

To Our Pocatello/Chubbuck Community:

Having served as the Superintendent of Pocatello/Chubbuck School District for less than three years, I am constantly impressed by the many wonderful accomplishments that happen in our district. I say “happen,” but that might suggest that it is by coincidence or by chance, I can assure you that it is not.

The learning in our classrooms is facilitated by highly qualified, inspired and passionate teachers who are assisted by support staff and knowledgeable administrators. Our building and grounds are maintained by a group of women and men that take great pride in their work to ensure that learning occurs in safe, comfortable and clean conditions. Our Food Service Department takes great care in preparing nutritional meals for our hungry learners. The Transportation Department greets eager learners at bus stops across our valley every morning and ensures their safe return at the end of the day.

Our district is continually recognized for achievements both inside and outside of the classroom. In addition to accolades such as merit scholars, honor roll and scholarship opportunities for graduates, each year the district boasts academic and state championships in many of our activities. Likewise, the professional development and curriculum achievements have been highlighted by the Idaho State Department of Education.

The above accomplishments that create the space, resources and atmosphere for optimal learning is governed by a group of five, volunteer, highly passionate people known as our Board of Trustees. Tackling one of the most, if not the most difficult and controversial topics a board could ever grapple with, this board recognized the need to restructure our boundaries to take advantage of existing seats in our schools. This Board could have delayed and directed administration to alter course but courageously accepted the task even though each knew it would be difficult.

Please know that the work of a board member extends far beyond a monthly meeting. Board members participate in a host of other district, community and state committees and organizations. As an example, routine meetings include a monthly onsite school or department visit, a board work session, the regular board meeting and student hearings at least twice per month. In addition, the Board attends special meetings to address personnel matters, the budget, negotiations, pending legal concerns and the sale or purchase of property. The scope of the Board extends far beyond one decision.

Each Pocatello/Chubbuck School Board member reviews, directs and holds the district accountable for curriculum, personnel, and operations of the fifth largest district in the state with an annual operating budget over \$100 million. In addition, your Board of Trustees has been recognized as a “Distinguished Board” by the Idaho School Boards Association. This recognition is achieved by the collective and individual training that each board member has received and implemented.

Unfortunately, these unsung heroes have been under much scrutiny over the past few months while observing, listening, reading, learning and processing and truly educating themselves on the proposals related to school boundaries. I have witnessed first-hand, each and every member carefully listen to public comment, pore over numerous written feedback and truly agonize over every recommendation, proposal and option that would eventually lead to decisions affecting students and families.

Each member, Mrs. Cranor, Mrs. Gebhardt, Mr. Mattson, Mr. Vitale and Mr. Gertsch is truly a person with the best interest of all students in mind. This year, the Board and I have been reading *Indelible Leadership: Always Leave Them Learning*, by Michael Fullan. Chapter one of this book addresses the

“Moral Imperative” and defines it as: “... strong internal commitment to accomplish something of significant value.” It is my opinion that each of the members of the Board have embodied this creed. I confidently report that each of them wrestled with decisions and ultimately based their decision on what they believed would best contribute to the significant educational experiences and opportunities for all students.

If you do not know the members of the Board personally, I encourage you to get to know them and witness for yourselves the love and passion they have for our students, schools and our community. They are genuinely good people that deserve the respect of our community.

I encourage you too, to be more involved in all of our students’ education. Not only visit with your board members about our district, but also visit with the school and district administrators. Please know that we welcome productive suggestions to not only ensure continued success for all of our learners, but to be one of the learning leaders in the state.

Dr. Douglas Howell, Superintendent
Pocatello/Chubbuck School District 25