

Outgoing Board President Remarks

January 6, 2025

Residents of the City of Lakewood hold quality public education as a high priority, thus making service on this Board of Education an honorable and rewarding endeavor. I have great appreciation for the voters of Lakewood for the opportunity to serve and great respect for those with whom I serve on this Board.

In 2024 we welcomed two new members to the Board, Colleen Clark-Sutton and Lisa Dopman. Both have come to the table with high qualifications, trust from the community, and a desire to add their perspectives to delivering a first-rate education experience for all of our learners while demonstrating fiscal responsibility and reflecting the needs and interests of the community. I thank them for their service and appreciate the opportunity to serve with them.

I also appreciate the contributions of Betsy Shaughnessy and Nora Katzenberger who bring their intellect and real sense of the pulse of our community. I have learned quite a bit from them and can confidently say that the community benefits from their presence on the Board.

As Board President, I have had the opportunity to work closely with our Superintendent and Treasurer as well as the entire cabinet. I see firsthand the level of competence, leadership, and expertise that they all bring to work from their diverse backgrounds. Some of our leaders have worked significant portions of their careers in other places, while others have served our community for many years. We are fortunate to have some of the best in the field right here in service to Lakewood's students.

One of the great opportunities I have had as President is to recognize some of our brightest and most notable learners at our regular meetings. While we are only able to recognize a small number of "resilient rangers" and other notable students at our meetings, all of our diverse and amazing students are appreciated and valued for their uniqueness.

We also learn about and recognize our teachers, paraprofessionals, coaches, maintenance and custodial workers through the "staff spotlight" award at Board meetings. It is an honor as President to recognize these recipients on behalf of the Board. Again, we are only able to feature a small sample of the large number of dedicated, qualified and committed educators who choose to work in Lakewood. There are many reasons we attract and retain such a committed group. I am convinced that our vision, and our community's collective emphasis on education are top reasons. There is no shortage of personal stories of the impact our people have on the lives of our students.

In 2024 we continued to evaluate and address the most significant matters of the day while also being future-minded. The Board has supported our administration in convening a second task force to evaluate enrollment trends and how we most effectively utilize our spaces. This ongoing process, led by our superintendent and treasurer, includes community conversations that demonstrate a desire to serve the community responsibly with transparency and also a willingness to at times be

uncomfortable while discerning what is needed most. This Board and administration are not putting off to the future what can and should be discussed and considered today. No decisions have been made regarding our facilities; therefore the work of the task force and leadership team will continue in 2025 as they work toward recommendations to the Board.

Last year we worked with our colleagues at the City of Lakewood on matters of mutual interest. The Board of Education passed a resolution to support the development project at the former Lakewood Hospital site. This action, with its tax incentives, will allow a meaningful once-in-a-generation or more project to move forward. The Board did not take this matter lightly, and considered the overall impact of this project on the community.

The Board also has and will continue to have an eye on the impact of education-related legislation at the state and federal level and will work with our administration to advocate for what our community wants and needs in public education.

In 2025, as I shift my seat to the end of the table, we pass the gavel to Board President Katzenberger who is positioned for success and who will benefit from the experience of Betsy Shaughnessy as Vice President. President Katzenberger is a very thoughtful individual, an excellent communicator, and someone who has earned the trust of this Board and community. I look forward to her leadership as President.

I again express my gratitude to the entire Lakewood community, my colleagues on the Board, and all of our staff in the district for the opportunity to serve as President in both 2023 and 2024. I look forward to my committee assignments and I am committed to representing our community to the best of my ability. Thank you!