

June 13, 2015

To: Parties

From: Bill Hawley

Re: CMP

Introduction

At the June 9 meeting of the Governing Board, the Superintendent asked for approval of the magnet plan. Plan 3 to 2 vote perhaps believing that this was a tentative endorsement. The Board did not have any budget numbers for the magnet plan and was told that the plaintiffs and the special master essentially agreed with the plan as presented in May.

While it is true, as the Superintendent said on June 9, that there was substantial collaboration between the special master a member of the implementation committee and the district, it is not the case that I had signed off on the plan or that the plaintiffs had. Moreover, the week prior to the June 9 meeting, I submitted a series of memos that I hoped would clarify concerns that I continue to have as well as issues raised by the plaintiffs with which I both agreed and disagreed.

I have not reviewed each of the magnet plans yet to determine whether there have been revisions but I think it is important to immediately identify issues that are possible obstacles to approval by me and the plaintiffs of the plan dated June 10 so that we can reach agreements—or identify things that will lead to objections to the CMP--expeditiously. Given that the district has decided to move forward in the face of identified concerns, I think it is likely that final approval of the magnet plan by the court is unlikely in the near future. This, of course, is a major problem. One of the most important matters is that the district needs to move forward with professional development efforts scheduled for the summer and principals need guidance accordingly. I return to this issue in the conclusion to this memo with a recommendation.

Clarifications

On page 3 of the plan, the district says there shall be no additional dual language magnet programs. I agree with this position but this does not suggest, I presume, that it would not be desirable to add dual language programs of different sorts elsewhere in the district. This is a separate issue.

On page 4, at the top of the page, my role is characterized as supervisory. I did not dictate any particular strategy though I recommended many and many, but not all, were incorporated in the plan. I did not endorse the establishment at Carillo of a communication and creative arts theme as it is suggested I did. Indeed, I have consistently urged that Carillo should be with the district now wants to call a lighthouse school and that it lose its magnet status. There is no reason to add a new theme to a school that may end up diminishing school's rather extraordinary achievements as an A school.

On page 5, in the second paragraph, the plan says that schools that have shown substantial progress towards integration will have until June 2017 to meet USP integration standards. That is not correct. I will be making my recommendation to the Court with respect to magnet status based on integration in October 2016. Between October and June, there is no way that a school could change its integration status.

On page 6, "learner centered professional development" is described as having four characteristics. One of the most important characteristics, one that is most likely to shape the characteristics of professional development, was omitted (although it was included in the verbal presentation to the Board). That characteristic is that professional development should incorporate what we know about learning and be focused on the needs of the people receiving the opportunity to learn (e.g., teachers). (I know this because a colleague and I coined the phrase "learning centered professional development" and have defined it in publications).

On the bottom of page 6, the district says that funding for D schools is to be focused on student achievement. While I believe this makes sense, previous plans also allowed schools to use magnet funding to it improve their integration status.

On page seven, the district describes the role of Teacher Assistants. I have no quarrel with this role but some of the school plans refer to instructional assistants,as I recall. If my recollection is correct, we should be sure that the terms are used consistently so that the rule about the use of these assistants can be applied effectively.

At the bottom of page 8, student achievement data are described as a second determining factor in determining possible magnet elimination. I think the first is integration but given the placement of this paragraph, it may be useful to clarify.

The chart on page 9 is already inaccurate and should be changed.

All of these “clarification” issues seem minor.

Substantive Issues

Ochoa

On May 31, I advised the parties of my views about Ochoa.

While I support the idea of lighthouse schools-- whose purpose is to serve as hubs for professional development and school improvement-- I had raised questions about whether Ochoa was the right choice and whether the plan was sufficiently well-developed (though I did not say that this was a deal breaker). I believe the district should withdraw its proposal to create Ochoa as lighthouse school for the following reasons:

- 1. The plan is not well developed and is inadequately funded.*
- 2. Ochoa has a theme that is unlikely to be useful to other schools especially because that theme involves particular approach to instruction.*
- 3. Lighthouse schools should be among the very best schools in the district. Ochoa is a B- school with its most recent grade being lower than the grade it achieved in the year before that.*

The Mendoza plaintiffs objections add to my list.

Redrafting this plan for purposes of maintaining this magnet status should not be difficult because the lighthouse idea is an add-on.

Carillo would be a good candidate for a lighthouse school.

Continued Funding after Loss of Magnet Status

On p.9, the district says that if a school is to lose magnet status at the end of the year, its magnet funding would be continued for another year. I believe it would be appropriate to continue at least a significant part of what was magnet funding into the next year but not for magnet purposes. This may be what the district means but, if so, it should be clarified. In short, magnet level funding for school losing magnet status should be repurposed and, perhaps, reduced.

What to Do about Professional Development?

As noted above, it is likely that final decision on the magnet plan will not be made until mid-summer. Successful implementation of magnet plans in many cases is dependent on professional development that either needs to be offered or significantly planned during the summer. I suggest that the district provide the plaintiffs and the special master with a plan for professional development for the magnet schools that would allow consent on the implementation of those activities that are essential to be performed in June and July.

Measuring School Effectiveness

State tests play a major role in identifying achievement levels and therefore the attainment of some of the goals essential to implementing the magnet school plan. But the state tests are changing and school grades are placed on hold. It would be helpful to the parties as well as to schools and families if the District were to describe how it will determine how each of the measures on student achievement goals will be determined. This need not be a requirement for approval of the plan.