

Improving Employee Relations

Strongsville City Schools
Cameron Ryba, Superintendent
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Convocation Video

Presentation Outcomes

The focus of this presentation will be on the improvement of employee relations among all employee groups within a school district. Participants will learn the process we went through to develop a plan, to build moral, trust and appreciation throughout the district. We will also share our methods for both internal and external communication, which has directly impacted and improved relationships.

Sharing Our Story

Board of Education and Administrative Team

Staff

Community

Getting to Know Strongsville City Schools

SCS - Where We Were

Strongsville - home to nearly 45,000 residents and a growing senior population
August 2012 - One preschool, seven (K-6) elementary schools, two middle schools (7-8), one high school (9-12), and two administrative office buildings
 Averaging a decline of 250 students per year Outdated facilities and empty elementary classrooms
November 2012 - Passed an \$81 million bond issue
March 2013 - Eight week teacher strike and the disconnect between the schools, community and city officials grows deeper
October 2013 - Community communications survey completed and results share that both internal and external stakeholders do not know what is occurring in Strongsville City Schools

SCS - The Transition Phase

Leadership Plan - Making the difficult decisions to put the right leaders in the right positions at the right time; supporting new leadership in both Unions through a shared vision for the future of the district
Instructional Plan - Getting caught up to our comparable districts through relentless curriculum work, professional development and resource updates
Facilities Plan - Closed six (6) buildings, repurposed an elementary school into administrative offices, built a new middle school, renovated three facilities from 2013-2016
Staffing Plan - Continued to implement staffing reductions to keep pace with enrollment trends; 212 positions eliminated from FY 9 to FY 17

SCS - Where We Are Now

Vision - A clear vision and plan for the future of our district with the support of our parents and community

Enrollment - Over 5,400 students and in August 2016 we saw an increase in student enrollment

Facilities - One preschool, five elementary schools (K-5), one middle school (6-8), one high school (9-12), and one administrative office building

Technology - Hiring of a Director of Instructional Technology, transition to a GAFE district, comprehensive professional development plan prior to 1:1 implementation of Chromebooks

Curriculum - Momentum Award winner in 2015-16, second iteration of our instructional Plan

The Impact our Past Had on Employee and Community Relations

Board of Education/ Administrative Team

BOE/Admin Team - Setting the Foundation

- Hired as Superintendent in February 2015
- **From March to August 2015** - Hired and built a team of administrators getting the right people in the right place
 - From our 24 administrative positions, 15 were new to that role
 - Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Supervisor of Instructional Technology, Director of Special Education, Middle School Principal (x2), Elementary Principal (x2), Athletic Director, Assistant Principal (x3), Preschool Director

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BOE/Admin Team - Setting the Foundation

- **From April to August 2015** - Established *Strong Schools 2020* focusing on (1) teaching and learning, (2) technology, (3) community engagement, (4) finances, and (5) facilities infrastructure based on internal focus group feedback
- **In September 2015** - Hired former Superintendents to facilitate a Board Retreat to focus the efforts on entire administrative team and finalize the focus of *Strong Schools 2020*
 - Developed shared expectations and non-negotiables with the Board and those have been the basis for our leadership team and annual Board retreats



BOE/Admin Team - Developed a Vision for the

Future all of the new and reassigned administrators, we needed to develop a shared vision for the future and change the culture to a new set of expectations. If we expect our Board and administrative team to communicate a shared message, they needed to understand it, believe it, and provide similar leadership at all levels.



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BOE/Admin Team - Developed a Vision for the Future

- **Administrative Collaboration** - Redefining our administrative meeting times and PD through the OLI4 work
- **Vision Meetings** - Leadership to take team from where they are to where they need to be for our students, developing their 30-second story
- **Developed Work Plan** - Replaced the OPES Professional Growth Plan
- **Building Instructional Plans** - Addressing building needs with district support
- **Research Teams** - Developing capacity not have everything come from district leadership, create time for research and development (resident experts)

STAFF

Staff - Convocation

OPENING "ALL STAFF" MEETING

Make it meaningful

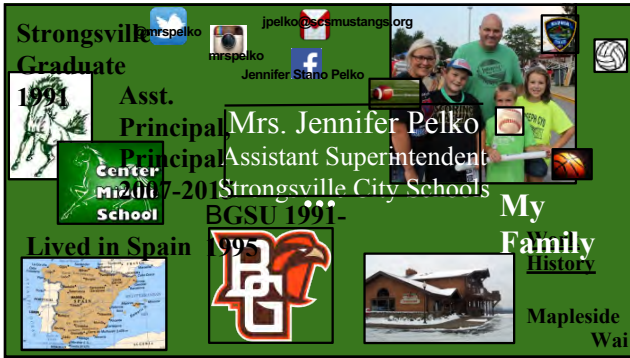
Tie in emotion

Take advantage of having everyone together to hear a message applicable to all

Provide a take-a-way

Can't wait to see what they do next year





Staff - Having a Vision and a Plan

From: Ohio Improvement Process

To: Strongsville Instructional Innovation Plan



Staff - Visibility

Time of change

Say hello on important dates and events

Support ongoing improvement

Model expectations (professional development)

Quarterly Superintendent visits



Staff - Creation of Strongsville Positive Outreach Team (SPOT)

[SPOT Video](#)

[SPOT Recognition](#)



Staff - Evaluation and Feedback

Survey of staff of administration - find link for questions

Staff - Continued Communication

Principal Newsletters

Leaders Lineup

Special Education

Technology

The Corral



Staff - Build Partnerships

Biweekly meetings with Union leadership

Increase in Volunteerism

Summer Work

TBT Coaches

Tech Coaches

SPOT Committee

BLT Members



COMMUNITY

Community - Establishing Connections

Team Strongsville

City - School Relationship (Police-safety plans- facilities, Mayor - great supporter of the schools, as well as partnering with "key players" in the city)

Community groups

Facilities Committee

PTA collaborations



Community - Communication Connection

60-seconds - weekly video highlighting what is going on in the district
 Mustang Moments Newsletter
 POST Superintendent speaking and community engagements
 Community Conversation with Departments
 Mailings to Community- Quality Profile



Community - Gathering Data

Focus Group
 Tech Committee
 Fallon Survey
 InfoSnap

18. Do you think it is a high, medium or low priority to... Provide transportation for students who get personal instruction from teachers?	44.7% High 22.2 Medium 17.8 Low 15.3 Unsure/not answer
19. Do you think it is a high, medium or low priority to... Keep sports and activity teams going just at their current levels, so they are affordable?	57.0% High 29.0 Medium 14.4 Low 11.2 Unsure/not answer
20. Do you think it is a high, medium or low priority to... Provide bus transportation throughout the community?	67.2% High 22.2 Medium 11.1 Low 1.5 Unsure/not answer
21. Do you think it is a high, medium or low priority to... Offer advanced placement and honors courses?	48.7% High 24.1 Medium 14.4 Low 12.8 Unsure/not answer
22. Do you think it is a high, medium or low priority to... Maintain up to date textbooks and learning materials, so students are exposed to the types of information they will be expected to know in college or the workforce?	79.4% High 11.4 Medium

Community - Mutual Partnerships

Strongsville Civic Team
 Heinens
 NLA
 Excellence in Athletics
 Youth League - Varsity Collaborations and Clinics
 Greet and Treat Event



Community - Taking it to the Next Level

Communications Coordinator-share our message, plan to tie in community, alumni
Twitter and Facebook
Green/White Fridays and working with businesses to support
Communications Plan
Communications Calendar

Community - Follow up and Support

Turf Donor Party
SMS Open House Cleveland Pops
Orchestra concert Expectation
to support community
events and support back



Lessons Learned

Never make everyone happy
Growth is painful
Seek help when needed
Compliance versus embracing
Evolution of communication
Challenge in strategic communications through social media

On The Horizon

Community Partnership to help with Social Emotional Learning
 Realtors Luncheon
 Community events - Family First Night, Iron Chef Competition, Distinguished Alumni
 Share communications plan and calendar
 Advisory committees - student, curriculum, community
 Athletic Council
 Instructional Plans

Proactive Communication - Benefits

Easier to campaign for levy
 Excellence in Athletics
 Union negotiations/trust
 Polaris and AFJROTC programming - transition
 Administrative/Leadership contracts

Contact Information

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