

Greetings from Kevin Daniel / KD,

It is not uncommon for a few BoE members to challenge the thinking, or ask some fair but difficult questions when it comes to recommending an outside person or group to facilitate strategic planning / CSIP development work for your district. In our collective experience, here is the most frequently provided feedback received over the last several years from superintendents, school leaders and board of education members about the value-add of investing in / bringing in an outside the district facilitator. The statements below may also serve as possible talking points or information as needed verbally or via a written update to your BoE and others.

- ☐ The cost \$_____ of this process should be viewed as an investment vs. cost on a spreadsheet for some of the following reasons. This will require a shift in mindset for some. There are multiple funding sources / budget lines this can be taken from. Or, blending funds and lines to cover costs.
- ☐ Developing a 3-5 year strategic plan will very likely save you 3-5 times the initial investment in the process because you now have a well identified, MSIP 6 ready CSIP that will give you leverage to say yes and leverage to say no or not yet. A well drafted CSIP can give you the discipline to say not yet.
- ☐ Having the leverage to say no because of well-defined priorities can save you thousands over the life of your plan because you are no longer chasing every new initiative, shiny new object or program out there. You are focused on priorities in your CSIP. This leverage provides a good anchor for decisions.
- ☐ Having an outside facilitator helps the district have a plan created with input from the CSIP team rather than the perception of a “cooked up” plan by the admin team or Supt. In some situations, when the Supt is the facilitator; the perception becomes “it is the Supt’s plan” vs. “it is our plan”. Ownership is vitally important in this work. Ownership creates engagement in executing and living out the plan.
- ☐ Successfully creating an MSIP 6 ready CSIP is very labor-intensive. Requires community engagement, skilled facilitation and a lot of preparation to have effective meetings. Oftentimes, the Supt just doesn’t have time to spend the hours required to set agendas, prepare for meetings, put together consensus building protocols, develop slides, create templates, be thoughtful about seating and dozens of other details we have already thought about, prepared for and already been through.
- ☐ FiredUP has a blueprint / process that is effective, efficient and proven to be successful with district after district. Our process is consistent but differentiated/unique for each district we serve. We have invested dozens of hours preparing a successful process. We are highly skilled at meeting facilitation, building and reaching consensus and navigating “politics” to keep the Supt and BoE members from having to mediate special interest groups or unique agendas that can sabotage or derail a meeting.
- ☐ It’s really important that the Supt participates in the process rather than having to facilitate it. The Supt of schools needs to be able to “float” around, listen in to conversations as a listener who is engaged rather than an authoritarian “running” the meeting. It frees the Supt up to lead as a participant and engage in the process. It also helps with the perception that it is not just the Supt’s plan, it is our plan.
- ☐ FiredUP Consulting Group has facilitated CSIP development **in over 170+ districts** the past six years. We do a lot of this type of work. We love it, are passionate about it and skilled at making this go well.