

TUCSON UNIFIED

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Heliodoro T. Sánchez, Ed. D.
Superintendent

District Leadership Team:

Thank you for your time and attention last week at our District Leadership Team Retreat. We covered important topics and previewed the work ahead. This memo is to capture the week-long session and highlight key points we discussed. Many of you were taking notes. This is my reflection and enclosed are my notes.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS)

The first three days focused on PBIS. I know many of you have had different renditions of PBIS training in the past, but it was important to get everyone on the same page going into next year. We couldn't move forward with fractured knowledge and expect to see PBIS occur on every campus next year. We also sent a team of principals to the trainer-of-trainers session in Phoenix. They will ensure that we maintain expertise to support our schools, teachers, and students.

Our assistant superintendents and directors will work with our PBIS certified principals to devise PBIS follow-up support going into next year. It is vital that acting principals lead the work and guide the training. With all that goes into setting up a PBIS system on campus, success will come from our collective commitment to help each other succeed.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

We spent this school year learning about PLC structures. A teacher team advised the work of our curriculum department in the creation of a Tucson Unified PLC Handbook. As you saw, the PLC Handbook is replete with useful information to move into year two. Your conversations about the next steps for PLC frameworks were thoughtful, and your request to further explore this topic is noted. We will build further training into our ILA structure. Each of the topics presented are a full day or two worth of professional learning.

The "Focus, Teach, Assess, and Reflect" rubric was especially powerful due to its simplicity and utility. The appendices also captured the tell-tale denotations of what is needed to move from our present reality of scattered teacher collaboration to our desired reality of quality and systemic teacher collaboration.

Tucson Unified Curriculum v3.0

Our curriculum department and the teachers who spent countless hours working on revising the curriculum deserve major accolades. Less than 3 years ago, Tucson Unified had no written curriculum but, today, we have access to quality documents that speak to the extraordinary expertise among our instructional faculty. The webpage is easy to access and

use. It's great to have the v3.0 Curriculum at our fingertips. We have incorporated our leveled library content, and our v3.0 Curriculum reflects our multicultural literature selection.

The Scope and Sequence by Quarter is a great planning document. It allows a full year at a glance that captures Highly-Leveraged Standards, Supporting Standards, and Constant Standards. The thematic denotations are also exceptionally useful. The grade level and content specific Curriculum Maps help plan aligned instruction and provide teachers with user-friendly definitions of the standards but also enduring understandings, essential questions, district resources, web links, and student standards written as TSWBAT statements. My favorite documents are the Curriculum Map Supplements with the Performance Level Descriptors. The descriptors differentiate among minimally proficient, partially proficient, proficient, and highly proficient instruction appertaining to each Highly-Leveraged Standard.

Move to Campus-Based Formative Assessments (CFA)

We spent last year becoming familiar with the new School City assessment program. With our familiarity and greater access to student computers, we are ready to take the next step. We spent last year using three district benchmark assessments to guide instruction and build greater alignment in our district curriculum.

With our v3.0 Curriculum and PLC emphasis, the next step in our evolution is to move to campus-based formative assessments. By using the v3.0 Curriculum and School City within the context of PLC meetings, teachers will be able to create CFA's and design instruction backwards from each CFA. This will ensure tight alignment among the v3.0 Curriculum (written curriculum), content delivery (taught curriculum), and CFA (assessed curriculum). Teachers and campus leaders will have the data at their fingertips via School City to identify student learning gaps and address them through subsequent instruction and academic intervention in real time.

In the 2016-17 school year, we will use one district-wide benchmark assessment in late October to gauge the effectiveness of CFA's and instruction. Campuses that score in the top 25 percentile will have the option to forgo the February benchmark assessment due to the effectiveness of their campus' use of CFA's, v3.0 Curriculum, and content delivery.

We will use our Instructional Leadership Academy time to build our mutual knowledge and refine this new instructional system. We will expand our PLC framework knowledge, and we will explore the School City program and its assessment building features. We will also identify the optimal School City reports to ensure we are looking at the right data. Most importantly, we will take time to become expertly familiar with effective classroom observation protocol to ensure we provide teachers with optimal feedback to guide content delivery.

Cadre ILA's

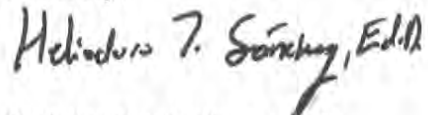
We will schedule one ILA session a month for campus-focused cadres. We are in the process of creating the cadre leader criteria. Once cadre leaders are identified, they will

gather their peers to share ideas and strategies to build their PBIS systems, PLC frameworks, deployment of v3.0 Curriculum, design of CFA's, and observation protocols. This will be a great opportunity to schedule visits to each other's campus and schedule times for teachers from different schools to work together or visit each other's classrooms.

Next Year

Over the last three years, we have assembled all of the pieces for an effective district-wide content delivery system. This next year promises to be our best. We have learned so much from each other, and we have the collective knowledge of over 89 schools. We know what our AZ Merit baseline looks like, and we are positioned to make great ground on the state average, and in subsequent years, we will exceed it.

Attentively,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heliodoro T. Sánchez, Ed.D." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Heliodoro T. Sánchez, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools