

Q3b) The vision of a student-centered school environment where every district is equipped with a Local Instructional Improvement System will require the collaborative and collegial involvement of the Instructional Leaders of the District. The nine component areas of a Local Instructional Improvement System create a framework to accomplish this work but powerful relationships with students, families and the instructional team are critically important. The Instructional Leadership Team will need a level of consensus on a Plan of Action and Milestones that includes investments in teachers. There is no-one who makes a greater direct and measurable contribution to the learning of a child than a teacher does so it will be critical that they play a significant role in the leadership of this effort. A philosophy of Value Added Assessment involving getting children incrementally to their personal best will be critical to motivating children and teachers. Plans should be living and RTTT cannot be planned and executed without the buy in of those most affected in our classrooms.

Q9) Teachers are the most important members of an instructional leadership team. They not only need to have input and voice into matters that concern them but they must play a key role in decision making that impacts teaching and learning. In my experience in public education to date, I am convinced that there is almost no challenge in a school that teams of collaborating teachers cannot solve. Positive ongoing communication is central to assessing and addressing issues and concerns. Listening may be the most powerful tool in making sure members of the team feel that they are heard. 360 Degree customer service surveys are a great tool for getting a sense of the school climate, but nothing can replace face to face communication, mutual trust, respect and transparency in resolving challenges. People are central to anything we will achieve.

Q10) It is important to always remember that in most circumstances, parents only want the best for their children. It is critical to “walk a mile in their moccasins.” A difficult parent is sometimes created by impersonal communications. I have found that email exchanges are not the most effective in resolving parent concerns. There also needs to be a caring, loving adult in the school in the life of every student. Faculty Mentors are a very valuable approach in ensuring a family has someone in the school they trust to look out for the best interest of their child. In handling five individual personalities on the School Board, transparency will be critical. We always have to remember that a Governance Board must act as a unit on important matters of teaching and learning. Positive interpersonal relationships with members of the School Board will also be critical.

Q14) The Arts are critical to the development of children. The Performing Arts create unique opportunities to develop self-confidence, teamwork and problem solving skills. The student body will have many students who are accomplished in some aspects of the Arts and the students can play a pivotal role in leading creative pursuits. The teachers in the school I currently lead use the arts across the content areas to provide a variety of approaches to rehearsing learning objectives. Recent advances in research on the cognitive neuroscience of teaching and learning have discovered that certain structures in the auditory cortex only respond to music (Sousa, 2006). The Arts foster a collection of skills and thought processes that transcend all areas of human engagement.

Q16) We have had the opportunity to create a highly qualified team who provide direct supports to teachers in supporting students with special needs and students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Individual Student Success Plans are important for every student but particularly important in addressing the unique challenges these students face. We have invested in one to one tutoring and small group instruction as well as technology tools such as Study Island, NetBooks and iPad. The performance of our students on the Massachusetts Curriculum Assessment System is excellent with no identification of sub-group deficiencies for low income, special needs and LEP students.

Q17) We have a theory of action founded on the pillars of very high standards, effective instruction in every classroom, the use of data, formative assessment and student work to continuously inform and improve our instruction. Our teachers meet routinely in grade level and content teams to talk about teaching and learning and individual students and interventions that are necessary to help them be successful. My role is as the chief instructional leader and I am in classrooms every day. We have put together a team of trained mentors and coaches who work with teachers, share ideas, share research findings and map out ways of making teaching and learning more effective. Our school has improved student achievement on high stakes state tests, PSAT scores and SAT scores. We are currently ranked one of the highest performing schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Q19) I spend a great deal of time on relationships involving personal notes, visits to classrooms, and phone calls to parents. We continuously foster a very positive school climate and proactive resolution of issues that may interfere with a climate conducive to teaching and learning.

Q20) We have a very diverse staff and student body and routinely celebrate the many cultures represented in our school. It is not unusual to hear students reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in the morning in many languages besides English. We celebrate International Days and parents and students where the clothing of their culture, recite poetry, and sing and dance to celebrate our many international families.

Q23) Privatization decisions are very complex and have to be carefully analyzed for the actual return on investment. I would need to do much more research on the issues involving the County School Board jobs and engage the stakeholders on the pros and cons of any action.

Q25) Very powerful positive communications must be the foundation of relationships between the leadership of the District, the Union and the School Board. Transparency is also an essential element on ongoing positive communications and mutual respect.

Q32) I have done research on the school district, student performance, the demographics of the community and the growing diversity both ethnically and economically as increasing numbers of children on free/reduced lunch are served by the district. Clearly as an out of state candidate, I have a great deal more to learn.

Q42) Before I proposed an approach to organizing custodial services, I would have to engage the stakeholders including the current providers and recipients of the services.

Q43) A food service program should operate in the black recognizing that there are programs to support students on free/reduced lunch. I would have to look carefully at the current operation of the program, profit and loss statements and engage both the providers of the services and the recipients. Customer service surveys are an important tool in assessing a food service operation as well as the priority of providing children with balanced nutritious meals.

Q49) As with any new challenge, I would embark on an aggressive schedule of listening and learning, meeting with stakeholders throughout the district including teachers, families and the students. Research would be important to looking at implementation in other states as well as engaging the RTTT Implementation Teams in other states that have been awarded RTTT resources.

Q50) It is critical to have a system like the Parent Internet Viewer (PIV). We use, Rediker, a state of the art system that links all our Management Information Systems. We place a very high priority on the posting of grades within a week and well in advance of a child failing. We find that issues get addressed with individual teachers in a much more timely way so we can assist the student before the student has to experience a failing grade.

Q51) Powerful positive communications are critical but more important is some consensus building and buy in on policies and procedures that affect teaching and learning in the classroom. Teachers will always have great input on more effective and efficient ways of getting every student to their personal best,

Q52) We have very strict laws in Massachusetts concerning food and vending machines. We have transitioned to healthy fruit juices, water and healthy snacks. Sugary products and sodas are not permitted in the school and the school cafeterias offer a variety of healthy, balanced meals with generous amounts of fruits and vegetables.

Q53)

a. We have been focused on anti-bullying campaigns for over three years and believe powerful positive relationships are central to preventing this kind of student behavior. Our team has been fully trained in the warning signs and every six months we do an anti-bullying survey. Assemblies on the subject of bullying are routine with a particular emphasis on what we know to be the most vulnerable age groups. We have trained students in bullying prevention and mediation and we find that the students are the most powerful source of information and resolution.

b. We have designated collateral duty safety officers who are trained in an all hazards approach to prevention. The Student Support Team consists of highly trained registered nurses, two deans of students and student advisory groups who routinely engage on issues

of safety and security. Entrances to the school are either locked or staffed. Strict identification procedures are followed for student pick up and early release. Responsible adults are always in school facilities when students are present. Our customer service surveys every six months engage respondents on matters of safety and security.

c. Fire drills and all hazards training is done several times a year. Our Safety Officer does routine inspections of the school and we also arrange for inspections on a regular basis by the Fire Department and the Department of Health.

Q54) I would need to examine district policies and capacity as well as engage stakeholders on the best way to deal with out-of zone students.

Q55) Active engagement of Schools of Education will be critical as well as advertisement among student associations. Teachers in a school district are a critical source of referrals. Intern programs also allow you to recruit teacher minority candidates and develop them in the classrooms of outstanding teachers.