

EXHIBIT C

January 31, 2017

To: Parties

From: Bill Hawley

Subject: Comments on Transition Plans for Former Magnets

Overview

I am focusing my comments on issues that cut across schools—with one exception--rather than **the specifics of individual plans. I'm happy to work** with the district on individual plans.

Overall, these plans are thoughtful, explicit and deal with fundamentals. Some of my comments no doubt reflect an inadequate reading of the plans and it may be that the way the plans are presented convey less coherence than the plans actually have. No doubt my understanding of the plans is hindered by my own views about what should happen.

In raising the issues below, I do so with the hope that they are worth consideration and I am not necessarily arguing that the district needs to address each of them.

The success of all of these plans depends on developing a collaborative culture and the plans recognize this. But when it comes to endorsing collaboration everyone raises their hands but not everyone moves their feet. Collaboration is difficult to pull off in schools not just because of scheduling issues but because school cultures generally value privacy and individual autonomy. One way to facilitate collaboration is to have a shared understanding of the vision that drives the improvements. I think it would be useful to make this vision—**the “theory of action” that** is common in these plans--more explicit and put the continuous improvement of teaching at its center.

Issues for Consideration in No Particular Order of Priority

1. The goals for student achievement are ambitious. Only one plan seems to take into account the variations in where students are with respect to achievement within that school. Goals should be reachable.

They may be, but having the same goals for virtually all schools and subjects raises the question of whether goals for each school were developed in light of past student performance. Since these plans involve a number of new programs, the so-called implementation dip phenomenon should be taken into account.

2. I note that goals are sometimes presented as percentages and in other cases as percentage points. Choose one please to facilitate review.
3. There are many new programs that teachers are supposed implement. Many of these involve technology assisted strategies. I wonder if the level of professional development is adequate. Turning students loose on software programs, however well designed the software, seldom has the desired effects.
4. While professional development is crucial, how professional learning is facilitated is critically important. If traditional methods are used, we should not expect much payoff and student learning will suffer. In the schools the district should move aggressively to implement the standards of Learning Forward which it says it has adopted.
5. I believe the emphasis on professional learning communities is quite good but the success of these initiatives will depend on support teachers routinely get as they implement what they learn in working together.
6. There are many programs being introduced to facilitate teacher and student learning. Is the efficacy of these programs supported by research? One of the programs mentioned is Success Maker, a program the district is already implementing in some schools. I could not find convincing evidence that Success Maker has resulted in success (only one of 11 studies identified showed positive effects). What about the others programs being proposed?
7. I saw a relatively little investment in leadership development in the schools, both at the principal level and beyond. Leadership has been

an issue in the majority of the schools and having a full-time support person for school leaders could be a good investment.

8. The improvement of instruction will undoubtedly contribute to improving student behavior but at least three of the schools have experienced a significant amount of student disorder. As I recall only one plan explicitly talks about the implementation of PBIS.
9. In the overview of this memo, I mentioned the importance of coherence. The responsibility for implementing these plans is shared by people who inhabit an extraordinary number of different positions. In addition to teachers, principals and counselors, implementation will be the responsibility of people holding the following titles (not all of which actually appear in past budgets):

RTI teacher, curriculum support coordinator, MTSS facilitator, MTSS/PBIS facilitator, community representative, CSP, instructional technology liaison, ALE mentor, instructional coach, IB coordinator, school-community services position?, AmeriCorps member, liaison, Webmaster, data coach, school improvement coach and transition coordinator.

People serving this many different roles is an invitation to fragmentation of the learning opportunities students experience and a barrier to collaboration.

10. It appears that there is an absence of agreement about what the **role of MTSS facilitators is. I'm reminded of the unhappy history of learning support coordinators who became utility infielders who often didn't play any particular position very well.**
11. Some of the plans seek to remediate students who have not done well by repeating the class. There is evidence that this is not a productive strategy both instructionally and psychologically.
12. The plans appear to differ in the approach they have for family engagement but more important the strategies listed are not consistent with the development of true partnerships in which

educators learn from parents about their children and use that knowledge to improve instruction and motivate their students.

13. The Utterback plan appears to be trying to sustain its existing performing **arts program**. **It seems necessary that the school's** approach to arts education have a more explicit academic purpose. There are "**arts integration**" programs that do this and TUSD has experience accordingly. But looking at the academic performance of Utterback students, there is little reason to believe that doing what has been done will make much difference and may even divert resources that could yield greater student development.

The transition plans proposed are substantially richer and more detailed than plans we have seen before. I hope the comments above are helpful.