

November 9, 2014

To: The Dickinson Public School Board
From: Sarah Ricks, President
RE: Dr. Douglas Sullivan's Formal Summary

Four out of five board members responded to the request for Dr. Sullivan's evaluation. All four were satisfactory in each of the areas selected for evaluation. Following are comments and suggestions from individual board member evaluations:

1. Relationship with School Board

Comments: Dr. Sullivan consistently attends and is prepared for every meeting and adds valuable information. Dr. Sullivan has been completely hands on with the community and the board in disseminating information. His updates via e-mail to the board and his newspaper column and his monthly letter to parents and the community continue to keep the lines of communication open. Supt. Sullivan is proactive in bringing pertinent information and discussion to various school board members who serve on board committees. He spends time visiting face-to-face with individuals serving on the School Board. I have observed that he is skilled at facilitating dialogue that leads to greater understanding among the board members. He has been respectful in stating his reasons for his thinking and his decisions; he also listens to other points of view. Having served on several committees with Dr. Sullivan, it is refreshing to see him allow openness during committee meetings and still move forward with what is necessary. I appreciate Dr. Sullivan's willingness to research and obtain the information that the board requests to aid us in making decisions. It is impressive that Dr. Sullivan keeps us up to date on recommended policy. I know many districts struggle with this and I am grateful for his diligence. I believe that the superintendent has been handed quite a challenge in keeping the school district's policies and the School Board itself up to date with new laws and changes implemented by both federal and state governments. He has also been faced with unique circumstances that require close study and interpretation of laws and policies. I commend Supt. Sullivan for his proactive approach in seeking legal guidance and in conveying that information to the School Board in a timely manner. I have observed that the time he takes to reflect on our discussions often helps to bring a positive resolution to issues.

Recommendations: While I feel that the working relationship between Dr. Sullivan and the school board is a good one, I also feel that communication within the district could be improved. Some problems we experienced in the past year might have been avoided with better communication between parties. A survey that the technology committee did last year also revealed that there seemed to be some issues with the information flow from committees to buildings and vice versa. I would recommend that Dr. Sullivan investigate methods for improved communication and information sharing.

2. Educational leadership (including philosophy, curriculum development and staffing)

Comments: I have appreciated Supt. Sullivan's continued laser-like attention to the AdvanceEd report and the changes that it directed the district, under his leadership, to make. Supt. Sullivan continues to work, modify, update and refine the Strategic Plan; the School Board appreciates a review of our plan – or sections of our plan – and progress toward the goals on a regular basis. I am aware that Dr. Sullivan is seeking to stay current with educational trends. I know that he has been to other school districts as part of the research for our new middle school. He attends conferences and reads articles. He shares this information with school board committees who report back to the board. Curriculum development is always the backbone of our education system. I believe we have a good product, and great teachers to deliver the product. Staffing in this chaotic environment has been challenging but rewarding.

Recommendations: I suggest that data be collected and presented to the board for the 1:1 pilot programs being run in certain high school departments. What changes in teaching and learning have come as a result of increased technology use? What has been the effect on student achievement? What were the specific goals of the department and were they met? A rubric needs to be made with quantifiable standards. I would recommend that Dr. Sullivan work very closely with the Curriculum Director to find ways to communicate better with the staff and encourage collaborative ways to get buy in so when time comes to deliver the product our staff is comfortable, well prepared and part of the process. I would suggest that Dr. Sullivan might keep the board advised of trends affecting our exceptional students such as those with special needs, those who are English

language learners and those who are gifted. I suggest that the School Board hear regular reports on national curriculum trends and upcoming issues. For example: using technology in music or other encore classes may lead to enhanced student learning and should be explored, the knowledge shared. Southwest Community High School will need to change and expand based on the needs of its students. It is to the community's and the school district's advantage to continue to provide comprehensive instruction to SWCH students. It was a positive move to add the parenting component and to expand language arts.

3. Relationship with community

Comments: I would agree that our district has taken some big steps forward in the area of public relations under Dr. Sullivan's leadership. One thing I appreciate about him is that he is careful and thoughtful when answering the questions of those inside and outside of our district when they bring forward difficult issues. The new website is a big improvement and I am so impressed with the work of the district-wide PAC. I am very grateful for all of the hard work that Dr. Sullivan put in on the bond election to make it a success. It amazes me that Dr. Sullivan has much time to get anything of the educational nature done with as many meetings as he goes to. I know he attends the Rotary lunches, Chamber Round Table, has regular parent advisory meetings, he helped guide the way for the bond election, I have seen him visiting schools, all the while he attends, if not runs, multiple committee meetings within the school district. I was impressed with Supt. Sullivan's support of and interaction with the DHS students who participated in the DLR Group's challenge at NSBA. He is very visible in the community, schools, and participates and provides positive information about our schools. He loves kids and that shows. He truly believes in the mission of public schools and that resonates with everyone. Most importantly he is very cordial and approachable. His open door policy and willingness to listen before any decisions are made makes him very invaluable to us and to our community.

Recommendations: As a district I think we can continue to improve our public relations. We could make our websites more mobile accessible and possibly increase our use of social media to reach more parents and community members. Supt. Sullivan is visible in the community and has been on television quite a bit. I would like to see him regularly attend a variety of coffee groups in the community, perhaps setting a goal of meeting with a number of different groups and rotating those visits. I suggest he make a point of attending a variety of home sporting events, junior high/high school drama and music productions, BEST Robotics, speech meetings and other similar student activities as a way to meet and network with parents, as well as showing support for the students.