

REMARKS BY INCOMING BOARD PRESIDENT BETSY SHAUGNESSY

I first want to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Markling and Mr. Kamkutis for their work on behalf of this school district and for their commitment to supporting academic excellence. This commitment was fully demonstrated during our recently completed treasurer search, Both Matt and John were fully engaged in the process even though they had chosen not to run for re-election – they welcomed the newly elected board members and worked to truly develop a consensus in order to provide a strong foundation of support when the transition occurs in 2013. While there have been some contentious periods in the past few years I believe that we were at our best as a Board over the last several months.

I am delighted that Mrs. Beebe has been re-elected - she is not only keenly interested in and aware of the role technology will play in our future success but is also able to provide historical context as we confront current challenges.

I welcome our newly elected Board members – Mrs. Petrie-Barcelona and Mr. Einhouse. They will bring skills and knowledge and very importantly a fresh perspective to the board that will serve us well. They also bring a willingness to work as a team in order to best serve all the children in the Lakewood schools. I cannot overemphasize the importance of that mind set – an individual member of the Board of Education has no individual authority and the board as a whole carries responsibility for representing the whole of the school community and the whole of the Lakewood community. We function as a Board which makes it critically important that we demonstrate our respect for each other and for those responsible for the operation of the district. We need to remind ourselves that a difference of opinion is merely a difference of opinion not a reason to question the motive or commitment of a fellow member of the board.

The Lakewood City Schools have never allowed fiscal or legislative challenges to deter us from establishing an ambitious agenda for the future and we are not going to retreat to a defensive position now. Our goal is to become one of the top 20 school districts in the state by the year 2020. The question in front of us for the foreseeable future will need to be “How do we manage our resources in order to accomplish this goal?”

The superintendent and Lakewood administrators and staff members recently presented us with an extensive list of goals that we need to meet in order to reach our 2020 goal. These goals are intertwined and interdependent and the attainment of each goal will move the district forward incrementally. I think it is worthwhile to repeat some of these goals as they illuminate the ambitious nature and wide scope of this plan.

- Each student must make at least a year’s academic growth in a year’s time
- Each building needs to demonstrate greater than expected growth in student achievement
- Each Lakewood parent needs to be meaningfully engaged in the education of his or her child

- Each kindergarten student needs to come to school with the skills needed to have a successful kindergarten experience
- Technology needs to be integrated into teaching and learning within every classroom
- Students must be able to master content using the technological tools that meet their individual needs
- Students must develop 20th century skills including collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking among others
- College bound students will be able to enter freshman level classes without remediation
- We will increase the number of students taking Advanced Placement or college equivalent class and this includes our minority and ELL students
- 100% of our students with IEPs will be proficient on grade level state proficiency tests
- 70% of our students will take a world language with Mandarin being one of the offered languages
- A continuous and ongoing model of professional development will be implemented
- The drop out rate will be decreased by 50%

We do not have time to waste – clearly our goals require resources both human and financial – we will have to consider the benefit vs. cost of almost every activity in this district and will measure our decisions against the question – does this activity, program, operation move us toward our goal?

I have every confidence that this Board, this community, our administrators and all those working for this school system are committed to ever improving academic achievement. I have every confidence that we will demonstrate the qualities of creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and communication as we address the matters at hand.

Communication will be particularly important - we have come to use the phrase “perception is reality” with increasing frequency – it really isn’t – reality is reality. If perception does not match reality there has been a breakdown in communication and understanding. The reality for the Lakewood city Schools is that we have made excellent progress in some areas and not in others – we have made significant cuts in expenditures while minimizing the impact on our core academic activities. The reality is that this year we will be required to make additional cuts to expenditures. An important goal for the Board and administration will be to make sure that facts are shared and that decisions made can be directly traced to district goals. There will be

differences of opinion regarding decisions that will be made by the board. In recent years public education has been disparaged. It has been implied that the requirements set forth by national, state and local legislation and judicial bodies can be accomplished with ever reduced resources. This is not the case. We will be making hard decisions this year and in the future – we will be improving educational opportunity and achievement and contributing to this community's economic stability this year and in the future. That is the reality and if the perception is wrong we need to correct the perception.

I thank my fellow board members for the opportunity to serve as president this year. I am honored to be an advocate for our students and those who provide the environment in which they thrive. Thank you