



# SHAKER HEIGHTS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
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Gregory C. Hutchings Jr., Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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**To:** Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Superintendent  
**From:** Annette Tucker Sutherland, Member Board of Education  
**Date:** September 15, 2016  
**Re:** 2015-16 Annual Superintendent's Evaluation

Once again, The Board utilized the Ohio Standards for Superintendents as the basis for your annual evaluation. The Ohio Standards provide a common framework from which to structure the evaluation of a superintendent's performance. In addition, we indicated whether or not you successfully completed the 25 (including five bonus) objectives laid out for you in your annual Expectations as modified in March 2016. Under the Ohio Standards for Superintendents, there are five standards or areas that cover key parts of a superintendent's role, namely: Vision, Continuous Improvement and Focus of District Work; Communication and Collaboration; Policies and Governance; Instruction; and Resources. It is our belief that this tool allows for a robust evaluation that leads to an action plan to continue growing your skill set.

To fully measure your performance on these Standards we solicited feedback from each Board member, parents, students, teachers, administrators, your direct reports, building leaders, collective bargaining unit leaders, and external stakeholders, based on the five elements set forth in the Ohio Standards. Together, these approximately 50 contributors provided a 360 degree view of your performance across those five Standards. Generally, that review illustrates growing approval of your superintendency. Finally, Board members added commentary based on your annual Expectations, highlighting areas of proficiency and outlining areas for future growth in order to meet District needs going forward.

This document contains an aggregation of the body of feedback that was gathered. Areas of Strength and Opportunity are identified for each Standard. The Board will establish 2016-17 Expectations for each Standard based on this information, the Strategic Plan objectives, and input from you. Equipped with these Expectations, you will develop an action plan based on the guidelines provided in the Ohio Standards for Superintendents. In addition to the annual review that will be completed in August 2017, there will be a mid-year assessment to review progress, make modifications as necessary, and provide interim feedback.

## **Performance Against Specific 2015-16 Job Objectives**

The Board unanimously agreed that you have successfully completed all but one of the specific Expectations; we had discussed midyear there would be a delay in completion of that remaining Expectation. Just as the Strategic Plan must be a living document, so too must we adjust our goals to reflect evolving and new realities. One reason we review the objectives and Expectations at midyear is to discuss progress and challenges to completion during the academic year. Significant progress is being made in the District with respect to technology infrastructure and to adoption of technology for various operations and academic programs. However, we agreed midyear to delay one Expectation with respect to choice and implementation of a new

student information system; a potential solution has been identified and your team will be studying an updated version of Progress Book Suite.

In addition to the 20 specific Expectations, we set five salary-bonus goals for you during the year. These required some discussion because not every element had been fully realized, but the Board recognized your diligence, creativity, attention to quality, and accomplishments in each of the five bonus goals. The Board therefore agreed that you fulfilled our expectations regarding these five salary bonus opportunities. The elements not strictly performed were:

- Goal 1: The homework policy has been reworked for grades K-4 but not yet for grades 5-6; we agreed during the interim evaluation that it would be best to delay full process for grades 5-6 toward meeting this goal in AY17.
- Goal 5: A new website was launched, more video content is available to browsers, the appearance and functionality are much improved, but the website is not yet as mobile friendly as envisioned. The Board is pleased with this progress towards the goal as a whole.

Additionally, Dr. Hutchings, you will see from this document that District stakeholders have a high regard for your strengths and accomplishments. Based on the feedback received from a wide array of Shaker constituents both within and outside of the District it is clear that your strengths continue to impress the community including:

- *Development of a shared vision for the District* – You exhibited exceptional effort to instill the Vision and Aspirations from the Strategic Plan into all aspects of the District including: facilitating the District’s steady, phased, implementation of the 2014-19 Strategic Plan; initiatives to lobby the state regarding education issues; laying the groundwork for a new preschool program; continuous improvements to our professional development program; innovative recruitment of minority teachers; a streamlined process for updating the District’s Board Policy Manual; and overseeing a complex facilities master planning process.
- *Collaboration with the Board of Education, Treasurer and staff* – Through the use of committees and focused efforts you utilized the expertise of many in the District to foster a collaborative approach to meeting the District’s strategic goals. Your collaborative approach was highlighted by: use of Interest Based Bargaining during contract negotiations with three new collective bargaining units; and a broad-based committee to debate and vet various alternatives for the District calendar. All of these efforts were exemplified during work sessions for the Board of Education tied to the Strategic Plan goals. The presentations from administrators and staff to the Board provided in-depth information, allowed many participants to interact with the Board, and served as a model for the collaborative efforts underway.
- *Financial leadership* – You continued to limit non-instructional costs while also successfully negotiating new contracts with new bargaining units. You made substantial progress in improving overall employment processes and organizational management. The new collective bargaining agreements and the final negotiations to the Supplemental Contracts Memorandum of Understanding with the SHTA illustrate the progress in recognizing the significant efforts of each and every staff member, establishing better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of various employee groups. Furthermore, you continued to think creatively regarding non-tax revenue sources and worked effectively with the District’s partners to build relationships with both public and private entities that will broaden our financial resources in the future. The Board challenged you to raise a third of the costs for the First Class preK initiative from non-tax revenue sources, and you exceeded that goal by raising almost half of the costs from outside resources.

- *Communications and Collaborations*—There were highlights in this category, such as the launch of a new website which is more attractive, collegiate, and user-friendly, and the expert assistance of a broad-based advisory committee in developing communications strategies. These are strong foundations for the everyday challenges of keeping stakeholders informed and connected.

Your strengths are truly valued by the Board and all District stakeholders. Moving into your next year as the District Superintendent it will be important to build from these strengths and look towards the Areas of Opportunity that are identified in this document. The Areas of Opportunity reflect the Board's assessment, based on all the information collected during the previous year and through this evaluation process, of what areas for growth will have the greatest positive impact on your ability to lead the District further towards its goals. In general, the Areas of Opportunity identified include:

- *Effective communication* – New staff and new strategies helped make this past year more successful than the prior year. We had ended the prior year with a difficult but breakthrough public discussion with high school teachers; while there have been improvements, we anticipate that additional change at the high school will as usual face some resistance before everyone adjusts toward a collaborative environment. Similarly, the evening forum on safety plans convened in autumn 2015 did much to explain general school safety but missed an opportunity to explain to parents how false threats on social media had disrupted a class day at the high school. Continuing to develop an effective system of communication between you, the staff, and the broader community will expand the opportunities for effective growth in the District. We also face an anticipated bond campaign in early 2017.

The efforts made this past year serve as an excellent platform for you, administrators, and other District leaders to build on moving forward.

- *Modeling and promoting the utilization of data* – Outside mandates and assessments continue to get swapped around by legislation; however, the District has begun to acquire enough data to illustrate trends regarding the strength of our curriculum and instruction and to illustrate areas for further study. The well planned use of existing data, as well as designing new metrics, will be important in order to analyze the success of these efforts to reach the Strategic Plan goals. Several contributors to the 360-review of Standards noted that this is an area for renewed attention.
- *Comprehensive Curriculum and Assessment*—These goals may have taken a back seat during transitions in leadership, long-term absence of a key employee, attention to professional development and improving the technology infrastructure. Strategic use of data may assist in your focus on this part of the Strategic Plan. Several contributors to the 360-review of Standards noted that this is an area for renewed attention.

In addition, last year's evaluation summary (dated October 17, 2015) referenced major projects that are still ongoing, and present other Areas of Opportunity, including:

- The challenges of state-mandated testing, how they impact instructional time, how to manage the relevant technology and logistics, and how to lobby Ohio legislators for sensible reforms.
- The Innovative Center for Learning has served many students in its first two years, but has not yet expanded its reputation and use as an alternative for any and all students who may need an alternative school day schedule and/or online opportunities to recover credits or pursue enrichment courses.
- The District has met Ohio statutory requirements for College Credit Plus but should more fully advertise and offer these and also career prep opportunities.

**The Year Four Challenge**

You have led true growth in all aspects of District functions and have rebuilt the administrative team as long-time administrators retired or moved on to new opportunities. The 2014-19 Strategic Plan is in full implementation in every building, although new leadership at the high school may have to catch up. Your team will be measuring the plan's impact, building new capacities to better serve our students, and adapting the plan to meet the realities in the classroom. The Board remains enthusiastically convinced that you have the skills and motivation to continue developing the District's programs to help every student and reach the Vision and Aspirations our community set forth.

**Next Steps**

After the Board and you discuss and review this document, we will confirm a set of 2016-17 expectations rooted in the Strategic Plan and reflecting our shared goals for the academic year. These expectations should form the basis for your development of a one-year Action Plan.

Your leadership of, and enthusiasm for, both the District's strengths and its tremendous potential continue to drive us in the right direction, namely, the delivery of an equitable and excellent education filled with exploration for all Shaker students. Thank you for your continued efforts as we all build an ever more exciting future for the Shaker Heights City School District.

Sincerely,

Members of the Shaker Heights City School District Board of Education

**Appendix A: 2015-16 Baseline and Bonus Potential Expectations as revised March 8, 2016**

		1. The Shaker Experience	2. Continuous Improvement	3. Policy	4. Human Resources and Facilities	5. Communication	6. Finance
G o a l s		Engage all students in an enriching educational experience that enables them to achieve educational milestones and meet high school graduation requirements within four years as fully developed young adults with an entrepreneurial spirit, prepared for success in postsecondary education and careers.	Support the District's Aspirations, Mission, Vision and Core Values through strategic planning, systems and data analysis, technology infrastructure and professional learning.	Develop and implement policies that align with the District's Aspirations, Mission, Vision and Core Values and support the Goals of the District's strategic plan.	Recruit and retain high-quality staff with diverse cultural experiences and backgrounds, and provide facilities conducive to high-quality teaching and learning.	Engage school and community stakeholders as active partners.	Ensure efficient and effective use of financial resources while maintaining high-quality educational experiences for all students.
	A	Establish a professional learning program to provide training on use of Google Classroom and document that at least 80% of all teaching staff have completed the program via online, face-to-face, and/or peers and are prepared to implement Google Classroom for the 2016-17 school year 1.2.3	Implement a measurement system to evaluate consistency of implementation of strategic plan in PreK-12 grades. 2.1.5	Establish and implement a systemic program to introduce the new Policy manual to all Administrators with a focus on integrating key Policies into decision making. Provide a written overview of the program to the Board no later than July 31, 2016.	Develop and obtain state approval for building safety plans for all District schools prior to December 31, 2015 and identify a method to distribute relevant content to all staff in a time effective and practically usable format. Present an outline of the employee use/education plan to the Board prior to August 15, 2016.	Establish a communications committee of community experts to assist with the design of the District's communications strategy. Establish clear communications expectations and develop a system to quantitatively measure the impact of the communication on the broader community (5.1.2, 5.3.3).	Streamline supplemental pay process per side letter of the SHTA agreement through collaboration with the SHTA and Administration. 6.2.5
E x p e c t a t i o n s	B	Define the metrics and data analysis used to measure success of the District, Strategic Plan implementation, and student achievement such that baseline data can be collected in 2015-2016 with enough accuracy to establish multiple year District level achievement benchmarks during the 2016-2017 academic year.	Include specific metrics to evaluate strategic plan implementation in surveys of student, staff and community. Collect survey results prior to June 30, 2016 and present results to the Board prior to August 15, 2016	Establish system of regular policy updates and monitoring of required changes 3.1.2	Establish multi-year staff recruitment and retention plan to address the current and anticipated future needs of the District, including efforts to reflect and support the full spectrum of our student body (4.1.3) Provide a report to the Board which includes updates on specific recruitment efforts, specific implemented changes designed to enhance current staff retention, and a macro view of anticipated future needs based on enrollment trends and predictions, relevant changes to courses and curriculum, and other factors which may impact future staffing by July 31, 2016.	Implement a formal communication strategy that includes the active use of differentiated communications and social media and a system to measure the impact of all communications on the broader community. Review with the Board by May 31, 2016. 5.1.3 & 4.	a. Begin implementation of systematic approach to securing non-tax revenue 6.3.2
	C	Define district-wide protocols, philosophies and the implementation plan regarding social emotional and behavioral growth. Provide a detailed written synopsis to the Board prior to June 30, 2016 1.6.2	Identify future student information system with an implementation plan set for no later than the start of the 2017-2018 academic year. Present plan to Board prior to July 31, 2016. 2.2.5, 2.3.3	Update and distribute administrative guidelines consistent with revised policies by July 31, 2016 with a plan to provide training for all Administrators which identifies and explains key changes in guidelines during the 2016/2017 academic year. Provide the Board with a written overview of the changes and planned training program by July 31, 2016 (3.2.2)	Working with relevant bargaining units, establish "customer experience plus" for all visitors to buildings throughout the District which include an outline of professional learning and resources needed to implement the plans and a timeline for full implementation, starting with PD for support staff in 2016.	Provide community-wide communication regarding school performance and finances (e.g. State of the Schools, PTO Council hosted chats, Measuring What Matters, etc.)	
	D	Implement an effective professional learning system for faculty including academic areas and cultural proficiency. Provide the Board with written comments or survey results describing faculty opinions and responses to the program by August 15, 2016 (1.6.4)	Establish consistent professional learning system for staff (MyLearning Plan) with at least 80% use among instructional staff with an Ohio Department of Education's educator license as determined and reported by the Director of Professional Learning 2.4.2				
	E	Establish the process and parameters for the development of the next District Calendars (2017-18; 2018-19) and determine whether the District should, or should not, include considerations relating to current research on sleep and its impacts on recommended start times by age grouping. Provide an outline of the process and recommendations of items to be considered to the Board by August 31, 2016	Establish core professional learning criteria and multi-year program for new teachers to be implemented starting in 2016/2017 academic year with a written summary provided to the Board no later than July 31, 2016 2.4.3				
	B o n u s	Collaboratively establish grading and homework practices for all classrooms K-4 to be implemented in the 2016-17 school year and provide the Board a written summary prior to August 15, 2016 (allowing for MYP grades to do the same in 2016-17 school year).		Revise the employee handbook for consistency with the District Policies and Guidelines and distribute to all employees prior to the start of school for the 2016/2017 academic year? Update the Board on progress by July 31, 2016	Complete tasks shown on the Master Planning timeline with either: a comprehensive and multi-year master plan for the District which includes each building and their systems and spaces, for Board approval; or a detailed report on efforts to develop the master plan and external reasons why a delay in plan is necessary along with a revised timeline for completion prior to May 30, 2016	Develop and launch a new mobile friendly website, District App for use by students and parents/guardians, and increased social media presence by August 31, 2016	secure 36% of the entire budget via independent non-tax funding for the two year early childhood initiative/ preschool pilot program and identify at least three other discrete District programs or initiatives for which private funding can be sought and develop plans to secure such funding with a report to the Board by June 30, 2016 ?

## Appendix B: Feedback By Standard With Sample Comments

### Standard 1: Vision, Continuous Improvement and Focus of District Work

#### Areas of Strength: Developing a shared vision for the District, reviewing progress and revising strategies for achieving District Goals.

You maintained a clear focus on the Strategic Plan and the Vision and Aspirations it sets forth for the District. With continual effort this has become a core part of how the District views itself and is seen by others. You have continued to make the Strategic Plan a living document which guides the District based on its initial goals as modified by events on the ground.

#### Comments:

- Great job in focusing the District of the strategic plan. Good job of tying various actions of the building to the District vision, goals and strategic plan.
- The strategic plan chats appear to be a good way to broaden both buy-in and ownership for plan activities. Post the demonstration, we don't have a measurable way to show that the strategic plan is more engrained in a building than it was previously.
- I have found Dr. Hutchings to be extraordinarily intelligent. He has worked hard to develop and implement goals for the District. He has been a superintendent for a relatively short time but is managing very well.
- In my experience working with Greg, I have found [him] to be an energetic and visionary thinker with an unwavering commitment to administering the Shaker Schools as effectively as possible and [he] regularly proposes ideas for moving the District forward in its objectives. At the same time, he also intuitively understands that vision is futile if the more mundane "day-to-day" aspects of management (the fiscal stuff, basic organizational discipline) are neglected. I consider us to be very lucky to have Greg as our Superintendent. He brings a very positive, kind and caring demeanor to his work and leaves no doubt that the stakeholder base that matters most, our students, are at the center of everything he does.
- Overall, I strongly believe that Dr. Hutchings is doing an excellent job. He is committed to thinking outside of the box and moving the district forward as it adjusts to an ever-changing population and ensuring that all students receive an excellent education.
- The vision is shared, but rarely feels inclusive.

#### Areas of Opportunity: Expecting, modeling and supporting the effective use of data.

Focusing on establishing baselines and tools for measurement as new initiatives are instituted will not only help measure the success of programs but will also help foster a belief in the practical applications of data within the District.

#### Comments:

- Google launched with few reported apparent issues. Change, especially technological changes, is challenging for organizations and Dr. Hutchings' team did a nice job executing the transition to Google.
- The baselines are established. I have a few concerns. First, tying metrics to the end of course exams leaves us at risk if the state changes either the methodology or use of the exams. Second, there are multiple metrics in many categories. Which is most important? Should there be a blended "score" created from the total? Finally, how do we manage the special situations? For example, District transfers where prior data is not

available or special needs students? Is it most important for us to be measuring subcategories of students as we are striving for equity?

## **Standard 2: Communication and Collaboration**

### Area of Strength: Open and collaborative communication.

Most likely there will be specific challenges under this heading in every academic year. In autumn 2015 the high school suffered a false threat on social media and some related miscommunications. You made significant efforts to address the missteps and to communicate the District's safety plans. In addition, you expanded informal conversations with each building and with PTO officers. You also expanded the role of constituents in various committee roles. All of these efforts show an exemplary interest in creating an open and collaborative environment.

#### Comments:

- Dr. Hutchings is learning each day about the effective ways to communicate with all stakeholders- including word choices and collaborative language.
- The "chats" done at each school has been a great way to share the vision and create ownership.
- Dr. Hutchings has been nothing but professional when I have met him on several occasions. But it still amazes me the extent to which some members of the educational and external district family treat him with such lack of respect. It takes a strong man to deal with so many issues with such grace and professionalism.
- It is evident that effective and open communication is important to Dr. Hutchings and he demonstrates an ongoing commitment to shared dialogue.
- Dr. Hutchings is a very good communicator. This is a difficult district with conflicting views and interests among parents and teachers. He has handled all this very well. The only problem is in creating expectations and hopes that are hard to fulfill.
- He knows his own mind and communicates his visions and plans clearly, but is pragmatic and willing to listen to others. When he feels circumstances warrant, he is open to changing his mind.

### Areas of Opportunity: Demonstrating communication competence with all stakeholders; developing, implementing and maintaining an effective communication system.

Connecting with all stakeholders, especially with the unique attributes of Shaker Heights, is important. We believe this is an area where significant growth has already taken place and will become an area of great strength in your overall performance. Just as important as personal communication is the development of an effective system of communication. In particular, connecting with a broad range of stakeholders over multiple platforms, developing better communications with teachers, and finding ways to counter the rapid spread of rumors, present ongoing challenges.

#### Comments:

- Communication is ineffective, defensive and occasionally dishonest
- Communication still needs improvement. Posting something on the website and assuming it is communicated to parents is not strong communication. PTO brown bag lunches are good because building relationships and trust to encourage two-way communication. Need to improve communication and trust with teachers, so they feel comfortable sharing concerns and opinions with administration in a spirit of true collaboration.

- My personal feeling is that after a long period of operating under a non-transparent leadership, the District may be overcorrecting over the past two years. I can't tell if that is attributable to Greg or the Board of Ed or both. While I almost always welcome receiving too much information over too little, I'm a bit concerned that the amount of disclosure and community involvement that is solicited for certain District initiatives may [be] more than is prudent for effective management. A case in point might be the recent town hall meetings on District facilities planning. One meeting where Greg and Board representatives give members of the community a presentation on what is being considered is probably sufficient. The town halls seemed to solicit a degree of community feedback and involvement that may create unrealistic expectations for some in the community.

### **Standard 3: Policies and Governance**

#### Areas of Strength:

This is a Standard seen as an area of strength with nearly uniform agreement. You have advocated for children and families, modeled and expected professional conduct, addressed societal educational trends and reviewed and developed new policies for the District. This is also a less visible, more internal function than the others, eliciting far less comment from 360-review contributors. Board members are appreciative for the efficient overhaul of the Policy Manual, the expert assistance from the Ohio School Boards Association, and the new process for continual and timely updates to the Policy Manual.

### **Standard 4: Instruction**

#### Areas of Strength: the development and implementation of high quality standards based instruction, high quality professional development for all staff.

In another year of significant administrative staff transitions, state mandated testing, and many teachers new to our District, you and your team stayed focused on professional development and continual improvement of the District's instruction.

#### Comments:

- Dr. Hutchings understands that Shaker is a community in transition because of its status of an inner-ring suburb. He is committed to providing excellent services to the entire student body and community. He understands the importance of ensuring a quality education for all students, regardless of class and race.
- The supt has a growth mind-set modeling that we are all learners.
- Once the new leadership and structure of this area transitions, the area will be poised for great success. Incorporating effective cultural proficiency programming will continue to be a challenge and key area of focus.
- Creating formal systems around professional learning will pay dividends many years from now. It would be wonderful to know what "nuggets" are derived from MyLearning Plan. For example, when do teachers log on? For how long? How many units/topics do they work through at a time?
- Love the new staff Academy! It is especially encouraging that new staff from last year are giving their thoughts. I could see some of the material being shared distributed as pre-work (or even as part of the acceptance information) so that teachers know our technology, leadership team, etc., before this point in the summer so that they can ask questions.

#### Area of Opportunity: Continued establishment, implementation and monitoring of District-wide curriculums.

While few 360-review contributors offered comments, there were notably more "developing" ratings in this section of the review. This area requires a coordination of other resources such as leadership, technology, and

vision. As those other resources have been strengthened in your first three years, now is the time to focus on strengthening and aligning curriculum.

Comments:

- I do not believe that there is enough being done to make sure that children placed on an IEP are meeting standards, I do not mean meeting personal goals, I mean many of these children on IEP's are on them because they were said to be behind in 2, 3 or 4 grades. Now in Middle School and still on them, this is why there is a huge knowledge gap that continues to grow.
- I believe over all our Superintendent has done a great job to ensure the future of our children remain bright and thriving with possibility but I worry about the IEP program and the children that should be caught up to standards but are not.
- This is a developing area that was hindered by resignation of Curriculum Director and late hire of Assistant Superintendent.

### **Standard 5: Resources**

#### Area of Strength:

Once again, this was an area uniformly seen as a strength. From the continued efforts to limit non-essential expenses, to extensive research on financial software systems, success in raising funds from non-tax resources, and focus on a long-term facilities plan, the community and Board applaud your efforts and achievements.

Comments:

- The collaboration among the treasurer staff and business staff has resulted in exceptional achievements as noted by audit reports, construction projects and master planning initiatives.
- He appears to have been capable of making some tough personnel decisions this year. Not sure about rest--no access.
- Greg is a conscientious manager and, from what I have seen, an excellent steward of community resources.
- I LOVE the concept of a special recruitment and mentoring program for African-American males with Master's [degrees].
- The recruitment fairs were well received. In addition, the outreach to future teachers while still on campus helps establish Shaker as a destination.
- Having a clearly defined role to go with Supplemental assignments [and pay] is a BIG step forward.

#### Area of Opportunity: Communication of hiring decisions

The new interview process is lengthier and more detailed than in prior years. Many can see the benefits of this process. However, there has been some frustration with delays in filling positions, lack of communication with applicants, and uncertainty regarding how and when final decisions are made. Working to further institutionalize this process, creating clear and transparent guidelines and expectations for involvement, continuing to focus on communication and inclusion of key personnel will provide increased overall support.