

To: Mr. Michael T. Harris, Director of Schools
From: Elise Shelton, Communications Director
Re: Stakeholder Feedback
Date: February 13, 2007

Strategic Goal: *Engaging the Public in Support of Student Achievement*

Background: Increased stakeholder feedback and expansion of public engagement for stakeholders have occurred in the following ways:

District-wide Survey: In 2005, there were 5,518 survey participants, comprised of 1,356 teachers, 598 classified staff, 2,572 parents, 89 school administrators, and 903 in the “other” category, which includes business community members, central office employees, Greenwood employees and operations complex employees.

There were 6,393 participants in 2006, comprised of 1,547 teachers, 728 classified staff, 3,508 parents, 108 school administrators, and 507 in the “other” category, which includes business community members, central office employees, Greenwood employees and operations complex employees.

Major perceptual findings from the survey included: 1) fewer respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that stakeholder feedback is being used for district decision making; and, 2) fewer respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the maintenance department is run effectively and efficiently. A baseline question regarding awareness of the ISO 9001 program is also another opportunity for improvement. Stakeholders continue to report a high level of support for the school district and their individual role in improving student achievement. This was the first year the district survey included the option of “don’t know” as a choice in responses. Consequently a number of respondents chose “don’t know”, which indicates an opportunity for improved communication.

Calendar Survey: For the first time, CMCSS and the CMCEA Professional Council created a statistically valid way to collect feedback in designing a three-year school calendar. Nearly 8,000 parents and staff responded to the survey, based on a calendar designed with input from teachers, parents, students, classified staff and administrators. The total overall support for the calendar was 84%.

Board Hosted Public Engagement Focus Groups: From September through November of 2006, School Board members hosted six public engagement sessions in each of the high school feeder groups. The Board identified the process as part of its 2006-07 Goals. Principals of each feeder group identified parents and community members who were invited to participate. Representative individuals participated and provided input on questions about how CMCSS has impacted student achievement; what CMCSS needs to do to help students succeed; how the system can become more efficient and effective; what communication vehicles are most

effective; what communication needs the community has; and how parents and the community can become more involved in supporting students.

While each feeder zone was unique and had individual issues specific to that community and its schools, all six zones shared commonalities. Here is a summary of those universal issues:

Goal- Improve student achievement - The stakeholders reported that the benchmarks had a positive impact on student achievement along with the innovative curricular programs such as AVID, Bridges, the 90-minute reading block, and pre-K program. Areas for concern included an extreme focus on testing, the need for quality teachers, the dropout rate, low teacher morale accompanied with an increased workload, and the need for more advanced programs.

Goal- Improve efficiency and effectiveness - Transportation services identified as being appropriate. Areas targeted for improvement included funding, especially for textbooks and technology, and the reaction to growth with frequent rezoning.

Goal- Engage the public in support of student achievement - The stakeholders reported that the K-12 Planet communication of grades was very beneficial along with the ConnectEd message system. Increased involvement of parents was cited as an improvement areas as well as, more communication on specific topics such as special education services, budget/funding, and child nutrition.

Goal- Build leadership capacity - This goal was not addressed by stakeholders. Principals have been provided with the zone-by-zone summaries and are using the data in their school improvement planning.

Budget Summits: One elementary school chose to host a mini-budget summit at the beginning of the school year. Plans are in place to host a summit in March with representatives from the following communications and advisory groups: parents; teachers; and classified staff.

ConnectEd: This telephone notification system repeatedly comes up in surveys and focus groups as a valuable communications tool for school to home information. From the beginning of the school year through December 12, 2005, there were a total of 837 calls made from 29 of 30 schools. Of that total, the breakdown is as follows: 252 community outreach calls; 12 emergency communication calls; 573 attendance calls.

During the same time frame in 2006, a total of 988 calls were made from 29 of 31 schools. Of that total, the breakdown is: 256 community outreach, 14 emergency communication calls, and 718 attendance messages. Although overall usage is on the rise, community usage and attendance messages have dropped considerably in a handful of schools.

County Commission Linkage Meeting: The Senior Leadership Team and School Board members hosted a meeting in October in which feedback was collected from County Commissioners to better communicate budget information. A summary of comments follows this section. The information collected will be used to improve communication in the presentation of budget and capital project requests that go before the Commission.

Facility Project Teams: As school construction projects are identified, CMCSS now has a process which provides feedback opportunities as a part of the overall plan. With West Creek

Elementary and Rossvie Elementary, key stakeholders have collected input for consideration in the development of proposals for school design.

Minority Issues Group: This group began focused work in the fall by providing input to encourage more parental involvement, particularly in middle and high schools. Also, the group is currently studying the Student Code of Conduct and has plans to provide feedback.

Stakeholder Groups: Each of the communications and advisory groups (including teachers, classified representatives, students and parents) provide feedback on the strategic goals at their monthly meetings.

News Coverage: From August 2005 through December 12, 2005, there were a total of 208 CMCSS related newspaper articles in *The Leaf-Chronicle*. Of the 208 articles published, 32 were directly related to academic accomplishments made by the district, individual schools, teachers, and students; 73 articles were related to student programs offered in the district and 103 were general articles about events or individual accomplishments made by students and employees of the district.

During the same time frame in 2006, there were a total of 276 CMCSS newspaper articles in *The Leaf-Chronicle*. Of the 276 articles published, 63 directly related to academic accomplishments made by the district, individual schools, teachers, and students; 103 articles related to student programs offered in the district and 110 were general articles about events or individual accomplishments made by students and employees of the district. The number of articles in 2005 and in 2006 do not reflect sports related activities.

E-Newsletters to Internal Stakeholders: There were 10 electronic newsletters sent to employees from June 2005 through December 12, 2005. Due to the increased volume of information, the frequency of electronic news has moved from twice per month to once per week. Seventeen e-newsletters have been sent to CMCSS employees from June 2006 through December 12, 2006. Newsletters are used as a form of communication to keep employees abreast of all news that pertains to the district and individual employee groups. It also is used as a tool to provide employees with feedback about decisions that have been made as a result of input provided directly from employees.

CMCSS Web News: From the end of the 2005 school year through December 2005 there were 25 news items listed on the front page of the CMCSS web site. Twenty-nine news items have been posted on the front page of the district web site since the end of the 2005-06 school year.

The Web News is used as a form of communication to keep the public abreast of news that pertains to the district and individual students and employees. It also is used as a tool to provide the public with feedback about decisions that have been made as a result of public input.

Recommendation: It is recommended that as work goals and action plans are developed for the 2007-08 school year, feedback opportunities should be continued