

SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION – 2015-2016 School Year

Superintendent: Dr. Trent Bowers

Board of Education: Marc Schare, Sam Shim, Jennifer Best, Charlie Wilson, Julie Keegan.

OVERVIEW

It is the job of the Board of Education to evaluate the Superintendent on an annual basis. Worthington has adapted the Ohio Superintendent Evaluation System. As specified in OSES, the Superintendent is to be evaluated by his or her work in each of 5 areas with each area containing multiple elements. The OSES rubric will appear in italics in this document with the Board commentary in regular font.

In addition, as with the Ohio Principal Evaluation System, the Superintendent is given an overall rating of Accomplished, Skilled, Improving or Ineffective in each category.

ACCOMPLISHED: The Superintendent has demonstrated mastery of all or most of the elements in this area.

SKILLED: The Superintendent has demonstrated mastery of many of the elements in this area and is progressing on other elements in this area.

DEVELOPING: The Superintendent has demonstrated mastery of some elements and is progressing on other elements. In addition, the Board has specific concerns over some elements in this area.

INEFFECTIVE: The Superintendent has demonstrated mastery in few or none of the elements. The Board has concerns over major sections of the area.

NOT YET RATED: The Board lacks sufficient data to offer a meaningful rating. This might reflect projects that are not yet complete or external data (such as the State Report Card) that is not yet available.

Source material for the Ohio Superintendent Evaluation System can be found at this web site:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Teaching/Educator-Evaluation-System/Ohio-s-Superintendent-Evaluation-System>

A. *VISION, CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT, AND FOCUS OF DISTRICT WORK:* *Superintendent shall establish a vision, expect continuous improvement, and develop a focused plan for achieving both short term and long term district goals. Effective superintendents facilitate the establishment of a vision for their districts. The Superintendent will articulate this vision clearly in appropriate internal and external venues throughout the district. This vision drives the district's work. Representative elements include: developing the vision; supporting the effective use of data; creating, executing and monitoring a coherent plan with a limited, achievable number of goals and objectives; and communicating the plan to stakeholders.*

COMMENTS

The Board is very pleased with the progress you've made towards Superintendent Standard A. The district has new mission and vision statements that we believe are inspirational in nature, yet achievable in practice. The mission and vision statements were created through staff and community feedback. The Board believes that mission/vision statements must be actionable if they are to be effective, so next year's evaluation will assess how well the mission and vision statements have been incorporated into the culture of Worthington Schools and what, if anything, is different now that they exist. We anticipate the mission and vision statements will be incorporated into individual building improvement plans and become a part of the continuous improvement process.

The OSES rubric calls for the effective use of data and the Board acknowledges that we are a data driven district, although we also acknowledge that one of our main sources of external data, the state report card, was not particularly helpful as a diagnostic tool in 2015-2016. It would have been impossible for any district to react to the data provided by the report card in a reasonable timeframe since the data was not available from the state until the year was ¾ over. Nevertheless, the use of internal metrics such as MAP continue to drive instructional practice, highlight areas for improvement and guide programming which certainly meets the OSES standard.

The OSES standard also calls for, in large part, defining a small number of achievable goals. In 2015-2016, we agreed on 4 goals and we further agreed that the goal setting process would become an annual event. Our assessment of progress towards the goals is later on in this document. For purposes of OSES however, you did define the goals, you defined tactical objectives towards accomplishing the goals, you communicated the goals to stakeholders and kept both the Board and our constituents informed of the district's progress towards meeting the goals.

OVERALL EVALUATION: ACCOMPLISHED

B. COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION: *Effective superintendents have processes in place to facilitate communication and collaboration with the board of education, the district treasurer and the general public.*

Effective superintendents recognize the importance of involving multiple stakeholders to inform decision making, communicate processes, celebrate accomplishments and address deficiencies. To gain and maintain support for these improvement efforts and to sustain the focus on the goals, effective superintendents must communicate effectively with staff and stakeholders. Specific elements include demonstrating communication competency with all stakeholders, implementing effective communication systems, communicating effectively with the Board, Treasurer and other stakeholders and keeping the public informed about education trends and practices, policies, progress and challenges. This standard also includes assessing public and staff opinions about matters pertaining to the schools. Worthington-specific elements include the use of representative task forces to be involved in major decisions.

COMMENTS

The Board is very happy to see the progress made in this area during the 2015-2016 school year. The District has put into place numerous mechanisms for communicating with stakeholders including a dramatic and effective emphasis on social media. For example, the District has increased its online presence with Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts and the web site makeover has made a remarkable difference in our constituent's ability to find information, especially now that we have a working "search" function. In addition, under your leadership, Board Meetings and other events are live streamed and in addition to all this, you *personally* blog and tweet often about district events, as do many of your direct reports. For our constituents who are not online, printed material appears in the newspaper and the district sends educational and financial information to every household 4 times a year. While we recognize that communications will always be a work in progress, the Board is extremely pleased with the rather dramatic improvements in this aspect of district governance.

The Board acknowledges the difficulty in managing communication with 5 "bosses", each of whom has different interests and different requirements for detail. On balance, we believe you appropriately collaborate with Board Members on an ongoing basis and we appreciate that your door is always open, both to us and members of the public. Note that collaboration does not necessarily lead to acquiescence. You are a strong leader but you occasionally struggle when no clear consensus emerges on a given issue. We also acknowledge your close working relationship with the District treasurer. As you know, it is imperative that the Board's two direct reports have a strong relationship. We expect that District treasurer to be part of the management team, but as the Chief Executive Officer, we anticipate most decisions will be yours.

The district did not conduct a public survey this year and so its assessments of public beliefs were derived primarily from social media, task force participation, your coffees and similar settings, all reaching a relatively small number of people. The Board believes that a great deal of information can be derived from increased use of surveys, focus groups and similar instruments. We strongly believe your Superintendent's Advisory Council consisting of students as well as the continuing use of task forces such as the Treasurer's Advisory Committee and the Curriculum Liaison Council provides meaningful input, however, those vehicles provide limited ability to assess the broader views of the tax paying public. The Board would like to see a greater use of survey instruments, both for the public at large and also, meaningful post-graduation data.

The Board appreciates the emphasis on building and sustaining community awareness in our schools. In particular, the State of the Schools address in February provided an outstanding vehicle for community engagement. The Board believes that while there are appropriate avenues for community engagement and community participation in district events, finding out about these events remains a challenge for community members. A focus on a district-wide calendar with an eye towards alerting members of the public to those events that might be interesting such as plays, concerts and other events might be helpful.

Finally, with regard to community task forces, the Board gives you high marks for your continued use, but not overreliance, on this form of community engagement. Examples include the Treasurer's Advisory Committee, Curriculum Liaison Council, Building Plan Committee, Technology Committee, mission/vision task force and others, all of which benefit from your *personal* involvement.

OVERALL GRADE: ACCOMPLISHED

***POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE:** Effective superintendents identify, prioritize, recommend and follow policies and governance procedures that maintain a focus on the central goal — ensuring the success of all students. Effective superintendents recognize the moral imperative to ensure the success of every child and recommend and enforce policies and governance practices accordingly. Effective superintendents value the importance of an effective working relationship with the board and enlist the board's support for district goals. Representative elements include reviewing, recommending and implementing Board policies for the district, identifying and responding to societal and educational trends, modeling professional conduct and preparing data necessary for Board members to make informed decisions at board meetings. Local elements include encouraging a culture where the staff feels comfortable challenging the status quo and finally, maintaining effective relationships with our state officials.*

COMMENTS

The first element relates to Board policies and this come to us at an interesting time as the Board is currently reviewing all 1500 pages of its policy manual. We appreciate the support of your administration in this endeavor.

As you know, the goal of this process was to make sure that Board Policy matches current practice and that we have a maintainable set of Board Policies moving forward. This remains a work in progress.

The Board recognizes that responding to societal trends is an important component of educational leadership. The challenge for school districts is to respond to societal trends, but not over-respond. We believe you strike an appropriate balance in this respect. For example, you have dramatically increased the district's use of technology (an education trend) without having the district become overly reliant on the use of technology. You have responded to the societal desire for a reduced testing workload without compromising the need for the district to have data to make effective decisions. You have implemented programming based on the growth mindset (another educational trend) which is designed to assist with the implementation of the district goal of maximizing academic potential of every student. The Board acknowledges that educational trends come and go with the seasons and we are appreciative that your administration is wise enough to not respond to every wind current.

In general, the Board is more than satisfied with your efforts to keep us informed of significant district activities. The Board acknowledges that in an organization of 1000+ employees and 19 separate buildings, picking out which activities the Board needs to be informed about is a non-trivial task, particularly when different board members have different interests. Generally, significant district events are communicated as needed. Your Monday updates provide more data about more topics than any of your immediate three predecessors and you have granted (indeed, encouraged) us to go to your direct reports for more data when necessary.

The Board believes that encouraging bottom-up innovation is important for the Superintendent of Worthington Schools or any large organization. The Board has no way to know with certainty if staff is comfortable challenging the status quo although there is anecdotal evidence on both sides of the question. What we do see is a good faith effort to institute best practices through the effective use of data, an agreed upon goal setting process and a

continuous improvement process that is top-down but includes significant input from the buildings. We also acknowledge significant staff input into curriculum content and materials.

Finally, the influence of the General Assembly on public school districts in Ohio cannot be overstated; therefore, it is vital that our district maintain relationships with policy makers at the Ohio General Assembly and throughout the Ohio Department of Education, as well as through statewide advocacy groups. You clearly recognize this and have met appropriately with Worthington's representatives as well as encouraging your staff to take leadership positions in statewide organizations. We note your participation in the Executive Committee of the "Alliance for High Quality Education" statewide group. This is a work in progress, however. Worthington's voice needs to be heard on issues pertaining to assessment, accountability, standards and on financial matters. We expect that as you gain experience and time to foster the necessary relationships, this will become a natural part of the job.

OVERALL RATING: ACCOMPLISHED

***INSTRUCTION:** the Superintendent leads the creation of instructional systems designed for high student achievement. The Superintendent shall place a primary focus on improving instruction and enhancing student learning. As an instructional leader, the Superintendent shall create a district culture and expectations that support effective data-based decision making at all levels of the system. The Superintendent shall work with district and building administrators to identify, collect, analyze, and use relevant data to identify strengths to sustain and improvements to address. The Superintendent shall promote, support and use research-based best practices for curriculum design and instruction. Representative elements include creating and requiring the use of a district wide curriculum, implementing a comprehensive academic assessment system, assuring full access and opportunity to all students regardless of socio-economic status, creating high quality professional development opportunities and directing cocurricular programming for the district. Local elements include encouraging creativity and innovation in educational practices.*

COMMENTS:

Under your leadership, the district does require the use of the Board adapted Graded Courses of Study (GCOS) and you've put into place appropriate procedures to update these GCOS on a regular basis to remain aligned with Ohio Learning Standards. This year's course adoptions included AP Psychology, IB Psychology SL and a new World Languages curriculum, among others. The Board also appreciates the significant contribution that teachers make to this process, serving on curriculum writing teams, textbook selection teams and so forth.

The Board is concerned that the obvious care taken in hiring high quality teachers, creating a high quality curriculum, and teaching that curriculum with fidelity are not reflected on recent test results from the state report card. While we understand the challenges involved in the state's recent merry-go-round of different standardized tests (3 tests in 3 years) as well as the challenges inherent in teaching an increasingly diverse population, we encourage you to dig deeper into the data and try to assess whether the recent decline in test scores represents a problem with the assessments, a case of Ohio simply raising the bar or a possible misalignment between our local curriculum and Ohio's new learning standards.

The board notes that you have made some major strides in assuring equal access and opportunity, most recently, in the area of technology through the use of portable hotspots for students to access the Internet at home. In recognition of the summer slide, you have instituted high quality summer reading programs that will minimize this phenomenon. The district also makes summer activities available for students who might benefit from them.

In the area of professional development, while there are numerous professional development opportunities available for certified staff, the Board remains concerned that not all staff are accessing these opportunities on a consistent basis. There was a lot of focus that went into WORTHU16, yet less than half of certified staff attended. The Board encourages the Superintendent to do whatever he can to assure all staff accesses high quality professional development each year.

The Board acknowledges your increased emphasis on a robust cocurricular program which is predicated on your belief that every student must have, in order to thrive academically, at least one trusted adult in their building and that coaches serve that role for many students. As a result, Worthington maintains one of the strongest cocurricular programs in Central Ohio.

Finally, it is not clear to the Board whether creativity and innovation is adequately encouraged at every level in the district. To be sure, programming such as Linworth, Phoenix, Teacher-Driven Blended Learning offerings and the Worthington Academy reflect innovation. The Board believes that it is possible to foster an environment of staff creativity while still assuring compliance with curriculum and other mandates and encourages the WEC staff to find ways to do so. The Board believes that to respond dynamically to the needs of a rapidly changing society, risk must be taken. We further acknowledge that not every program will be successful or achieve the desired results, however, with programming, curriculum, teaching methodology and use of resources, there will be instances where the status quo isn't good enough. We encourage you to continue to embrace and unlock the creativity of Worthington's staff by creating a culture of innovation.

OVERALL RATING: SKILLED

***RESOURCES:** Effective superintendents intentionally focus financial, human, time, materials, technological and facility resources in support of district goals for instruction and achievement. Superintendents take actions to achieve district goals. They support individuals at all levels in the district and assume that the central office is a support and service organization for the schools. Effective superintendents organize the district to provide leaders appropriate authority within their schools to make decisions and implement initiatives. To allow for this to happen successfully, superintendents provide adequate and equitable resources across the district. Representative elements include obtaining and retaining high quality staff, prioritizing fiscal resources, providing and implementing a plan of annual assessment and evaluation for district employees and personally evaluating selective administrative personnel. Additional elements include managing transportation and food services and maintenance of district property. Local elements include working with the Treasurer's Advisory Committee and other organizations to maintain funding consistent with the district's educational goals as well as reporting to the Board and the community the status of district enrollment, building capacity and any overutilized or underutilized resources.*

COMMENTS

The success of a given recruitment class can only be measured in the fullness of time, but the Board does acknowledge the work being done in the district to recruit high quality candidates at all levels, from finding Principals and teachers at the last minute to participating in numerous recruitment fairs and attempting to bring forward quality candidates to individual buildings. The Board encourages continued investment in the recruitment of minorities as research indicates a correlation between minority hiring and successful outcomes for minority students, especially African American males.

The district's evaluation system continues to evolve based on local requirements and state law. The Board appreciates your efforts to incorporate BOE and WEC goals in the administrative evaluation process and encourages a culture of data-based evaluations (rather than the typical subjective evaluations) for administrative staff.

As previously noted, the Board appreciates the close working relationship between the Superintendent and Treasurer as evidenced by closely collaborating on the annual appropriations document, as well as your participation in the Treasurer's Advisory Committee. As the time to run either bond issues or operating levies (or both) comes nearer, the Board encourages you to take a hard look at both operating and capital requirements in preparation for recommending levy amounts to the Board.

Many of the elements in this category involve the management of the day to day operations of the district, specifically, food service and transportation. The Board encourages you to continue to look for efficiencies in both areas.

Finally, this year, the district initiated a multiyear process of reviewing district facilities in light of an aging infrastructure, overcrowding in some buildings and underutilization in others. The Board appreciates the thorough and inclusive nature of your process, as well as the unhurried pace at which you set out to meet this very important Board goal. The decisions that are made in the next year or two will impact the district for a quarter of a century, so while we acknowledge there may continue to be some short term overflow situations and maintenance headaches, this is certainly a case where getting it done right is more important than getting it done fast. The Board looks forward to your leadership in working with the community task force and the administration on a range of possible solutions next year.

OVERALL RATING: SKILLED

DISTRICT GOALS: This section of the evaluation reviews the district's 2015-2016 goals. A major component of OSES and the Worthington Superintendent Evaluation Process is to set annual short-term and long-term goals and then evaluate our progress during the OSES evaluation process. The Board realizes that some goals are multi-year in nature and that others may be aspirational in nature, but it is still important for you to communicate these goals to all levels of the organization and to hold district staff accountable for results. This year, we had 4 major goals.

1) Undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the current state of the district, including enrollment, programming, staffing and facilities.

Most of the activity surrounding Board Goal 1 was in the facilities and enrollment sections. A comprehensive audit of our facilities was conducted in a timely and cost-effective manner that will allow our district to make data-driven decisions as we enter Year 2 of this goal. Two enrollment studies were conducted with the district wisely choosing to wait for another year of data before making any decisions with regard to district boundaries. As our Board desires community input on all major decisions, we appreciate the inclusive nature of the task force you have commissioned to discuss both facilities and enrollment in Year 2 of this goal.

The Board also acknowledges the ongoing efforts to shift staff commensurate with enrollment fluctuations. While the results weren't overly dramatic, the Board appreciates the comprehensive look at rightsizing staff in each of our buildings as well as assuring, to the extent possible while remaining cost effective, equity in class sizes. One example of this is the successful incorporation of the 6th grade Evening Street class at Kilbourne Middle School as the most cost efficient way to deal with the classroom shortage in that building.

OVERALL RATING: ACCOMPLISHED

2) Create a Mission/Vision statement that provides a filtering tool for future decisions.

The purpose of the mission and vision statements is to provide a filtering tool for future decisions, so any objective evaluation of Board Goal 2 is going to have to be done in the fullness of time. For now, the Board is appreciative of the inclusive community-driven process for creating the statements as well as the statements themselves. For the mission/vision statements to be actionable, the Board believes they need to be incorporated into building improvement plans, job descriptions and Board policy where applicable and we need staff to provide evidence of vision statement implementation during annual reviews. Fortunately, both the mission and the vision statements lend themselves to this kind of scrutiny which is testimony to their quality.

OVERALL RATING: ACCOMPLISHED

3) Maximize Academic Potential for every student by increasing the number of students enrolled in AP, IB, College Credit Plus and Honors classes and decreasing the number of D's and F's.

The origin of Board Goal 3, a goal which is carried over into the 2016-2017 school year, was to try to pull out of every student every bit of potential that the student possesses and do this for every student. It was and is an

aspirational goal. In 2015-2016, you chose to focus on students enrolled in advanced, college-credit-earning classes at the high school level as well as looking at the district's grading criteria. Within the confines of this focus, the Board is very pleased with some of the metrics. There was a marked increase in students enrolling in advanced classes at the high school level and the grading seminar at WORTHU16 certainly provided secondary school teachers with food for thought regarding grading practices. The Board also acknowledges the internal data showing positive student growth. In addition, we note that under your leadership, the district is focused on early literacy, particularly putting into place programming to address the summer slide that disproportionately affects minorities and low-SES students. We encourage this as these investments will inevitably lead to all other parts of Board Goal 3 being met over time. The Board is, however, concerned over the district's recent performance on the state report card. We encourage you to thoroughly analyze the data from both Worthington and peer districts from the 2015-2016 testing period and report to the community as part of Board Goal 3 your assessment about whether the performance section of the report card represents a statistical anomaly or a genuine source of concern. The Board feels it lacks sufficient data to offer a meaningful rating at this time.

OVERALL RATING: NOT YET RATED

4) Ensure that Students graduate remediation free for college and career

This aspirational goal was translated by the administration into 5 component parts. They are: Students graduate without the need for remediation, deficits in reading and math are identified in K-8, students have the "21st century skills" desired by employers, students have developed career/college goals and personalized learning pathways. The Board acknowledges that this is still very much a work in progress and that this goal has been carried over to the 2016-2017 school year but in general, we are pleased at your progress in this area. The opening of Worthington Academy will provide opportunities for at-risk students that might otherwise have never even thought about college. The increased enrollment and exposure to AP coursework will help to minimize the need for remedial classes and new courses designed to provide assistance for struggling math students can also lead to a remediation free college experience. The Board is, again, concerned with our performance on the state report card in this area, however, and as with Board Goal 3, we encourage your administration to analyze the data and provide, as part of Board Goal 4, your assessment about whether the "college and career readiness" portion of the 2015-2016 state report card represents a genuine concern or is the state simply measuring the wrong criteria in this area. The Board feels it lacks sufficient data to offer a meaningful rating at this time.

OVERALL RATING: NOT YET RATED