

Plan to Reorganize the Clark County School District (Revised on August 16, 2016)

The Proposal: The plan proposed to reorganize the Clark County School District which is set forth in this document provides a completely different management structure and culture for the Clark County School District (CCSD) than exists today. The plan envisions turning the present administrative structure upside down, or, more accurately, right-side up, with the schools becoming front and center at the heart of the operation of the school district. This plan calls for the extensive involvement of frontline staff and the community in decision making and makes staff accountable for the results which flow from the decisions they make. Concomitantly, and of equal importance, the school district is charged with providing the framework and structure in which the schools function to achieve their results.

This plan establishes the framework under which the specific recommendations were developed by the Advisory Committee to Develop a Plan to Reorganize the Clark County School District, which are hereby incorporated by reference. Those recommendations provide the details for the implementation of this plan and must be considered together with this plan for a comprehensive understanding of this proposal. The proposed regulations which have been prepared for the State Board of Education include the concepts necessary to begin to carry out this plan in accordance with those recommendations. (See sec. 28(4) of Assembly Bill No. 394, chapter 543, Statutes of Nevada 2015, at p. 3850.) Not every concept, however, needs to be included in law or regulations. Some of the concepts instead will be carried out internally by the CCSD, and others may be developed over time.

The Requirements. The provision of information is critical in an operation which is based on the wide participation of frontline staff, parents and members of the community. **Transparency** and **timeliness** of information and operation is critical to achieve the informed involvement of stakeholders. Therefore, the recommendations must include requirements for various reports concerning important aspects of the local school precincts and financial information about the operation of the local school precincts which must be made available to the public.

The Change Process. Because of the successful pilot program that was carried out by the CCSD with empowerment schools, it is not necessary to create another pilot program. Rather, the reorganization of the school district must facilitate the operation of the schools within the district as autonomous schools, to be called local school precincts. An incremental change of schools within the CCSD to local school precincts would likely fail. Therefore, this plan anticipates a complete change in the school district so that all public schools within the CCSD, other than charter schools and university schools for profoundly gifted pupils, become local school precincts at the same time and have autonomy over certain operations similar to the autonomy which was provided to empowerment schools.

The Timeline. Changing the school district requires considerable planning and the installation of infrastructure to support the new structure under which the CCSD will operate. Nevertheless, the change must happen expeditiously to avoid delays. To carry out the changes proposed in this plan, there must be a willingness and urgency to carry out the change. After consideration of the factors that would most likely result in a successful, district-wide implementation, this plan

recommends carrying out the plan, including the specific recommendations for implementation, district-wide beginning with the **2017-18 School Year**. To facilitate the change, a number of tasks and preparatory activities must begin during the 2016-2017 School Year. Therefore, the regulations that will carry out this plan and the recommendations must become effective as soon as possible to facilitate planning and training.

The Reorganization. This plan addresses three principal structural components of the school district: The Principalship, the Superintendency and Central Services, and their interrelationships.

The Principalship. In terms of accountability, the school principal is responsible for the entire school operation. However, a successful school consists of much more than a one-person operation. A successful principal must reach out and embrace the involvement and contribution of staff, students, parents and community. Together the group can achieve much more than any one person could accomplish alone. Some of that involvement can be mandated, such as through school organizational teams which are created for schools, but there is much more to a successful school than what is mandated. Successful schools radiate a culture of involvement that permeates their everyday operation and interactions with others.

The Superintendency. The Superintendency refers to a concept whereby the Superintendent and his or her immediate staff share a common interest in the successful operation of the school district. For this to take place, the staff members who are most likely to share this common interest are those who are most directly responsible for the schools. If the staff assisting the Superintendent represent individual departments and not schools, they are less likely to think at the district level than are those who are responsible for the schools. Because the Superintendent must focus on the schools, the people working with the Superintendent must share that focus. The Superintendent must understand the needs of the schools when considering and making decisions. The Superintendent must meet regularly with the staff members of Central Services who work with the principals of the schools in the school district.

Principalship-Superintendency Linkage. In a system in which individual schools exercise a very prominent role, accountability of the schools to the school district is achieved by a tight coupling of each local school precinct to the Superintendent managed through a single staff member within the central administration who is responsible for both support and supervision of certain local school precincts. This staff member would hold a new position within the central administration of the school district with the title of **School Associate Superintendent**. This title reflects the dual nature of the person's responsibility for certain local school precincts and for working with the Superintendent.

A school associate superintendent must be assigned by the Superintendent to oversee a group of not more than 25 local school precincts and report directly to the Superintendent. The school associate superintendent is responsible for the performance of each local school precinct which he or she has been assigned to oversee. To this end, the school associate superintendent must provide supervision of and training to the principals of those local school precincts and ensure that the local school precincts remain in compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws. The school associate superintendent will review and approve the plan of operations that are

established for the local school precincts and act as a liaison between the local school precincts, the school district and the community.

With this revision to the operation of the central administration of the CCSD, the local school precincts have a direct link to the central administration and will not have multiple supervisors within the central administration. This governance structure removes the need to create an intermediate level of bureaucracy, commonly referred to as regionalization. The role and responsibilities of the school associate superintendents in the reorganization will redefine the current structure of the CCSD, which relies on Assistant Chiefs of various departments for those roles and responsibilities.

The Central Services. The authority to carry out certain responsibilities that currently are carried out by the central administration will be transferred to local school precincts, or may be made available to the local school precincts to purchase. With the transfer of certain day-to-day decisions to the local school precincts, the central administration will be able to focus on performing those tasks remaining at the district level. The services that remain the responsibility of the central administration must be aligned with resources to ensure that the central administration is able to provide those services to the local school precincts. Instead of being referred to as central administration, the staff who provide services through the central administration should be referred to as Central Services of the CCSD. Central Services must be treated as an entity separate and distinct from the Superintendent. Although still accountable to the Superintendent, Central Services must be assigned the responsibility to plan and budget and must be held accountable for the conduct of its operations. Central Services will render certain district services to all of the local school precincts. These services include things such as payroll services, negotiations, transportation services, food services, risk management services, certain human resources services, legal services, capital projects and others. In addition, with this approach, Central Services will establish coherent expectations for local school precincts, plan better allocation of resources, provide for measuring outcomes of pupils, provide requested in-services, develop support systems, establish protocols for the manner in which any outsourcing and school-to-pay service is carried out and formulate policies for consideration by the Board of Trustees.

Central Services will likely be faced with certain challenges when it converts to operating in the manner described in this plan. For example, when responsibilities and resources devolve to the school level, certain services which become the responsibility of a local school precinct may be best provided by someone outside the school. Experience shows that after schools receive their allocations of money, the schools begin to look for “free” services that may be obtained from Central Services. The demand for “free” services increases, thereby creating an ever increasing demand for more free services. This increasing demand, however, only happens when the service is subject to elasticity in demand. When there is no elasticity, the demand does not often grow. For example, the act of issuing paychecks does not provide any elasticity of demand because there are only so many payroll checks to be written. On the other hand, if Central Services offers consultants in language arts, schools may experience increasing demand for such consultants. The solution to this type of situation is to create a market-driven operation in which the requests by local school precincts for services from Central Services are made on a “school-to-pay” basis, meaning that money that is allocated to the local school precinct must be budgeted by the school

for the services. Thus, resources that previously funded the provision of those “free” services must be reallocated to the local school precincts so they are able to determine whether it is important enough to budget for a particular service, or whether to use the money allocated in another manner. In this way, the local school precincts will be able to use money allocated in the most efficient manner rather than just grabbing for free services.

The Schools. With an autonomous model, individual local school precincts are moved to the front and center, at the heart of the school district’s operations. Each local school precinct is placed in a unique position to respond to local circumstances, provide an arena for the creative and innovative talent of staff and accept ownership for the education of the pupils it is charged with serving. Operating in this manner makes it easier to identify problems and provide direct solutions.

There are several advantages to the local school precincts with this model. The local school precincts can resolve issues without having to go through various district offices. The surrounding community more readily identifies with the local school precinct. The operation of the local school precinct is much more easily understood than the operation of an entire school district. The local school precinct also provides an easy entry point for parents to make a difference and become meaningfully involved in its success.

With only one supervisor to oversee each local school precinct (the school associate superintendent), rather than multiple supervisors from independent offices, the work flow of assignments is monitored much more easily. In addition, the school associate superintendent is responsible for ensuring that the responsibilities assigned to the local school precincts are carried out in a timely manner. As a result, Central Services will operate much more efficiently.

The Principles of Organization. To successfully carry out this plan, the CCSD must have a clearly defined organizational plan coupled with a staff that shares the cultural values of the district. Given a supportive structure, effectiveness will depend largely on the commitment and motivation of the staff. The Superintendent must approve an explicit set of principles designed to communicate the manner in which all staff are expected to perform. These **Principles of Organization** need to be developed, internalized and approved as a district position.

Surveys. The results of surveys provide a powerful tool to achieve better performance. The effectiveness of surveys, in large measure, depends on the rigor of design, the response rate, and the follow-up actions. Surveys should be administered annually toward the end of the school year. Groups surveyed should include students, staff, parents and the community. To ensure that follow-up actions may be taken, the information collected from surveys needs to be separated by individual schools and units of Central Services. All results must be made public and reported separately for local school precincts, for organizational groupings of Central Services and the district.

Training for District-wide Implementation. Successful implementation of this plan will depend upon the preparation and training of the staff most directly involved in the transition, including the staff of Central Services as well as in the schools. Because training must precede implementation, the training must begin during the 2016-2017 School Year. The training program must be based on real situations that will be encountered in the actual implementation

of operating autonomous schools throughout the school district. The training provided must be consistent from the Superintendent to the individual staff members in the schools and Central Services. To this end, the training is to be provided using a pyramidal model which begins with training at the top of the organization and then moving down the organization providing training to related groups. For example, the supervisor and the persons supervised by the supervisor should be trained together to ensure they agree on commitments and to ensure consistency in practice.

The Superintendent and the school associate superintendents must be trained first. During the training, the Superintendent may choose to seek the assistance of a facilitator who has expertise in the operation of autonomous schools. Successful implementation relies upon establishing a common understanding of the principles of organization, acceptance of those principles and consistency in implementation by the Superintendent and the school associate superintendents. Different points of view may be expressed and deliberated during training, but once the group establishes a common understanding, the debate must end. Successful implementation requires consistency and adherence to the requirements established and agreed upon during the training.

Once properly trained, each school associate superintendent moves the training down the pyramid by taking responsibility for leading the training of the principals of the local school precincts assigned to them regarding the requirements for operating as a principal in an autonomous school model. School associate superintendents, having completed the training, will be prepared to provide the training to the principals without the assistance of a facilitator. If the school associate superintendent decides to seek the assistance of a facilitator, it is important that the school associate superintendent and the principal reach a common understanding and acceptance of the autonomous school model independent of the facilitator because after the training, the facilitator will leave and ownership for successful implementation rests with the principal and school associate superintendent who remain responsible for results of the school. It is very important that the requirements established apply equally to all members of the group, the supervisor and supervised. There is no hierarchy and any member has the right to call out another member of the group who violates the agreed upon requirements. This acceptance is a true test of an organization's culture.

After the principals complete the training, the principals are then responsible for communicating and arriving at a common understanding of the autonomous school model within their school communities. An ongoing program which involves staff must be made available at the school to ensure they understand the opportunities available to them at the school to participate in decision making. Likewise, an outreach program must be in place to inform parents about the autonomous school model and the opportunities available to them to participate as part of an organizational team which advises and assists the principal in developing a plan of operation for the school, which includes a budget for certain aspects of the local school precinct that have been transferred to the local school precinct to carry out.

School Program Planning and Budgeting. The core principle of this plan for the reorganization of the management of the CCSD is establishing the responsibility of local school precincts for results and aligning resources to the responsibility. This is a large undertaking and will be revised and clarified over time. As that occurs, the system will begin to operate more effectively

and additional responsibilities and corresponding allocations of money will be made to the local school precincts that previously were carried out by the central administration of the school district. In the first year, at a minimum, the local school precincts must be assigned the responsibility of budgeting for the staff at the local school precincts as well as for equipment, services and supplies relating to that responsibility and providing direct supervision of staff, including addressing certain disciplinary actions that do not involve a violation of law or which does not require an investigation to comply with law. The local school precincts will become more successful and efficient at budgeting as more responsibility for budgeting is transferred to them from previous central budgets. When local school precincts do not have the responsibility of budgeting for the needs of the local school precincts, planning by the local school precincts is extremely difficult. Further, if local school precincts lack control over their budgets, they are likely to continually seek to access funds and services available through Central Services rather than planning efficiently and independently for their actual needs.

Once the responsibilities of the local school precincts are defined and the dollars assigned, the task of distributing the resources to the local school precincts requires the development of allocation algorithms. This plan proposes the application of a weighted student formula which is based upon students and other identified factors. In the development of the weighted student formula, the goal is to distribute the existing available funds to the local school precincts in an equitable manner. The weighted student formula eliminates the thresholds that are inherent in a system in which an additional student may determine whether a school becomes entitled to a full-time counselor or, at another level, an additional student results in an additional administrator at the school.

The initial development of the weighted student formula must be based on the equitable distribution of funds existing in each of the following groups: elementary school, middle school, junior high school, high school, and identifiable learning groups. Whether to assign greater weight to a particular group is a separate consideration. One of the real benefits of the weighted student formula is that the system is less complicated, thereby providing for more informed involvement by staff and parents. Another benefit of the weighted student formula is that it becomes easier to identify whether any group is receiving special treatment. Equally, it becomes more clear whether lower socioeconomic neighborhood schools are underfunded or overfunded. With this information available, value judgments and decisions are more likely to be made on a rational basis rather than on bias. Because the Nevada Department of Education is already working on a weighted student formula, the Department must be tasked with establishing the formula to be used in the CCSD. If the CCSD wishes to apply a different weighting, it will apply to the Department for a variance.

The process used by the school to develop the school budget must include involving the wider school community. The form of that involvement must be communicated to staff and the community. Part of that process must include communicating the amount of money that is allocated to the local school precinct and the budget decisions that are made for the local school precinct. The process must include holding a public meeting to present the proposed budget.

School budgets must be established early to eliminate surprises and must be balanced within the amount of the allocation made to the school. Allocations must be reconciled to actual state count enrollments. Any year-end balance of a local school precinct will be carried forward.

Staff Costs for Local School Precincts. Historically, school districts have staffed schools on the basis of full time equivalents, referred to as FTEs. Staffing decisions have been made on the basis of obtaining the best teacher for the available position, regardless of salary. Because the autonomous school model converts all resources to dollars, if local school precincts were required to determine staff based on actual salaries, marked variation could exist in the cost to individual local school precincts based on the composition of their staff in terms of training and experience.

The argument for using actual salaries is that it is simple, low salary schools would be able to get more staff with lower class sizes and other benefits may accrue to the school. The argument against using actual salaries, however, is that the maximum salary is more than double the minimum salary and it would be impractical to implement such a variation based on actual salaries. No one argues that teachers receiving the maximum salary represent twice the value of teachers receiving the minimum salary. In addition, no one argues that teachers who receive the maximum salary should have twice the class size of teachers who receive the minimum salary.

The correlation between salary and teacher effectiveness is low. Furthermore, in making staffing decisions, a local school precinct should select the best teacher available for the position without compromising the decision based on salary. Attempts by schools that operate under this model to use actual salaries have not proven to be sustainable and have created administrative pressure to move teachers to other schools for the sole purpose of attempting to equalize salaries within a narrow range. Using actual salaries also does not solve the problem of attracting quality teachers to schools which are considered difficult assignments. Finally, when the CCSD operated the pilot program which made certain schools within the CCSD empowerment schools, the average unit cost operated as a successful measure for budgeting purposes for each year of the program. For these reasons, this plan recommends using the average unit cost when budgeting for staff.

Central Services Program Planning and Budgeting. Budgets for the services provided by Central Services should be developed on a modified zero-based model. This is especially important since many of these budget units previously budgeted funds for the schools.

Developing a modified zero-based budget provides transparency as to what responsibilities remain in each of the budgets of the various departments of Central Services. Central Services budgets are not based on an allocative system. Costs are based on actual cost with no provision for carrying money forward.

The form of modified zero-based budgeting needs to be defined by the district. Modified zero-based budgeting usually is planned on a minimum threshold of 80 to 85 percent of the previous year's budget as the base, with a provision to add individual stand-alone incremental packages not exceeding 10 percent.

Parental and Community Engagement. The mindset of the **Principalship** discussed above embraces the contribution of parents and the community. Parental and community involvement must become intertwined in the culture of the local school precinct and integral to its operation. The principal of the local school precinct must be responsible for creating this culture. This plan recommends creating an organizational team for each local school precinct consisting of parents, teachers and other licensed and unlicensed staff who will provide assistance and advice to the

principal in the development of a plan for the local school precinct, including the budget for the local school precinct. The principal should participate on the team as a nonvoting member. Others may also be included on the organizational team to receive input from other interested persons, including students and members of the community. Other methods of reaching out to the community may also be developed.

Appeal Process. This plan calls for transparency and, therefore, the budget plan developed by the principal must be explained in a public meeting where members of the public have an opportunity to comment and make suggestions. If those suggestions are not accepted and included by the principal, there must be a process by which an appeal may be taken to the school associate superintendent. This plan suggests that the organizational team be provided authority to appeal decisions of the principal to the school associate superintendent.

Principal Selection. This plan proposes that the principal of a local school precinct be selected in a collaborative manner. Because school staff, parents and the community are very helpful at identifying the needs of a school when a principal vacancy occurs, the plan further suggests that the organizational team establish a list of qualifications that the organizational team determines are desirable for the next principal. Because the person in the school district who should make the decision about the appointment of the principal is the person who will be responsible for removing the principal if the principal's performance is unsatisfactory, the Superintendent, in consultation with the school associate superintendent, must be responsible for hiring and appointing a principal to a local school precinct. After making the appointment, the Superintendent and school associate superintendent are accountable to the staff and community for competent leadership at the local school precinct.

School Year Operational Cycle. Whereas the existing operation places a premium on problem solving, this proposed plan instead requires much wider involvement of local school precincts and considerable advanced planning. This wider involvement in the program planning and budgeting, both in the local school precincts and Central Services, necessitates even more attention to timelines in order to meet critical commitments. Efficient operation of a local school precinct requires constant planning and communicating regarding events, dates and responsibilities. Such planning must be completed before the school year and during the school year and reviewed at the end of the cycle. Though the operational school year is 1 year, the entire planning and operating cycle is 2 years.

Another aspect of the 2-year cycle is the overlap of school years. While one school year is being planned, another is being carried out. This means that major changes in initiatives and priorities, as a result of the review of one year's results, are then included in the planning for the following year rather than in the current year which is already in operation.

Transition Costs. The reorganization described in this plan will have certain costs associated with it, especially for training and infrastructure. The amount of such costs that will be incurred is not fully understood at this time. However, whatever the cost, the plan will be cost neutral as resources will be reallocated within the CCSD. In addition, there will be significant savings to the CCSD from restructuring responsibilities within the central administration and more efficient spending by schools. In the end, the CCSD will have an organizational structure that supports a system which focuses on the actual needs of each individual school, provides transparency in

budgeting and spending, encourages more efficient and effective budgetary decisions and places more money in the schools to provide programming and services for pupils.

Oversight. To ensure that the plan is carried out, there must be oversight of the transition to the autonomous school model. This plan recommends that the Advisory Committee to Develop a Plan to Reorganize the Clark County School District continues to receive reports from the CCSD to ensure timely and effective implementation of the plan. It is also critical that the CCSD provide financial and other information to the Advisory Committee to assist with this oversight.