

November 30, 2016

Greetings staff, families, and community members:

Last July, I began my role as West Bend's Superintendent. As a new community member, my initial goal was to learn about the West Bend School District and genuinely listen to a variety of opinions. One of my top priorities has been to visit with teachers and staff, meet the students and families at each school, and meet with community members. I have had the wonderful opportunity to see children learning and creatively thinking in their classes and to talk to educators about their opinions of our school climate, interpersonal dynamics, and areas of concern.

While learning about the community is an ongoing goal, over the past five months, my focus was on:

1. Understanding the strengths within the West Bend School District
2. Understanding the opportunities for improvement within the West Bend School District
3. What the district would be known for in five years, and
4. What indicators would signal I am off to a strong start as your superintendent.

From my listening sessions, themes emerged and are summarized below. The ideas generated will inform my next leadership steps. As an example, I will meet with District leaders to understand existing programs and processes, and then collaboratively explore areas that can be improved. Through understanding various opinions and reasons for current processes, then change can be carefully considered to strengthen the organization. From this "deep" dive, I will be able to leverage strengths, prioritize opportunities for improvement, focus on five year goals, and continue to reflect on my leadership style to help support our learning environments for all students and work environments for all the District's employees.

Regards,
Erik

Summary of Listening Sessions

Strengths

- Community Support - Parent and business partnerships
- Fiscal responsibility
- Innovative
- Most schools are maintained well
- On-site Wellness Clinic
- Opportunities for children:
 - Advanced placement classes
 - Arts
 - Athletics
 - Career classes
 - Course offerings
- Professional development opportunities
- Staff centered on students

Opportunities for Improvement

Explore the following areas to ensure alignment to and support of our our District values and vision of “Excellence for All.”

- All students learning at high levels
 - Ensure all children are academically growing and provide additional support when students are struggling (Response to Intervention)
 - Ensure identified Gifted & Talented students are “growing” and challenged
- Balanced assessment system
- Communication
- Compensation Plans
- Curriculum renewal and design process
- Embrace positive and uplifting culture at high schools
- Facilities upgrades
 - High Schools
 - Build a new Jackson Elementary School
- Focus: reduce the number of initiatives
- Invite input and open communication from staff, parents, and students on a variety of topics
- Strategic plan aligned from board room to classroom

Hope for the District in Five Years

- A Destination District
- All graduates prepared for career and college
- A Culture of Excellence and Positivity (staff, students, and family)

Indicators Superintendent is Engaging and Communicating Well

- Listening to and valuing all staff, students, and stakeholders
- Staff and community feel informed of District's direction
- Transparency
- Visibility in schools, at events, and in community