

From: Amanda Fulkerson [<mailto:amanda@ccsd.net>]
Sent: Monday, May 06, 2013 6:32 PM
To: Karen Gray
Subject: Re: ELL update...

Hi Karen - sorry for the delay. Any part of the narrative below can be attributed to me. It's a basic flyover of ELL topics.
-Amanda

The District refuses to ignore inequity. CCSD has taken a hard look at the uncomfortable topic of inequality. District leadership saw a trend of low performance in our ELL population and has set out to ensure English Language Learners start hitting the benchmarks for success. We needed data to show our decision makers so we enlisted some credible education experts to take a look at our trends. This is data we should be applauded for putting together to get a look at the reality we face. We only move forward by looking at solid data and saying - okay, now we know the challenge we face - how do we address it?

Our leadership created a top level position to oversee how our resources are utilized in ELL and implement proven strategies to get better, faster, because our kids can not wait.

Lucy Keaton came from Hewitson Elementary School - a school that is unique because despite have 100 percent free and reduced lunch and English language learner population - earned 5 stars. The students are excelling. Why? Because Hewitson is data driven, kept learning fun, engaged parents and challenged our students with reading programs.

These strategies were proven successful and it's my job to scale them into other schools with similar demographics and look at other strategies that work for ELL populations. Keep in mind, there is no one size fits all strategy when it comes to English Language learners, we must give our schools options and support that works for them.

We've been clear - language is NOT a barrier to intelligence - it's an obstacle to overcome so the curriculum and instruction can educate the student. ELL students should never be looked at as unintelligent.

We know the public education funding formula for our schools is outdated. In Clark County we are sending the majority of tax dollars to Carson City, but only receive \$38 a day per student to educate, feed and at times, care for or students. There are no increase taken into consideration for special needs students, English language Learners, or any other population of students that require any number of specialists and resources.

We have to live within our reality and right now that means providing the best education we can with the funding we have.

The conversation in the legislature is encouraging. Our decision makers are informed and have been very vocal about the need for a better funding formula that would help us better meet the needs of a diverse Clark County.

We as a District have made the decision to put pre-k and full day kindergarten at the top of our priorities. We've made the commitment that any new early learning programs will start in our highest need schools - these are our high ELL schools. We know having kids "ready by entry" gives them a much better chance of hitting those important benchmarks for success.

The District supports the Governor's plan to send increased per pupil funding to high English Language Learner schools. It shows he's making this a priority and that's positive.

Making supporting our English Language Learners and their families is a top priority of the District. From our police department officers learning Spanish in our high Spanish-speaking neighborhoods to ensuring our community knows there are headsets available at the board meetings so Spanish speakers are engaging in the decision making process - it's a change in culture - not a one time program.

The District as a whole is making parent engagement a priority. We know caregivers are the most important factor to success for our students.

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