

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Gary S. Mathews, Superintendent

RE: Non-Negotiable Goals for NCSS

DATE: September 21, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends Board adoption of two “non-negotiable” goals for the Newton County School System: **(1) increased student achievement**, and **(2) more effective teaching**. For the Board to do so conveys an important and powerful message to school professionals as they go about the work of the organization on a day-to-day basis. According to school researchers, Robert Marzano and Timothy Waters, of Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, in their book entitled *District Leadership That Works*: “[In effective districts, the local board of education is aligned with and supportive of the non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction. The board ensures that these goals remain the top priorities in the district and that no other initiatives deflect attention or resources from accomplishing these goals. Although other initiatives might be undertaken, they must directly relate to these two primary goals. Indeed, publicly adopting broad five-year goals for achievement and instruction and consistently supporting these goals, both publicly and privately, are precisely the board-level actions that are most directly related to student achievement.](#)” In my judgment, having examined recent results on CRCTs, GHSGTs, End-of-Course Exams, and ACT/SAT results, the Board adoption of these two “non-negotiables” formally focuses the school system on that which matters most: student achievement. And, it is that variable—student achievement—that is in need of focused attention and needed improvement at all levels and on most measures.

BACKGROUND:

According to school researchers, Robert Marzano and Timothy Waters, effective district-level leadership involves central office, principals, and the Board of Education in formally establishing “non-negotiable” goals for the school system. “[In particular,](#)” they write, “[they \[district leadership\] ensure that building-level administrators \[principals\] throughout the district are heavily involved in the goal-setting process since these are the individuals who, for all practical purposes, will implement articulated goals in schools.](#)” Marzano and Waters further note: “[Involving principals and school board members in the goal-setting process does not imply that consensus must be reached among these stakeholders. However, it does imply that once stakeholders reach an acceptable level of agreement regarding district goals, all stakeholders agree to support the attainment of those goals.](#)” According to these two researchers, “non-negotiable” goals are those “[that all staff members must act on.](#)”

What follows is the final product, co-produced with NCSS Principals, as the result of collaboration related to the Principal's Evaluation in NCSS and the two "non-negotiable" goals: increased student achievement and more effective teaching. As you can see from this document [Principal additions in yellow], a collaborative process has resulted in effectively tying Principal Evaluation to achievement of the two non-negotiable goals. More specifically, 40 points in the Principal Evaluation are tied to increased student achievement, 40 points are tied to more effective teaching [and the Principal's facilitation of this], and the remaining 20 points are related areas such as teaching and learning environment, administrative practices, and community relations. (There are points beyond 100 which a Principal can earn based on most relevant and important school measures beyond No-Child-Left-Behind/AYP assessments such as ACT, SAT, AP, Georgia End-of-Course Exams, industry-certifications via career-technical education, writing, etc.)

Finally, as I work to "look, listen, and learn" throughout our school system, it is my observation that when discussing student achievement results with teachers, they tend to understand and support the two non-negotiable goals proffered herein. In any case, these goals, in my professional judgment, are the "right ones" and ones that we must work consistently on in the years to come. As I've indicated on a number of occasions, now, there is no magic wand, no silver bullet, just hard and "smart" work ahead if our students are to be all that they can be ...

NCSS NON-NEGOTIABLES

“Effective district leaders ensure...goals that all staff members must act on...in at least two areas: (1) student achievement and (2) classroom instruction.”

- Marzano & Waters in *District Leadership That Works: Striking the Right Balance*



- **Increased Student Achievement**
- **More Effective Teaching**

Increased Student Achievement (40 pts./Principal Evaluation)

Primary Goal for All Schools (17 pts.): *To earn Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) at the end of the 2010-11 school year per the federal No-Child-Left-Behind (NCLB) accountability system.* (Note: 8 of 17 points could be earned on Principal's Evaluation by earning AYP for the subgroup "All Students." For high school principals, "statistically significant not-by-chance" gains in ACT, SAT, and AP results will result in up to an additional 6 points added to the Principal's Evaluation, i.e., +2 for ACT, +2 for SAT, +2 for AP. Additionally, for high school principals, any gain of 3% or more in any one of the Georgia End-of-Course-Tests will result in an additional 2 pts. added to the Principal's Evaluation; also, for high school principals, for each 50 students who earn "industry certified" credentials through Career-Technical Agricultural Education, an additional 2 pts. will be added to the Principal's Evaluation. For high school principals, an increase of 3% or more for the overall graduation rate will result in an additional 2 pts. added to the Principal's Evaluation. For elementary and middle school principals, an increase in 3% or more in the overall attendance rate will result in an additional 2 pts. added to the Principal's Evaluation. Following announcement of the initial AYP results, if student "retakes" result in a school achieving AYP, then the Principal's Evaluation will be amended to reflect full credit, i.e., 17 pts.)

Secondary Goal for All Schools (13 pts.): *To demonstrate an increase of 3% in student proficiency, per each NCLB subgroup, over the prior school year in reading/English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science.*

(Note: NCLB subgroups = All, Black, White, Hispanic, Economically Disadvantaged, ELL, and SWD / For Principal's Evaluation, a 3% or more increase in 10 subgroups across 4 core subject areas = 5 pts., in 19 subgroups = 5+4 = 9pts., in 28 subgroups = 5+4+4 = 13pts. For all Principals, "statistically significant not-by-chance" gains in writing will result in an additional 2 points added to the Principal's Evaluation. Any subgroup, of at least 40 students, which realizes double-digit %-age gains from one year to the next will earn an additional 2 points added to the Principal's Evaluation. All subgroups, remaining in the 90s without a commensurate loss of 3% or more, will "count" as a subgroup earning "full credit" when examining subgroups across the four core areas for purposes of the Principal's Evaluation.)

Tertiary Goal for All Schools (10 pts.): *To achieve, at a minimum, "Safe Harbor" for the SWD subgroup.* (Note: A gain of 3% in this subgroup will earn 5 pts. on the Principal's Evaluation and, naturally, achieving "Safe Harbor" will earn the full 10 pts.)

Measurable/Monitorable Evidence for All Schools: A comparison of 2010 data vs. 2011 data per Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Goals above.

More Effective Teaching (40 pts./Principal Evaluation)

Primary Goal for All Schools: *To parallel—at each school—the learnings (knowledge/attitudes/skills) taking place in the monthly Leadership Team and Teacher Leader meetings held throughout the school year as designed by the school’s Principal and school-based leadership team(s).* (Note: Leadership Team = Principals & Central Office Administrators; Teacher Leaders = representatives per each NCSS school)

Primary Sources:

For the Improvement of School-Based Professional Practice: *Results Now: How We Can Achieve Unprecedented Improvements in Teaching and Learning*, Mike Mike Schmoker, ASCD, 2006

For the Improvement of District-Based Professional Practice: *District Leadership That Works: Striking the Right Balance*, Robert Marzano & Timothy Waters, McREL, 2009

For the Improvement of Classroom-Based Professional Practice:

Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement, Robert Marzano, Debra Pickering & Jane Pollock, McREL, 2001

Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement, Robert Marzano, ASCD, 2004

Working On The Work: An Action Plan for Teachers, Principals and Superintendents, Phillip Schlechty, Jossey-Bass, 2002

Measurable/Monitorable Evidence for All Schools: Portfolio demonstration by Principal as to the processes/activities underway in his/her school to accomplish this Primary Goal relative to More Effective Teaching in NCSS (e.g., e-Walk data, faculty/team agendas reflecting “parallel” work of Leadership Team, i.e., Principals and Central Office Administrators/Teacher Leaders, faculty survey results relative to district learnings, etc.)

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION RUBRIC TOTALS

- **Student Performance/Achievement = 40 pts.**
 - **Change/Facilitating Agent = 15 pts.**
 - Teaching and Learning Environment = 7 pts.
 - **Staff Performance & Capacity = 15 pts.**
 - Administrative Practices = 7 pts.
 - Community Relations = 6
 - **Personal Development = 10 pts.**
- Red = Non-Negotiables**

RATING CATEGORIES FOR PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

- Exemplary/Exceeds Goal/Substantial Progress = 90 - 100 pts.
- Proficient/Met Goal/Meaningful Progress = 80 – 89 pts.
- Minimally Acceptable/Some Progress = 70 – 79 pts.

Note: Below 75 necessitates a Professional Development Plan **unless the Principal's school has earned AYP the prior year or 2 out of the last 3 years.**

- Unsatisfactory/No Progress = Below 70

PRINCIPAL SIGN-OFF: I understand the Non-Negotiable Goals of NCSS and the Principal's Evaluation Process.

(Principal's Signature & Date)

SUPERINTENDENT SIGN-OFF: I affix my signature as witness to the above Non-Negotiable Goals of NCSS, an understanding of the Evaluation Process, and the above Principal's testament to the same.

(Superintendent's Signature & Date)