MEMORANDUM

To: David W. Coon, Superintendent/President

From: Stephanie O’Brien, Eva Long, Wanden Treanor, Trustees

Date: 10 September 2012

RE: Ad Hoc Committee Commentary on EMP, SP

David, the three of us met to assemble comments regarding the information presented in the Educational Master Plan (2009 – 2019, Updated Feb 2012) and Strategic Plan (2009 – 2012, partial 2012 – 2015), and to ascertain what information or direction would be beneficial to the Board of Trustees in order to effectively integrate these tools into policy and direction-setting. We begin with the overall recommendations that apply to all aspects of leadership.

1. It is clear from the depth and importance of these documents that the Board regularly schedule annual reviews and analysis of the primary data findings. We recommend a structured discussion, possibly following a “study guideline” to help guide the board toward understanding both the content and how the information is or might be influencing decisions within the District with regard to mission and resource allocation. We believe that this will help assure the administration that the objectives are clear and that the policies being enacted are in full support of the District’s objectives, as well as help the Board to develop a solid understanding of the policy implications.

Actions:

a. Prepare a document to accompany presentations or board packet information that poses the crucial questions for the board to be considering when taking the information under consideration. This should connect all relevant supporting plans (i.e., call out that the Strategic Plan is an off-shoot of the Educational Master Plan, and refer readers to specific sections of that plan to highlight the inter-connectedness, etc.) and links to organizational decision-making relative to achieve objectives.

b. “Test” the guide with the board, adjust as necessary to provide the most effective tool

c. Revisit annually as needed

2. While it is clear that the District has an Integrated Planning Model in place, one consistent and over-arching comment from the group was that there doesn’t seem to be a definitive statement to the Board about “this is where we think we are headed, and here are the specific and measurable steps/actions we will be taking to get there”. This makes it hard for the Board to make informed policy and budget recommendations. It is also challenging for the lay-person to delve into the disparate documents and readily comprehend the connectivity. It could be that we just don’t know where that direction is! Also, the documents can be hard to follow,
necessitating page flipping back and forth to locate references. It appears as though there is a great deal of “planning” and not as much “implementation”.

Actions:

a. Include brief explanations of data within appendices that contextualize the information presented.

b. Create a “State of the District” assessment that links all the plans, outlines the measurable activities, and defines the key policies that must be considered or created to support that direction. Include examples of how the data being gathered on an annual basis is being used to inform board-directed policies for resource allocation throughout the District. Provide an explanation of how resources are being applied to specific areas of concern or focus to support Student Success.

c. Provide this presentation to the Board on an annual basis, well in advance of key decision dates for resource allocation and direction setting.

d. Review this data in conjunction with the District Mission Statement, and determine augmentation required to define the over-arching direction of the District into the future.

3. The Educational Master Plan is the prevailing document for our institution. It informs (or should inform) all activities within the District. Each subsequent plan (Technology, Distance Learning, Facilities) is ostensibly linked to this document’s content. However, as stated previously, the word “plan” is quite prevalent within the District. It feels to some degree that there are few quantifiable actions outlined or tracked. It is also not immediately clear how each plan is linked. And, while the development of these objective plans are not the purview of the Board, it would be advantageous to have a working knowledge of the specific, measurable actions being taken by the Administration to support the long-term objectives.

Actions:

a. Make available clear and measurable actions with dates and responsibilities in all plan discussions and documentation.

We hope that this overview is beneficial to your team in preparing for the retreat on September 15th.