

Jeff Brincat's Email to Superintendent Montgomery

Date: January 11, 2023, 12:10 p.m. CST

From: Jeff Brincat

To: Matthew Montgomery, Superintendent, Districts 67 & 115

Subject: Re: 411 on 67 - January 10, 2023

Hi Matt,

Thank you for the reply. I appreciate your response and understand that you have a lot of factors to balance in your administration of the school districts.

I am happy that your planned Strategic Plans will "include actionable and measurable goals." As someone who has led a State Agency and built several businesses, I know it is critically important for leaders to set measurable goals. There is a significant difference between setting intentions or actions and establishing quantifiable benchmarks. The benchmarks establish where you want to go, and the intentions/actions explain how you will get there. Failure to articulate where you want to end up confuses stakeholders and enervates accountability.

In a business setting, leadership failures result in the destruction of profit, which forces accountability. But in the public sector, there are no profit accountability forces. In the public education sector, the results of leadership failures are declining education results for our children and bloated budgets borne by taxpayers.

You have a lot of goodwill in this community, and we want to see you succeed. But I am not the only one who sees recent test scores, combined with record-high budgets, as a flashing red light. Communications are essential, and the tone I am seeing reveals a district leadership that doesn't perceive an emergency. It would give me more confidence if the district gave us 'the 911', not just 'the 411'. I am all for a positive face to the public but not one that tends to mask the true state of our Districts.

The Portrait of Learner document also completely omits any language geared towards academic achievement. There is nothing about discipline, leadership, rigor, accountability, perseverance, ambition, comprehension, hard work, time management, attendance, commitment, or goal setting (there is language about achieving a defined goal, but nothing about setting goals). Successful people aren't just adept in soft skills of empathy, communication, citizenship, adaptability, and confidence; they are also driven, disciplined, and focused. They also are at least proficient in core subject areas of mathematics, English, and science. Our Districts should aspire to produce leaders, risk-takers, and achievers in addition to well-adjusted and nice humans.

I don't pretend to see into people's souls and gauge their true intentions. I assume all hope (as I do) for the best for everyone. The results and measurements are simply stark realities and well below the standards we should have here in an epic sense. While there is temptation to view these conditions as they once were, or as we wish they might be, we have to regard them as they truly exist. The gravitas required of those who will affect this change has yet to manifest itself. That has to change and change now.

I stand ready to help in any way I can.

Jeffrey R. Brincat

Transcribed from the January 11, 2023 email. Message wording is preserved; line breaks are normalized. Business contact details, automatic confidentiality boilerplate, and earlier quoted correspondence are omitted.