



## **ACSA's Superintendency Council Meeting Minutes**

**September 20, 2012**

### **1. Welcome/Introduction:**

Sandy Thorstenson welcomed the members of the Superintendency Council.

She shared with the group:

- New Directory of members has been developed and was distributed to the group.
- Meeting time changed for this year, now from 9:00 to 2:00 p.m.
- It's a new day at ACSA. Whatever your thoughts and concerns in the past, it's a new day. Renewed interest in serving our members. Staff has been phenomenal and committed to serve.
- Huge uncertainty in our world, more than ever important to stay together, have our voices heard and use benefit of group reflection. Excited about direction ACSA is taking.

David Gomez, ACSA President, also welcomed the group:

- Strategic plan will set the vision for the next ten to twenty years. Development will take place throughout the year.
- There is opportunity to participate in ACSA teams or through strategic planning committee.
- We are in the process of selecting a search group to begin the process of selecting a new executive director of our association. All members will have the opportunity to weigh in on the selection.

- Proud of our ACSA staff and focus as membership driven association.
- Don't forget to vote yes on Proposition 30.

## **2. Discussion Items:**

### **2.1 Orientation and Expectations:**

Sandy shared the Council's purpose and member responsibilities:

- Huge part of responsibility is to take this information, from our meetings, back and share it with the groups you represent. You have to be the conduit for the group.
- Keep everyone up to speed on what is happening. It is critical that every region be represented. If you can't make a meeting, make sure you send a representative in your place.
- Sandy went through the council directory including the purpose of the Council: To identify and study issues related to the role and responsibilities of superintendents and proactively advocate for solutions.
- Sandy reviewed the meeting dates of the Superintendency Council. May meeting date will be on May 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **2.2 Discussion Item: Superintendents' Voice in ACSA:**

#### **Background: Superintendents Voice Initiative:**

- Sandy explained the initiative:
- The council will determine one or two issues, along with school finance, to become a reform initiative led by superintendents.
- She plans to bring the issues to the Superintendents' Symposium in January for full discussion and subsequent vote in a general session.
- Superintendents' Symposium hasn't always been utilized in a way that can promote our moving our opinion forward and speaking with one voice. Professional development and networking are and will continue to be important aspects of the Symposium,

however we must not lose the opportunity “to leverage our voices as superintendents.”

- Sandy proposes that superintendents coalesce around topics, including finance. We have to show that we can do more than the legislators and come together on major issues. It is possible for us to work together and reach agreement on our position on major issues, and therefore increase our effectiveness in impacting policies that have hindered our work and have been obstacles to student success.
- A survey was sent out to all superintendents to ask for opinions. The survey ideas were generated at the Spring City Superintendents’ Meeting, brainstorming what were the most important issues we need to focus on. The list was brought to the Superintendency Council for review and action.
- Our discussions will culminate with a vote at the Superintendents’ Symposium on the top key issues. There would be a prior meeting and discussion at the Symposium. We would then have a united voice on issues that we can use with the legislators, the state board and the governor. The Symposium will conclude with time for each region to develop action plans to move our platform forward. The Council will develop a macro view action plan.
- At every Region superintendents’ meeting and every gathering of superintendents between September and the January Symposium this topic is to be discussed and facilitated by Superintendency Council members to ensure that superintendents throughout the state are included in the dialogue. Board members, PTA Presidents, and other stakeholders ought to be involved in discussions as well to obtain a broad base of support for the initiative.
- Ideally, we could come to a vote at the Superintendents’ Symposium on key issues. There would be a prior meeting and discussion at the Symposium. We would then have a united voice on issues that we can use with the legislators and governor. We need to collaborate and help each other out and our districts.
- Thelma Melendez de Santa Ana commented: “It was the Superintendents’ Council that really pushed the statewide waiver last year. This is a powerful group and we don’t always see ourselves this way. We are at a time that the leadership in Sacramento is not sufficient to do what we need on behalf of

districts and students. We can work together, develop a platform and move our position forward at the state and Federal level.”

- Sandy stated, “It’s up to us to make sure all of our colleagues have heard about this effort.” She suggested we speak with our colleagues in the region and also with our School Boards regarding the initiatives. Michael Kirst, President of the State School Board, will attend our November meeting.
- Elliot Duchon mentioned that we worked hard on the Federal waiver issue last year. We need to narrow down and zero in on issues with a clear idea of where we want to go.
- ACSA staff really works with us to keep us up to speed on what is happening.
- Mark Ecker commented that it is going to take superintendents around the state to actualize the issues. Legislators and the governor’s staff want our input and are surprised when we don’t provide it. ACSA at this time is looking at its own goals and direction through the strategic plan. Superintendents play a unique role. I am excited about the direction we are going and reaching a consensus.
- Sandy mentioned that California Superintendents have very little involvement in AASA. It is an embarrassment that, with a state our size, we should have a lot more members and delegates in AASA. It is a professional organization that we need to engage with as superintendents, because it has an impact at the national level.
- Linda Wagner mentioned that we need to work together and remember that we just don’t represent our region; we need to collaborate as a whole group.
- Jim Brown mentioned that the lack of a focused superintendent voice has been an issue over the years.
- There are issues that this group could fracture on, but there are critical issues that if we can find a way to come together in a unified way, it will be important for the future of education. If it is teacher or principal evaluation, common core, what are the critical components?

**Superintendents' Voices:**

- George Manthey shared the on-line, superintendent survey results from last week.
- There were only 160 responses to the survey. Discussion and comments followed regarding the need to focus as a group on key issues.
- Pat Sweeney mentioned that the topics were extremely difficult to weigh. They can perhaps be linked with overall topics.
- The Superintendency Council then divided into small groups of three for ten minutes to discuss topics.
- The goal at the end of the discussion was to identify the essential topics. Council members were asked to select the most important topics to be addressed.

**Discussion and Comments from members of the Superintendency Council regarding the "Superintendents' Voice" Survey:**

- What is the ACSA Board's Perspective and Platform that we could support?
- If we (Superintendents) are going to do it well, then the ACSA Board needs to give us the authority to develop a legislative platform. How does it feed into the legislative policy of ACSA? This has been a dilemma in the past.
- There is a difference between a platform and specific details. The platform should be a centralized vision and be clear.
- It is important that there are some very specific areas of focus. Some of the themes are around local control and what we can bargain.
- Some of the issues bring up the question, how do we improve student learning, e.g. common core, weighted student formula, last in first out with teacher tenure?
- There are some things about our students' needs that need to be an essential part of the conversation.

- We looked at the common core and believe everything is going to be linked to it. Urgency, sharing resources, pushing our state, and ELD.
- Our message has to be that we are advocating and supporting students. What are the things that are going to improve learning and important for California's kids?
- Many of these areas have to do with the delivery of quality instruction. This includes accessing the curriculum and quality personnel. Needs to be just a few things and let the others go.
- Important to focus on the things we are going to be called upon to do, e.g. ESEA reauthorization, teacher evaluation. We have done work in these areas, been outspoken and been listened to.
- As strategy, do we want to go after a couple big fish, or a bunch of little fish? Strategically, something to be said for little wins.
- If it's a big thing, it takes longer to realize your goal. Smaller challenges, we can address and get closure.
- Let's focus on a few critical issues. How do we bridge the gap and prepare kids for a new world order?
- As we go through voting process, we can develop the overarching issues.

**George went over the key topics discussed: Group was asked to prioritize these areas.**

- Meaningful teacher evaluation process
- Define roles of assessments in evaluation
- Streamline assessment systems
- Revise accountability system
- Staffing based on student needs
- Changes in layoff timelines
- Remove STRS Penalties for hiring "retirees."
- Reform/Eliminate Adoption Cycle and allow open source materials
- Allow districts to bargain dismissal process
- Workforce/College and Career in 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Improving Student Learning/ the Quality of Instruction
- Common Core Implementation
- ESEA Reauthorization

**Summary Survey Results:**

- Top Priorities:
- Common core implementation
- Prepare students for workforce/college/career in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Three Overall Priorities Were Identified:**

- Common Core/ Prepare students for workforce/college/career in 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Human Resources Issues
- School Finance

**Follow-up:**

- Sandy will e-mail a protocol to Council members regarding the topics. Each Council member is to facilitate discussion of these topics in your region and with other superintendent groups represented in the Council.
- The goal is to identify and prioritize essential components under each of the three overall priorities and frame a question for the most essential component that will be discussed and debated at Superintendent meetings between now and the Symposium .

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**2.3 Discussion Item: CTC Issues:**

- Karen Stapf-Walters, ACSA Interim Executive Director, shared the CTC Issues with the group. Two years ago, we began to look at changes in the credentialing process.
- The requirement that you must have three years teaching experience has now been moved to five years for an administrative credential.
- What do you have to do at the end of the credential work? An assessment? ACSA representatives Dick Bray and Rick Rogers and ACSA staff met with Linda Darling Hammond, who will be the next CTC Chair.
- Darling-Hammond believes the administrative credential work is not rigorous enough. She believes that as you move people up the ranks, they typically will have the skills to do the next level job as an administrator. There are some who would like to differentiate the credential, separate work for

superintendent. She doesn't believe this would be a good direction.

- Higher education people have dominated the CTC. They would like to see more requirements that link to classes at the university level.
- Dick Bray, ACSA Representative on CTC Committee:
- There were four administrators on the credential reform committee, all the rest were teachers and higher education people.
- They wanted to get rid of the test credential. Our position was that the test has a place, e.g. teacher leader at a high school when there is a need to put someone in the position that doesn't have time to go back to school, but will take the test, an example. We finally reached consensus on the recommendation to keep the test.
- Many meetings arguing over whether there should be a specialized credential for superintendents. Higher education believes should be a separate credential. Our representatives disagree and it has taken a long time to resolve that issue.
- Other issues that Linda would like us to weigh in on, include,
- Should there be a culminating exam as part of the credential?
- The assumption would be that there is a high stakes assessment as a culmination.
- Rick Rogers' perspective is that it is not necessary. When people are not successful as a superintendent, it has to do more with their decision-making.
- Linda Darling Hammond explained that this would be a different kind of test. It would include videotaping of the candidate, like National Boards. If many candidates did not pass, and they were from the same higher education school, there would be need for reform at the higher education university.

#### **Discussion by Council Members regarding CTC credential proposals:**

- If there was a culminating exam, it could professionalize the credential, like doctors and lawyers.



- Issue of gate keeping, there is more to it than just the book learning. We need the flexibility at the district level regarding whom we hire.
- The test they are talking about is a new test where there is videotaping, and more performance based. They are talking about using that exam for the end of course, capstone. It is set up to be a gatekeeper and it will have that effect.
- Administrators have a track record, with five years of teaching. We have more data about the practical work they have done.
- Sometimes people apply who have significant credentials but cannot do the job.
- Tier 2 training can be good; the issue is how it is set up. There is a huge variability among the IHE s (Institutes of Higher Learning).
- A test isn't going to show evidence about how much they care about students.
- Could lose mid-career teachers who are considering going into administration.
- The belief is that the bar has been set too low for the administrative credential.

**Closing Comments, Karen Stapf-Walters, Regarding CTC and Credential Reform:**

- This will be an ongoing conversation at the CTC level this year. Discussion and perspectives will be considered and reflected in the conversation.

**2.4 Presentation Item: Interactive session on English Learners and the Common Core, presented by George Bunch of U.C. Santa Cruz ([gbunch@ucsc.edu](mailto:gbunch@ucsc.edu))**

- George is a Research professor at U.C. Santa Cruz.
- The purpose of George's work is to promote the engagement in healthy public dialogue regarding, "How can we use common core to improve learning for English learners?"
- There are challenges and opportunities.
- Research in EL is currently developing exemplars in language arts, and core academics.

- If we make common core for English learners work, it will work for all. We'll see the benefits with all students.
- The Focus is on understanding language:

#### **Foundations:**

- Language and the Common Core Standards
- What is the Development of Literacy?
- What Does Text Complexity Mean for English Learners and Language Minority Students?
- Instruction for Diverse Groups of English Language Learners
- ELs should not be removed from the challenges set out in the standards; don't wait until native like language in English.
- Leverage background knowledge, build strategic competence, and provide supports rather than simplifying the text.
- The Council members were given a sample lesson regarding historical context and language learning strategies linked to the common core.
- The unit will be available on the website for "Understanding Language."

**Meeting was concluded at 2:03 p.m. by Council President, Sandy Thorstenson.**

**The next Superintendency Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 1, 2012, ACSA Sacramento office.**

Notes reviewed by Sandy Thorstenson, Council President and Karen Stapf Walters, Interim Executive Director