

SUMNER SCHOOL DISTRICT

A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN.



DATE: August 9, 2017

TO: Laurie Dent

FROM: Marilee Hill-Anderson and Bill Gaines

RE: Community Engagement

Purpose of Report: To share the progress made in the past three months of exploring best practices and definition of what needs to be included in our work on community partnerships.

Relationship to Sumner School District's Strategic Plan – Vision 2020: Pillar 3 is entitled 'Partnerships' and efforts in this area supports our three additional plan elements: academic achievement, safety and fiscal responsibility.

Background Information and Current Status: In mid-April, Marilee Hill-Anderson was re-positioned to Director of Community Engagement. Key questions emerged to help shape the initial phase of work:

- What is a partnership?
- What other forms of engagement does Sumner School District have with our community?
- What are best practices in building community partnerships?
- What is working well with community partnerships?
- What types of partnerships, or partnership improvements, do our students, staff and District need?

Summary: Meetings and interviews were and are being conducted. We are forming a needs assessment to define partnerships, finding out partnerships which already exist, discovering the benefits all stakeholders envision from partnerships now and in the future, and determining methods to strengthen future partnership initiatives. This information and input will be utilized as stakeholders are brought together to develop a model for community partnerships in the Sumner School District.

Work Plan:

Three phases of work emerged through discussions about these questions. We believe this action plan will provide an effective structure for Vision 2020 / Pillar #3 – Partnerships, as well as to address immediate needs for existing efforts:

Phase One - Preparation (April, May and June 2017):

- *Define areas of work with our community:* Communication, outreach, engagement, partnership and co-leadership of efforts to support students and families (see slide.) Determine what actions are planned, who is responsible, and how departments work together in achieving and evaluating impact of activities.
- *Develop guiding change framework for the Office of Community Engagement:* Staff responsibilities, needs/strengths assessment, initial work plan & corresponding budget.
- *Explore local districts' work with community partnerships:* Program models, activities, staffing, funding, and outcomes;
- *Examine best practices:* School/community partnership models and work;
- *Initiate gathering qualitative data/input:* Interviewing internal and external key stakeholders: parent group leaders, school principals and District department leads;
- *Take immediate action to address and explore program funding:* Financial support for school resource officers, family center services and 'Back to School' supplies;
- *Continue facilitation and evaluation of the Sumner-Bonney Lake Area Communities For Families (CFF) Coalition:* Obtain feedback from these social and human service partners on how CFF enhances services to students and families, as well supports Sumner School District's goal of 100% graduation.

Phase Two – Incubation (July 2017 through March 2018):

- *Continue gathering quantitative and qualitative data with internal and external stakeholders (identified in Phase One):* This input will sharpen our focus so we cultivate relationships with partners that can best help us meet what our struggling students need to succeed.
- *School Improvement Plans:* Use our needs/strength assessment work to bolster each school's plan to complete CEE surveys and take actions showing engagement in supporting student learning;
- *Explore and develop enhanced parent engagement strategies that are relevant and responsive to our diverse communities:* Attending the September 2017 Washington Parent Engagement Conference with a District team, including parents and administrators.
- *Fly the plan while building it:* Take immediate action to help principals and other staff connect with existing community partners, resources and opportunities as needs are identified through interviews; increase the number of community members who have completed the District's volunteer background check process and assist in schools.

Phase Three – Illumination (April through June 2018):

- *Finalizing our 'community partnership' model:* This framework of best practices will meet our District's needs, support existing partners, and create a structure utilizing outreach and engagement to nurture relationships which will result in future partnerships.
- *Presentation and Adoption of Model:* Formalizing approval of our work by District administration and Board of Directors by June 2018.

How does this relate to board policy? (1) Policy 5630 (Volunteers) – Encouraging and increasing volunteerism; (2) Policy 4120: School Support Organizations: Supporting parent leadership efforts in our schools; (3) Policy 4130 – Title I Parental Involvement, which states, "The Board views the education of students as a cooperative effort among schools, parents and the community." Pillar 3 work helps us meet our federal funding requirements.

What is the budget allocation for your topic? \$10,000 + salary/benefit costs of the Director.

What are the impacts to student performance? (1) Added Resources: Existing and well known partnerships (i.e., Rotary Club of Sumner and CTE partnerships) illustrate the value and impact of working with community groups who give our students real world application to what they are learning within the schoolhouse walls. (2) Student Support: As demonstrated by our recent Golden Apple Award winners, cultivating and recognizing community partners helps us garner goods and services to meet students' needs – needs which left unaddressed create barriers to learning.

Relationship to Equity: Work to increase our knowledge and apply practices to increase our engagement and partnerships with community members, including families, will build more equitable partnerships between home, school and community.

Benefiting parties: All students, staff, families, community members.

What is working well? (1) Having the establishment of this pillar with the leadership of an experienced administrator who has deep roots to work in the student and community supports; (2) Strong work by our CTE staff and their partnerships with local businesses who contribute time, instruction and workplace learning opportunities for students; (3) Strong partnerships and generous contributions of resources by local human service agencies, faith communities and civic groups through the CFF Coalition and Sumner-Bonney Lake Family Center; (4) Partnership agreements and services articulated through the 21st Century Grant at LRE and DVE; (5) Strong parent organizations, which contribute significant financial resources to schools, at many of our buildings.

Where are opportunities for improvement? Communication tools within our district and communities to access opportunities, including enhanced use of social media and online tools; the need for District administration and staff to explore newer models of parent and community engagement, as well as strategies utilized by other local districts; developing a system and toolbox of strategies for individual schools to use in boosting parent engagement; exploring what we don't know – how to best engage a growing number of parents and community members from diverse backgrounds.

