, it is imperative that Dr. Berman works to show immediate improvement in attaining student proficiency in reading and math. The Board is disappointed in the current student achievement trends in reading and math.

We commend Dr. Berman's leadership and hard work with state and federal legislators and with our new education commissioner, Terry Holliday. We recognize the work that is continuing toward demonstrating Jefferson County's commitment to higher achievement as evidenced in our participation in the Kentucky's Race to the Top Application. And, we know that working with our state and federal leaders is helpful to JCPS as well as to those who seek to improve the educational system at those levels.

We wish to take this opportunity to applaud the support of our schools demonstrated by the leadership of Mayor Abramson and other important partners in the community over many years. We ask that Dr. Berman join us in welcoming a new Mayor in keeping with our history of strong mutual support.

Jefferson County Board of Education
Jefferson County, Kentucky

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