



# Stakeholder Engagement

In Support of  
South-Western City Schools' Strategic Planning Process

## **SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK**

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### **Reference Information**

- Attachment A: Facilitator Information
- Attachment B: Strategic Dimensions

### **Stakeholder Meeting Information**

- [includes Introductory Letter, Survey Results, and Stakeholder Invitation List]
- Attachment C: Student Development/Extra-Curricular Activities
  - Attachment D: College/Vocation Preparation
  - Attachment E: Diversity of the School District
  - Attachment F: Innovation in Education
  - Attachment G: Academic Achievement
  - Attachment H: Parent Engagement

### Background of Strategic Planning Process

In July of 2009, South-Western City Schools requested the Auditor of the State of Ohio to conduct a performance audit on the financial and operations management of the school district. The stated goal of this audit was to determine whether current operations and management practices were effective and identify any potential areas for improvement.

At the conclusion of the audit a report was prepared and submitted to South-Western City School's Board of Education and administration. The report cited multiple noteworthy accomplishments of the district, which are exemplary practices that should be duplicated in other Districts. It also identified a significant number of instances where the District was utilizing best practices in the financial and operations management of the District.

Lastly, the performance audit also made a number of recommendations for the District to consider for future improvements. One of those recommendations was the following [as characterized in "South-Western City School District's Response to Performance Audit March 2010"]:

#### Recommendation R2.1 – Summary

Develop a clearly written, multi-year strategic plan that provides vision and direction for its Board and employees. The plan should incorporate the CCIP ["Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan"] and any other educational and operational plans. In developing the strategic plan, the Board should identify and formally adopt a limited number of district priorities to guide its strategies and major financial needs, capital needs, and program decisions.

In response to this recommendation, South-Western City Schools made a commitment in early 2010 to formalize its process to create a more comprehensive strategic plan to communicate to the District. This strategic plan will outline the vision and priorities of the District and provide a road map as to the how the District intends to build a successful future for its students, teachers, and communities.

### Stakeholder Engagement

After choosing to embark on a formalized strategic planning process, the District administration determined that a critical first step would be to obtain input from various stakeholders throughout the communities that it serves.

Stakeholder engagement is a very common tool utilized in strategic planning in both the public and private sectors. Stakeholder engagement is a process that allows an organization's stakeholders to participate in dialogue around key strategic issues in an effort to align mutual interests, reduce risk of stakeholder dissatisfaction, and improve the overall sustainability of the organization.

The District engaged volunteer facilitators from American Electric Power and the District's Community Advisory Group, who have experience with various types of stakeholder

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engagement, to assist the District in defining and implementing a stakeholder engagement process.

The District's stakeholder engagement process included the following steps:

- i. Identify the strategic dimensions that the District would like to engage in discussion with stakeholders
- ii. Identify stakeholders for each strategic dimension discussion
- iii. Identify specific areas of discussion for each strategic dimension
- iv. Provide stakeholders with introductory letter prior to discussion providing information on the discussion topic
- v. Conduct facilitated stakeholder engagement meeting
- vi. Summarize feedback from the meeting and note common themes
- vii. Provide a summary report to South-Western City Schools' administration

## Facilitators

The facilitators for the stakeholder engagement process are all volunteers not employed by the District. Three of the facilitators – Guy Cerimele, Dave Lucas, and Sal Piazza – are employed by American Electric Power in Columbus, OH and have experience in various types of stakeholder engagement throughout their professional experience.

Amy Dawson, Senior Vice President of Fahlgren Advertising and member of the District's Community Advisory Group also served as a facilitator for the stakeholder engagement meetings. Dave Lucas is also a member of the Community Advisory Group.

Additional biography information on the facilitators is attached in Attachment A.

## Strategic Dimensions

The starting point for the strategic planning process and stakeholder engagement process is to identify the major strategic issues about which South-Western City Schools' Board of Education and administration would like to seek stakeholder input.

The District provided the stakeholder engagement facilitation team with the following key strategic dimensions [not listed in any order of importance]:

- i. Academic Achievement
- ii. Student Development / Extra-Curricular Activities
- iii. Innovation in Education
- iv. College / Vocation Preparation
- v. Parent Engagement
- vi. Diversity of the School District

The District provided the facilitation team with a list of questions under each strategic dimension to help clarify the types of information that it was interested in obtaining from the stakeholder engagement sessions. In addition, the District also provided a separate list of general questions for the facilitators to work into the discussions if possible.

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Please see Attachment B for the strategic dimension information provided by the District.

### Stakeholder Identification

Once all strategic dimensions were identified, the District was requested by the facilitation team to begin the stakeholder identification process for each strategic dimension. The facilitation team provided guidance that in order for the overall stakeholder engagement process to be effective the stakeholder identification process was an extremely critical aspect of the process.

The District was requested to make every attempt to incorporate the following suggestions into identification of stakeholders:

- i. Involve stakeholders from throughout the communities in the district
- ii. Engage stakeholders in a position to provide input on the discussion topic
- iii. Engage stakeholders from various ethnic and socio-economic groups
- iv. Involve employees and students
- v. Step outside of the “regular attendees” and engage people not normally involved in this type of dialogue with the District
- vi. Involve stakeholders outside the District where helpful [i.e. colleges, businesses]

### Stakeholder Engagement Meetings

Prior to each meeting, the facilitation team worked jointly with the District to prepare a pre-meeting communication that was sent to all invited stakeholders for that particular meeting. This communication outlined the time and location for the meeting [all meetings were held at Central Crossing High School], an introduction into the strategic planning process, the purpose of the specific meeting, what the participants should expect, and some discussion questions that the participants should think about prior to the meeting.

Each of the stakeholder meetings utilized a common agenda that with the primary intent of encouraging participation from all stakeholders, discussing various aspects of the meeting topic, and collecting meaningful information to provide to the District. Based on input from the District and the facilitators it was determined that the meeting should not exceed 90 minutes in order to respect the time of volunteer participants.

The standard agenda for each meeting was as follows:

- |      |   |        |
|------|---|--------|
| i.   | Welcome and introduction of participants    | 15 min |
|      | a. Brief introductions                      |        |
|      | b. Today’s objectives and expected outcomes |        |
|      | c. Ground rules of participation            |        |
|      | d. Discussion format for breakout sessions  |        |
| ii.  | Two concurrent breakout sessions            | 50 min |
|      | a. Facilitated discussions                  |        |
| iii. | Break & Regroup                             | 5 min  |
| iv.  | Recap of Breakout Discussions               | 15 min |
| v.   | Summary Recommendations & Key Messages      | 5 min  |

## Summary of Stakeholder Comments

During the breakout sessions, the facilitators began by asking the participants to provide their position on up to twelve (12) statements. The participants had the following options when stating their position: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree.

The statements that the facilitators used were a combination of:

- i. South-Western City Schools Belief Statements – the District has published twelve (12) “Belief Statements” on its Web site that provides the community and other stakeholders with insight as to core beliefs on how the District should function. In each breakout session, the facilitator(s) typically read three (3) or four (4) Belief Statements and asked the participants to rate their position.
- ii. Topic Specific Questions – the facilitation team crafted questions for each session to quickly identify those areas where the group had a consensus or was divided. These questions were specific to the meeting topic and provided a basis for the remaining discussion within the group.

After the results to the survey questions were tallied, the remainder of the breakout session was utilized to engage the participants in open-ended questions regarding the meeting topic. During this portion of the meeting, the facilitators encouraged full participation, open dialogue, and any specific ideas that the stakeholders would like for the District to consider in future planning.

At the conclusion of the breakout sessions, the facilitators reconvened all stakeholders in a common location to recap the combined survey results and discuss the significant themes that were generated from each breakout group. The facilitators then summarized the key points that would be included in the report to the District for this specific topic.

Attachments C through H contain copies of the pre-meeting communication, survey results, and invitation lists for each of the stakeholder meetings.

## Stakeholder Meeting Feedback

The following is a summarization of the feedback obtained from each of the stakeholder engagement meetings. It should be noted that in order to adequately cover the topic in the time frame allotted some recommendations or dialogue may warrant a much deeper discussion in order to fully understand the entire context of the discussion.

Also, in the effort to summarize feedback it should be recognized that in many cases the facilitators will use the majority of the stakeholders as the generally accepted position of the group. It should be noted that some individuals in the meeting may not be in agreement with the majority position, and dissenting views may exist to some points in this summary document.

## Summary of Stakeholder Comments

**Meeting Topic:** Student Development / Extracurricular Activities  
**Meeting Date:** December 7, 2010  
**Facilitators:** Guy Cerimele and Dave Lucas  
**Meeting Information:** Attachment C

### Summary of Feedback:

- Stakeholders were generally aligned with the District belief statements discussed [see Attachment C for specific results].
- Strong stakeholder belief that given similar academic standings students engaged in extra-curricular activities are better prepared to succeed in the classroom and/or after high school.
- Stakeholders felt that extra-curricular activities provide more opportunities than the classroom to develop some social skills that are critical in life after graduation. Skills discussed included teamwork, leadership, individuality, communication, and dealing with adversity.
- The majority of stakeholders acknowledged that extra-curricular activities were very valuable to the students of the District. However, if required to prioritize between core academic resources and extra-curricular activities, the majority of the group agreed that core academics are the District's top priority.
- The District should only encourage, not push, students to participate in extra-curricular activities. Student advisors should work with students to identify potential interests, but should leave the decision to the student and family.
- Stakeholders do not perceive the District having failed students who excel academically, but are lacking in social skills.
- There was general stakeholder consensus that responsibility for student developmental activities and social skill development is shared among family, community support groups and the District.
  - ◊ There was significant discussion among stakeholders that the District should pursue more opportunities to partner with the communities to provide activities that promote social skill development.
  - ◊ Stakeholders acknowledged that in many cases throughout the District, students are not receiving the proper support outside of school to develop socially. The District should work with the community to identify these situations and collaborate to offer programs to fill the void.
- The majority of stakeholders did not feel that club-sponsored sports were a viable alternative to school-sponsored sports at the junior and high-school level due to the loss of community pride. It was discussed that extra-curricular activities were viewed as a primary opportunity for the community to be involved in the learning process. Although students may get similar experiences [i.e. teamwork, adversity, etc.] from club sports, the community engagement associated with school sponsored sports is critical to a vibrant school district.

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- The stakeholders did not feel as though the District should take any additional role in the youth sports programs [prior to Junior High]. Allowing these organizations to utilize facilities and promote their programs are the primary roles that the stakeholders recommended for the District in youth sports.
- It was discussed that during the period the District went without extra-curricular activities, the stakeholders felt that the District functioned and students learned, but the overall environment and connection with the community was not the same.
- In the context of student development and preparing students with the skills needed to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, stakeholders were not confident that the District has defined what those skills are and incorporated them into the learning process. The majority of stakeholders acknowledged that these skills are beyond pure academics.
- With respect to the State Report Card and whether it values the time spent on social skill development or drives educators to focus solely on academic performance, the stakeholders did not fully understand the criteria for the report card. Stakeholders felt that the Report Card is not as important as the personalized experience a family has with a teacher and / or administrator.

**Meeting Topic:** College / Vocation Preparation  
**Meeting Date:** December 7, 2010  
**Facilitators:** Amy Dawson and Sal Piazza  
**Meeting Information:** Attachment D

### Summary of Feedback:

- Stakeholders identified multiple skills that high school students need in order to effectively transition into a specific vocation or enroll in a college/university.
  - ◊ Improved communication skills – majority of stakeholders view this as an opportunity for improvement. In particular, additional emphasis in presenting an argument, asking effective questions and good interpersonal communication would be helpful in preparing students to be successful.
  - ◊ Improved work etiquette – understanding expectations of employer – employee relationship and appropriate behaviors in work place.
  - ◊ Basic reading skills – reading and comprehension are basic skills that are required to be successful in most paths upon high school graduation. In many cases these skills are lacking.
  - ◊ Basic math skills – similar to reading there is a basic level that is required to be successful and in some cases they are lacking.
  - ◊ Develop computer skills – the stakeholders pointed out that although many are becoming more aware of computers their experience is very limited to social media. In order to be successful in vocation or college the training and experience base needs to be much broader and transferable to various types of software.

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- Stakeholders generally agreed that the college/university expectations and experiences are changing rapidly and that it is critical for the District to stay abreast of the changes and prepare its students to be successful in that environment. A few specific suggestions included:
  - ◊ Improve the students' readiness for independence
  - ◊ Allow students to get experience in managing the pace and workload they can anticipate in college
  - ◊ Increase the rigor and challenge of high school course work, particularly in programs for those preparing for education after high school
  - ◊ Identify opportunities for students to be exposed to a few college classes during high school to make the transition smoother
  
- Stakeholders discussed that there are multiple factors that influence how effective a student's transition from high school to college may be:
  - ◊ Parental involvement and support has a significant impact on the transition
  - ◊ Household attitudes toward college is important in the transition
  - ◊ If cost is a heavy burden on pursuing education this may become a barrier to an effective transition
  - ◊ Stereotypes such as "college is not for us" may have an influence on how determined a student will be to overcome adversity during the transition
  
- Stakeholders discussed the need for the District to work with business partners, universities, technical schools, and other stakeholders to continue to identify the skills needed to prosper in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These skills are evolving and it is important our public education system provide graduates that will allow businesses to be competitive in the future.
  
- Stakeholders generally agreed that although the District has a comprehensive vocational education program, there is a "stigma" associated with the program that is unfortunate. Some terms the stakeholders brought forth included:
  - ◊ Vocational program is for kids who cannot succeed in high school
  - ◊ Referred to as the "school of last resort"
  - ◊ Where discipline problems go
  
- Stakeholders would strongly encourage the District to do more to remove this stigma and highlight the fact that these are excellent programs with bright students. The vocational programs will continue to be critical feeders to business in the local community and the success of the area.
  
- Stakeholders raised the question as to whether there should be more integration between the high school curriculums and the vocational curriculum. There are skills taught in both programs that may be valuable to all students in life after high school.
  
- Stakeholders suggested that there is value in providing opportunities for teachers to obtain exposure to the business world so that they better understand the environment the students will be working in after school and incorporate this into the classroom. This goes both for vocational and high school teachers.

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- Stakeholders identified both community service projects and job shadowing with partner businesses as excellent opportunities for students to get outside the classroom and obtain skills that will prepare them for their future.
- Stakeholders emphasized that it is important for the District to be engaged with the community and the families of the students to fully understand their situation, assist in identifying the proper path for life after school, and partnering with the community to provide the resources for the students to be successful. Engagement is critical in this process.

**Meeting Topic:** Diversity of the School District  
**Meeting Date:** January 18, 2011  
**Facilitators:** Guy Cerimele and Dave Lucas  
**Meeting Information:** Attachment E

### Summary of Feedback:

- Stakeholders were generally aligned with the District belief statements discussed [see Attachment E for specific results], although there were some different opinions. The primary area of discussion involved survey question #3 and whether students should consider failure part of the learning process. Stakeholders clarified that while it should be recognized that failure is a necessary part of learning process, this belief statement refers to students “being called failures.” This clarifying dialogue resulted in most stakeholders supporting the belief statement.
- Stakeholders generally agreed that diversity is a positive attribute of the District. There was some conversation around how many parents or community members really think about the diversity of the District. Some stakeholders felt that people are more interested in their individual community or school and really do not think in terms of the “diversity of the District.”
- A significant amount of time was spent discussing the question around student expectations and whether all students – regardless of race, nationality, or socio-economic status – should be evaluated on the same basis.
  - ◇ Stakeholders generally agreed that lowering expectations for certain groups of students would result in lower performance. Stakeholders felt that children and teachers will rise to expectations.
  - ◇ If there were to be different standards or expectations for different groups of students and teachers, stakeholders questioned who would set the expectations. There was general agreement that this would be a very difficult endeavor to under take and didn’t see the apparent benefit.
  - ◇ A conversation around “social justice” and “public school” responsibility generated some level of agreement among stakeholders that the District must educate each child and identify how to help them reach the expectations... not lower expectations.
- A majority of stakeholders agreed that while expectations should be consistent for all students, the methods that we use to help students achieve these will likely be different for different types of students. The District should not impose rigid teaching instructions for all schools.

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- A small number of stakeholders raised the point that there are some students that are at a significant disadvantage in being successful in the education process.
  - ◊ Examples of students coming to the District from other countries was discussed where students – by age – are in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, or older grades but have never been exposed to school before. They require significant remediation.
  - ◊ A number of students in the District have parents that have not gone to or completed school and are unable to help their students. Discussion took place that we provide ESL services to the students, but the parents cannot speak or read English and cannot help.
  - ◊ Some high school students come from families where they are required to work, do not live at home, or have become involved in alcohol/drug issues.
- Stakeholders agreed that it is critically important that the District – more specifically the teacher – take time to understand not only the student’s circumstances, but know the family and the barriers to support at home.
- Discussion took place among stakeholders that the District has limited relationships with many communities or groups within the district.
  - ◊ Multiple stakeholders expressed the importance of a good working relationship between the District and all parts of the community. This should be a continuous, on-going, and two way relationship. The District needs to understand the needs of the communities it serves, not just how the community can help the District.
  - ◊ Discussed the importance of seeing the teachers and building employees in a community participating in community functions not related to the District. Again building these relationships in a non-educational environment and investing in the community will ultimately result in the community being more likely to be involved in the schools.
  - ◊ One stakeholder mentioned experiences in another District where employees were encouraged to participate in community service projects. Stakeholders were unaware of this being an initiative for the District, but thought it was a good idea to improve community relationships.
- Multiple stakeholders raised a concern about the lack of resources in the District to adequately address the diversity issues. There were examples of interpreters working between three (3) buildings and other coordinators being spread too thin to really know the students and develop an individualized plan as to how they can progress.
- With respect to the diversity of the District staff and whether the District should do more to recruit a staff that reflects the student population of a particular building, the Stakeholders generally agreed that recruiting the best teachers should be the top priority for the District.
  - ◊ A number of stakeholders did recommend, however, that for certain schools additional qualifications such as being bilingual should be considered. This would not only make the teacher more effective in dealing with students, but would provide better opportunities for relationships with parents and the community as well.
- The majority of stakeholders did not feel as though the District treated all parts of South-Western City Schools equitably.

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- ◇ Lack of community relationships in certain parts of the District was highlighted as one contributor to this perception.
- ◇ Stakeholders suggested potentially instituting a “school of the week” to highlight the positives going on in various schools throughout the District. This would also be a good opportunity to engage the community and promote school pride.
- ◇ Stakeholders emphasized community education is the key to overcoming this perception.

- One stakeholder brought up the issue that teachers have such a difficult job in teaching students and dealing with many of the issues discussed previously that it is critical that the District do more to provide positive reinforcement to these employees. Employee recognition, encouragement, and highlighting best practices are a great motivator to address these issues.

**Meeting Topic:** Innovation in Education  
**Meeting Date:** January 18, 2011  
**Facilitators:** Amy Dawson and Sal Piazza  
**Meeting Information:** Attachment F

### Summary of Feedback:

- Stakeholders were generally aligned with the District belief statements discussed [see Attachment F for specific results].
- Stakeholders discussed how receptive the community is to the change that innovation brings to the District.
  - ◇ Stakeholders generally agreed that change is difficult for any community, but positive change is generally supported by the community.
  - ◇ It was discussed that the level of education and exposure to the technological advances is an influencing factor on how receptive individuals are to change.
- Stakeholders discussed that in order to obtain acceptance and support from the community it is very important to communicate progress and ideas to the community. Some of the ideas discussed include:
  - ◇ Showing is always better than telling the community when it comes to technology. Create a model classroom open to observation from community members.
  - ◇ Provide hands-on experiences for parents at a young age.
  - ◇ There is an expectation of instantaneous communication. Providing information to parents via e-mail or text message may be positively accepted.
  - ◇ Schools and teachers could do a better job communicating with the community. Some teacher’s use a Web site, some do not. Teachers communicate differently which creates information overload for parents.
- Stakeholders generally agreed that changing with technology is not an option, but that it brings numerous challenges for the District to address.
  - ◇ The pace of change is very dramatic; the challenge is that we are preparing students for technology that may not even be developed yet.

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- ◇ The District cannot afford too many different innovative scenarios and they must provide equal access to all kids. Some innovative ideas may not be feasible due to economic disparities and inability for all to participate.
  - ◇ There are infrastructure challenges with some innovative ideas. There has to be infrastructure and management systems in place to manage the innovation.
  - ◇ Innovation and changes in technology requires teachers to change the way they instruct. Teachers need to be receptive to new technology, be trained in the new technology, and be confident it can enhance what they teach and how they engage with students.
- Stakeholders generally agreed that an understanding of technology is necessary for students to be prepared to participate in the global economy and that it is important the District provide opportunities that will prepare students to be successful.
    - ◇ Stakeholders felt that the District was doing a good job in preparing the Career Academy students for life after school.
    - ◇ Traditional high schools are still operating in the “old model” – chemistry, biology, etc.
    - ◇ Discussion was held regarding exposing middle school kids to real-world experiences to foster thinking about potential options for their future.
    - ◇ Stakeholders felt the District should evaluate the potential for more internships, so students can learn from people that do the job they may be interested in.
  - Discussion took place among the stakeholders regarding on-line learning and what the future of incorporating technology into education should look like for the District.
    - ◇ The stakeholders were somewhat divided in their views of “on-line” learning or virtual classrooms.
    - ◇ A majority of stakeholders felt that on-line learning has significant potential for students who are excelling in the classroom. Utilizing on-line learning for advanced classes in grades 9-12 would be a focus area for implementation.
    - ◇ Stakeholders expressed concern with the lack of engagement with others if school were to become over loaded with on-line learning. There should be a combination of classroom and on-line learning if utilized at all.
  - Stakeholders discussed that changing technology does not guarantee success. It must be incorporated with a combination of parent engagement and support, trained and committed teachers, engaged students, and opportunities for social skill development to be successful.
  - There are many schools that are more progressive in technology than the District. The District should learn from these other schools to identify ideas for implementation.
  - All students can benefit from technology in education. Stakeholders identified areas where technology is available for special needs education that will help in the learning process.
  - There was an acknowledgement that technology advances require capital investment. While the stakeholders were divided as to whether they felt the community would be willing to make an investment in technology, stakeholders recommended that the District should do more to pursue opportunities to obtain grants to aid in covering the capital cost.

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**Meeting Topic:** Academic Achievement  
**Meeting Date:** January 25, 2011  
**Facilitators:** Amy Dawson and Sal Piazza  
**Meeting Information:** Attachment G

### Summary of Feedback:

- The majority of stakeholders agreed that in order to fully realize the learning potential in every student, both teachers and students must be able and willing to utilize a wide range of different teaching methods.
  - ◊ Stakeholders generally agreed that it is not only the teacher that must change, the students must also be willing to adapt to various teaching styles.
  - ◊ Stakeholders emphasized that teachers should evaluate the class and utilize multiple delivery styles to reach the majority of learning styles in the class. Example used is that some students learn well by reading while others prefer demonstration, teachers should utilize both methods where practical.
  
- With respect to the impact of the “learning environment” on the effectiveness of student learning, the stakeholders discussed the following observations:
  - ◊ The enthusiasm of the teacher is essential in establishing a learning environment that motivates students and gets them interested in learning. Students lose motivation to learn when they are around a negative or non-motivated teacher.
  - ◊ Some stakeholders pointed to the physical environment as contributing to the learning environment. Examples discussed include Finland Middle School, which is old with no windows for some students compared to Franklin Woods which is new, well lit, etc.
  
- Stakeholders had extensive discussions around the collaboration that must take place between the family, school, and community in order for student learning to be optimized in the district.
  - ◊ Stakeholders generally agreed that the engagement with the community and parents is an area that can be significantly improved by the District. The stakeholders brought up that the District does not do a good job of “selling” or promoting the positive things going on in the District and making community pride a priority.
  - ◊ Stakeholders specifically cited one example school where community pride and engagement in the learning process is lacking. There is a perceived lack of identity for the school. The overall community is not engaged and some parts of the district need to be reminded that they exist and where they are located. Stakeholders feel that all of these issues impact how students feel about their school.
  - ◊ Stakeholders discussed another example school where many students have little family support, participation in extra-curricular activities are down, and the school and community are somewhat disconnected [outside of a few pockets of supportive parents/community members]. Stakeholders stated that this school is filled with many very bright kids who teachers and coaches are attempting to mentor, but that there needs to be more engagement with the community for students to reach their full potential.
  - ◊ Some recommendations from the stakeholder group were to find a better way to communicate the positives in the District, utilize events that people want to come to [i.e.

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captive audience] to promote good things going on in the school AND community, and attempt to engage people outside “normal” group that participates in the District.

- With respect to the role that parents play in the academic performance of their child, the stakeholders discussed:
  - ◇ Parents should be engaged and make sure their kids are motivated to participate in school activities and academics. The group was not sure how much they should be involved beyond providing this support and positive environment.
  - ◇ The stakeholders discussed that they did not like the approach by some teachers that parents of kids performing at or above expectations are told they do not need to come to parent teacher conference. Some perceive this as discouraging the parents from engaging with the teacher.
  - ◇ Stakeholders discussed that some parents simply do not know how to help. An example of was given where parents stated they didn’t know how to multiply and therefore cannot help their child. Teachers need to acknowledge that skills among parents are very different and need to take this into consideration when setting their own expectations of their parents.
  - ◇ Stakeholders also acknowledged that while parent engagement is critical that some parents are extremely difficult to get involved. Teachers should not just accept this and discontinue trying. There must be a continuous effort to reach out and find a common ground to encourage the parent-teacher relationship and engagement with their student.
- All stakeholders agreed that the District has a responsibility to modify its curriculum and teaching methods to keep up with the changes in the global and digital economy.
  - ◇ Stakeholders agreed that the District is behind in this area with respect to the technology that it is using. The challenge is that technology is constantly changing and to stay up-to-date is not financially feasible. Grants should be pursued to help with costs.
  - ◇ Stakeholders stated that the focus should be to prepare students to be college or career ready when they graduate, not to teach to a standardized test. At times, the District is not teaching what is really needed for life after school.
  - ◇ Stakeholders said the state does not say what to teach in some areas [i.e. business] so it is up to the District to keep up with what is required to prepare students for college / vocation. This requires a focused and forward-thinking effort from the District.
- Stakeholders were somewhat divided in their assessment of how well the grading system used by the District is communicated to the parents.
  - ◇ Comments were made that the new grading policy did not go well with respect to communicating with parents, students, etc. Stakeholders stated some teachers still don’t understand how grades are determined so communicating with the parents is difficult.
  - ◇ Stakeholders raised the issue that there are new teachers coming from different backgrounds and there doesn’t appear to be adequate and consistent training on how the grading system works. This again makes it difficult for teachers to engage in consistent discussions with parents [i.e. parents have children with different teachers].
- Stakeholders generally agreed that it is reasonable to consider demographics and other socio-economic factors when comparing the performance of schools or districts, but did not view this

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as the measure that is really important in education. The measure that is important is how well the individual student is doing in the learning process. The parents of the District are far more concerned with the teacher – student – parent experience than the overall performance of the District.

**Meeting Topic:** Parent Engagement  
**Meeting Date:** January 25, 2011  
**Facilitators:** Guy Cerimele and Dave Lucas  
**Survey Results:** Attachment H

### Summary of Feedback:

- Stakeholders were generally aligned with the District belief statements discussed [see Attachment H for specific results].
- With respect to the results of the survey questions, the stakeholders discussed the following clarifications to their ratings:
  - ◇ On survey question #4, where it is stated that “Parents have an equal or greater accountability as the District in the academic performance of their child,” the stakeholders discussed that if the survey had just stated “equal” [and eliminated “or greater”] there would have been more strongly agree. The general consensus is that it is an equal partnership.
  - ◇ On survey question #10 it states, “... it is the District’s responsibility to provide special attention to these students to ensure the stay at the same level as their peers.” Stakeholders stated that the word “ensure” should be replaced with “provide the opportunity” for better alignment with expectations.
  - ◇ On survey question #12 it states, “The two things that parents can do to have the greatest impact on their child’s learning are: spending significant time with the child and communicating expectations regarding performance at school.” Although the majority of stakeholders strongly agreed with this statement, they felt that it was important to clarify that “significant time” could better be characterized as “meaningful time.”
- A significant amount of time in this session was devoted to discussing expectations of parents and teachers in the education process.
  - ◇ The majority of stakeholders agreed that it is not practical for teachers to have expectations of parents in providing instruction to their child on how to do a particular assignment. It was discussed that generally teachers should [and do] only send home assignments that the student should be able to complete on their own.
  - ◇ It was recognized that all parents have different abilities and experiences and that teachers should make no assumptions as to whether a parent should be able to provide specific instructional support to a student.
  - ◇ The primary expectation that the stakeholders felt is practical and should be communicated to parents is that students are fed, rested, well-behaved, attend school regularly, and have a positive attitude about learning.
- With respect to parent – teacher engagement, stakeholders shared the following observations:

## Summary of Stakeholder Comments

- ◇ Stakeholders discussed the transition from elementary to intermediate to junior high being a significant difference in engagement. The observation was that in elementary there was a lot of communication between the teacher and parent [i.e. papers sent home, etc]. As students transition from elementary to higher grades, the level of engagement significantly decreases and it becomes very difficult for a parent to provide support.
  - ◇ Stakeholders discussed the lack of utilization and consistency in the information systems and communication tools utilized by teachers. The “PAM” system has not met expectations in terms of consistent utilization. Some teachers use it and don’t update it, some don’t use it at all, and some fully use it. This makes it very difficult for a parent to understand who is doing what.
  - ◇ Stakeholders discussed the lack of resources now available for teachers to provide to parents that want to help their child in their homework. It was stated that nothing can be sent home [i.e. instructional books, etc.] unless purchased by the teacher. This was identified as a significant barrier in fully engaging parents in the learning process.
  - ◇ Stakeholders emphasized the fact that some parents do not know how to engage in the education process. Some do not understand basic terms and are uncomfortable engaging. It was mentioned that some school districts utilize a “parent advocate” concept that helps these parents engage with the District in a non-threatening way.
- From a best practice perspective, stakeholders discussed the “Math Nights” and other similar engagement tools that are utilized at some “Title Schools.” It was noted that these sessions are fairly well attended and were a good way to connect with the community.
  - Regarding how comfortable the parents in the District feel coming into the school buildings within the District, the stakeholders had varied experiences.
    - ◇ Each school building takes on its own personality, often driven by the building administration and secretaries/administrative assistants. While some buildings were cited as being very open and receptive, stakeholders shared several examples where they did not feel welcome and perceived they were “a burden” to the staff.
    - ◇ It was again noted that for some parents, schools are an intimidating place to visit. They have had bad experiences in the past and are uncomfortable engaging. For these parents [in particular], it is very important they are welcomed into the building, greeted with a customer service mindset, and leave with a good feeling about the school.
    - ◇ The stakeholders acknowledged that the security rules that have been imposed on schools over the past decade have made visiting schools a much more formal process and have taken away some of the open community environment.
  - In terms of developing relationships, the stakeholders discussed that the District and school buildings need to identify opportunities to have relationships outside of the academic setting.
    - ◇ The stakeholders discussed the importance of inviting parents and community members into the school building for “non-academic” events. This is a great opportunity for teachers to connect with parents in a non-threatening environment outside of the academic conversation. Stakeholders stated that teachers should be strongly encouraged to attend these types of events.

## Summary of Stakeholder Comments

- ◇ Stakeholders discussed community service and identifying “neutral ground” to build relationships with parents and the community. Again, the focus was on understanding the environment, culture, and interests of the student, family, and community.
- ◇ Stakeholders also acknowledged that the diversity of the District, in terms of socioeconomics and cultural make-up, poses a number of challenges to reaching the community. There is no one size fits all. Different school buildings will likely need to have different types of events or community service projects based on the interest and culture of the community it serves.
- Throughout the conversation, the stakeholders acknowledged the significant expectations that were identified for a teacher in the area of engagement with student, family, and community, while also teaching each student to the best of their ability.
  - ◇ Stakeholders stated that teachers, in affect, at times fill support voids by parents and become role models, counselors, and try to do whatever it takes, notwithstanding available District assistance.
  - ◇ It was raised in the stakeholder discussion that teachers need to be made aware of all available resources to provide support to students and families within the District. Some teachers are unaware of what support is available to them.
  - ◇ It was discussed that there may need to be more training for teachers in how to effectively manage the diversity of families that they are asked to work with and how to address the personal issues that many of today’s students face.
  - ◇ It was noted that while most teachers do accept the responsibilities above, that many teachers are also parents and have to be available to provide the supportive environment to their own families.

# **ATTACHMENT A**

## **Facilitator Information**

## Facilitator Information

### **Guy Cerimele**

Guy is a Project Manager in the Generation business unit of American Electric Power. He has twenty-five (25) years of experience in the electric power industry, including positions in engineering, environmental, and governmental affairs. Guy's current responsibilities include working with project managers to provide training on project management best practices and facilitation of project and risk management workshops. Guy is a graduate of Youngstown State University and has completed the The Ohio State University Strategic Leadership program. He is a Professional Engineer and certified Project Manager Professional.

### **Amy Dawson**

Amy is a Senior Vice President at Fahlgreen, one of the country's top advertising, public relations, and digital agencies. With twenty-five (25) years of experience in these disciplines, Amy leads the agency's healthcare practice and also works extensively with college and university clients in Ohio and beyond. Amy also coordinates consumer research on a variety of issues and topics. Amy is a member of the South-Western City Schools' Community Advisory Group and is a graduate of Texas A&M University.

### **Dave Lucas**

Dave is the Director of Environmental and Retrofit projects for American Electric Power. In this role, Dave is responsible to provide management oversight in the planning and executing a number of projects ranging from \$5M to \$100M. Dave has over eighteen (18) years of experience in project management, strategic planning, and heavy industrial construction. Dave has a MBA from Marshall University and has completed Executive Education programs at The Ohio State University, MIT, and Harvard Business School. Dave is a member of the South-Western City Schools' Community Advisory Group.

### **Sal Piazza**

Sal is the Manager, Technical Skills and Process Optimization in the Generation business unit of American Electric Power. In this role, Sal is responsible for managing a team of professionals that provide training, employee development, organizational effectiveness, and technical skills support to over 3,800 employees spanning eleven (11) states. Sal has over fourteen (14) years of experience in the electric power industry and is a graduate of Manhattan College in Bronx, NY.

# **ATTACHMENT B**

## **Strategic Dimensions**

## **Strategic Planning Dimensions and Guiding Questions**

### **Academic Achievement** (outcomes- scope of opportunities, individualization, appropriate delivery, missing skills)

- Is the state of Ohio's academic rating system important for students?
  - What "grade" would you give the South-Western City School's quality of education?
- What experiences are crucial for the school district to offer to appropriately prepare a student?
  - What do you think are the characteristics of a "well-educated" student?
  - What is needed to assure that all students can succeed?
  - What is it that students should know and be able to do to succeed in their world?
  - What knowledge is of the most worth in a global and digital economy?
- What are the primary responsibilities of public education in our country?
  - Discuss the balance of individual choice versus societal greatest good in educating students.
- What should/will assessment look like in the future?
  - How should/will student achievement be measured?

### **Student Development/Extra-Curricular Activities** (outcomes- priority, experience versus winning, group versus individual, skills to be taught, sense of community)

- What do you think should be the role and importance given to student development activities in the schools?
- Besides their "classes," what other programs should students have access to at school?
- What should be the school's role related to teaching social skills (e.g. self-esteem, self-control, conflict resolution, etc.)?
- What is the proper focus of school activities in a student's overall educational experience?
- How do we get students to want to be involved? Should we?
- Is school/community pride important to student development? If so, how do we develop pride in our system/organization/community?

### **Innovation in Education** (outcomes- basics versus liberal arts, role/importance of technology, experimental versus best practices, traditional delivery versus alternative methods, branding of the district)

- How does the community view change?
- How do you perceive the school district views change?
- What are the trends affecting public education in the future?
- How much time and what level of resources should be allocated to innovative options (technology, innovative class schedules, on-line learning, etc.)?
  - Should your child continue to attend school in a physical building in the future? What might An alternative look like?
  - How do we balance access issues related to technology?
  - Does money spent on instructional technology produce dividends?
  - How should education prepare graduates for their world in which they will live?
- What should our buildings/classrooms look like? (by grade band)
- What technologies should students be exposed to at school that they aren't today?
- What are the values and beliefs of the South-Western City School District community?

**College/Vocation Preparation** (outcomes- specialization/differentiation of curriculum, soft skills, linkages and partnerships)

- Should our goal be to prepare ALL students to attend college after high school?  
·What are the differences that will exist in preparation for college and the workforce?
- What should the business community's role be in SWCS educational programs?
- What do you think is the role of Vocational education?
- What is the future of Vocational (Career and Technical) Education as a means for preparing a child for their world
- What additional responsibilities should the district assume in promoting a successful transition from K-12?

**Parent Engagement** (outcomes- role, responsibility, ways parents want to engage)

- In what ways would you like to be more engaged in your student's education?
- In what ways can your student's school make you feel more welcome in their building?
- What is the role of a parent/guardian in the relationship with their child/school?
- How can the school system better engage parents...or should we?
- What tools are parents lacking to appropriately assist their student?

**Diversity of the School District** (outcomes- how people see/define, the untapped benefits/opportunities)

- What are the trends affecting public education in the future?
- Does the community see diversity as an asset?  
·How would you characterize the district in terms of diversity?  
·Is cultural diversity education important for your child?  
·What attitudes have you observed regarding the school district's diversity?  
·How can diversity be better used as a resource?  
·What are the values and beliefs of the South-Western city school District community regarding diversity?
- Should your child begin learning a foreign language at an early age? Why? Which language(s)? Why?
- What resources, actions or attitudes do you think would be helpful in addressing diversity issues?

**Additional Question Considerations** (outcomes- our brand, the desired brand)

- What are the values that you perceive to drive the school district? What values do you think should drive the school district?
- What comes to your mind when you think of the South-Western City School District?  
·What would you want to come to mind?
- How does the public judge the success of the South-Western City School District?
- Are there barriers (changeable or other) that stand in the way of the district being successful?
- How would you describe the image of the South-Western City Schools today and in the near future?

# **ATTACHMENT C**

**Student Development/Extra-Curricular Activities**



## South-Western City School District

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### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

3805 Marlane Drive

Grove City, Ohio 43123

Phone: (614) 801-3000

Fax: (614) 871-2781

[DATE]

[NAME]

[ADDRESS]

Dear [NAME],

First, let me say thank you for your willingness to be part of our strategic planning process, or more specifically, part of the upfront work needed to help us plan, prioritize and deliver the educational related needs defined by the communities we serve. We are truly excited about the possibilities. We understand that many of you have very busy personal and professional lives and that your "free time" is limited so we will do our best to make your time in this process time well spent! Your focus group meeting is scheduled for:

**Central Crossing High School**

(4500 Big Run South Road in Grove City)

on **Tuesday, December 7, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.**

The meeting will last approximately 90 minutes.

Education is changing. We face major budget and funding issues that threaten to create obstacles for local school districts in educating our children. At the national level, we continue to hear that the U.S. is falling behind other countries in the education of our children and the debate continues around how to improve. Globally, technology is changing the way education is being delivered to students.

The work in which you will be participating, is the basis of our efforts to develop three to five overarching themes that will drive the work of the school district for the next ten years. Your input and insight will be used to create themes, strategies, tactics, and metrics that will become an integral part of our decision-making framework as we work to become a premier district in the United States.

We have created six strategic dimensions that capture the essence of why we exist. They are academic achievement, student development, innovative education, college/vocational preparations, parent engagement, and diversity. A focus group process will be used to further define these areas and create future opportunities. Based on common ideas between these dimensions, we will create themes that will become the essence of our future work. Themes will lead to specific plans, including options and measurements that will allow us to gauge progress and ensure integrity in our daily operations.

In order to make the best use of our time together we have included a small amount of pre-work. The pre-work has been included with this letter giving you time to review the material before the meeting. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Debbie Kirby or me at (614) 801-3063 or by e-mail at [debbie.kirby@swcs.us](mailto:debbie.kirby@swcs.us) or [bill.wise@swcs.us](mailto:bill.wise@swcs.us). I truly appreciate your willingness to be part of our efforts to become the best we can be.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Wise".

Bill Wise, Ph.D.  
Superintendent



Student Development  
Stakeholder Engagement meeting  
December 7, 2010 • 7:00 p.m.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this meeting is to obtain YOUR input on a variety of questions associated with student development. This is a topic, which plays a critical role in the education of our students. The school board and administration will take the feedback from this meeting and use it as input into the strategic planning process that will establish the vision for the district for years to come.

**What you can expect at the meeting**

The meeting will be an INFORMAL DISCUSSION led by a team of two (2) volunteer facilitators, not employed by the district. At the beginning of the meeting, the facilitators will introduce themselves and briefly re-cap the purpose of the meeting. You will then be split up into two groups and everyone will be asked to participate in a discussion regarding some of the questions provided below. This will last for approximately 35 minutes and then we will take a break. After the break we will reconvene in the larger group for approximately 35 minutes where we will discuss the themes generated by the two groups and identify feedback we would like to provide to the district. The entire meeting will last approximately 90 minutes.

**Introduction to Your Meeting**

For the purpose of your discussion, "student development" will be defined as those activities offered by the district outside of the student's core academic curriculum (i.e. athletic teams, band, student clubs), as well as other opportunities to aid in the development of social skills.

The South-Western City School District currently has more than 5,000 students participating in these types of activities. During the meeting we will be discussing your thoughts on how important these types of activities are in regard to the overall development of our students. We will also be discussing what qualities you feel are important when it comes to the activities offered to our students (i.e. teamwork, competition, community pride, "life lessons," etc.).

**Discussion Questions**

Please review the following questions, write down your initial thoughts, and be prepared to discuss them during our meeting.

1. What do you think should be the role and importance given to student development activities in the schools?
2. What should be the school's role related to teaching social skills (i.e. self-esteem, self control, conflict resolution, etc.)?
3. What is the proper focus of school activities in a student's overall educational experience?
4. How do we get students to want to be involved? Should the district do this?
5. Is school / community pride important to student development? If so, how can the district participate in maintaining/growing the pride in our community?

**Student Development / Extra-Curricular Activities  
Facilitator Questions  
December 7, 2010**

South-Western City Schools has published what it calls "Belief Statements" that attempts to define the various roles that it plays within the community it serves. Using the post-it notes in front of you, please write whether you "Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree" with each of these "Belief Statements."

**1. Schools have a responsibility to prepare students to function in, and adapt to, a changing and diverse society.**

Record Results:

15 Strongly Agree    3 Agree    \_\_\_ Disagree    \_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**2. The school district must be designed to provide students with the skills needed to pursue their educational and employment goals upon graduation.**

Record Results:

17 Strongly Agree    1 Agree    \_\_\_ Disagree    \_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**3. School activities must be designed to provide experiences that actively engage students in real-life learning.**

Record Results:

7 Strongly Agree    9 Agree    1 Disagree    1 Strongly Disagree

**4. A strong interaction among the family, school, and community supports student learning.**

Record Results:

11 Strongly Agree    7 Agree    \_\_\_ Disagree    \_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

The following are some basic statements to determine where this group sits on some key issues pertaining to the importance of student development in South-Western City Schools.

**5. Teaching social skills [i.e. leadership, teamwork, and conflict resolution] is a primary responsibility of the school system.**

Record Results:

2 Strongly Agree    6 Agree    9 Disagree    1 Strongly Disagree

**6. SWCS has failed students that are high academic achievers, but lacking basic social skills.**

Record Results:

1 Strongly Agree    3 Agree    10 Disagree    4 Strongly Disagree

**7. The State Report Card is the primary measure that is used by the public to evaluate the performance of the School District.**

Record Results:

  2   Strongly Agree      8   Agree      7   Disagree      1   Strongly Disagree

**8. School administrators should be evaluated based on the percentage of students engaged in extra-curricular activities.**

Record Results:

  1   Strongly Agree      3   Agree     10   Disagree      4   Strongly Disagree

**9. A primary consideration for parents that put their sons or daughters in private, charter, or home schooling is to better control or shape their social development.**

Record Results:

  2   Strongly Agree      6   Agree      8   Disagree      2   Strongly Disagree

**10. For those students with roughly the same academic standing, students who participate in extra-curricular activities are better prepared to be successful in the classroom after high school.**

Record Results:

 14   Strongly Agree      4   Agree         Disagree         Strongly Disagree

**11. The District should rely more on the community to provide extra-curricular / student development activities and stay focused on core academics.**

Record Results:

     Strongly Agree      5   Agree      8   Disagree      5   Strongly Disagree

**12. If required to prioritize, the District should always reduce District funded extra-curricular activities before core academic resources.**

Record Results:

     Strongly Agree     12   Agree      4   Disagree      2   Strongly Disagree

**Student Development / Extra-Curricular Activities  
Stakeholder Invitation List  
December 7, 2010**

<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Stakeholder Role</u></b>
1	Pat Weethee	Service Club Advisor
2	Precious Lee Thompson	Service Club Student
3	Madison Bostard	Student Athlete
4	Mark Mayers	Parent
5	Cheryl Grossman	Service Club Member
6	Andy Amstutz	Coach High School
7	Janelle Stoltman	Coach Middle School
8	Patrick Callaghan	Executive Director
9	Paul Pyle	Clergy
10	Denise Charmichael	Booster Club Athletics
11	Brad Malloy	Booster Club Band
12	Steve Bowshier	Township Trustee
13	Karen Dover	Board of Education
14	Doug Shoemaker	Juvenile Court/Law Enforcement
15	Bob Lewis	Grove City Kids Association
16	Kim Conrad	Parks and Recreation Department
17	Becky Ciminello	YMCA
18	Joe Dimel	Non-Public School Parent
19	Liesl McNamee	Lion's Club
20	Karen Rohr	Kiwanis
21	Mimi Connolly	YMCA

# **ATTACHMENT D**

**College/Vocation Preparation**



## South-Western City School District

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### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

3805 Marlane Drive

Grove City, Ohio 43123

Phone: (614) 801-3000

Fax: (614) 871-2781

[DATE]

[NAME]

[ADDRESS]

Dear [NAME]

First, let me say thank you for your willingness to be part of our strategic planning process, or more specifically, part of the upfront work needed to help us plan, prioritize and deliver the educational related needs defined by the communities we serve. We are truly excited about the possibilities. We understand that many of you have very busy personal and professional lives and that your "free time" is limited so we will do our best to make your time in this process, time well spent! Your focus group meeting is scheduled for:

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We have created six strategic dimensions that capture the essence of why we exist. They are academic achievement, student development, innovative education, college/vocational preparations, parent engagement, and diversity. A focus group process will be used to further define these areas and create future opportunities. Based on common ideas between these dimensions, we will create themes that will become the essence of our future work. Themes will lead to specific plans, including options and measurements that will allow us to gauge progress and ensure integrity in our daily operations.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Wise". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Wise, Ph.D.  
Superintendent



College/Vocational Preparation  
Stakeholder Engagement meeting  
December 7, 2010 • 7:00 p.m.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this meeting is to obtain YOUR input on a variety of questions associated with college/vocational preparations. This is a topic which plays a critical role in the education of our students. The school board and administration will take the feedback from this meeting and use it as input into the strategic planning process that will establish the vision for the district for years to come.

**What you can expect at the meeting**

The meeting will be an INFORMAL DISCUSSION led by a team of two (2) volunteer facilitators, not employed by the district. At the beginning of the meeting, the facilitators will introduce themselves and briefly re-cap the purpose of the meeting. You will then be split up into two groups and everyone will be asked to participate in a discussion regarding some of the questions provided below. This will last for approximately 45 minutes and then we will take a break. After the break we will reconvene in the larger group for approximately 30 minutes where we will discuss the themes generated by the two groups and identify feedback we would like to provide to the district. The entire meeting will last approximately 90 minutes.

**Introduction to Your Meeting**

For the purpose of your discussion, college /vocational preparations will refer to as the curricular opportunities, community partnerships, and other activities which will support students in identifying plans and transitioning to life after high school. For a typical graduating class, approximately 22% of SWCS graduates attend a 4-year college or university in Ohio and approximately 16% attend a 2-year college in the state.

During this meeting we will be discussing your thoughts on the important task of preparing our students for the next step in their life – be it work or higher education. How can the district ensure that its students are prepared to compete in the ever changing world that awaits them?

**Discussion Questions**

Please review the following questions, write down your initial thoughts, and be prepared to discuss them during our meeting.

1. Should SWCS' goal be to prepare ALL students to attend college after school?
2. What should the business community's role be in SWCS' educational programs?
3. What do you think is the role of vocational education?
4. What opportunities should be offered to ensure that South-Western students are among the best prepared in the world for college and vocational experiences?
5. What additional responsibilities should the District assume in promoting a successful transition from K-12?

**College / Vocation Preparation  
Facilitator Questions  
December 7, 2010**

**Survey Questions**

**1. In order to be successful in today's global economy, students need to have lifelong learning skills that will enable them to graduate from high school and transition smoothly into a specific vocation or enroll in a college or university.**

  13   Strongly Agree      3   Agree      0   Disagree      0   Strongly Disagree

**2. SWCS adequately prepares students for post-secondary education [at a college or university].**

  1   Strongly Agree     10   Agree      2   Disagree      0   Strongly Disagree

[Note: 3 chose not to answer this question due to lack of information or familiarity with the District]

**3. SWCS offers a well-rounded, college preparatory academic program focused on students who seek to enter a college or university after graduation.**

  2   Strongly Agree     12   Agree      0   Disagree      0   Strongly Disagree

[Note: 2 chose not to answer this question due to lack of information or familiarity with the District]

**4. SWCS offers a comprehensive vocational education program focused on students who seek specialized employment after high school graduation.**

  3   Strongly Agree     11   Agree      0   Disagree      0   Strongly Disagree

[Note: 2 chose not to answer this question due to lack of information or familiarity with the District]

**5. SWCS offers the depth and breadth of courses students need to be successful in a college or university setting.**

  8   Strongly Agree      3   Agree      1   Disagree      0   Strongly Disagree

[Note: 4 chose not to answer this question due to lack of information or familiarity with the District]

**6. SWCS offers the depth and breadth of courses students need to be successful in their chosen vocation upon graduation from high school.**

  1   Strongly Agree     12   Agree      1   Disagree      0   Strongly Disagree

[Note: 2 chose not to answer this question due to lack of information or familiarity with the District]

**7. College and vocational readiness begins before students start kindergarten.**

  4   Strongly Agree      8   Agree      2   Disagree      2   Strongly Disagree

**8. SWCS provides adequate information to students and parents to help them choose the path most suited for their needs – college preparatory or vocational.**

  1   Strongly Agree      9   Agree      2   Disagree      0   Strongly Disagree

[Note: 4 chose not to answer this question due to lack of information or familiarity with the District]

**9. SWCS offers a good array of post-secondary education opportunities to accelerated high school students cannot be met in the high school classroom.**

  1   Strongly Agree      5   Agree      4   Disagree      0   Strongly Disagree

[Note: 6 chose not to answer this question due to lack of information or familiarity with the District]

**10. The District does a good job of related achievement test scores to the types of skills need for success in high school and beyond.**

  0   Strongly Agree      6   Agree      3   Disagree      2   Strongly Disagree

[Note: 5 chose not to answer this question due to lack of information or familiarity with the District]

**11. The District provides guidance counselors who can help students find the path that they're most interested in and suited for.**

  2   Strongly Agree      6   Agree      2   Disagree      0   Strongly Disagree

[Note: 6 chose not to answer this question due to lack of information or familiarity with the District]

**12. SWCS has the resources needed to educate students of all ages about the variety of careers available to them after graduation.**

  3   Strongly Agree      7   Agree      3   Disagree      0   Strongly Disagree

[Note: 3 chose not to answer this question due to lack of information or familiarity with the District]

**College / Vocation Preparation  
Stakeholder Invitation List  
December 7, 2010**

<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Stakeholder Role</u></b>
1	Emily Rodgers	4-year college
2	Mabel Freeman	4-year college
3	Mike Snider	Columbus State Community College
4	Stan Dick	Manufacturing Rep
5	Brian Lehman	Manufacturing Rep
6	Kirk Bidlack	Service Industry Rep
7	Jason Keys	Service Industry Rep
8	Jerry Brownfield	Skilled Trades Rep
9	Mike Boso	Skilled Trades Rep
10	Nina Brown	Career Tech Teacher
11	Kris Sander	Career Tech Teacher
12	Mike Reichfield	Health Care Industry
13	Andrea Applegate	Chamber of Commerce
14	Linda Blaine	Local Employer
15	Shelley Swallows	Entrepreneur
16	Gary Shyu	Entrepreneur
17	Karen Yeater	Parent of Recent Graduate
18	Jim McNabb	Non-Public School Parent
19	Sherry Minton	Adult Ed/Able Teacher
20	Linda Schweitzer	Technology Rep
21	Steve Torsell	WABA Rep
22	Ted Berry	Elected Official
23	Mark Yound	Unidentified

# **ATTACHMENT E**

**Diversity of the School District**



## South-Western City School District

---

### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

3805 Marlane Drive

Grove City, Ohio 43123

Phone: (614) 801-3000

Fax: (614) 871-2781

[DATE]

[NAME]

[ADDRESS]

Dear [NAME],

First, let me say thank you for your willingness to be part of our strategic planning process, or more specifically, part of the upfront work needed to help us plan, prioritize and deliver the educational related needs defined by the communities we serve. We are truly excited about the possibilities. We understand that many of you have very busy personal and professional lives and that your "free time" is limited so we will do our best to make your time in this process, time well spent! Your focus group meeting is scheduled for:

**Central Crossing High School**

(4500 Big Run South Road in Grove City)

on **Tuesday, January 18, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.**

The meeting will last approximately 90 minutes.

Education is changing. We face major budget and funding issues that threaten to create obstacles for local school districts in educating our children. At the national level, we continue to hear that the U.S. is falling behind other countries in the education of our children and the debate continues around how to improve. Globally, technology is changing the way education is being delivered to students.

The work, in which you will be participating, is the basis of our efforts to develop three to five overarching themes that will drive the work of the school district for the next ten years. Your input and insight will be used to create themes, strategies, tactics, and metrics that will become an integral part of our decision-making framework as we work to become a premier district in the United States.

We have created six strategic dimensions that capture the essence of why we exist. They are academic achievement, student development, innovative education, college/vocational preparations, parent engagement, and diversity. A focus group process will be used to further define these areas and create future opportunities. Based on common ideas between these dimensions, we will create themes that will become the essence of our future work. Themes will lead to specific plans and measurements that will allow us to gauge progress and ensure integrity in our daily operations.

In order to make the best use of our time together we have included a small amount of pre-work. The pre-work has been included with this letter giving you time to review the material before the meeting. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Debbie Kirby or me at (614) 801-3063 or by e-mail at [debbie.kirby@swcs.us](mailto:debbie.kirby@swcs.us) or [bill.wise@swcs.us](mailto:bill.wise@swcs.us). I truly appreciate your willingness to be part of our efforts to become the best we can be.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Wise".

Bill Wise, Ph.D.  
Superintendent



Diversity of the District  
Stakeholder Engagement meeting  
January 18, 2011 • 7:00 p.m.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this meeting is to obtain YOUR input on a variety of questions associated with diversity of the South-Western City Schools district. This is a topic, which plays a critical role in advancing the education of our students and preparing them for life after school. The school board and administration will take the feedback from this meeting and use it as input into the strategic planning process that will establish the vision for the district for years to come.

**What you can expect at the meeting**

The meeting will be an INFORMAL DISCUSSION led by a team of two (2) volunteer facilitators, not employed by the district. At the beginning of the meeting, the facilitators will introduce themselves and briefly re-cap the purpose of the meeting. You will then be split up into groups and everyone will be asked to participate in a discussion regarding some of the questions provided below. This will last for approximately 50 minutes and then we will take a break. After the break we will reconvene in the larger group for approximately 15 minutes where we will discuss the themes generated by the two groups and identify feedback we would like to provide to the district. The entire meeting will last approximately 90 minutes.

**Introduction to Your Meeting**

For the purpose of your discussion, "Diversity of the District" will be discussed in the context of the various communities, socio-economic backgrounds, and ethnic groups that exist within the District.

South-Western City Schools is one of the most diverse schools districts in the entire state. Within the District there are over 50 different languages spoken, 2,000 students enrolled in our English Second Language program, nearly 50% of our students are on free or reduced lunch, and there are 6 different ethnic groups represented. The focus of this discussion will be how the District should consider, or promote, the diversity of our district as it prepares its strategic vision for the District for years to come.

**Discussion Questions**

Please review the following questions, write down your initial thoughts, and be prepared to discuss them during our meeting.

1. Does the community perceive the diversity of the District as an asset or liability?
2. What are the values and beliefs of the community regarding diversity?
3. Should the District have different expectations, teaching styles, and/or curriculum for different parts of the District based on socio-economic, ethnic, or other attributes?
4. What resources, actions, or attitudes do you think would be helpful in addressing diversity issues?
5. Should the District do more to promote unity among the communities in South-Western City Schools or is individual community pride (ie. Westland, Franklin Heights, etc.) more important?

**Diversity of the School District  
Facilitator Questions  
January 18, 2011**

South-Western City Schools has published what it calls "Belief Statements" that attempts to define the various roles that it plays within the community it serves. Using the post-it notes in front of you, please write whether you "Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree" with each of these "Belief Statements."

**1. Schools have a responsibility to prepare students to function in, and adapt to, a changing and diverse society.**

Record Results:

12 Strongly Agree    2 Agree    1 Disagree    1 Strongly Disagree

**2. An orderly, safe, caring, and supportive environment is necessary for effective learning to take place.**

Record Results:

11 Strongly Agree    5 Agree    \_\_\_\_ Disagree    \_\_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**3. Students must have continuous opportunities to show that they are able to learn without being called failures.**

Record Results:

13 Strongly Agree    \_\_\_\_ Agree    3 Disagree    \_\_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

The following are some basic statements to determine where this group sits on some key issues pertaining to the diversity of South-Western City Schools.

**4. I consider the diversity within South-Western City Schools to be a positive attribute of the District.**

Record Results:

11 Strongly Agree    4 Agree    \_\_\_\_ Disagree    1 Strongly Disagree

**5. Students from all races, nationalities, and socio-economic status should all be evaluated on the same basis with regard to academic achievement.**

Record Results:

5 Strongly Agree    4 Agree    6 Disagree    1 Strongly Disagree

**6. Narrowing the "minority achievement gap" [ie. national studies reflect on average lower test scores, higher drop out rates, and lower college attendance among minorities] should be a priority of the school district.**

Record Results:

9 Strongly Agree    6 Agree    \_\_\_\_ Disagree    1 Strongly Disagree

**7. All parts of South-Western City Schools [ie. Grove City, Franklin Heights, Westland, etc.] feel as though they are treated equitably by the Administration and Board of Education.**

Record Results:

     Strongly Agree      4   Agree      8   Disagree      4   Strongly Disagree

**8. South-Western City Schools should place more emphasis on exposing our students to foreign languages and other cultures starting in elementary school.**

Record Results:

 10  Strongly Agree      4   Agree         Disagree      2   Strongly Disagree

**9. If the District identifies students as not receiving the proper support from home [ie. consistently late homework, absenteeism, performing below ability], it is the District responsibility to provide special attention to these students to ensure they stay at the same level as their peers.**

Record Results:

  4   Strongly Agree     10  Agree      2   Disagree         Strongly Disagree

**10. When comparing the academic performance among teachers, schools, or Districts, the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the student population should be considered.**

Record Results:

  3   Strongly Agree      5   Agree      6   Disagree      2   Strongly Disagree

**11. The diversity of administrators and teachers within a district building should reflect the diversity of the community where the district building is located.**

Record Results:

  4   Strongly Agree      4   Agree      7   Disagree      1   Strongly Disagree

**12. South-Western City Schools should do more with the community to promote the diversity of the District and identify opportunities to support the various groups represented.**

Record Results:

  6   Strongly Agree      6   Agree         Disagree      2   Strongly Disagree

**Diversity of the School District  
Stakeholder Invitation List  
January 18, 2011**

<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Stakeholder Role</u></b>
1	Paul Johnson	Township Trustee
2	Jeff Guminey	Chamber of Commerce
3	Jim Hale	Visitors/Convention Bureau
4	Maria Bonachea	Diversity Coordinator
5	Rene Phillips	ESL Coordinator
6	Erin Harris	TESOL Teacher
7	Dawn Lauridsen	Principal
8	Jo Ellen Myers	Board of Education
9	Mayda Vazquez	Bilingual Interpreter
10	Mr. Abdi	Somali Leader
11	Magaly Vazquez	LEON
12	Mary Allen	WABA Representative
13	Marcy Gifford	Non-Public School Parent
14	Marge Moretti	Non-Public School Administrator
15	Deputy Pollick	Law Enforcement Representative
16	Hebah Fares	Student
17	Michelle Phillips	Support Staff
18	Donna Hughes	Business
19	Terry Jones	Community Member

# **ATTACHMENT F**

## **Innovation in Education**



## South-Western City School District

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### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

3805 Marlane Drive

Grove City, Ohio 43123

Phone: (614) 801-3000

Fax: (614) 871-2781

[DATE]

[NAME]

[ADDRESS]

Dear [NAME],

First, let me say thank you for your willingness to be part of our strategic planning process, or more specifically, part of the upfront work needed to help us plan, prioritize and deliver the educational related needs defined by the communities we serve. We are truly excited about the possibilities. We understand that many of you have very busy personal and professional lives and that your "free time" is limited so we will do our best to make your time in this process, time well spent! Your focus group meeting is scheduled for:

**Central Crossing High School**

(4500 Big Run South Road in Grove City)

on **Tuesday, January 18, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.**

The meeting will last approximately 90 minutes.

Education is changing. We face major budget and funding issues that threaten to create obstacles for local school districts in educating our children. At the national level, we continue to hear that the U.S. is falling behind other countries in the education of our children and the debate continues around how to improve. Globally, technology is changing the way education is being delivered to students.

The work, in which you will be participating, is the basis of our efforts to develop three to five overarching themes that will drive the work of the school district for the next ten years. Your input and insight will be used to create themes, strategies, tactics, and metrics that will become an integral part of our decision-making framework as we work to become a premier district in the United States.

We have created six strategic dimensions that capture the essence of why we exist. They are academic achievement, student development, innovative education, college/vocational preparations, parent engagement, and diversity. A focus group process will be used to further define these areas and create future opportunities. Based on common ideas between these dimensions, we will create themes that will become the essence of our future work. Themes will lead to specific plans and measurements that will allow us to gauge progress and ensure integrity in our daily operations.

In order to make the best use of our time together we have included a small amount of pre-work. The pre-work has been included with this letter giving you time to review the material before the meeting. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Debbie Kirby or me at (614) 801-3063 or by e-mail at [debbie.kirby@swcs.us](mailto:debbie.kirby@swcs.us) or [bill.wise@swcs.us](mailto:bill.wise@swcs.us). I truly appreciate your willingness to be part of our efforts to become the best we can be.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Wise". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Wise, Ph.D.  
Superintendent



Innovation in Education  
Stakeholder Engagement meeting  
January 18, 2011 • 7:00 p.m.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this meeting is to obtain YOUR input on a variety of questions associated with innovation in education. This is a topic, which plays a critical role in advancing the education of our students and preparing them for life after school. The school board and administration will take the feedback from this meeting and use it as input into the strategic planning process that will establish the vision for the district for years to come.

**What you can expect at the meeting**

The meeting will be an INFORMAL DISCUSSION led by a team of two (2) volunteer facilitators, not employed by the district. At the beginning of the meeting, the facilitators will introduce themselves and briefly re-cap the purpose of the meeting. You will then be split up into groups and everyone will be asked to participate in a discussion regarding some of the questions provided below. This will last for approximately 50 minutes and then we will take a break. After the break we will reconvene in the larger group for approximately 15 minutes where we will discuss the themes generated by the two groups and identify feedback we would like to provide to the district. The entire meeting will last approximately 90 minutes.

**Introduction to Your Meeting**

For the purpose of your discussion, “innovation in education” will be considered any new tools and/or techniques used in the education of our students. Innovation includes, but is not limited to, technological advancements and/or alternatives in education. Other changes like modified class schedules, alternative teaching methods, or on-line learning will also be discussed.

Our world is changing every day with new technologies that change the way we communicate with one another, manage our personal business, read the daily news, and learn about new topics. Our students are growing up in a different era than the generations before them. They think, learn, and play differently. As parents and educators we will be discussing how we can “connect” with our students in a way that offers them learning opportunities they can relate to and prepare them for a technologically advanced world after school.

**Discussion Questions**

Please review the following questions, write down your initial thoughts, and be prepared to discuss them during our meeting.

1. How does the community view change? How do you perceive the District perceives change?
2. How much time and what level of resources should be allocated to identifying innovative options?
3. How should the District prepare graduates for the world in which they will live, work and study?
4. What do you feel about the District offering on-line learning from home? At what age would this be appropriate?
5. What do you feel the District could do better to “connect” with this new generation of students?

**Innovation in Education  
Facilitator Questions  
January 18, 2011**

South-Western City Schools has published what it calls "Belief Statements" that attempts to define the various roles that it plays within the community it serves. Using the post-it notes in front of you, please write whether you "Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree" with each of these "Belief Statements."

**1. Schools have a responsibility to prepare students to function in, and adapt to, a changing and diverse society.**

Record Results:

  9   Strongly Agree      2   Agree        Disagree        Strongly Disagree

**2. The school district must be designed to provide students with the skills needed to pursue their educational and employment goals upon graduation.**

Record Results:

  8   Strongly Agree      3   Agree        Disagree        Strongly Disagree

**3. School activities must be designed to provide experiences that actively engage students in real life learning.**

Record Results:

  7   Strongly Agree      4   Agree        Disagree        Strongly Disagree

The following are some basic statements to determine where this group sits on some key issues pertaining to the importance of innovation in South-Western City Schools.

**4. The basic skills that a student needs to pursue their educational and employment goals have significantly changed in the past 20 years.**

Record Results:

  5   Strongly Agree      4   Agree      2   Disagree        Strongly Disagree

**5. Advances in technology have changed the way that students communicate and learn.**

Record Results:

  9   Strongly Agree      2   Agree        Disagree        Strongly Disagree

**6. The school district has a responsibility to adopt new technology and teaching methods that will prepare our students for a successful future.**

Record Results:

  9   Strongly Agree      1   Agree      1   Disagree        Strongly Disagree

**7. Distance or on-line learning will become more prevalent in high schools over the next 5 years.**

Record Results:

6 Strongly Agree    4 Agree    1 Disagree    \_\_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**8. The advancement and availability of technology has had a negative impact on the social development of our District's students.**

Record Results:

1 Strongly Agree    4 Agree    3 Disagree    2 Strongly Disagree

**9. Every student in South-Western city schools should be required to have a computer and be able to do class-work and/or homework at home.**

Record Results:

\_\_\_\_ Strongly Agree    6 Agree    4 Disagree    \_\_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**10. The district is effectively leveraging technology to communicate with parents, students and community members.**

Record Results:

\_\_\_\_ Strongly Agree    5 Agree    6 Disagree    \_\_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**11. In the future, the role of traditional school buildings and classrooms may be minimized and virtual classrooms common place.**

Record Results:

\_\_\_\_ Strongly Agree    4 Agree    6 Disagree    \_\_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**12. The parents and community within the District are supportive of innovative and new ideas and are willing to change from the traditional teacher –classroom relationship.**

Record Results:

1 Strongly Agree    4 Agree    5 Disagree    \_\_\_\_ Strongly Disagree

**Innovation in Education  
Stakeholder Invitation List  
January 18, 2011**

<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Stakeholder Role</u></b>
1	John Kellogg	Executive Director
2	Mark Wantage	Parent High School
3	Lori Sturm	Parent Middle School
4	Suzie Smith Rios	Parent Elementary/Intermediate School
5	Brad Mitchell	Higher Education
6	Bill Tacon	Business
7	Jackie Traini	Gifted Teacher
8	Tom Rutan	ODE
9	Randy Reisling	Board of Education
10	Tara Windle	Technology Team
11	Marcy Raymond	Charter Operator / Technology Provider
12	Nathan Ericson	Textbook Representative
13	Terri Gerasco	Ed Foundation Representative
14	Bryan Mulvaney	Technology
15	Courtney Shearer	Middle School Teacher
16	Sue Barte	Elementary School Teacher
17	Scott Gaddis	High School Teacher
18	Paul Smathers	Middle School Principal
19	Dan Boland	High School Assistant Principal
20	Al Gauche	Unidentified

# **ATTACHMENT G**

## **Academic Achievement**



## South-Western City School District

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### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

3805 Marlane Drive

Grove City, Ohio 43123

Phone: (614) 801-3000

Fax: (614) 871-2781

[DATE]

[NAME]

[ADDRESS]

Dear [NAME],

First, let me say thank you for your willingness to be part of our strategic planning process, or more specifically, the upfront work needed to help us plan, prioritize and deliver the educational related needs of the communities we serve. We are truly excited about the possibilities. We understand that many of you have very busy personal and professional lives and that your "free time" is limited so we will do our best to make your time in this process, time well spent! Your focus group meeting is scheduled for:

**Central Crossing High School**

(4500 Big Run South Road in Grove City)

on **Tuesday, January 11, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.**

The meeting will last approximately 90 minutes.

Education is changing. We face major budget and funding issues that threaten to create obstacles for local school districts in educating our children. At the national level, we continue to hear that the U.S. is falling behind other countries in the education of our children and the debate continues around how to improve. Globally, technology is changing the way education is being delivered to students.

The work, in which you will be participating, is the basis of our efforts to develop three to five overarching themes that will drive the work of the school district for the next ten years. Your input and insight will be used to create themes, strategies, tactics, and metrics that will become an integral part of our decision-making framework as we work to become a premier district in the United States.

We have created six strategic dimensions that capture the essence of why we exist. They are academic achievement, student development, innovative education, college/vocational preparations, parent engagement, and diversity. A focus group process will be used to further define these areas and create future opportunities. Based on common ideas between these dimensions, we will create themes that will become the essence of our future work. Themes will lead to specific plans and measurements that will allow us to gauge progress and ensure integrity in our daily operations.

In order to make the best use of our time together we have included a small amount of pre-work. The pre-work has been included with this letter giving you time to review the material before the meeting. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Debbie Kirby or me at (614) 801-3063 or by e-mail at [debbie.kirby@swcs.us](mailto:debbie.kirby@swcs.us) or [bill.wise@swcs.us](mailto:bill.wise@swcs.us). I truly appreciate your willingness to be part of our efforts to become the best we can be.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Wise".

Bill Wise, Ph.D.  
Superintendent



Academic Achievement  
Stakeholder Engagement meeting  
January 11, 2011 • 7:00 p.m.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this meeting is to obtain YOUR input on a variety of questions associated with academic achievement. This is a topic, which plays a critical role in the education of our students. The school board and administration will take the feedback from this meeting and use it as input into the strategic planning process that will establish the vision for the district for years to come.

**What you can expect at the meeting**

The meeting will be an INFORMAL DISCUSSION led by a team of two (2) volunteer facilitators, not employed by the district. At the beginning of the meeting, the facilitators will introduce themselves and briefly re-cap the purpose of the meeting. You will then be split up into groups and everyone will be asked to participate in a discussion regarding some of the questions provided below. This will last for approximately 50 minutes and then we will take a break. After the break we will reconvene in the larger group for approximately 15 minutes where we will discuss the themes generated by the groups and identify feedback we would like to provide to the district. The entire meeting will last approximately 90 minutes.

**Introduction to Your Meeting**

For the purpose of your meeting, “academic achievement” will be discussed in the context of how South-Western City schools determines core academic curriculum, delivers the curriculum to students, evaluates the individual student’s academic progress, and rates the overall quality of education at a building and district level.

One of South-Western City Schools’ published Belief Statements states “The school district must be designed to provide students with the skills needed to pursue their educational and employment goals upon graduation.” In this session, we will focus on how well our district is preparing our students to pursue their goals, barriers that may prevent students from reaching their academic potential, and what opportunities for improvement that may be pursued.

**Discussion Questions**

Please review the following questions, write down your initial thoughts, and be prepared to discuss them during our meeting.

1. South-Western City Schools recently received an overall grade of “Excellent” in its state report card. What does this mean to you when assessing the district’s academic performance?
2. What “rating” would you give South-Western City Schools in quality of education?
3. What experiences are crucial for the school district to offer to appropriately prepare a student?
4. What do you see as the top 2-3 barriers preventing students from achieving their academic potential?
5. How important are parents and community in a student achieving their academic potential?
6. Should South-Western City Schools be proactive in modifying curriculum and learning environments that prepare students for technological and / or societal changes (ie. remote learning, social media, etc.)?

**Academic Achievement  
Facilitator Questions  
January 25, 2011**

The following are some basic statements to determine where this group sits on some key issues pertaining to the importance of student development in South-Western City Schools.

**1. Adapting teaching approach to student learning styles is important in how a student learns.**

Record Results:

8 Strongly Agree 5 Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

{Note: 2 people arrived late and did not answer this question}

**2. The learning environment impacts the effectiveness of learning.**

Record Results:

8 Strongly Agree 7 Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**3. Collaboration between the family, school, and community supports student learning.**

Record Results:

15 Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**4. Parents play a critical role in the academic performance of their child.**

Record Results:

12 Strongly Agree 3 Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**5. Teaching our students the core academic curriculum [reading, math, science, etc.] is THE number one priority of the school District.**

Record Results:

     Strongly Agree 8 Agree 7 Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**6. It is the teacher's responsibility to educate all students in their classroom, even at the expense of holding higher achievers back from their learning potential.**

Record Results:

     Strongly Agree      Agree 10 Disagree 5 Strongly Disagree

**7. South-Western City Schools has a responsibility to modify its curriculum and teaching methods to keep up with the changes in the global and digital economy.**

Record Results:

  4   Strongly Agree    11  Agree        Disagree        Strongly Disagree

**8. A low student to teacher ratio, which allows more time for individual attention, is critical in each student achieving his academic potential.**

Record Results:

  2   Strongly Agree     7   Agree     5   Disagree     1   Strongly Disagree

**9. South-Western City Schools' grading system is effectively communicated to parents so that performance expectations for each student are clearly understood.**

Record Results:

  6   Strongly Agree     5   Agree     4   Disagree        Strongly Disagree

**10. When comparing the academic performance of teachers, schools, or District's, the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the student population should be considered.**

Record Results:

  2   Strongly Agree    11  Agree     2   Disagree        Strongly Disagree

**Academic Achievement  
Stakeholder Invitation List  
January 25, 2011**

<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Stakeholder Role</u></b>
1	Debi Ballard	Elementary Teacher
2	Stephanie Baker	Intermediate Teacher
3	Donna Price	Middle School Teacher
4	Lori Fullen	High School Teacher
5	Kathy Gadowski	High School Teacher
6	Jill Caton	Guidance Counselor
7	Sue Oharra	Instructional Aide
8	Elaine Lawless	Principal
9	Jill Burke	Principal
10	Larry Mitchell	Parent
11	Tally Hart	Higher Education
12	Jeff Davis	Parent Non-Public School
13	Corey Meyer	Student
14	Lyndsey Pruett	Recent Graduate
15	Tami Malkowski	Parent Non-Public School
16	Michelle Lowe	Public Library Representative
17	Diane Mankins	Executive Director
18	Joe Dimel	Parent Non-Public School
19	Robert Ragland	Parent Recent Graduate
20	Sheila Ragland	Parent Recent Graduate
21	Kelly Siders	Instructional Aide

# **ATTACHMENT H**

## **Parent Engagement**



## South-Western City School District

---

### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

3805 Marlane Drive

Grove City, Ohio 43123

Phone: (614) 801-3000

Fax: (614) 871-2781

[DATE]

[NAME]

[ADDRESS]

Dear [NAME],

First, let me say thank you for your willingness to be part of our strategic planning process, or more specifically, the upfront work needed to help us plan, prioritize and deliver the educational related needs of the communities we serve. We are truly excited about the possibilities. We understand that many of you have very busy personal and professional lives and that your "free time" is limited so we will do our best to make your time in this process, time well spent! Your focus group meeting is scheduled for:

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Wise". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "W".

Bill Wise, Ph.D.  
Superintendent



Parent Engagement  
Stakeholder Engagement meeting  
January 11, 2011 • 7:00 p.m.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this meeting is to obtain YOUR input on a variety of questions associated with parent engagement. This is a topic, which plays a critical role in the education of our students. The school board and administration will take the feedback from this meeting and use it as input into the strategic planning process that will establish the vision for the district for years to come.

**What you can expect at the meeting**

The meeting will be an INFORMAL DISCUSSION led by a team of two (2) volunteer facilitators, not employed by the district. At the beginning of the meeting, the facilitators will introduce themselves and briefly re-cap the purpose of the meeting. You will then be split up into groups and everyone will be asked to participate in a discussion regarding some of the questions provided below. This will last for approximately 50 minutes and then we will take a break. After the break we will reconvene in the larger group for approximately 15 minutes where we will discuss the themes generated by the groups and identify feedback we would like to provide to the district. The entire meeting will last approximately 90 minutes.

**Introduction to Your Meeting**

For the purpose of your discussion, "parent engagement" will be discussed in the context of how South-Western City Schools can partner with parents of students within the District to provide the best possible educational experience to all students.

One of South-Western City Schools' published Belief Statements states "A strong interaction among the family, school, and community supports student learning." In this session, we will focus on the importance of the relationship between parents and schools in the education of our students. We will also talk about the role of the community to support those students who may not have the parental support they need.

**Discussion Questions**

Please review the following questions, write down your initial thoughts, and be prepared to discuss them during our meeting.

1. What are the barriers to parent engagement that are within the District's control?
2. How can the District better engage parents... or should they?
3. In what ways can our schools make parents and community members feel more welcome in their building?
4. How can the District help parents with educational activities at home?
5. What is the role of a parent/guardian in the relationship with their child/school?
6. For those students that lack parental involvement, what is the role of the school and community in providing support in the students' educational/social development?

**Parent Engagement  
Facilitator Questions  
January 11, 2011**

South-Western City Schools has published what it calls "Belief Statements" that attempts to define the various roles that it plays within the community it serves. Using the post-it notes in front of you, please write whether you "Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree" with each of these "Belief Statements."

**1. The quality of teaching and changing to meet a person's needs are important in how a student learns.**

Record Results:

13 Strongly Agree           Agree           Disagree           Strongly Disagree

**2. An orderly, safe, caring, and supportive environment is necessary for effective learning to take place.**

Record Results:

13 Strongly Agree           Agree           Disagree           Strongly Disagree

**3. A strong interaction among the family, school, and community supports student learning.**

Record Results:

11 Strongly Agree      2   Agree           Disagree           Strongly Disagree

The following are some basic statements to determine where this group sits on some key issues pertaining to the importance of student development in South-Western City Schools.

**4. Parents have an equal or greater accountability than the district in the academic performance of their child.**

Record Results:

  5   Strongly Agree      7   Agree      1   Disagree           Strongly Disagree

**5. Parents have an equal or greater accountability than the District in the development of social skills for their child.**

Record Results:

12 Strongly Agree      1   Agree           Disagree           Strongly Disagree

**6. Parents in the District are offered the resources necessary to actively support their child in their academic courses.**

Record Results:

  2   Strongly Agree      5   Agree      5   Disagree      1   Strongly Disagree

**7. Teachers should have the expectation that students are receiving the proper support at home when completing assignments or preparing for tests.**

Record Results:

  1   Strongly Agree      4   Agree      8   Disagree           Strongly Disagree

**8. Students whose parents take an active role in their day-to-day school work and have high performance expectations are more likely to be successful in school.**

Record Results:

13 Strongly Agree         Agree         Disagree         Strongly Disagree

**9. The State Report Card is a reflection of both the District's performance and the support the students of the school receive from their parents.**

Record Results:

     Strongly Agree     8 Agree     3 Disagree     2 Strongly Disagree

**10. If the District identifies students as not receiving the proper support from home [ie. consistently late homework, absenteeism, performing below ability], it is the District responsibility to provide special attention to these students to ensure they stay at the same level as their peers.**

Record Results:

 2 Strongly Agree     9 Agree     2 Disagree         Strongly Disagree

**11. Organizations such as the PTA are accessible to all parents in the District and provide an excellent opportunity for parent engagement.**

Record Results:

 6 Strongly Agree     2 Agree     5 Disagree         Strongly Disagree

**12. The two things that parents can do to have the greatest impact on their child's learning are: spending significant time with the child and communicating expectations regarding performance at school.**

Record Results:

 5 Strongly Agree     5 Agree     3 Disagree         Strongly Disagree

**Parent Engagement  
Stakeholder Invitation List  
January 25, 2011**

<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Stakeholder Role</u></b>
1	Jennifer Merritt	Pre-School Parent
2	Jennifer Hodges	Elementary Parent
3	Traylene Hutchison	Elementary Parent
4	Sherrri Bethel	Intermediate Parent
5	Valerie Hartwell	Middle School Parent
6	Deb Kakos	High School Parent
7	Terry Hickey	Elem/Interm School PTA Representative
8	Toni Gift	Middle/High School PTA Representative
9	Sue Barte	Elementary School Teacher
10	David Hampson	Middle School Teacher
11	Mindy Garverick	Board of Education
12	Mark Diemer	Clergy
13	Natosha Eskander	Childcare/Pre-School Representative
14	Sandy Nekeloff	Executive Director
15	Ana Pena	Hispanic Community Representative
16	Julie Buzard	Family & Children First Council
17	Nancy Pry	Health and Welfare
18	Elizabeth Kress	Health and Welfare
19	Ron Wheeler	Community & Family Engagement
20	Linda Kuhn	Principal