



GENERAL AGREEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

JULY 9, 2012

AN OVERVIEW OF *SUMMIT 303*

JULY 2012

INTRODUCTION

The stakeholders of St. Charles Community Unit School District 303 take very seriously the role that schools play in the quality of life in a community. District 303 is more than the 13,500 students that attend 17 schools. District 303 is people that come together to support the education of students not just to simply secure the future for those specific students, but to secure the future of a thriving, dynamic community through education.



The original series of *Summit 303* meetings took place from November 2007- December 2008. During that first round of *Summit 303*, the community conducted a comprehensive review of District 303. The outcome was a series of five General Agreements which gave the Board of Education and District Administration valuable guidance in the decision-making process. Among the programs now in place in District 303 that were suggested by the original *Summit 303* are: INFINITY, the Gifted Magnet Middle School Program; the All-Day Kindergarten option; elementary foreign language instruction at Richmond Intermediate

School; the increased use of technology across the District especially in the high school science curriculum; and the streamlining and expediting of the referral and evaluation process for students displaying learning disabilities.

At about the same time the original *Summit 303* was completing their work, global economic events were taking place that would eventually impact District 303. Specifically, those events have led to stagnant, and in some years declining, revenue available for District 303 and declining enrollment of students entering Kindergarten. In addition, the world around us continued to change through faster communications and the continued collaboration of a global economy.

Summit 303 was reconvened in February 2012 to ask the community to set priorities on what is needed for the education of students to prepare them for the 21st Century, while also exercising the fiscal responsibility of operating with a balanced budget.

THE PROCESS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In November 2011, the District 303 Board of Education charged District Administration with the task of bringing together the stakeholders of the community to discuss challenges facing the District in the current economic situation, and the need to prepare students for their future.

The goal was to provide the Board of Education with the consensus of community opinion on how the District might continue to provide a high quality educational experience for students while also navigating opportunities presented by declining enrollment. Just a few years ago, District 303 was experiencing explosive growth. That trend has reversed and, coupled with a near halt in development of new property in District 303, has presented a fiscal landscape that has not been seen in many years.

While these circumstances provide difficulties, they also provide opportunity for creative thinking on how to maintain, and maybe even expand, programs for students.

Summit 303 has completed its schedule of Community Engagement meetings and submits these materials and documents as a final report to the Board of Education.

This report is a compilation of **Summit 303** materials presented to the Board; it also represents a primer to the larger community of the District as to the areas of General Agreement felt to be necessary to maintain the premier status of the District.

All of the information studied and discussed during the engagement process is included in the summary report notebook and on the disc of collateral materials.



This document is an executive summary of the program's completed work and attempts to provide an overview of **Summit 303's** purpose, participants, process and product.

All Summit 303 information including video of the meetings is available at www.d303.org

THE PURPOSE OF ENGAGING THE PUBLIC

Community Engagement, at its core, is intended to solicit the hopes, ideas, and thoughtful suggestions of a school District's owner - its' public - through meaningful dialogue and discussions. With this in mind, the main focus of **Summit 303** is to:



- Assist the Board of Education in broadening their understanding of the community's beliefs, aspirations, desires and priorities related to public education and specifically to the needs and interests of District 303
- Provide an avenue for reaching community consensus on issues concerning how declining enrollment and the current economic conditions affect allocation of resources
- Invite and involve the community in District planning and decision making
- Obtain relevant perspectives that build upon, expand and enhance the previous planning initiatives by the District
- Define priorities and improvement strategies
- Discover what instructional resources will be needed to prepare students to compete in the global marketplace of the 21st Century
- Continue an ongoing process to strengthen trust, communication and collaborative efforts with the full community

To this end, in November 2011, the District 303 Board of Education issued the following charge:

The Board of Education hereby authorizes the formation of a broad-based coalition of community members and staff to be known as **Summit 303**. The charge of **Summit 303** is to make recommendations to the Board of Education regarding a plan for improving the performance of the District.

As part of the process, the Board asks participants in **Summit 303** to discuss the role that education plays in developing the community. **Summit 303** should also discuss the role of the District in supporting expectations for the education of our Pre-K-12 students, and the role the District has in contributing to overall community quality.

To accomplish this goal, **Summit 303** should determine:

- *an understanding of the role, needs and objectives, of our community in preparing students for their futures,*
- *an understanding of the role of the District in supporting the community,*
- *how District programs that are currently limited due to financial or facility constraints might be maintained or expanded to serve more students, and*
- *the community's priorities for the relationship between academic and extra-curricular activities.*

The Facilitating Team coordinating **Summit 303** activities should present final recommendations to the Board of Education by the beginning of the 2012-13 Academic Year. At that time, **Summit 303** should bring forward recommendations based on the above guidelines including steps to be taken to implement those recommendations.

PARTICIPATION

Community participation in **Summit 303** occurred in two separate areas- the work of a Facilitating Team (FT) in coordinating and providing leadership to the process and through District-wide Community Engagement Sessions (CES).

This group of dedicated community members facilitated the **Summit 303** engagement process from planning the initial session through the submission of this final report.

THE FACILITATING TEAM

Community Co-Chairs

Julie Feldsien
Scott Nowling

Community Members

David Amundson
Michelle Bancroft
Patti Barsanti
John Hoscheit
Rita Payleitner
Kirsten Suyak

Staff Representatives

Mary Hill
Pam Turriff (SCEA)

District Leadership

Dr. Don Schlomann
John Baird
Becky McCabe
Jason Pearson

Board of Education

James Gaffney, Jr.
Kathy Hewell

Administrative Support

Kathy Bowling
Chris Rachford
Lynne Schwartz

The primary role of this Facilitating Team was to attend to the charge from the Board of Education resulting in specific recommendations representing the desire of the larger community. This group then provided the leadership and coordination throughout the entire process. The group helped with decisions regarding process, strategy and communications and met regularly to develop agendas, review discussion materials and keep the program focused and on task.

The Facilitating Team held planning meetings prior to the first community engagement session and met between each of the monthly CES's to review the work of the previous CES and to prepare for the next presentation.

Community volunteers provided the leadership for the Facilitating Team and the entire **Summit 303** process. The community co-chairs, selected for their commitment to District 303 and their leadership ability, were Julie Feldsien and Scott Nowling.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

Since the Community Engagement Sessions were the central component of the **Summit 303** process, there was tremendous effort prior to the first meeting to communicate with the entire community about this special planning effort. The goal was to use every means possible to reach out and encourage all District stakeholders to participate in the process. Examples of this outreach included:

- Production of an invitation video hosted by the community co-chairs inviting all stakeholders to attend **Summit 303**. This video was posted on the District web site and a link to the video was e-mailed to the parents of every District 303 student
- A special edition of the District 303 newsletter FOCUS with information about the **Summit 303** process was sent to every mailing address in District 303 early in January 2012
- Press releases were sent to local media, and reporters who regularly cover the District were briefed on the goals of **Summit 303**
- School newsletters, the District E-News and e-mail blasts encouraged parent attendance
- Facilitating Team members reached out to various community groups on a personal, one-to-one basis
- Information was continually posted on the District's web site
- Blackboard Connect, the District's mass notification system was used by sending both e-mail and voice messages reminding parents of the scheduled meetings
- Internal communication to all District staff members

Copies of these communication materials are provided on the disc of collateral materials.



Team meeting.

Total attendance for the five **Summit 303** meetings was approximately 1,000. CES attendance averaged around 225 participants including students, parents, community members, business and civic leaders and staff members. Members of the Board of Education also attended as observers and active listeners.

Summit 303 hosted a total of five CES meetings. The subject area of each session was determined at the first Facilitating

Summit 303 Community Engagement Sessions

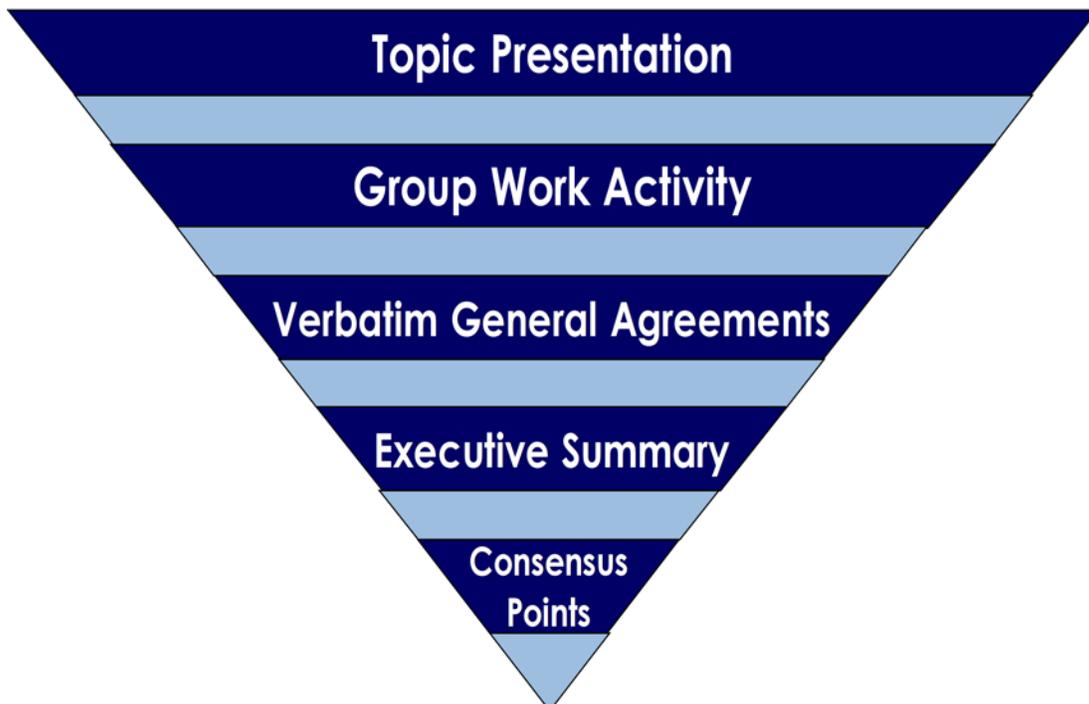
DATE	TOPIC & PRESENTERS
February 1, 2012	21st Century Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Yong Zhao- Presidential Chair and Associate Dean for Global Education, College of Education at the University of Oregon
February 28, 2012	Elementary Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becky McCabe, Area Assistant Superintendent Kindergarten- 5th Grade Education • Jenni Iwanski, Richmond Intermediate School Instructional Support Coach • Rosa Ascharya, Associate Director of Curriculum • Donald Schlomann, Ph.D., District 303 Superintendent of Schools
March 20, 2012	Middle School Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jason Pearson, Ed.D., Area Assistant Superintendent 6th-12th Grade Education • Melissa Dockum, Wredling Middle School Principal • Robert Miller, Haines Middle School Principal • Steve Morrill, Thompson Middle School Principal
April 17, 2012	High School Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jason Pearson, Ed.D., Area Assistant Superintendent 6th-12th Grade Education • Charlie Kyle, St. Charles East High School Principal • Kim Zupec, St. Charles North High School Principal • Jamie McFarling, University of Illinois Admissions Counselor • Robert Walton, Northwestern University Admissions Counselor
May 15, 2012	State of the District <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brad Cauffman, District 303 Assistant Superintendent for Business Services • Jim Blaney, District 303 Director of School and Community Relations • Donald Schlomann, Ph.D. District 303 Superintendent of Schools

THE PROCESS

The five meetings followed similar formats as each meeting began with a presentation of information specific to the topic of that evening's meeting. (Those presentations can be found on the disc accompanying this report.) The presentation was then followed by a small group work activity in which attendees worked in groups of up to six people to come to a consensus on the questions asked in the work activity.

Each small group selected their own recorder and spokesperson. The recorder was instructed to complete a worksheet based on the consensus or general agreement of the group. Following the small group work the spokesperson from each group was invited to share the main ideas from the group with all the participants at the session.

These consensus opinions were then compiled into a verbatim report from the meeting which then became an executive summary of the consensus opinions. In addition, each Summit meeting provided an opportunity for individual feedback on various topics. While the consensus of opinion gives the Summit process strength and validity, individual preferences also provides valuable information.



PRODUCT

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The final product of **Summit 303** is a set of recommendations, or General Agreements. The recommendations that follow represent a compilation of the discussions, feedback and consensus points that were produced during the small group work activities hosted at each of the five **Summit 303** community sessions.

General Agreement #1-Overall

Seek the addition of programs which deliver instruction in and develop 21st Century Skills such as collaboration, creativity, project-based learning and the ability to evaluate data.

- Prepare students for success beyond their educational experience and into the global marketplace
- The District needs to continue to act in a fiscally responsible manner in adding additional programs
- In the current economic climate, the phasing in of new programs is preferable to seeking new sources of funding
- Where **Summit 303** is recommending the addition of programs, there was no clear recommendation on how to implement the programs in terms of funding or scheduling

General Agreement #2-Elementary Schools

Expand student exposure to the concepts and skills of 21st Century learning while maintaining the neighborhood elementary school concept, as it is an important component to the fabric of the community.

- Though **Summit 303** expressed a high level of interest in adding Foreign Language instruction in Grades 1-5, that interest is tempered by the cost of the program and by the desire to keep neighborhood schools
- Though **Summit 303** expressed a desire for increased access to technology with a goal of achieving a 1:1 ratio between students and technological devices, that interest is tempered by the cost of the program; implementation should occur as the budget allows
- The All-Day Kindergarten program should maintain its current form with parents paying tuition for the additional half-day of instruction

General Agreement #3-Middle Schools

Provide increased opportunities for students to sample elective courses with the goal of helping students define their future interests

- Expand the Explore program by increasing opportunities for students and allowing students to choose from among the Explore offerings (for additional detail, refer to page 3 of the Executive Summary for the March 20 **Summit 303** meeting)
- **Summit 303** expressed a desire to add Foreign Language instruction at the middle school level, however the Summit vote was inconclusive as to a preferred method for implementing the program
- Though **Summit 303** expressed a desire for increased access to technology with a goal of achieving a 1:1 ratio between students and technological devices, “Bring Your Own Technology” is not a concept supported by the community for middle school students

General Agreement #4-High Schools

More closely align the high school educational experience with 21st Century skills in order to prepare students for success in the global marketplace beyond their educational experience.

- **Summit 303** expressed a clear desire to eliminate class rank as a measure of student success in District 303
- In the next year, investigate a partnership between the District and parents where the District would seek to reduce high school registration fees and high school parents would supply a District specified 1:1 computing device for their student
- Based on verbatim responses, **Summit 303** expressed a desire to implement a “Senior Institute” which would offer real-world experiences for learning such as internships, mentoring, job-shadowing, and on-line learning

CONCLUSION

This gathering of **Summit 303** was the second time the Summit format was used in order to confirm the priorities of what the District 303 community wants for its schools and the education of their children. The first **Summit 303** went a long way in providing guidance to both the Board of Education and District Administration as they addressed the challenges facing the District.

This round of **Summit 303** was focused on 21st Century learning and the skills students need to compete successfully in the world-wide employment market place. Students acquire these skills through the opportunity to explore creativity and innovation, while having access to 21st Century learning tools. The community reaffirmed the pride it takes in the quality of our schools and recognizes the need for students to develop these skills.

The community identified Foreign Language instruction, access to technology across all grade levels, and middle school EXPLORE program enhancements as highly desirable. The community expects District 303 schools to meet the changing needs of students and pursue these enhancements, but to do so in a fiscally responsible manner.

The **Summit 303** Facilitating Team asks the Board of Education to accept this report and thanks the Board for their support and encouragement during this process.