TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Neil Pedersen

Executive Director

SUBJ: Executive Directors Report

DATE: March 10, 2016

Since we last met, it seems like I’ve been involved in a number activities that most of you don’t know too much about; therefore, I’ll take this opportunity to update you.

**Meeting with CCRESA Affiliate Members**

On February 29, I met with the following representatives from our Affiliate Members: Greg Hicks (NCSU); Martinette Horner (UNC-CH); Diana Lys (UNC-CH); Todd Roberts (School of Science and Math); and Art Rouse (ECU). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how we could better serve the Affiliate Members and develop stronger partnerships. Below are the conclusions from our meeting:

* Affiliate members value their partnership with CCRESA and networking opportunities with LEAs and other Affiliates; however, there is general agreement that there are opportunities of which we should take advantage.
* Affiliates would like for superintendents to identify “lines of inquiry, “areas of common interest, and desired services or partnerships in which these institutions could engage with LEAs.
* Universities have some flexibility in re-allocating resources and have a mission to serve our public schools; however, it is helpful when services can be tied into grants or can be designed to be mutually beneficial (e.g. doctoral students or interns assisting with research or program implementation, studies that could lead to publications for professors, or investigation of “problems in practice” that students can use for dissertations.).
* Affiliates would like for superintendents to have a discussion around educational issues that they would like to explore more deeply and other ways that Affiliates could be of service to them. We discussed the possibility of including this as a Board discussion item at the Board’s meeting on May 13th and then follow up with a response from Affiliates over the summer or at the September Board meeting.
* Universities would be interested in strengthening clinical models and support given to prospective and beginning teachers.
* NCSSM could assist with the teacher shortage by taking advantage of distance learning programs in which NCSSM teachers could play the lead role in a team teaching model in providing courses that have low enrollment in rural areas and at the same time develop the competence of teachers in the district to become the primary instructors in these courses in the future.
* Affiliates would like to take advantage of their membership in the CCRESA to network and collaborate with each other. We would like to see NC Central University join the CCRESA.

As indicated in the notes, we would like to include a discussion about how Affiliates can better partner with school districts on your May agenda and will plan to do so.

**Assessment Proposal**

As you know, I developed for your consideration a proposal pertaining to how the state might revise its assessment model in light of the flexibility that ESSA gives to states. I ran the first draft by Patrick and Sean to get their feedback and then distributed a subsequent draft to Board members. I heard back from only a few Board members, all of whom were in support. In consultation with Patrick and Sean, we decided that we should proceed with sending the proposal to June Atkinson so that we could discuss it with her when she meets with superintendents after our Board meeting on March 11th. We will have an opportunity to discuss it among ourselves during our Board meeting. K-2/3 assessment is an area that still needs some work. Drafting this proposal is consistent with the feedback that you gave me at your December meeting regarding the CCRESA playing more of an advocacy role.

**Assistant Principal READY Session**

As you know, for the past few years DPI has been conducting Principal READY sessions twice per year. About a month ago, Angela Jackson asked if we could provide lunch for a regional READY meeting for Assistant Principals. The session was advertised and filled up almost immediately to the maximum of 100 participants. It was conducted on March 3rd at the DPS Staff Development Center (which was provided free of charge). Assistant Principals often miss out on professional development opportunities, so I thought this was a good partnership for the CCRESA.

**Participation in Public School Forum’s Policy Study on Racial Equity**

I was invited to participate in the Public School Forum’s Study Group this year on racial equity and low performing schools. I’ve attended several informative meetings that focused mostly on how to transform low performing schools. In April we’ll start to work on strategies and recommendations. I’ve received so much information that it’s a bit overwhelming, and I’m not sure how to share this with you effectively. I believe that when we start to develop recommendations the materials will become more manageable. You might be interested to know that the last session, which was held last Monday night, included John Farrelly and Pascal Mubenga on a panel. In addition, NELA, which operates under the direction of Bonnie Fusarelli, was highlighted as a valuable resource for developing principal talent in the Eastern part of the state. Sean Bulson is also a member of the Study Group looking at low performing schools.

**Presentation to Beginning Teacher Support Group**

Last Friday I presented our report of the Teacher Shortage Crisis in North Carolina to the Beginning Teacher Support Group for our region, which includes representatives from IHEs, LEAs, and charter schools. I believe that the report was well received and participants were given an opportunity to provide suggestions for combatting the shortage.

**Monthly Monday Webinars for Superintendents**

As you may know, June Atkinson has initiated Monday webinars to inform superintendents about issues on the State Board’s agenda and to provide them with an opportunity to ask questions or give comments. Undoubtedly, this additional communication channel was created in response to concerns about superintendents not being kept informed and, probably, some frustration on June’s part to superintendents not voicing concerns until late in the process and sometimes to State Board members directly. I’ve participated in two of these webinars and noticed that there have been only 10-20 participants, including only 2 or 3 superintendents. I’d encourage you to participate in these yourself or ask one of your direct reports to do so.

**Next CCRESA Board of Directors Meeting**

We don’t meet in April due to NCASA holding its annual meeting that month and June holding a Superintendents Quarterly meeting. I hope that many of you will be attending these meetings, which are being held in Wilmington this year. Our next Board meeting is on May 13th. That will be our last regular Board meeting until September. We will host a dinner meeting for superintendents attending the Summer Leadership Conference in Asheville at the end of June.