

# Assistant Superintendent Report to the Board

April 2017

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## **Site Visits**

Myers-Wilkins  
Stowe

## **Early Childhood**

- The PK-3 Leadership Team has met several times this year to monitor our progress as ISD 709 has expanded and enhanced our early childhood programs. PK-3 alignment has been a priority of the governor and whether funding continues at the same level into next year is unknown at this point. Our team has plans in place to continue expansion of more classrooms if funding is provided. This work is crucial in addressing the achievement gap in Duluth and Minnesota as research is firm on the positive impacts high quality early childhood programs have in regards to reducing the achievement gap. Our goal is to reach as many children to ensure all students have the kindergarten readiness skills to succeed K through grade 12.
- Northland Foundation hosted their annual summit in Duluth in April. I was one of the presenters who talked about previous work to create aligned systems in PK through grade 3 and improve transitions for children and families. We also heard information about how childhood trauma at very early ages impacts child development beyond school aged years. We also learn about strategies for how to better support these children and families who have faced trauma. We had over 30 representatives (teachers, principals, etc.) attend the Summit during their spring break! Thank you to our dedicated educators for your commitment to high quality early childhood education!

## **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support**

- Our MTSS Leadership Team continues to monitor the action plans we have developed over the last two years to support MTSS at our elementaries. Each year we had provided more targeted coaching support. The key to this work is monitoring our implementation to ensure we have fidelity of programs and services. The MTSS Leadership Team has begun to look at next steps to improve MTSS at the secondary this winter.
- I worked with district and school leaders to draft an ADSIS grant for FY18 and FY19 from MDE. The grant in combination with other state and federal funds would be used to expand our support services for students not reading at grade level in the elementary. Grant funds would be used to hire interventionists, provide intervention curriculum materials, and provide staff development for staff to use those materials as part of an MTSS framework.

## **Safe and Welcoming Schools**

I continue to receive some questions regarding Interquest. Interquest is another strategy to address drug use and possession in our schools to ensure they are safe and drug free. This agency works with schools and PDs across the state and schools have experienced significant success in the reduction of drugs and drug related arrests. High schools see this as another layer of prevention as we work to reduce out of school suspension from drug possession and drug related arrests. This does not replace Duluth PD dog searches. We will continue to conduct Duluth PD dog searches as we have in the past. I have met with Mike LaFontaine (SRO supervisor with the PD), the SRO at Denfeld (East SRO had an emergency and could not attend), and the building principals. The principals have worked with their SROs and voiced great support in the use of Interquest. The superintendent has also spoken with the police chief and has shared support for the use of Interquest as another way to keep our school safe. The schools have each communicated with students and parents throughout this planning process.