

Q3b) What plan of action would you take to implement Florida's Race to the Top initiatives successfully?

The District has created a clear plan of action that outlines the scope of work. I truly believe 'what's inspected is respected' therefore I would want to be part of a quarterly monitoring summit. Participants would include members of the BOE, Principals, Teachers, and Parents. Continuous improvement must be an integral component of everything the District embraces.

Leadership matters. It is imperative that leaders emerge from the rank and file for the benefit of today's students and tomorrow's leaders. With a concerted effort to rally support I know that the implementation will be successful.

Q9) Will you allow teachers to provide input and have a voice into matters that concern them? How will you go about this? How will you determine if there are legitimate issues and concerns at the teacher/staff level?

The teachers and staff have a critical role to play in the organization. Therefore, their input is exceedingly important to accomplish the successful mission of the District.

I have employed several methods that create that sense of ownership: 1. Instructional Issues Committee; 2. Surveys; 3. Personally attending staff meetings; 4. Standing meetings with Teacher/Staff representatives; 5. Open invitation for personal meetings and/or email conversation.

Legitimate issues and concerns are typically shared by more than one person and I would depend on Leadership to assist in ascertaining those issues that can be resolved.

It is important to note that I define Leadership as anyone willing to take on that role, it could be a Teacher Leader, a Principal, Union Leadership, etc.

Q10) How will you handle a difficult parent? Define "difficult parent". How will you handle five individual personalities on the School Board?

There are several versions of a difficult parent: 1. an uninvolved individual that does not engage; 2. a parent that does not allow their child to be held responsible for their actions; 3. a parent that can not be pleased when the school/teacher is making a concerted effort to resolve the issue.

I like to have a personal conversation with the parent/s and the outcome being that we will agree to acknowledge each other's perspective. Then a clear understanding that the District will do everything that can reasonably resolve the problem with an agreement that the parent does their part for the benefit of their child.

The BOE: I intend to be very familiar with individual perspectives on any given issue. Collectively we will focus on providing the best solution for the business at hand with the understanding that we may hold differing opinions. I believe that we should always be respectful and agree that we operate with good intentions.

Q14) How do fine arts and performing arts fit in to your overall plan for a school district?

The fine and performing arts are absolutely a must for a well-rounded curricular offering for students. I'm a huge supporter of the arts. A quick example of this: I asked the high school principal to reserve one of his physical education FTE's to engage the services of a local dance studio. Many of our students who enjoy the performing arts do not have the financial wherewithal to take lessons of this nature. Instead of participating in a typical gym class they are now more likely to be actively and positively engaged thus earning PE credit and experiencing relevance to their passion.

Q16) Discuss the experiences you have had in working with the special needs of exceptional education students and language enriched pupils (LEP). What initiatives have you implemented in your current district to meet the special needs of exceptional education students and limited English speaking students? What were the results?

Personalized learning is the foundation of a Standards-based System\* (SBS). When learning becomes the constant and time is the variable the needs of ALL children can be better met. Students who are high achieving can be appropriately challenged without the constraints of an artificial boundary (the school calendar and seat time). On the other end of the spectrum, children with learning disabilities also have the luxury of being in a system that recognizes that time is a critical factor in their success. In a SBS students progress through levels as they demonstrate mastery regardless of the calendar versus a traditional system with grade levels: K, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, etc. based on a 9 month timeframe.

The feedback received from students and parents has been validating. Parents are supportive of the system as most of the children have been mainstreamed and are being served in the LRE. The Special Education Teachers in Adams 50 have become Interventionists. Students are more engaged and discipline referrals have dipped to an all time low.

Second Language Learners in Adams 50 are provided assistance in a variety of methods: dual language school, immersion, and pull out programs. If these students stay with us for a period of 5 – 6 years, they are more likely to out perform native language speakers as assessed by CSAP (Colorado Student Assessment Program).

Q17) Discuss the progress the schools in your district have made in the area of student achievement. What role did you play in these accomplishments?

Adams 50 is in the second year of implementing a Learner-centered approach to education coupled with a Standards-based System\*, which has yielded a modest increase in student achievement. (Please note that a change of this magnitude will typically take 3-5 years to see positive results.) I led the charge of reforming the district.

I am a true believer that leadership matters. One of the schools (Skyline Vista Elementary) the principal and staff has completely embraced the SBS with passion. I'm proud to share they experienced double digit growth – from 30% to 48%.

Q19) Discuss the experience you have in motivating a diverse staff and student body.

The past two districts I have served as Superintendent have been diverse: Adams 50: 21% White; 70% Hispanic; 5% Asian; 2% African-American; 1% American Indian; Crete-Monee: 27% White; 63% African American; 8% Hispanic.

In both Districts I have made a concerted effort to be involved with the students, parents, and community at large. As examples: 1. I meet with student leadership once per month, this allows me the opportunity to know first hand what is important to them and identifies issues that may be explored.; 2. I created SCIE – Superintendent's Council for Institutional Equity. We meet on a quarterly basis to monitor the District's actions.; 3. Created the Welcome Center – a central service center where parents can enroll their student/s, learn about the District and community, offers outreach programs such as: becoming a citizen, locating affordable housing, enrolling in English and/or Spanish classes.

Q20) How has diversity impacted your leadership in your current workplace? What role have you played in celebrating diversity?

More than 300 adults (primarily parents) attend evening class 4x per week during the school year to learn the English language. I participate in a 'Graduation' celebrating their success.

I was instrumental in building our new high school in the southern end of our District boundaries. This area serves our lower income and diverse populations. I felt it was an important statement to make about valuing and promoting the education of ALL students.

Q23) What is your position on privatization of County School Board jobs?

I've worked in two states and the Boards of Education were not paid a salary – this is new to me. I realize the importance of the position and I'm happy to know that Florida recognizes their value and is willing to support it through compensation.

Q25) What sort of relationship do you envision between employer and Union at the School Board?

I prefer to have a trusting, collaborative relationship; which can only be sustained when you put mechanisms in place to ensure that connection. I would expect to host leadership meetings that include members of each association for an open dialog about issues that are germane to the organization. You can't create a team without participation.

Q32) What do you know about this community and school district?

I have been reading articles in the local newspaper, the internet and have spent many hours exploring the District's website including watching videos of the Board of Education meetings.

What I know is that I definitely want to live and work in this wonderful location. The District offers rich potential to the students via curriculum and extra curricular offerings. There are pockets of excellence and there are pockets that require improvement. With a philosophy of continuous improvement I

believe I can lead this District to increasing the success rate of "Education Which Inspires All To Their Highest Potential."

Q42) How would you organize this district's custodial services?

I would have to know if the current method is meeting the needs of the organization. By the question posed I'm assuming there is room for improvement. With that in mind, I would involve those closest to the situation and those with additional information (i.e.: finance department, supervisors, etc.). Data would be used for the purpose of identifying and resolving many of the issues.

For the record, I am not a huge proponent of outsourcing this department. There are other ways of addressing budget shortfalls if this is the root cause for the question.

Q43) How would you operate the food service program? Should the food service program operate in the black?

The food service program should absolutely operate in the black. This is an area that deserves close analysis: are students eating, are adults willing to purchase meals, is there a general satisfaction with the quality, taste, presentation, selection, etc. of the meals? I have had success with outsourcing the management of the nutritional services department. Without being redundant, please read the first paragraph in Q42.

Q49) As an example, let's assume that you are not familiar with the "Race to the Top" standards for the state of Florida. How do you get up-to-speed quickly on such unfamiliar policies implemented in other states? Describe the method that you would use.

Since the Osceola School District is a recipient of this award I am positive you have dedicated personnel working with Scott Fritz ensuring the implementation of the scope of work. I

will spend time with this team to learn about the plan. I am also well connected with my peers who could point me in the right direction. I'm an avid reader and a life long learner, this would not be a problem.

I was part of the team that worked with our past Commissioner of Education, Dwight Jones, on Colorado's application. We were not successful, primarily due to the lack of support from Colorado Education Association.

Q50) What do you think about the Parent Internet Viewer (PIV) used in the Osceola County School District? What have you used in the past to keep parents informed of their children's grade status? What is the maximum amount of time that should elapse between the determination of an assignment or test grade and when it is posted online for parents to see? Please

elaborate.

More importantly, I would like to know what the staff and parents think of PIV. Is it meeting their needs? Is it cost effective? Is it user friendly? etc. Bottom line, it's a tool that is extremely beneficial for increasing communication and involvement.

In my present system we are using Infinite Campus and Educate to allow real time access for parents. It is difficult to give a definitive answer for what is a reasonable amount of time for posting grades. An assessment completed via computer compared to a project or a multiple page essay require vastly different time commitments from the teacher therefore my answer: it depends. Having said that, I do believe that every effort should be made for record keeping to be as current as possible. It is not reasonable for grades to be posted weeks after an assignment or an assessment is given. Another variable besides content is class size.

This is an issue that we have struggled with in Adams 50, ultimately we had to employ data entry personnel to keep abreast with our goal of providing timely information to our parents.

Q51) How would you verify on a day-to-day basis that your policies and procedures are being properly implemented? For example, how do you know if teachers are handing out the questions and answers to midterm or final exams?

In a District the size of Osceola you must depend on the professionalism of your staff and leaders to assist in that task. Making it clear that the policies and procedures you have adopted will be enforced and appropriate actions will ensue if violated.

As far as the example provided, it has been my experience that students will be the first to share inappropriate practices with other adults (parent, counselor, a different teacher, principal, etc.). An investigation would be initiated to determine the facts. A culture of high expectations and integrity must permeate the organization. Since this has been raised as an issue I would ask that each school create a covenant that addresses the professionalism and ethics of a person in a position of trust.

Unfortunately, in a climate where testing becomes high stakes it has the potential to bring about questionable behavior.

Q52) What plans would you implement to eliminate sugary products in school cafeterias and vending machines?

Institute a Nutritional Committee focusing on the health and well being of our students. Populate the committee with parents, nutritional specialists, staff and students. Provide data that underscores the catastrophic effect of poor nutrition with the goal of recommending a moratorium on those types of products.



Q53) Given the state school systems are currently face with regarding bullying on campus as well as off campus, briefly mention:

a. What measure(s) have you implemented in dealing with this issue in your current position?

A "Safe to Tell" campaign. We have an automated phone system that creates real time reports of any concern (they can be anonymous). The phone number is widely distributed and students and staff are required to wear their picture IDs with the number printed on the back. Appropriate school personnel are responsible for responding to these alerts.

A policy which states that Bullying will not be tolerated and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that goal.

b. What measure(s) you will implement across the school system to ensure the safety of all children?

Create student parent handbooks that clearly describe all policies associated with student safety and behavior; this document must be signed by the student and their parent/guardian.

Clear procedures must be diligently followed for picking up and/or sharing information about student/s. All procedures for ensuring the safety of children must be practiced on a regular basis. This would include safety drills (of all kinds), expectations for transportation (bus, car, bike, walking), discussions about internet safety, and bullying.

A fine line exists between making individuals aware of their surroundings and practicing safe actions and creating paranoia.

c. How will you ensure that this method is implemented in all schools?

Accountability is key. I would have a review of the actions be a part of regular Parent meeting as well as a yearly report that details that all required measures have been implemented.

Q54) What method(s) do you have in mind to deal with out-of-zone students?

First of all, what a wonderful problem to have – obviously there is a reason why parents perceive the receiving school as offering a better/different opportunity for their student. Given that, I would want to focus attention on why parents want to leave their neighborhood school – how can we change that image? But that most likely requires is a longer-term solution. For an immediate resolution, policies and procedures need to be created to ensure order and equity when and if there is capacity for admitting out of zone students.

Q55) What will you do to recruit minority teachers to Osceola County?

This is an issue facing all school districts. I believe the best opportunity to staff our schools with minority teachers is to 'grow your own'. I would institute a Teacher Cadet program in the high school thus creating our own pipeline. Once the student completes the necessary requirements to become certified and returns to Osceola County there would be a financial incentive. (Tuition reimbursement or a signing bonus are possible options for consideration.)

\* Standards-based is synonymous with Competency-based, Proficiency-based, Personalized Learning, etc.