

May 17, 2015

To Parties

From: Bill Hawley

Re: Comments on the Revised CMP

As you know, I have spent considerable time working with District staff on the revision of the magnet plan. While I have reviewed all of the school plans at least twice, I write this memo without having reviewed the final version of the site plans but with the hope that it will facilitate your assessment of the plan.

#### Some Clarifications

On page 4 of the first full paragraph indicates that, "The goals and benchmarks were modified to show equal incremental growth over a two-year span of the plan." This means that the gap between the current points that determine the school grade and the number 120, which is the lowest number for achieving a grade of B, was divided in half and the 2015-16 goal was thereby determined.

On page 4 of the CMP, the District refers to a Ochoa as a lighthouse school. I believe that the concept behind this proposal is sound but that details need to be further developed. That can happen without revising this plan. The final sentence in the paragraph dealing with Ochoa should probably end with the following phrase "after which funding would be evaluated".

On page 5, it is noted that Tully is exempt from having to meet specific goals because this change in its theme creates a GATE school that also satisfies the requirement of the ALE court order. It does not seem appropriate to make such a significant change in a school and then pull the rug out from staff and families. One of the values of the Tully proposal is that it will allow us to better understand the value-added of GATE programming for students with very different levels of achievement. To that end, all students admitted to totally should be tested but their scores should not be released to teachers or families. Families should

understand that this will happen and the reasons why. It may require family agreement.

On page 5, the first bullet in paragraph three should read, "Implement PLCs for **at least** two hour blocks... I do not believe the intent is to limit what schools do but rather to require that at least two hours be set aside for serious analysis and problem-solving.

On page 5, sub-bullet one of bullet two should read: "The content of LCPD focuses on what **staff and** students are to learn...As co-author of the definition of LCPD, I can tell you that our intent was to ensure that PD reflected what we know about how people learn (which much professional development does not).

On page 7, the process by which magnet status would be removed appears to need clarification. As special master comment I would recommend to the district based on the criteria established that magnet status be withdrawn, when appropriate. If the District agrees, it would inform the plaintiffs accordingly and they would have the opportunity to object. If this were to occur, discussions could be held and if resolution not found, an R&R could be submitted. If neither the district nor the plaintiffs object, there would be no need to take the matter to the court except to provide the court with this information. Under the plan presented, no school would lose magnet status for reasons of its academic performance until data on student achievement for 2015 16 was available. While this might delay the inevitable in some cases, it does not seem fair to hold schools accountable for academic goals established at the end of this school year.

On page 8, the schedule at the top of the page indicates that achievement data would be submitted in January 2016. I am told that the state does not typically provide achievement data for the preceding year in a timely manner. However, because it is very important for families and staff to understand to have clarity with respect to the magnet status of their schools, this provision should read "No later than January 2016" and be coupled with the phrase, within 14 days of the district having received relevant student achievement data for performance on state tests".

On page 7, the briefing schedule described at the bottom of the page would presumably be superseded by the agreement reached in our discussions over the knock next over the last couple of days.

### Other Issues

In my discussions with staff, we came to agreement on some matters that are not reflected in the plan. That is understandable but some of these matters should be made explicit so that they can be monitored as the plans are implemented. Two of the most important of these are:

1. Noncertified staff should not have significant responsibility for interventions aimed at enhancing the learning opportunities outcomes of the students who are underachieving, including ELLs.
2. The allocation of funding for professional staff should be based on the Court approved formula-plus criteria. In my comments on the budget, I will make those criteria explicit.

No school should be allowed to set a goal for future student achievement that is lower than its current numerical rating. There is no reason for a school to do this because as long as it maintains B or A status the provisions of the plan would not call it's magnet status into question on academic grounds. On the other hand, it is an unfortunate message to send to families that schools have lowered their goals in order to meet the requirements of the magnet plan.

### Comments on School and Program Plans

While I have not reviewed the final version of the school plans, I believe that the district and school level leaders have worked diligently to develop these plans. I think they have given us their best shot because of the high stakes. Do I think every proposal made in these plans will be productive or is the best possible use of resources? I do not. But because district staff and school leaders have knowledge about the needs and capabilities of these programs and schools for

which they are responsible that I do not, I think there needs to be compelling reasons why I would propose changes in these plans. These would include:

1. The inequitable allocation of human and financial resources.
2. The inappropriate use of 910 G funds.
3. A proposal is clearly inconsistent with what is known about best practice.

Of course, plaintiffs need not agree with the position that I just outlined.