

Grossmont Union High School District
A Portfolio of Great Schools

Recommendation for a Strategic Plan
Presented to the Governing Board - February 21, 2008

- **A culture of collaboration:** I am proposing an expansion and deepening of the work of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in all subject areas. This would include a common understanding of California State standards and the development of goals by each PLC that are specific, measurable, results-oriented and time-bound. Finally, I want to ensure that each PLC consistently incorporates formative and summative assessments to inform instruction and intervention. Each of the above elements have been demonstrated by research to have dramatic effects on improving student achievement.
- **A future for every student - A post-secondary plan for every student in a culture of high expectations:** We want to stress the importance of every student having a post-secondary plan following graduation. That plan may include admission to a four-year college or university, community college, military, apprenticeships, career training or other educational experiences. Recommendations will include expanded college, career and financial aid information for students and parents and graduation portfolios. We will also strengthen our partnerships with Grossmont and Cuyamaca Colleges and develop new ones with surrounding universities. In addition to being able to access highly competitive, advanced placement programs at each high school, students will also be able to take college level courses at our neighboring colleges to enhance their preparation for college.

Finally, we will institute programs that will specifically address students who have been under-represented in college admissions. This includes expanding our AVID program and working with the College Board and its many outreach and support programs.

We want to be very sure that every parent understands that each of our high schools offer a strong college preparatory program and a curriculum that prepares them for the best colleges in the nation.

- **Multiple pathways to graduation - and a new Career Tech Program:** We recognize that our students should have multiple pathways to graduation and a career. At the same time they need to be engaged in subjects that are both relevant and of high interest. We are recommending the expansion of the Career Tech Education program with 30 new career tech academies in high schools throughout East County. This will include expanded partnerships with businesses through our community and our Chamber of Commerce.

These academies would provide Grossmont students with opportunities to work with the most modern technology in areas of their career interest. A new science program directly connected to the large Bio-Tech, Aerospace, hospitals and other science-tech businesses in the greater San Diego area would be another powerful component of this effort.

- **A sustained focus on literacy:** We simply cannot be successful when students are not reading at grade level. This is important for all students and in particular, those who are English Learners and students with disabilities. We are proposing a focused literacy support program for any student who, at any point, is reading below grade level. This would include the opportunity for teachers to be trained as reading specialists, an expansion of library collections, use of multiple instructional resources and assessments, and a reading program in the content areas. This will also include a focused writing program at each grade level.

- **Genuine parent engagement:** Being competitive means being customer service oriented. We have to expand our current communication efforts including an up-to-date District Website. We will ensure that teacher websites are well maintained and that we communicate with parents at the beginning of each semester regarding classroom goals, assessments and guidelines.

Every school should have a Family Resource Center that is staffed and has appropriate resources to assist parents. We are also instituting a customer service program that will work with all staff in seeing our parents as important clients. This includes promptly notifying parents at the first indication a student is not making normal progress. Finally, we will want to establish the structure in which counselors/school staff will be able to review every student's program with their parent once a year. Successful school districts and schools engage parents with this level of communication and service.

- **A network of support and options for students and families:** We have an obligation to provide support to students at-risk and their families. In this context, I am proposing a significant expansion of our current continuation facilities and a focused commitment to recover students who have dropped out of school. We also want to expand our Home Choice program to attract students who have left for other Districts or charter schools, or who are currently home schooled throughout East County. I sincerely believe in the quality of our school programs and ability to tailor these programs to meet a diverse group of students. These efforts will generate additional revenue.
- **Implement Character and Values Education:** We will expand character and values education throughout the school community. This effort will include supporting current local school efforts, expanding "Pursuing Victory with Honor" and utilizing the Character Counts! Program in partnership with schools and cities. This effort will engage the business community and local government agencies in the development and implementation of character education.
- **Filling in the gaps in the middle:** We want to establish a relationship with our feeder districts that will permit us to work with students and families while in middle school, in order to establish expectations and an understanding of how to be successful in high school. This will include procedures and practices that address student effort, behavior and relationships. As part of this initiative, new attendance and homework procedures will be instituted for all students in support of a culture of effort-based learning.
- **A concern for the health and wellness of our schools and communities:** A new wellness program will address issues of physical fitness, nutrition and healthcare. Healthy students and employees are absent less, and are less likely to need major healthcare. Both of these areas can result in a significant cost savings to the District. More importantly, employees and students who are healthy have higher morale, are more productive and truly enjoy their work.
- **A commitment to the performing and visual arts:** Research continues to show that students who have access to a powerful arts program do better in other core subjects. During the next several months, we will develop an arts master plan to address a model arts program.
- **Celebrating excellence:** In my visits to schools in the Grossmont Union High School District, I have observed remarkable teaching, exceptional leadership, and unique instructional and student-centered programs. I have also seen students, parents and community leaders provide outstanding activities and programs in support of our schools and students. We should continually recognize and celebrate these efforts and accomplishments. The power of recognition cannot be underestimated. To this end, we will develop a strong program to ensure that the public knows the real quality work that is being done in our schools each day.