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MEMORANDUM

February 29, 2016

Re: Focus on Improved Communication with Parents and Students

Dear Stakeholders,

In the past four years, we have completed yearly climate surveys and over forty focus group meetings, while developing our Strategic Plan and developing the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). As a result of these surveys and stakeholder engagements, one of the overarching desires from our parent and student stakeholders is improved communication on the progress of each student in terms of their grades, attendance and progress toward graduation. In addition, we want to implement an early warning system for families, which provides information at early stages so that parents and students can make changes in their behavior to get back on track toward success. We know that constant and accurate communication improves performance and reduces parent complaints by putting the onus on students to maintain their grades. This is an area that we must improve on as a school district.

When we look at our current situation, we have teachers using a variety of grading platforms. Currently, we have multiple systems that record grades, which are also used as a communication tool with parents and students for collecting assignments. Our current systems confuse parents. One of their chief concerns that they consistently report to us is that we do not have a cohesive way to communicate with them and they very much want a single, consistent and correct system that has all aspects of student information available to them with one login.

Additionally, we have too many instances where the information that has been input into the system is neither current nor complete. In order to give our community what they need and what they want, we need to have a system that is singular, complete and that will meet the needs of our students and parents.

We currently have approximately 60% of our teachers using School Loop and are making contact with student and parents. At some schools it is much higher and at others it is lower. School Loop does a good job with the features that it has, but it lacks the features that a student information management system has. The challenge is that without a cohesive approach, the data does not always get to where we need it (in Infinite Campus) or the data is reduced in translation or data is never fully recorded.

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A change to a single grading platform makes sense. Infinite Campus is our current student information system that houses grades, attendance, test scores and student behavior, as well as provides each school the capability to build its master schedule (class offerings). To date, the District has not fully utilized all of the modules in the Infinite Campus gradebook, including the parent portal. The Infinite Campus gradebook provides real time information regarding grades and attendance that School Loop does not provide. Attached is a matrix of the two systems.

Transition Period: To fully implement an early warning system we need all teachers providing information, maintaining grades and making sure the information is current and correct. We know that change is not easy and we want to develop a sixteen-month transition period to Infinite Campus which will allow all users to get fully up to speed with the new platform.

There are many new features that have been added to Infinite Campus and we know that parents, students and teachers will benefit from them. All new employees will be trained in Infinite Campus. Any employee that is ready to receive training using an electronic gradebook will receive training in Infinite Campus. Any teacher who is ready to transition from School Loop to Infinite Campus will receive training.

In addition, in order to address the survey results and the stakeholder meetings with regard to improved school-home communication, as well as providing the most current information on each student's grades and attendance, I am requiring that all classroom teachers use School Loop or Infinite Campus beginning in the Fall of 2016 and transition to Infinite Campus by the Fall of 2017, as well update their grades on a weekly basis. Obviously, turning around assignments and providing meaningful feedback as often as possible will provide more success for our students and, hopefully, improve parent engagement. This is a public expectation that we need to hold everyone accountable including our teachers, students and parents.

Thank you in advance for improving our communication and accountability to both students and parents.

Sincerely,



Chris D. Funk
Superintendent