

# HIGHLINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 17, 2007

## *Memorandum*

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TO: All Employees  
FROM: John P. Welch

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### John's Journal

*Reflections from the Superintendent*

Welcome back from spring break! I hope you had a restful and rejuvenating week. I know some of you traveled to warmer locales, and others of you may have taken a good old-fashioned road trip.

If you did take a trip over the break, you no doubt started with a plan. Whenever we take a journey, we begin with the end in mind and follow a roadmap to make sure we stay on course.

As a school district, we also need a roadmap for our journey. That map is our strategic plan.

The school board has just adopted a new five-year strategic plan. This strategic plan is designed to lead us to our destination: **to prepare all students for college, career, and citizenship**, regardless of their ethnicity, socio-economic status, or previous academic experience. This plan is meant to keep our focus on key priorities and give us ways to measure our progress toward that vision.

Many voices contributed to the creation of our strategic plan. It represents a year of research, gathering of community input, and deep reflection about the direction of our school district.

The strategic plan reflects these core values:

#### **We believe...**

- in academic success and high expectations for all students.
- in lifelong learning for students and adults.
- in investing in our most valuable resource - our people.
- in innovation, continuous improvement, and results.
- in stewardship of community resources.

- in community engagement, partnerships, and open and honest communication.
- in accountability from the board room to the classroom.

The plan is organized around five strategic goal areas. You will recognize the now-familiar acronym LEARN. However, our goal statements have been updated, and each area has a new action plan that reflects our current reality.

**Learning Environment** - Develop schools that are safe, provide students with educational resources that prepare them for college, career, and citizenship, and inspire community pride.

**Excellence in Staff** - Develop hiring practices and an employee service system that attracts and retains high-quality teachers and staff.

**Achievement for Every Student** - Ensure that every student achieves high levels of academic success and preparation for college, career, and citizenship.

**Resource Stewardship** - Maximize resources allocated to student achievement while maintaining the financial stability of the district.

**Neighborhood and Community Engagement** - Develop partnerships with parents and our community that foster shared commitment to success for every student.

I encourage you take a look at the strategic plan. Every school and office has a hard copy, or you can go to <http://www.hsd401.org/ourdistrict/about/strategicplan.htm>. There you will see the data and community input we used to formulate the plan, as well as specific action plans for each goal area. It is a relatively short document; you can read through it in 10 to 20 minutes. If each of us spends even a few minutes looking over this "roadmap," it will help us all move in the same direction.

This strategic plan is a living, flexible document that will require adjustments along the way in response to new information or changing circumstances. But while strategies may be modified as necessary, our vision of college, career, and citizenship will remain constant.

We all are here because we believe in the power of educating children. We will get to our destination if we are all "rowing together." Our new strategic plan will help us stay on course.