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MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Bobbi Jo Kenyon, 2012-2013 Michigan Teacher of the Year

SUBJECT: September State Board of Education Teacher of the Year Report

Introduction Reflection

As I acknowledged at my State Board of Education (SBE) introduction in June, I am overwhelmed and grateful for my selection as the Michigan Teacher of the Year (MTOY) and again would like to thank the selection committee, all those who made my surprise assembly an unforgettable event, and the love and support from friends, family, students, staff, and community as I begin this journey. I am honored to represent our outstanding teachers throughout the state and look forward to an amazing year!

In Grand Rapids

Ottawa Hills High School

- This summer our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), consisting of our principal, assistant principal, data coach, testing coordinator, English coach, special education teacher, social studies teacher, and me, attended our third weeklong summer institute at the Michigan Fellowship of Instructional Leaders (MiFIL). This program, sponsored by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Michigan State University (MSU) K-12 Outreach Program is intended to help ILTs from high priority schools across Michigan to come together and focus their work to improve student achievement. I have been part of this group for three years now and have learned so much from it, especially as it pertains to expanding my instructional leadership. Some of the topics we covered included "Building the Textual Lineages of African-American Adolescent Males" focusing on equity, adopting building-wide reading strategies, increasing student engagement, and cultivating efficacy. We also had an opportunity to meet Brockton High School teachers from Massachusetts. They turned around their school from being one of the lowest achieving in their state to now one of the highest. It shows that anything is possible when you have motivated people, the right strategies being implemented with fidelity, and full support of staff and community. What a great story!

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During that week at the Fellowship, our team worked hard focusing our priorities for school improvement, especially as it related to reading comprehension, an area that our students are really struggling with. We also had a chance to talk with other schools and see the work they have done over the year and discuss successes and challenges.

The Fellowship also invited several teams to share some successful ideas they have implemented at their schools. Our ILT was selected to give a presentation on the Instructional Template we developed last year for teachers to use in their planning. My principal, our data coach, and I explained the rationale, process, and implementation of this template to the other schools. It was exciting to be able to share this tool with other educators. We received great response, and I look forward to hearing how the template works in their schools.

- Our team was also asked to stay an extra day to participate in some interviews for a series of videos that will be used by the MSU K-12 Outreach Program to make modules to help other schools have online access to the work we have done at MiFIL. I was also independently interviewed to discuss gains our school made from being in this program and what strategies worked for us.
- I am on the MI Champions Team at Ottawa Hills. We were awarded a grant funded by the MDE and facilitated by Michigan Association of Computer User and Learners (MACUL) to help teachers develop the skills needed to implement technology effectively in their classroom to improve student achievement. On August 7 and 8, I attended a two-day Summer Technology Integration workshop where I had an opportunity, with other educators across Michigan, to learn a multitude of Web 2.0 tools and discuss ways to integrate them into lessons. The training was excellent and we all left there excited to use and ready to share what we learned with our students and staff. We will also be working several times through the year with a coach who will assist our team and school with ways to implement technology.

As Michigan Teacher of the Year

- After being honored as the new MTOY, I have had numerous media opportunities. My principal and I were interviewed by Shelly Erwin at WGVU, and I had a second interview with David Jacobnette at WJRW. In addition, I was contacted by my alma maters, Central Michigan University (CMU) and Grand Valley State University (GVSU), and my interview was highlighted in "Success Stories" on their websites. My favorite interview, however, was with Mardi Suhs from The Cadillac Evening News where I had an opportunity to share my story with my dad in his old classroom. It was truly a special moment!

- I met with John Helmholdt, Director of Communications and External Affairs at Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS), and was informed that he had met with Teresa Neal, our Superintendent, and GRPS would be a sponsor in my MTOY endeavors.

I was very thankful! I have always been a strong advocate for GRPS and will work with the district to help promote our district in the community throughout the year. In July, I shot a segment for a promotional commercial they will be running, and I will also be featured on a billboard.

- A MiFIL Summer Institute facilitator, Ben Botwinski, learned that I was MTOY and was ecstatic that someone from the MiFIL program had received this title. He asked me if I would give a presentation during our summer conference. I was excited to be asked to speak because this program has helped me grow professionally in my leadership over the past three years that I have participated in it. I gave my presentation to the group of over 120 principals, instructional coaches, school leaders and MiFIL team members and cannot begin to explain the overwhelming response I was given. I received a standing ovation and there were many people with tears. Afterward, I continued to hear from people how the message touched and inspired them. We had all worked hard over the three years with MiFIL and know that we can make a difference. That moment will stay with me forever. The MiFIL team immediately asked me to come back to the second summer session program and give my presentation again, which I did.
- I also gave a presentation at GVSU to the new Woodrow Wilson Fellowship student teachers on classroom management. I believe this topic is absolutely essential to create an environment in the classroom where children can succeed. It is a topic that can be a struggle for both the new teacher and the veteran and often poses unique challenges in urban schools. The Woodrow Wilson Program prepares selected graduates in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines to be teachers in Michigan's high need secondary schools. I was selected by my district to be a mentor last year (GVSU's first year implementing this program), and I worked extensively with and prepared my Fellows in all aspects of effective teaching. I was asked again to mentor this year and have two Fellows that are being placed with me. I love working with new teachers and am excited to help prepare them as well, especially because of the commitment to high need schools where great teachers are needed.
- I attended a Michigan Network of Educators Steering Committee meeting where I met with several wonderful and committed educators. We spent time discussing how to develop a stronger presence in terms of the web and marketing and how to be in better communication with all members of the Network of Michigan Educators (NME). We also talked about the planning of the annual NME banquet in December.

- I attended the traditional "Passing of the Torch" hosted by Jennifer Haberling, 2008-2009 MTOY. Here I had a chance to meet other wonderful MTOYs as they told me about some exciting things I would be doing and events that I would have the opportunity to attend. Needless to say, I am very excited and feel so honored to be a part of the MTOY family!
- This summer I decided to work on a large project. I wanted to be able to share my journey and resources with educators across the state and knew that a web presence would help me achieve this. I believe it is important to share what I am doing as MTOY as well as find ways to share resources with other educators. I learned WordPress and developed a website (with the help of Lance Miller who did all the design backend work). My website is a place for others to learn about me, my philosophy, my school, what I am doing as MTOY, instructional and tech tips that work for me, my portfolio of media, educational articles, and resources for Common Core, teaching at-risk students, new teachers, and STEM. After attending the MiFIL Institute, I also added another blog called "Success Stories" as a way for schools and teachers to share what they are doing that works. It is important to learn from one another and collaboratively share ideas to help support student achievement - showcase what is working in schools around Michigan. I am so excited about this site and have already had some wonderful feedback!

My website, www.bobbijokenyon.com will always be a work in progress as I update my MTOY, instructional tips, and success story blogs as well as continue to add teacher resources. I also created a Facebook page and established a Twitter account (@bobbijokenyon) to give updates on current educational articles and my MTOY activities. I have certainly had a busy summer and start as Michigan Teacher of the Year!