




SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

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TRANSITION PLANNING LETTER

August 28, 2015

TO: Salt Lake City School District Board of Education
FROM: McKell Withers, Superintendent 
RE: Transition Planning Letter

I am planning on retiring from the Salt Lake City School District effective June 30, 2016, at the end of my current two-year contract with the board. I am not planning on retiring from my advocacy work for young people, their families, and the incredible professionals that teach and support them in our public schools. My current contract requires that I *"shall not seek another position without giving notification to the Board"*; this letter constitutes that notification.

It has been an honor to represent the stakeholders of our Salt Lake City public schools since January of 2003. As you are aware, the most recent academic progress data for our schools documents the continuing hard work and success of our students, teachers, staff, and community and family partners. Of the 27 areas measured by the SAGE assessments in our schools, 22 areas have improved from 2014 to 2015. There are multiple data points that demonstrate constant progress during the years that I have been privileged to serve as superintendent. I will provide periodic transition updates along with relevant information concerning long-range plans, accomplishments, reminders, and critical priorities for the board between now and the end of next June.

I have been recruited for and offered many other opportunities over the years that I have been serving as your superintendent. With a new Student Achievement Plan in place later this year, competent and professional school and district leaders to rely on, great teachers and staff to continue our work, and the progress that has been made across the district, it is time for me to consider other avenues to support our students, families, and staff, and to share what we have learned with other thoughtful advocates. I want to personally thank Dr. Patrick Garcia for delaying his retirement until this fall to help with this transition planning. Patrick informed me of his plans to retire back in January, and will now publically announce his plan to retire at the end of October. Patrick will be available after the first of the year (January 2016) to consult with the district part-time and to lead our team through annual employee negotiations.

The qualities, characteristics, and integrity of our elected officials are extremely important for the development of healthy communities and successful schools. One of the things I look forward to is being able to speak more openly about the character traits of current public officials and openly supporting candidates that model honesty, integrity, and a desire to help young people become successful adults. I will be meeting with our board leadership in the weeks ahead to further discuss and plan for a thoughtful, professional, and purposeful transition of district leadership.

