



GROSSMONT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT'S NEWSLETTER

From the office of Superintendent Robert Collins

Wellness – A Community Commitment

“Employee wellness is about caring and strong employee morale is directly related to our caring for others. Everyone knows when you care.”

As school districts struggle with reform, issues of student achievement and numerous other challenges, they often forget the element of employee and student wellness. I know that the topic may sound far removed from reading and mathematics, but actually the two are closely related. Our Board of Education recognizes this connection and established a Wellness Committee.



Connecting Wellness to Achievement

Wellness includes eating correctly and proper exercise.

A strong wellness program creates a positive environment for learning for everyone. Aside from the positive effects that come with exercise and diet, is also the self-discipline and self confidence that comes with a healthy body. Finally, a strong wellness program tells everyone that we care about them, their health and well-being.

After seeing the most recent student **Fitnessgram scores**, there is cause for **concern on the part of everyone as to student fitness**. The additional reports on Type 2 Diabetes and obesity should also be alarms for us.

So while a strategic plan will be filled with student achievement goals, it will also address staff and student wellness. This has to begin in the spring in advance of the administration of the next Fitnessgram, but also has to be translated into practice in each school.

Working with recommendations of our Wellness Committee and with our administrators and physical educators, we need to actively address the issue of wellness in the coming year. That includes having wellness as part of any strategic plan. We truly care about the well being of every staff member and every student – that's what a strong wellness program is about.

The Strategic Plan – Just Whose Plan Is It?

In February and March I'll be presenting our strategic plan to the Board of Education to outline the direction of our school district as well as our plan for increasing student achievement. The question promptly asked is, **“Just whose plan is this?”** I hope that I've made it clear from the beginning that the strategic plan will be our plan, developed collaboratively by administrators, teachers, students and parents.

Today I'm visiting Santana High School. This is my last school site visit for the year. While I still have to visit the community day schools, I've been in each of our comprehensive high schools, the Adult School program and Chaparral Continuation High School.

The purpose of my visits was to devote extended time to the challenges, directions, programs and innovations that were already in place or that are being proposed. My purpose was to learn what is working well, what the instructional needs were and where we are in regard to **Proposition H and the physical condition of each site**.

There is no need for an expensive and lengthy audit of the District. Stakeholders in each school already know the strengths and the weaknesses within our District. **What is lacking is an overall plan to organize, support and develop these ideas**. I have seen great responses to issues of college preparation, career tech education, intervention, English Learners, special education and “at-risk” students.

As important as the ideas and blueprints are, it is the people of our school District that are making the difference. I have been impressed with the people and expertise in our District. That includes our principals, administrators, department chairpersons, classified staff, GEA representatives and parent leaders. It also includes so many teacher and administrator leaders who have developed strong programmatic responses to the challenges that face GUHSD.

Our strategic plan will be all about building upon what we know works in our District, sharing ideas and utilizing the expertise we have in each school. In the next months we will bring together many of the individuals we met during the past five weeks to help shape our plan.

A “Living Document”

Our plan should not be just another notebook to be placed on the shelf. It has to be a living document designed to change and grow to meet new challenges, address new research and develop new answers. I am calling upon all Grossmont stakeholders to be a part of this journey – where principals, administrators, teachers, staff, students and parents continually review, provide input to, restructure and renew our plan. **In the coming weeks and months we will establish the collaborative organization to put this type of living plan into place.**

Rules of the Garage

In developing any strategic plan, I am reminded of David Packard's (Hewlett-Packard) observations about how a garage is organized for real success. It kind of describes our work in developing a plan.

“Rules of the Garage: Believe you can change the world. Work quickly, keep the tools unlocked, work whenever. Know when to work alone and when to work together. Share - tools, ideas. **Trust your colleagues**. No politics. No bureaucracy. (These are ridiculous in a garage.) **The customer defines a job well done**. Radical ideas are not bad ideas. **Invent different ways of working**. Make a contribution every day. If it doesn't contribute, it doesn't leave the garage. **Believe that together we can do anything. Invent.”**

