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Board of Education
Littleton Public Schools
5776 South Crocker Street
Littleton, Colorado 80120

Dear Board Members:

Last October Pam Cirbo and I reviewed drafts of the 2002-2005 School Improvement Plans for all LPS schools. As you know from my October 15 letter and subsequent comments that Pam and I have made at board meetings, there still is much room for significant improvement in the plans to increase student learning:

- Many school plans show cursory analysis of data, unclear problem statements, and little identification of probable (or even possible) causes that would provide confidence in the likely effectiveness of planned activities.
- If the focus is upon CSAP proficiency to retain accreditation for the district and schools, then separate “academic achievement plans” should be developed to get better results for all students without jeopardizing accreditation.
- Many drafts needed clean-up for language mechanics and other careless errors.

The enclosed 40-page 1/14/03 draft on “Littleton Public Schools Nov/2002 ITBS/CogAT Results” is our latest effort to increase the quality of the 2002-2005 School Improvement Plans and their subsequent effects upon the quality and amount of LPS student learning. Pam and I believe that this report can be used by central administration and building-level personnel as part of a process to analyze data and to prepare problem statements.

The extensive tabulations of ITBS/CogAT data were selected from Riverside Publishing Service 10 reports (System and Building Frequency Distributions) on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and the Cognitive Abilities Test that were administered in November, 2002 and November, 2001 for nearly all LPS students in Grades 3, 5, and 7 in the 19 regular elementary and middle schools (both charter schools were not included).

The first page is an overall summary of selected frequency distribution data. That includes data sources, comparisons with Nov/2001 ITBS results, percentages of students below grade level, and percentages of students at least one year below grade level.

The second page is a tabulation of the Nov/2002 percentages of students below grade level in Grades 3, 5, and 7 for the total district and each school in the eight principal ITBS totals (reading, language, mathematics, core, social studies, science, sources of information, and composite). CogAT composite standard age score (SAS) averages have been included.

The third page is a tabulation of the changes in percentages of students below grade level in Grades 3, 5, and 7 for the total district and each school in the principal ITBS subtotals (reading, language, mathematics, core, social studies, science, sources of information, and composite) by subtracting the 2001 results from the 2002 results. The CogAT composite standard age score (SAS) averages for 2002 and 2001 have been included.

Pages 4, 5, and 6 (Grades 3, 5, and 7) have the district frequency distribution averages for the 19 subtotals and totals in terms of the Nov/2002 ITBS grade equivalent (GE) at selected percentiles (90%, 75%, 50%, 25%, and 10%). Percentages of students below grade level and percentages of students at least one year below grade level also are tabulated. Comparable Nov/2001 data have been included for principal ITBS totals. The CogAT composite standard age score (SAS) averages for 2002 and 2001 have been included with the three CogAT subtests (verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal) for 2002.

At the district level for Grades 3, 5, and 7 there were very few significant changes in the averages for ITBS grade equivalent (GE) and CogAT standard age scores (SAS). At the building level there were more changes in results associated with differences in grade-level groups in addition to those related to curriculum and instruction. The district composite ITBS percentage totals of students below grade level for Grades 3, 5, and 7 were 18%, 21%, and 23%, respectively.

As you know, the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) focuses on reading, writing and mathematics (the 3 Rs), whereas ITBS includes those and other subject areas. Also, CSAP requires higher performance to be considered proficient, whereas ITBS is referenced to national norms. The higher-performing schools on CSAP tended to also do well on ITBS, and the lower-performing schools on CSAP also tended to not do as well on ITBS. Some of the diagnostic information from ITBS reports can be very helpful for specifying problems, identifying causes, and aiding selection of effective corrective actions to improve student performance as measured by both ITBS and CSAP.

Pam and I are especially interested in measurements of student academic achievement that emphasize continual annual reduction of the percentage of students who are below grade level. Those students clearly have been left behind compared to state and national standards. There is an obvious and important opportunity to have a district where ALL of our students are truly above average (not the false "Lake Wobegon" claim).

Sincerely,



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cc: Supt. Stan Scheer
enclosure