

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #832
STUDY SESSION – BOARD OF EDUCATION
Thursday, January 24, 2008 - 7:00 PM
Mahtomedi District Education Center - Community Room

The Mission of the Mahtomedi School District No. 832, as a multi-community public school system, is to provide individually challenging, lifelong learning experiences for all people, leading to productive and self-fulfilling roles in a global society, accomplished through partnerships with students, families, staff and communities all committed to excellence.

- AGENDA -

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL OF ATTENDANCE
3. DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEMS
 - A. Facility Planning Update
Presenter: Denise Sundstrom
 - B. Review Pending Decision by North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale School Board Regarding Membership in EMID
Presenter: Mark Wolak
 - C. Review 2008-2009 Enrollment Forecast
Presenter: Sue Ann Gruver and Denise Sundstrom
 - D. Discuss 2008-2009 Budget Planning Process
Presenter: Mark Wolak
 - E. Review/Discuss Superintendent Evaluation Results 2
Presenter: Mark Wolak
4. ADJOURNMENT



MAHTOMEDI PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Individual Attention with a World View

December, 2007

Dear Superintendent Evaluation Participant:

I am requesting your feedback about my leadership effectiveness as Superintendent of Mahtomedi Schools. You were selected by your principal/supervisor or you belong to a team of which all members are being asked to respond (School Board, administration, district office, and so forth). If, after reviewing the materials, you do not wish to participate in my evaluation process, please notify my assistant Dawn at dmaslows@mahtomedi.k12.mn.us or 2002 and another person will be asked.

The evaluation seeks your feedback regarding three aspects of my work:

1. My impact on attainment of goals in the school district,
2. Ways that I can improve my leadership in the school district or community, and
3. Ways that I am leading that are helpful and productive for you.

Attached is a document that outlines district goals for 2005-2007 and a self-appraisal for each goal. After review, please provide your own rating of my impact on the survey at the website link provided. Your responses are anonymous. A summary of the responses will be made public and provided to the School Board in January.

I appreciate your help in this process and thank you in advance for contributing to my growth as a leader.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Wolak". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Wolak, Ed. D
Superintendent of Schools

Superintendent Evaluation Forms Sent To:

School Board Members - 6

John Belisle
Cathy Dalton
Kevin Donovan
Bill Roberts
Judy Schwartz
Steve Wolgamot

Administrators - 13

John Deir
Russ Fraenkel
Sue Ann Gruver
Mark Hamre
Molly Hollihan
Chris Moore
Kathe Nickleby
John Sedey
Denise Sundstrom
Lynne Viker
Denise Waalen
Jeff Whisler
Sharon Zweber

District Wide (5)

Phil Belden, B & G Supervisor
Patrick Crothers, Tech. Dept.
Jim Hering, Tech. Dept.
Deb Kaczorek, Tech. Dept.
Tonya Kostuch, Tech. Dept.

District Office (9)

Lynda Counihan
Luanne Dean
Laura Eliason
Deb Hogan
Nicole Honeycutt
Dyan Lovgren
Dawn Maslowski
Patti Pratt
Georgia Williamson

Community Education (2)

Mary George
Julie Toppson

MAEF (4)

Susan Brust
Sue Moore
Bob Shultz
Kelly Unger

Wildwood School (8)

Terri Beaver, para
Nanette Chow, clerical
Jody Eick, para
Stacy Fesser
Jim Jensen, head custodian
Edie Schmidt
Kathy Schwister
Paula Tansom

O. H. Anderson School (9)

Roy Anderson, head custodian
Adam Beyer, MEA President
Laurie Gerver
Sharon Jeans, para
Jane Martz, clerical
Terry Rodrique, para
Beth Sneden
Tamara Terman
Terry Trautman

Middle School (8)

Paul Beggin
Terry Hejny, para
Beth Ketzner, para
Linda Niziolek
Julie Osterbauer, head custodian
Bonny Strege, clerical
Tim Wilhelmson
Mary Bell Wolff

High School (8)

Nancy Breening
Dave Brown, head custodian
Donna Forbes
Michelle Hatcher, para
Chris King, clerical
Emily Osborne
Joyce Rohrig, para
Steve Wheeler

MLC (2)

Angie Buckingham
Judy Karel, para

**Appraisal of Performance of Superintendent Mark Wolak
Measures of Impact and Attainment of District Goals
December 2007**

**District Goal and Strategies
(2005-2007)**

Goal One

Student performance will increase through continuous improvement practice in the schools and school district.

Desired Results

- Data shows improved student achievement as measured by state and national tests, course exams, school outcomes, grade level assessments, and individual progress measures.
- Data shows an increase in performance for students who exhibit high capability in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, possess unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields.
- Data shows an increase in achievement for students who typically do not perform well in the classroom, on state and national tests, grade level testing and individual progress measures.
- Measures of student well-being (reports on nutrition, chemical health, satisfaction with school and participation in activities) are used to focus resources in student support services.
- Students, staff and community report high levels of satisfaction with student performance and school excellence.

Self-Appraisal (December 2007)*

Evidence or Data

The School Board and administration completed a third annual data retreat on October 26, 2007. A presentation on school and district performance was given to the school board by the entire administrative team. Results for each district arena were reported and are summarized in the table below:

District Scorecard Results – 2007

ARENA	Targets Met
Student Learning	7 of 9 areas
Satisfaction	8 of 10 areas
System Performance	6 of 6 areas
Professional Practice	5 of 5 areas
Community Engagement	7 of 7 areas

School district and schools now use a balanced scorecard process to measure current performance and monitor progress of school district in areas of system performance, student learning, professional development, satisfaction, and community engagement.

Measures for continuous improvement practice are now possible through Northwest Education Assessments (NWEA) and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments, reading and math interventions, literacy blocks (K-5), Positive Behavior Intervention Services (PBIS) and Response to Intervention (RtI) systems (K-8).

The strategic goals of the school district are in alignment from the school board to the schools. This leadership practice is based on effective schools research and is an evidenced-based practice for improving student achievement.

Staff development goals are developed based on needs defined by school and district teams. Staff development occurs as needed for the school board, administration, teachers, and all support staff.

Curriculum reviews completed in the following areas: Technology Education, Food and Consumer Sciences, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Languages, Music, and Gifted and Talented Services.

New district policies written for student wellness (533), differentiation of instruction (612), teacher improvement program (423), district accountability (616), and student achievement (618). Policies are available on the district website.

National School Survey Evaluation data (NSSE), conducted annually by school, reports satisfaction by students, staff and parents. Administrators, school teams and school board review results as part of continuous improvement practice.

District Goal and Strategies (2005-2007)

Goal Two

The economic health of the school district will be maintained through strategic program review and the formation of effective partnerships.

Desired Results

- Strategic Program Review defines priorities for programs and services based on the desired performance outcomes for students.
- Partnerships with area school districts and other entities increase efficiency and effectiveness and reduce costs.
- Creativity and planning contribute to district economic health.
- Revenue to the school district is predictable and sufficient for maintaining priority programs and services to students.

Self-Appraisal (December 2007)

Comprehensive Program Reviews are completed in Early Childhood to Grade 5 (E-5), Middle School, High School, Student Activities/Athletics, and Community Education Programs and Services. Program reviews

were completed to ensure that programs, services and course offerings would meet the vision of the school district. A secondary goal was to seek cost efficiencies and set priorities for funding.

Effective partnerships/written agreements to share services are established to reduce costs and to improve the quality of services. Current agreements include:

- White Bear Lake Schools for special education director services, transportation services and supervision of facility improvements;
- Stillwater Schools for food services,
- District 916 for purchasing services,
- SEE Program (Hallberg Engineering) for energy efficiencies; lowering cost increases by 20% in past two years,
- University and business partnerships and with MAEF in the development of the Mahtomedi Engineering Leadership Program, grades 6-12,
- Mahtomedi Area Education Foundation (MAEF) as a major contributor for schools and staff on an annual basis for education grants to teachers, instructional technology in classrooms and development of the Mahtomedi Engineering Leadership Program

Administrators work effectively as a team in areas of staff supervision, curriculum improvement, financial management, professional development, adoption of technology for instruction, and school improvement planning.

Demography studies were completed in 2006 and 2005 to determine enrollment projections for future years.

Open enrollment policy change by the School Board contributed to stable enrollment for 2007-2008 and, therefore, a stable financial picture with an additional \$2 million in state revenue annually.

School District audit reports shows consistent revenue and expenditure plan for past five years with a stable fund balance. Spending reductions were completed when necessary to balance the budget and maintain a predictable fund balance.

District Goal and Strategies (2005-2007)

Goal Three

The public trust and confidence in the performance of the school district will increase through improved communications and meaningful participation.

Desired Results

- Data shows increased citizen support for the school district based on regular evaluation.
- Citizens participate in the schools and learn about the needs of students.

Self-Appraisal (December 2007)

Public confidence in the school district grew over the past two years. The District 916 Annual Regional Survey Of Public Attitudes Toward Education (2007), a regional survey conducted by the Center for Community Opinion, an independent firm, shows an increase in the number of citizens grading Mahtomedi's performance as a district by a letter grade of "A". In 2007, 56.6 percent of respondents gave a grade of "A" compared with 2005 results when 45.5 percent of respondents gave the district a grade of "A".

New Committees for citizen participation include:

Engineering Leadership Program Development Team

Parent participation on program review teams

Citizen Participation in facility planning beginning January 2008

Web-based tools for parent and citizen participation include:

National School Survey Evaluation (NSSE)

Instant Alert notification system

Website enhancements for school news, report cards, registrations, school lunches and so forth

Globe district news improved

E-News and Superintendent Pod casts initiated


* This self-appraisal is a snapshot of key outcomes in response to district goals and superintendent job targets. These outcomes were accomplished with the help of many individuals in the schools and with the assistance of other leaders in the district.

2007 Superintendent Appraisal of Performance


1. District Goals 2005-2007
(Check number that best defines my impact on achievement of the district goal)

	1 - Low Impact	2	3	4	5	6 - High Impact	Response Count
District Goal One	0.0% (0)	7.7% (3)	2.6% (1)	20.5% (8)	28.2% (11)	41.0% (16)	39
District Goal Two	0.0% (0)	5.1% (2)	2.6% (1)	15.4% (6)	38.5% (15)	38.5% (15)	39
District Goal Three	2.6% (1)	2.6% (1)	5.1% (2)	17.9% (7)	28.2% (11)	43.6% (17)	39
<i>answered question</i>							39
<i>skipped question</i>							0

2. Please identify additional ways that I can improve my leadership in the school district or community:

	Response Count
 view	24
<i>answered question</i>	24
<i>skipped question</i>	15

3. Please identify ways that I am leading that are helpful and useful for you and that I should continue:

	Response Count
 view	26
<i>answered question</i>	26
<i>skipped question</i>	13

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Please identify additional ways that I can improve my leadership in the school district or community:

#	Response Date	Response Text
1.	12/13/2007 5:45:00 PM	Continue to work with the Administrative team on the Data driven goals and expectations. I feel it helps everyone set the bar high and work to achieve. I think the Balanced Score Card was an excellent idea. Continue to ask people for the data that shows the area's of growth and improvement.
2.	12/13/2007 6:00:00 PM	Be more visible throughout the district. (Schools/community events/activities)
3.	12/13/2007 7:34:00 PM	Be more visible in the schools...more often. I think it makes a difference when you show up in support of various programs, etc.
4.	12/13/2007 10:15:00 PM	Mark I think you should be more visible to the staff and community. This can take place via multi media like your podcasts (although i wish you would share more of your vision and thoughts on the future of education), website and globe but also the old fashioned way with open office hours and building staff meetings. (People feel important when you attend their meetings-it makes staff feel like they are important enough to get on your calendar.) The community can get to know you better with an occasional article in the WB Press. I understand you need to balance work and life so this can get tricky. On the negative side: we have a few 20th century principals who don't seem to understand progressive partnerships. A little nudging from you might help.
5.	12/14/2007 1:20:00 AM	Continue to be out in the public. You are a great representative of our district.
6.	12/14/2007 1:23:00 PM	Be more visible to the staff and the public.
7.	12/14/2007 4:27:00 PM	Improve visibility. Regroup in commitment to professional learning communities. Study the impact of open enrollment on student support services. Provide opportunities for additional staff development activities in partnership with you/the superintendent and the staff. In other words, do the staff development with staff (not just administrators or alone) as a common vision and commitment would be more likely obtained.
8.	12/14/2007 9:46:00 PM	You provide the steady, trustworthy leadership that the district needs while adding your own creative approach to solving problems.
9.	12/15/2007 3:59:00 PM	More visible at events (sporting, music, etc..). I never see Mark at these events, which are great networking opportunities. Attempt to engage teachers more directly--there is some animosity/resentment/lack of trust toward Mark due to prior issues.
10.	12/17/2007 5:57:00 PM	- I believe that you must be more of a presence in the schools. It seems that you have become less visible to the staff and students. In a district such as Mahtomedi where the community does talk and several staff members live in the district, it is extremely important to be visible. Word then gets spread through students, staff, and parent volunteers that you are actively engaged in what is happening and not just receiving reports from administrators at weekly meetings. - Improving and then maintaining staff morale is extremely important. - Keep administrators in their buildings. A couple of building administrators are out of their buildings a significant amount of time and that is recognized by the staff and parents especially. Regardless of professional organizations to which they belong and the experience they attain at conferences, they have to be a presence in their buildings. Very discouraging at times to see what appears to be personal/professional growth placed ahead of their initial responsibility.

- 11. 12/17/2007 9:08:00 PM You need to spend more of your time with the high performers in our district.

You seem disconnected with the buildings and the day to day task. Goals are set with minimal to no involvement from teachers. Goals and initiatives seem to be pushed through without a firm foundation or staff support. Later staff members are told what the initiative are. There is a need for more teacher leaders that are truly allowed to be part of the decision making process. Currently, this involvement is limited and sometimes teacher leaders are in name only. Our principal is overloaded with district responsibilities with limited time to accomplish and support building goals. There continues to be a disconnect between what is being told to the public and what is actually happening in the buildings. Sometimes the public is told about initiatives before staff have had a chance to implement. We attempt major initiatives in a one to two year time span. These are usually initiatives that should take at least 3 to 5 years to implement. Along with a short time span, we are not adequately funded with support for resources and staff development. This has been better but still not adequate. I feel we spend a lot of time marketing and not as much time developing quality programs. We need you to be involved and alleviate some of the principals' responsibilities, we need you to adequately finance new initiatives, we need timelines for new initiatives to be feasible with a built in evaluation system that works to modify, improve implemented iniatives, and to determine if they are effective, we need to have more teacher leaders and they need to have an equal voice,
- 12. 12/17/2007 10:42:00 PM
- 13. 12/18/2007 4:29:00 PM I believe an area that needs some additional resource and direction is meeting the needs of high potential and gifted students. Teachers need some guidelines, resources, curriculum etc. particularly at the elementary and Middle School levels, on how to meet these high level needs. I feel we are doing a very nice job with students at the other end of the spectrum.
- 14. 12/19/2007 7:47:00 PM It is always great to see Mark in the schools as much as possible.
- 15. 12/19/2007 8:53:00 PM Increase visibility in the school buildings
- 16. 12/19/2007 9:22:00 PM We need to get back to "students first". In the past few years many people that have left the district (all areas not just teachers) have been some of the most dedicated, capable, hard working people that I have ever met. What's going on? This reflects on leadership of the district.
- 17. 12/19/2007 9:55:00 PM Continue to improve upon communication efforts, especially regarding district websites.
- 18. 12/20/2007 11:08:00 AM I think you are doing a great job and am not sure what more you could do.
- 19. 12/20/2007 5:32:00 PM I THINK YOU DO A GREAT JOB
- 20. 12/20/2007 9:10:00 PM Continue to lead by example and by consistency in decision making process. These are key qualities I fee that leadership in this District needs.
- 21. 12/21/2007 1:58:00 PM n/a
- 22. 12/21/2007 3:41:00 PM Meetings with staff
- 23. 12/21/2007 4:59:00 PM I believe you are addressing some of the problematic culture issues and getting the point across that we exist for the kids, not primarily for the employees. There is more to be done in identifying those issues that are getting in the way of moving ahead, while maintaining the positive uniqueness of the district--a delicate balancing act.

Without being privvy to the day-to-day operations, it would appear that Mark is a manager that allows his reports latitude and an ability to exercise professional judgment in implementing major initiatives. While this is a commendable management style, there have been times where a more hands-on approach and

24. 12/21/2007 7:48:00 PM

direction would have been beneficial and could have saved the district from a public perception perspective as well as improved the financial condition of the district. In general, areas where a more hands on directive would have been warranted include the fee discussions with Grant and other municipalities, fund raising for the Engineering Leadership Program, and communications around the disbandment of the Multi-Age program.

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Please identify ways that I am leading that are helpful and useful for you and that I should continue:

#	Response Date	Response Text
1.	12/13/2007 4:54:00 PM	You are very positive and encouraging. You are doing a GREAT JOB! Thank you.
2.	12/13/2007 5:03:00 PM	Mark, I think you are doing an outstanding job as Superintendent of Mahtomedi Schools. Your leadership, guidance, and support are the reason that Mahtomedi Schools are among the best in the state and nation. Continue to do what you are doing: helping us grow professionally, keeping us on the cutting edge, and supporting the new initiatives.
3.	12/13/2007 5:45:00 PM	I think that the District sees the importance of accountability and useful data because of your leadership. The students are all benefiting because of this. Your partnership with other Districts has also been helpful for budget saving ideas. Mahtomedi District is looked at as a leading district because of your foresight and stucture as a leader. Thanks!
4.	12/13/2007 6:40:00 PM	Communication has improved with a focus on community involvement supporting the alignment of district goals to focus on student achievement.
5.	12/13/2007 7:34:00 PM	I appreciate the fact that you are easy to talk with and willing to listen to ideas not necessarily of the norm.
6.	12/13/2007 10:15:00 PM	I really appreciate your BIG ideas and visionary style. We need a leader with your courage to take us to the next step in education. I am happy that you have surrounded yourself with a talented DO staff that takes care of the day to day stuff. Thanks for all that you do. I hope you are here to lead us through the exciting changes in education.
7.	12/14/2007 1:20:00 AM	Working with the administrative team has been fun and productive. Your leadership has been the lynch pin keeping us on target.
8.	12/14/2007 4:27:00 PM	Continued and improved visibility in the actual schools is critical. Providing opportunities through solicitation for teaching staff and students to dialogue needs to be improved. It is not just enough to state there is an open door policy. People need to feel comfortable in an atmosphere that is not agenda related (e.g., facilities or strategic program review mtgs.)
9.	12/14/2007 9:46:00 PM	As an employee of the district it is important to have someone who understands educational needs as well as someone who can work well with the community and who is eager to listen and respond to individual concerns.
10.	12/15/2007 3:59:00 PM	Good at communicating one on one.
11.	12/17/2007 5:57:00 PM	- You appear to do a good job of empowering the administrators to run their buildings/staffs as they deem appropriate. This district has several talented administrators who have helped to make significant improvements in what were already impressive test scores. - Thank you for making tough decisions. I was very impressed that you convinced the Board to open-up enrollment. It was a necessary move considering current school funding issues and we have an incredible product of which we should take advantage. - On that same note, please continue to weed out staff that are not willing to do their jobs. It is recognized and appreciated. - I appreciate that you are making the effort to communicate with the staff and community via different means. The podcast and enews are intersting techniques for reaching a variety of audiences.
12.	12/17/2007 9:08:00 PM	You are open to new ideas. You are not afraid to do something even if other districts haven't tried it yet!

13.	12/17/2007 10:42:00 PM	You do a great job with public relations with MAEF and fund raising. You are an avid reader and are a role-model in the need to keep current with best practice. It seems that union relations have improved.
14.	12/18/2007 4:29:00 PM	I feel the open dialogue of communication through the data retreat with the school board is tremendous. I feel you have done a very nice job in preparing board members on how to use data to drive educational decisions.
15.	12/19/2007 3:13:00 PM	Electronic communications to staff are helpful. I am also looking forward to more communication and discussion of upcoming facilities improvements and bond referendum.
16.	12/19/2007 7:47:00 PM	Mark is very supportive of his staff. He encourages people to do their best.
17.	12/19/2007 8:53:00 PM	Tremendously supportive of building administrators Creative, innovative, supportive of new initiatives for students and staff
18.	12/19/2007 9:55:00 PM	Appreciate reference to MAEF as important and valuable partner. Holding us up as a key partner helps MAEF to be more successful and in turn provides for more private investment in the school district.
19.	12/19/2007 11:54:00 PM	personal meetings to touch base about community education and it's alignment to district initiatives
20.	12/20/2007 11:08:00 AM	I appreciated that you are visible, and approachable to the parents/staff--I have not always experienced that with Superintendents.
21.	12/20/2007 5:32:00 PM	COMMUNICATION IS GOOD
22.	12/20/2007 9:10:00 PM	Mr. wolak is helpful in that he is very approachable to employees and staff members. Being available to employees either to meet face to face or for meetings is extremely important. Your visibility in the District is exceptional.
23.	12/21/2007 1:58:00 PM	n/a
24.	12/21/2007 4:59:00 PM	I appreciate your confidence in the ability of your administration to follow through on expectations without undue direction, but with a sense that you are always there if we need coaching or support. I believe you are clear in those expectations.
25.	12/21/2007 7:48:00 PM	First off, we are blessed to have Mark leading our district. Mark continues to challenge the normal - or pas - ways of thinking in order to push the envelope. Examples include his leadership and foresight of the Engineering Leadership Program and the technological advancements (SmartBoards) that make our District the envy of others. I have heard from many, both inside and outside the district, that Mahtomedi Schools offer a private education for a public education price.
26.	12/23/2007 6:25:00 PM	Continue to connect with the community and the staff of each building through informal as well as formal settings.