



Clayton Avenue Elementary School

To: Mr. Mark Capobianco, Superintendent of Schools

From: Mr. Jeffrey DeAngelo, Principal

Date: June 3, 2009

Re: ***Report to the Board of Education***

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At this juncture in my career, I find myself re-reading the same core leadership texts over and over. I learn something different however, something deeper, with each turn of the page even though I've turned that particular page many times before. The authors are the most prominent minds influencing our profession - Richard DuFour, Robert Marzano, Douglas Reeves, Irene Fountas, Linda Darling-Hammond, Howard Gardner, Michael Schmoker and Stephen Covey are among my group of guides. This year, my staff has taught me as much as these authors. As a learner, I've reached the point in my professional journey where I no longer see the ideas within these teachings as distinct pieces of thought. I no longer communicate them that way to those with whom I have the pleasure of working. The ideas and actions needed to become a great school are very much integrated in my mind and in my decisions – an educational leadership “greatest hits”, if you will – all illuminating our path. Covey's leadership guidance rooted in the 7 Habits has been particularly beneficial in helping me continuously reflect upon my own behavior during my first year here in Vestal. I have spent the year making sure that I followed Covey's advice for leadership in the new knowledge-worker age: *inspire trust, clarify purpose, align systems and unleash talent*. It is my hope that you have received feedback from our school community that I am doing exactly those things.

A theme that has emerged from the leadership literature is the cultural importance within organizations of *celebration*. We must stop for a moment and celebrate our accomplishments. We are, after all, talking about accomplishments in the highest function of a society –the education of the children of our community. At Clayton Avenue, we have much to celebrate as we close this year, this chapter in our book. We are truly related, somehow, to everyone we know. We have built that culture intentionally and you can feel it when you walk in. We are a family, supporting each other through the celebrations and challenges of both our work and our personal lives. I am so very proud of the work we are doing at CAE, the collective reflection and challenge with which we engage one other, the risks we are taking...and the results we are getting. CAE is a collection of intelligent, passionate, inquisitive, child-centered, interdependent educators and parents who are never satisfied with the status quo. Good will never be good enough for this team. I've learned that, as a school community, we simply are not wired that way. We are only interested in being great. My state of the union statement to you is...we are **so** getting there!

How can I be so sure, you ask? Please indulge me for a moment as I cheer the instructional work of our team of educators and families in the area of mathematics. Let's celebrate a bit, shall we, before we all go right back to work?

- 🚩 **97 percent** of our 62 fifth-graders achieved at (Level 3) or above (Level 4) state standard this year in mathematics. 44 percent of our kids scored at Level 4 – the highest level possible. Not one fifth-grade child at CAE, not even our most challenged students (and there are many), earned a Level 1 in mathematics. We are sending them to our middle school colleagues in great shape.
- 🚩 **96 percent** of our 51 fourth-graders achieved at (Level 3) or above (Level 4) state standard this year in mathematics. 33 percent of our kids scored at Level 4 - the highest level possible. Not one fourth-grade child at CAE, not even our most challenged students (and there are many), earned a Level 1 in mathematics.
- 🚩 **100 percent** of our 52 third-graders - *yes, every single CAE third-grader this year* - achieved at (Level 3) or above (Level 4) state standard this year in mathematics. Astounding!

Thank you for all you've done for us this year. The pleasure has truly been ours. See you in 2009-2010!