

WUSD Goals for 2014-2015

A couple of months back I discussed the 2014-2015 goals with Governing Board at their annual retreat. The goals identify items we hope to accomplish this year and they focus on many of our immediate needs. Our actions as a district are still guided by our strategic plan, which identifies large, overarching activities, but these goals breakdown what we hope to accomplish by to June, 2015.

We have identified five goals: Attracting & retaining high quality employees, implementing our capital plan, addressing staff transitions, finance reporting and finally considering the concept of communication & community outreach.

To address attracting & retaining high quality employees we plan to explore ways to make permanent the salary bonuses we provided this year using District Sponsored Charter School funds. Although this funding source will sunset at the end of this year we are hopeful that the Prop. 301 lawsuit might provide some relief in this area. Time will tell, but we will see what we can do as the year progresses.

Implementation of the Capital Plan is really, really tough at this stage. We have lost 60% of our capital funding due to permanent state level budget cuts, yet our buildings and buses continue to age. Our hope in pursuing this goal is to find alternative sources of funding to in part support these needs. We likely will not be able to keep up with all of the challenges, but it is our hope to at least keep up with emergency issues we face.

Staff transitions are impacting the district in a major way and come in two forms. The first relates to many baby boomers who will be retiring in the next few years. We will lose some of our longest tenured employees and we will need to plan for this loss of institutional knowledge. Our second challenge in this area relates to the transition teachers are making to implement the Arizona College and Career Readiness Standards. To meet the needs of our students with these new, very rigorous standards our teachers will require lots of staff development and support.

Over the past couple of years we have “revamped” much of our finance reporting and have begun to produce some great information for both the Governing Board and the community. One example is the annual WUSD Governing Board Stewardship Report another is our financial projection system. Our plan during the course of this year is to develop a financial “big picture” report which will be available to our Governing Board on a quarterly basis.

The final area of our goals for this year relates to developing a plan related to communication and community outreach. We want to do more in this area, but with a small staff it can be difficult. At this stage we are conducting a couple of parent surveys each year

(October and March) and hope to design a way to enhance communication in other ways. We believe both the frequency and quality of communication can make a big difference in helping the community better understand its school system.

Clearly these goals are ambitious and multi-faceted in design. Although there is lots of work to do we will put in tremendous effort throughout the year to achieve success. At the end of the year I will attempt to devote another article to how things went and give the community a general update.