

Superintendent's Evaluation 2011-2012
Dr. Tom Kingston

Summative Findings:

The process that the School Committee has engaged in to evaluate the Superintendent within the newly adopted Educator Appraisal system has been to review the rubrics established for all educators, the self-assessment and artifacts that Dr. Kingston provided. Each School Committee member evaluated the Superintendent based on the four Assessment Standards: Instructional Leadership, Management and Operations, Family and Community Engagement and Professional Culture. We also evaluated Dr. Kingston on his Student Achievement and Professional Goals. Each ranking was assigned a value and an average "grade" was derived.

Provided here at the end of this document are the full, attributable comments from each of the School Committee members.

In addition, staff and family comments were solicited. I have included these as partial quotes without attribution. Ten comments were received.

Also included at the end of this report is a spread sheet with evaluation ranking for each Standard and Goal.

In summation:

Standards:

Dr. Kingston received a Proficient Assessment (3) in three out of four of the standards assessed and an overall assessment of 2.9.

The School Committee members felt that his experience in matters of Instructional Leadership, Management and Operations, Family and Community Engagement and Professional Culture provided the district with steady, articulated leadership. He has actively participated in (and guided) long-term planning in the areas of finance and curriculum and set some groundwork in place for innovations that go beyond technology.

He spent much of his first months in the position engaging stake-holders to better understand not just the Belmont Public School system but how it fits into the broader fabric of the entire community and has used these conversations to help define the goals and vision of the School Department and meet the expectations of the community.

Dr. Kingston has overseen the day to day operations of the School system including a successful budget process for this fiscal year.

He has been a visible presence in the community, not just by attending various PTA and PTO meetings but many plays, concerts and other celebratory events and Town/School department head meetings

Dr. Kingston has also led the district in adopting the new Educator Appraisal system and worked collaboratively with the BEA to implement this process and has continued to support the Professional Learning Team structure that was in place when he arrived.

Areas of improvement and focus that School Committee members suggest for this year include, but are not limited to:

- Further articulation of the shared instructional vision as well as ways to engage the community in understanding what expectations are and how to meet them.
- Increased mechanisms for general communication with the community. Beyond blogs – how else to communicate effectively

- Review of pilot programs and innovation to provide on-going assessment as to whether these are meeting our needs
- Addressing staff morale

Goals:

The School Committee felt that Dr. Kingston Met or Made Significant Progress on his Student Achievement and Professional Goals with an overall rating of 2.2.

Long-term planning that will provide adequate, predictable, sustainable funding is one that continues to be a major issue facing our school leaders;, progress frequently seems frustratingly slow but the school committee members do feel that we are heading in the right direction under the leadership of Dr Kingston.

We are encouraged as well by his participation in the Superintendents Induction Program as well as his in-district mentoring of personnel.

We look forward to hearing more from him at our next meeting regarding his goals for this year.

Superintendent's Evaluation -

1. Belmont Public School
 Superintendent's Evaluation
 School Year 2011-2012

Superintendent: Thomas S. Kingston
 School Committee Member: Kevin Cunningham

Overall Assessment: **Proficient**
 General Comment:

Since Dr. Kingston is an Interim Superintendent, it is hard to know precisely how to assess him.

First of all, he has come into the office bringing a wealth of skills and experience that he has applied with great expertise to the district, so that he far exceeds the expectations of him as a "mere" Interim. In particular, while he initially stepped lightly into the district with a firm conviction that his first order of business was to "Do No Harm," he has since taken the reins and made an impact in many domains. This impact has been significant, reflecting a full commitment to the district, not a hands-off or lame-duck approach. He is not simply keeping the chair warm while we look for the next Superintendent.

Secondly, for my part at any rate, I voted for Dr. Kingston specifically with the idea that, as a "temporary" Superintendent, he might be able to be an agent of change, unencumbered by the need to temper his efforts to "shake things up" by concerns that he might undermine the long-term relationships he'd have to cultivate as a permanent Superintendent. Because one of our goals is to enhance civility and openness, I had no fears that this would mean he would be reckless and inconsiderate; and even short-term change requires good relations. Again, he has met this challenge admirably.

Finally, in our recent conversations with representatives of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, we have found that the average time in office of Superintendents these days isn't as long as it used to be – 5-6 years these days is considered “long” – so the idea that Dr. Kingston's tenure of 2 or 3 years is “temporary” is not really a meaningful distinction as far as I can see.

I have chosen, therefore, to assess Dr. Kingston as if he were a permanent Superintendent.

Assessments Against Standards:

Standard I: Instructional Leadership:

The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes powerful teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

Proficient

Comment:

Dr. Kingston is a consummate professional, experienced in the ins and outs of being a Superintendent in Massachusetts, indeed mentoring others in these skills. However, he understandably entered Belmont with some reservation about exercising this full set of skills high-handedly in an already-highly-functioning district. He took some time to learn how things stood in town, received guidance from the School Committee and others, and only eventually took the wheel with the full set of talents he commands.

This process took time, and it is to his credit that he observed first and exercised control only later. Increasing school visits and classroom walk-ins form only one example of a preference to really be connected to what's going on – by observation, not blindly asserting control. (One can imagine another kind of careerist – or a “full-time” Superintendent – wanting to make his mark more overtly at the outset; I prefer Dr. Kingston's style.)

As he came in as an Interim, he has been hesitant to propose a vision himself, but he quickly has become an advocate for the visions he found already shared in the district, including the strategic orientation already in place and the need for long-term planning as expressed in the School Committee. His advice has been consistent with best practices. He aligned with district goals at the outset, and eventually has become more of a spokesman and advocate of best practices – again in a respectful, understated way. One way this manifested itself – another indicator of a light touch from an experienced professional – is that he worked diligently to spell out the assumptions underlying our actions (e.g., in the budget priorities): this helps answer the “why” behind the “what,” and helps guide minds toward the underlying vision.

Of significance to cultivating a vision, too, I note that since the beginning he has been a clear advocate for considering *innovation* – not as the champion of any particular technique, but as a believer in an overall culture of imagining better ways to do things.

My overall impression, then, is that Dr. Kingston hit the ground running as a caretaker, with a full set of skills to bear, but has grown more into the role of Superintendent for our district – including cultivation of a shared vision.

Standard II: Management and Operations:

The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.

Proficient

Comment:

Dr. Kingston knows how to run a district, and it showed his skill from the beginning. In particular, from the outset he has understood the significance of legal and bargaining issues and has taken them in stride. I appreciate the unruffled approach he takes, since it is respectful but not timid – he just knows what he’s doing, so there’s no need for drama. He just gets things done.

Going beyond an “If It Ain’t Broke…” philosophy since he arrived, he has actively supported the Professional Learning Team model, and appears to have cultivated an appropriately balanced relationship to the unions as well.

I do feel that there could be more done in the improvement of work processes in the various offices that he controls. We are now more aware of technological shortcomings in the way things get done, and some stronger leadership to get these processes revised would be appreciated. Dr. Kingston at least can see the issues for what they are (other Superintendents might not have). Some effort might be usefully spent really addressing these issues, as they impact how the School Committee, the Warrant Committee, Town Meeting, and the community in general view the School Department; they prevent easy production of dashboard statistics for the schools; and they waste employee time by requiring excessive manual effort. (Such improvement efforts are underway, but might be expedited.)

In summary, Dr. Kingston is clearly skilled in the operation of a school district, and it shows.

Standard III: Family and Community Engagement:

The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school and district.

Needs Improvement

Comment:

By temperament, Dr. Kingston welcomes communication with all community members. He is by and large serene and unruffled in his interactions; he cultivates straight talk and respectful discourse, and walks the talk there. (I have seen only a very few outbursts of impatience, notable for their rarity.)

I mark this as “Needs Improvement” primarily because it is my impression that community engagement in its full-blown form has taken a back seat during Dr. Kingston’s time so far –

though not, admittedly, because he is lax or inept at interacting with community groups (quite the contrary). It is clear that he has a good sense of how the community should be engaged by the Superintendent, and in his Self Report he has identified some specific topics that could use some attention (e.g., moderating unrealistic expectations, engaging about health issues, etc.).

It appears to me that his plate has just been too full learning about and running the district to allow time for more grass-roots community attention at this time. (I should distinguish between the meetings he had with all kinds of stakeholders as part of his District Entry program – which were plentiful and did begin to build inroads to the community – versus the ongoing relationship building that is the long-term work of the Superintendent.)

Since Dr. Kingston is an Interim Superintendent, it is understandable that long-term community engagement may not be the highest priority for him.

One last point. It is my impression (as an FBE board member) of the Foundation for Belmont Education – and important community group – is waiting for some guidance on what vision to support with its significant donation base. Dr. Kingston has attended these meetings and engaged the group well, but I wonder if he couldn't help articulate the vision of innovation for the schools in a more precise way that would allow FBE action. Again, as Interim, perhaps he is deliberately not voicing a vision there.

Standard IV: Professional Culture:

The education leader promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

Proficient

Comment:

Here I think Dr. Kingston shines. He is intent on supporting staff growth, and has taken to the new Teacher Evaluation system as a banner innovation that will bring with a wealth of opportunities for improving teaching – and teacher satisfaction – in the district. He has wholeheartedly supported the Curriculum Director model, the Professional Learning teams, and other systems in support of continuous staff improvement. Notably, he has championed all these not as “fixing what’s wrong” but as “cultivating improvements and enhancements,” which is, I think, a more powerful, respectful, and productive approach.

Assessments Against Performance Goals:

Student Achievement (for 2011-2012, District-Wide) Goal:

(Based upon Existing Strategic Plan Goal #6)

The Belmont Public School organization will manage community resources in a manner that fulfills financial and academic expectations, and fosters and informed, trusting relationship with the community.

- Target: Develop, communicate and report progress on an 18 Month Improvement Strategy that demonstrates positive returns on investment of community resources (beyond improved standardized test scores).
- Target: Develop a sustainable, long-term plan that will create adequate and predictable funding and preserve the quality of public education at a level that meets community expectations.

Significant Progress

Comment:

As Dr. Kingston noted himself, these goals are multi-year efforts, so one can only report progress not completion. On the other hand, I disagree that the goals are “elusive” – it is clear what these goals represent, and the Superintendent has contributed significantly toward their fulfillment, if most of all by supporting actions by others rather than standing in the way. It’s true that the School Committee has been spearheading the long-term planning goal, and the Leadership Council has been spearheading efforts toward strategic progress, but a new Superintendent could have easily sidelined those efforts, or indeed stood as an obstacle to them, with indifference or hostility. Dr. Kingston saw the importance of the goals and has been thoroughly supportive of them, if not acting as champion himself yet.

After a year of effort, though, it is now time to more powerfully work toward building on the early work reflected in these goals. I believe Dr. Kingston has the ability and desire to move these more formally – and more rapidly – to fruition.

The above comments bear on the longer-term strategic and planning goals; in the near-term (in support of these goals), Dr. Kingston has been quite active in supporting Common Core Standard integration, Teacher Evaluations, etc. So it’s not as if he’s been a passive cheerleader: he has taken many steps forward in many domains.

Professional Practice Goal:

Participate successfully in the Massachusetts New Superintendents’ Induction Program as a coach with the intention of bringing back to the Belmont Public Schools training and modeling to cultivate district leadership internally.

Some Progress

Comment:

Dr. Kingston has brought home valuable skills and knowledge from the Induction Program, notably first-hand knowledge about the new Teacher Evaluation system. He has also encouraged specific staff to join the NISL mentoring program, and started to approach some internal organization with a mind to cultivate our staff.

I am unclear, however, how far along we are in transforming our staff into a community of cultivation and mentoring – i.e., where we are grooming staff from within. I think Dr. Kingston is the perfect agent for evolving our system in that direction, but I am not sure what it looks like

or how we are proceeding on it. I expect he is looking to the Teacher Evaluation system as a lever in this effort, and so has held off thus far to instead put the building blocks in place.

(As an aside, I wonder how much Dr. Kingston looks to the Teacher Evaluation system as a “silver bullet” on the HR side. I think he’s too savvy to have such a naïve view, and necessarily focuses on the new system as a critical component of infrastructure – not as the end-all. But it will be important going forward to grow the new system with some precise ideas of what we’re trying to achieve, beyond teacher growth in a general sense.)

Signature of School Committee Member: ____Kevin M. Cunningham_____

Date: _____1 October 2012_____

2. Belmont Public School
Superintendent's Evaluation
School Year 2011-2012

Superintendent: Thomas S. Kingston

School Committee Member:
Pascha Griffiths

Overall Assessment: Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Assessments Against Standards:

Standard I: Instructional Leadership:

The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes powerful teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment: 15 of 18 Leadership Council respondents checked "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to this statement in evaluation of Dr. Kingston. Three were in disagreement with this statement in regards to Dr. Kingston. Dr. Kingston's work in encouraging teachers and leaders to imagine blended practices, as well as his work in two technological pilots for the 2012-2013 school year are evidence of Dr. Kingston's promotion of learning and growth of all students through the cultivation of a shared vision.

Standard II: Management and Operations:

The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment: 15 of 18 Leadership Council respondents checked "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to this statement in evaluation of Dr. Kingston. Three were in disagreement with this statement in regards to Dr. Kingston. Dr. Kingston credits the excellent principals with the strong management and operations of the schools. Dr. Kingston was also able to expediently hire a new (beloved) principal for the high school with enough time to give our new BHS principal fair ramp-up time.

Standard III: Family and Community Engagement:

The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school and district.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment: 100% of the 19 respondents from the District Leadership Council who took the survey provided by Dr. Kingston in the Artifacts responded “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” to this prompt regarding Dr. Kingston’s leadership.

I also saw Dr. Kingston enjoying the parents and children at the Winn Brook Ice Cream Social and Joey’s Park “New Park Reveal,” which is evidence of his commitment to building relationships with the stakeholders who support the mission of the school.

Standard IV: Professional Culture:

The education leader promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment: From gauging the Superintendent Evaluation Survey that members of the Belmont Leadership Council filled out, 18 of the 19 participants answered this question. Seven of the respondents checked “Strongly Agree” and eleven checked “Agree.” As all of the respondents evaluated Dr. Kingston positively on this, I believe that is strong evidence that Dr. Kingston does indeed show exemplary service to our District regarding his promotion of success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff. I also got to participate in the back to school all-day workshop with the Leadership Team and Dr. Kingston provided each of us the book Creating Innovators by Tony Wagner. We were to have the book completely read by the meeting so we could discuss in groups the elements of the book that were most significant to us. This fun engagement in learning for the staff is an observational artifact of Dr. Kingston’s commitment to continuous learning for staff. Also, Dr. Kingston’s continued support of the PLT’s, instituted by the previous superintendent, demonstrate his commitment to sustaining a school culture of reflective practice.

Assessments Against Performance Goals:

Student Achievement (for 2011-2012, District-Wide) Goal:

(Based upon Existing Strategic Plan Goal #6)

The Belmont Public School organization will manage community resources in a manner that fulfills financial and academic expectations, and fosters and informed, trusting relationship with the community.

3. Belmont Public School
Superintendent's Evaluation
School Year 2011-2012

Superintendent: Thomas S. Kingston

School Committee Member: Laurie Graham

Overall Assessment: Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Assessments Against Standards:

Standard I: Instructional Leadership:

The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes powerful teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment:

Dr. Kingston's entry into the Belmont Public School System began by meeting with various members of the community: including School Committee members, parents, department heads, and staff and gathered an understanding of the School Department and School Committee Goals which he inherited. In his first year as our Interim Superintendent he spent much time visiting schools and classrooms to make sure that instruction is aligned with these goals with a focus on student growth – taking ownership of the goals and encouraging staff to do so as well. He has worked with educators to support the implementation of several innovations but we will need to assess these pilots to determine if they are supporting the goals and vision of the district.

Standard II: Management and Operations:

The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment:

As the CEO of our district, Dr. Kingston has admirably addressed the budgetary, scheduling, staffing and other day to day responsibilities. He has, I believe, worked to further encourage input from the Leadership Council and Central Office Administrators to suggest ways to both achieve the goals of the district while staying within fiscal restraints.

Dr. Kingston also is well versed in Massachusetts Law and experienced in working with unions so has been able to provide guidance when needed.

He has dealt appropriately (and discretely) with sensitive matters that have arisen and quickly and efficiently hired new staff as necessary.

An area of improvement I see however is the issue of a more rapid communication in response to issues (some of which are long-standing on not of Dr. Kingston's own making) and addressing the moral of employees which was an area of concern noted in the self-assessment.

Standard III: Family and Community Engagement:

The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school and district.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment:

Dr Kingston continues to attend meetings: Rotary, FBE, PTA/PTO/BSEAC (when invited, as is appropriate). He attends many concerts, plays and celebratory events as a supporter of the students, but in a quiet and unassuming manner.

He has started a Superintendent's Blog which I hope will become more frequently visited (and commented on) but I think that as Dr. Kingston is now in his 2nd year as Interim Superintendent there will be increased visibility and communication and engagement.

Standard IV: Professional Culture:

The education leader promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment:

Dr. Kingston has been instrumental in working with the Central Office, Leadership Council and Staff to roll-out the new Educator Evaluation model in a collegial and collaborative way. He has, as well, continued the support of the Professional Learning Teams which are opportunities for staff to engage in "Research and Development".

Dr. Kingston has continued to apprise staff of the budget situation as this year's budget was being crafted.

As I referenced in my comments on Management and Operations it is of concern that staff morale has been expressed as low and it is hoped that this year will see improvement in that area.

Assessments Against Performance Goals:

Student Achievement (for 2011-2012, District-Wide) Goal:

(Based upon Existing Strategic Plan Goal #6)

The Belmont Public School organization will manage community resources in a manner that fulfills financial and academic expectations, and fosters and informed, trusting relationship with the community.

- Target: Develop, communicate and report progress on an 18 Month Improvement Strategy that demonstrates positive returns on investment of community resources (beyond improved standardized test scores).
- Target: Develop a sustainable, long-term plan that will create adequate and predictable funding and preserve the quality of public education at a level that meets community expectations.

Did Not Meet Some Progress **Significant Progress** Met Exceeded

Comment:

The targeted goal of securing sustainable, continued and adequate resources for the BPS is one that is a long-term one, not to mention one that every school system faces all the time. Dr Kingston has been a significant partner in working towards achieving this by engaging with the Finance Sub-Committee (and the whole School Committee) the Board of Selectmen and the Warrant Committee. Meeting community expectations is an ongoing issue for both the Superintendent and the School Committee and requires continuous bi-directional communication.

Professional Practice Goal:

Participate successfully in the Massachusetts New Superintendents' Induction Program as a coach with the intention of bringing back to the Belmont Public Schools training and modeling to cultivate district leadership internally.

Did Not Meet Some Progress **Significant Progress** Exceeded

Comment:

Dr. Kingston's participation in the Induction Program has informed much of the leadership he is providing in our district, including the successful adoption of the Educator Appraisal system. It will continue to be important for the BPS to rely on Dr. Kingston's mentoring of current staff to take on additional positions of leadership

Signature of School Committee Member: Laurie Graham

Date: 9/28/2012

4. Belmont Public School
Administrator's Evaluation
School Year 2011-2012

Superintendent: Thomas S. Kingston

School Committee Member: Anne Lougée

Overall Assessment: Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Assessment Against Standards:

Standard I: Instructional Leadership:

The Administrator promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes powerful teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment: Dr. Kingston was able to spend considerable time in each of the district's six schools this past academic year, observing classroom instruction with the principals as well as with the various curriculum directors. In the discussions that followed these observations, Dr. Kingston was able to articulate the importance of the instructional models in a way that has helped the principals and directors to further define and advance those models in the classroom to their educators.

Powerful teaching and learning is always evolving, and Dr. Kingston has encouraged Belmont's educators to imagine blended innovative practices in their efforts to engage and educate each student. In FY' 13, all eyes will be on two pilot programs to see whether an expanded use of technology will improve instruction to those students.

Standard II: Management and Operations:

The Administrator promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment: As a first year interim superintendent I believe that Dr. Kingston did a remarkable job of quickly establishing strong working relationships with the Leadership Council (which included the other finalist for the interim position), as well as learning the social and political "landscape" of Belmont.

Standard III: Family and Community Engagement:

The Administrator promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment: Given the demands of the position, add to it the challenges inherent to a first year interim position, and accept that there are only 24 hours in the day; I believe that Dr. Kingston’s efforts in the realm of family and community engagement were commendable. That said, I see a need for improvement and am confident that, as a second year interim superintendent, he will have to more time to give to this effort.

Already in FY’13, the implementation of the “Superintendent’s Blog” is a terrific start. Families and the community want to hear stories; they want to be informed, and they want to know and have confidence in the person who is steering the ship. Dr. Kingston, with his wealth of experience and leadership ability, has the misfortune of working without a public relations team – the purpose of which would not be to promote Tom Kingston but to unite the district and draw in the community at large. Nonetheless, he has successfully established and nurtured relationships with relevant community members who know him to be highly knowledgeable, respectful, authentic, and witty.

Standard IV: Professional Culture:

The Administrator promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment: Dr. Kingston, arriving after a period of extreme stress for the faculty, the school committee, and the community, has done a praiseworthy job of righting the ship. His vast experience as an educator and an administrator, as well as his respectful and collegial management style, helped to move the district forward and begin to heal. As a new school committee member, I have found his mentoring of the group to be invaluable.

Assessment Against Performance Goals:

Student Achievement Goal: (Existing Strategic Plan Goal #6)

Did Not Meet Some Progress **Significant Progress** Met Exceeded

Comment: This goal is extremely ambitious, and the pathways to achieving it are incremental. The open collaboration between the School Department and the Board of Selectmen, as well as open communication with the Warrant Committee, this past year has done a lot to advance it. Dr. Kingston’s role in these efforts should not be understated.

Professional Practice Goal:

Participate successfully in the MA New Superintendents' Induction Program as a coach with the intention of bringing back to the BPS training and modeling to cultivate district leadership internally.

Did Not Meet Some Progress **Significant Progress** Met Exceeded

Comment: Under Dr. Kingston's guidance, the administration was successful in quickly developing an MOA with the leaders of the BEA for implementing the new educator appraisal system in FY' 13. In addition, his focus on identifying and cultivating administrative talent and directing other emerging district leaders into the NISL program is great for Belmont.

Signature of School Committee Member: Anne Lougée

Date: September 23, 2012

5. Belmont Public School
Superintendent's Evaluation
School Year 2011-2012

Superintendent: Thomas S. Kingston

School Committee Member:

Dan Scharfman

Overall Assessment: Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Assessments Against Standards:

Standard I: Instructional Leadership:

The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes powerful teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment:

Dr. Kingston has been forceful in pressing for a shared vision of powerful teaching, and this is a long-term project. However, that vision has yet to be expressed clearly, and therefore he has not been able to promote it. Similarly, he has expressed clearly that teaching and learning in Belmont may be too conservative, too limited, too inflexible, but he has not developed a new shared vision to supplement or replace existing ones. As he develops that vision and plan he needs to spend more time the school buildings to allow him to engage teachers and students.

Standard II: Management and Operations:

The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment:

Dr. Kingston has been clear, consistent, and effective in balancing the constrained resources of our schools to benefit all students. Especially considering the negative environment that he found on entry, he has been realistic, pragmatic, cooperative, and direct. This has greatly improved internal operations and external relationships. He has

stabilized and empowered managers including finance, IT, and facilities, and encouraged them to find better and better solutions to longstanding problems. He has also handled sensitive matters discreetly, quickly, and realistically.

At times, however, Dr. Kingston has been unable to communicate and move quickly enough to stem community frustration. This is not to say that he has failed in action, but rather in communicating his action to people who believe themselves to be stakeholders. This was most evident in the unfolding complaints about playground safety, but has appeared in other areas as well. Belmont's residents are often unreasonable in their expectations, but they are still our constituent/customers.

Standard III: Family and Community Engagement:

The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school and district.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment:

Dr. Kingston has been admirably accessible to community members, and stakeholders, and has communicated clearly and quickly when he sees the need. He appears to have true partnerships with many organizations including the Foundation for Belmont Education and many town bodies. That said, he has not appeared to promote a sense of vision and direction – this may be a result of his interim role and of working to achieve existing goals rather than set new ones. It has been encouraging to see him engaging stakeholders around the new educator evaluation system, but I believe he can go further in leading the community to a new vision for the schools.

Dr. Kingston sometimes falls prey to excessive use of technical education terms, which undermines his success in building public understanding. Even terms as common as “instructional model” benefit from interpretation at times. He can be most effective if he takes on the role of Chief Interpretative Officer. I have seen audiences occasionally glaze over when the terms are too technical.

Standard IV: Professional Culture:

The education leader promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement **Proficient** Exemplary

Comment:

Dr. Kingston seems in many ways to have made the new educator evaluation system the theme and hallmark of his superintendency. It is hard to imagine how he could have emphasized this more prominently. It is too soon to tell whether the initiative will result

in meaningful change and improvement, but Dr. Kingston has moved Belmont's efforts forward.

Assessments Against Performance Goals:

Student Achievement (for 2011-2012, District-Wide) Goal:

(Based upon Existing Strategic Plan Goal #6)

The Belmont Public School organization will manage community resources in a manner that fulfills financial and academic expectations, and fosters and informed, trusting relationship with the community.

- Target: Develop, communicate and report progress on an 18 Month Improvement Strategy that demonstrates positive returns on investment of community resources (beyond improved standardized test scores).
- Target: Develop a sustainable, long-term plan that will create adequate and predictable funding and preserve the quality of public education at a level that meets community expectations.

Did Not Meet Some Progress **Significant Progress** Met Exceeded

Comment:

Dr. Kingston has made good progress toward these goals, perhaps as much progress as could reasonably have been expected. He has reported progress on the 18 month plan, and has generally communicated that Belmont gets its money's worth out of the public schools, but has not translated this into "return on investment;" rather, his message has seemed to be that we use the money we get very efficiently, not that we are achieving community goals beyond standardized scores. He has taken advantage of many opportunities to provide anecdotal evidence that our students succeed on the stage, on the field, and in community service, but this has not become a true "return on investment" equation. In short, Dr. Kingston could tell the story of what Belmont gets out of its schools as well as how efficiently we operate. Not an easy story to tell, but full achievement of this goal may require it.

Dr. Kingston has led strong efforts to develop a sustainable long-term plan, but any such plan is in its infancy. We have promising starts on mission, finances, and goals, and I am optimistic about the articulation of a plan this year. I would add that much of our direction seems to come from Dr. Kingston's educational philosophy, which I support. This, however, leaves less room for hearing and meeting the "community expectations" mentioned in the goal. To achieve the goal as stated, more community input and more time will be needed.

6. Belmont Public School
Superintendent's Evaluation
School Year 2011-2012

Superintendent: Thomas S. Kingston
School Committee Member: Laurie Slap
Overall Assessment: **Proficient**

Standard I: Instructional Leadership PROFICIENT

- Tom's support and advocacy for the new educator appraisal system inspires confidence from all in the community that this new tool will be constructive and valuable to our faculty and our students.
- I'm impressed that Tom started his regular visits to classrooms in all schools early last fall; and quickly learned of the strengths (and weaknesses) of the BPS.
- I applaud Tom's embrace of innovative practices, and his willingness to pilot new techniques and teaching strategies.

Standard II: Management and Operations PROFICIENT

- I admire Tom's leadership in the search and hiring of our new HS principal
- As will be mentioned several times in this review, I'm very impressed by Tom's approach to budget development (strong advocate for BPS; realist who recognizes that resources are constrained; makes sincere efforts for effective collaboration with others in Town (BOS, WC, etc.)) and the framework he used to ensure the budget 'aligns expenditures with district/school-level goals and available resources' (II-E-1)
- I'm troubled by Tom's note of the "need to improve overall operational morale" in his self-assessment and the results of the Survey Monkey tool that reveal that 63% of the District Leadership Council disagrees that the "overall morale of employees of the BPS is positive and high".
 - think Tom inherited this climate; but clearly work is needed to address this problem.

Standard III: Family and Community Engagement PROFICIENT

- I have seen Tom at many school events (e.g.: Bandorama, Thanksgiving Day Football Game, PTA/PTO meetings, concerts at Chenery, etc. etc); and think this visible presence is important to students and their families, and to faculty and staff.
- I think he handled the Butler playground 'crisis' calmly and very ably.
- Tom was quickly viewed as a 'partner' by town officials and board members in the community and has done a great deal to foster a spirit of collaboration and cooperation among Town leaders.

Standard IV: Professional Culture PROFICIENT

- Tom holds a strong commitment to high standards and culture of continuous improvement -- for all BPS faculty and staff -- and for himself.

- Tom has fostered the development and articulation of a revised mission statement and set of core values (as shown in McAllister/Darius presentation at LC/SC retreat)
- as mentioned above, Tom notes in his self-assessment and as revealed in the Survey Monkey results, low staff morale is of concern; and must be addressed.
 - (again, pls. note that I believe Tom inherited this problem; and did not create it.)

Goal I: District-Wide Goal (based upon the 2011-2012 Strategic Plan Goal #6): SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS

The Belmont Public School organization will manage community resources in a manner that fulfills financial and academic expectations, and fosters an informed, trusting relationship with the community.

- Target: Develop, communicate and report progress on an 18 Month Improvement Strategy that demonstrates positive returns on investment of community resources (beyond improved standardized test scores).
- Target: Develop a sustainable, long-term plan that will create adequate and predictable funding and preserve the quality of public education at a level that meets community expectations.
- I think that Tom has achieved the broad goal above. Resources were managed well in FY12: we ended the year in the black; union contracts settled; academic expectations were met; and Tom developed strong collegial relationships with others involved in town government and the broader Belmont community. I've only heard very positive reactions to the FY12 budget process; and Tom was instrumental in setting the collaborative tone.
- I expect that Target #1 will be met at School Committee meetings in October.
- Target #2, 'the development of a sustainable, long-term plan', has proved more challenging than initially envisioned for all of us on the School Committee as well as for the Superintendent. I think Tom has helped to lay the groundwork for such a plan by guiding the development of a strategic plan for the district; encouraging the formation of a SC Finance Subcommittee; and by cultivating an "informed, trusting relationship with the community" as outlined in the broad goal above. I look forward to working with Tom, the COA, and SC colleagues over the coming year to make further progress toward this target.

Goal II: Personal Development Goal: Participate successfully in the Massachusetts New Superintendents' Induction Program as a coach with the intention of bringing back to the Belmont Public Schools training and modeling to cultivate district leadership internally. MET

- Tom's leadership in the successful introduction and initial implementation the new educator evaluation system has been extremely valuable (including all his work in successful negotiations with the BEA).
- As mentioned above, Tom's framework for presenting the FY12 budget proposals has given us an important tool to help present the school system's priorities to the community.
- His encouragement of senior administrators to enroll in the NISL program helps develop future leadership and enriches the entire district.

CONCLUSION:

I think Tom has been a superb leader of the Belmont Public Schools over the past year; and he has clearly exceeded my expectations of an 'Interim' Superintendent.

Staff and Community Comments

Communication: concern that time-sensitive email was not answered and that there is no “auto reply” indicating he was out of the office. Also remarked that Superintendent (and others) emails/phone numbers are difficult to find on the School Department web site.

Visibility and Community Engagement:

1. concern that Superintendent is not “known” in the community to parents or students “that he comes off as more invested in the Superintendent's Induction Program than in our district and one of the ways in which that is very much evident is in his lack of visibility in or connection to the parent and student populations”
2. “Dr. Kingston is supportive of our students and the work they do in and out of the classroom, as can be evidenced by his regular and enthusiastic attendance at after school performances and events. This has made him feel like a part of our community, and he seems to truly enjoy that aspect of his work.”

Management:

1. concern that the demolishing of the Butler playground was rushed. “Dr. Kingston has proven incapable of communicating, organizing, budgeting, and efficiently completing the fairly simple task of building a new playground”.
2. “We ...think that he has a credible manner of dealing with the selectmen and warrant committee, and that is critical”
3. “I have noticed a marked increase in the level of civility surrounding budget discussions in town.

Professional Culture:

1. “We feel he does a great job of developing internal leadership, at least from an outsider’s perspective.”
2. “He is a true educator, knowledgeable about best teaching practices across curriculum areas. He is a supportive mentor who recognizes the challenges faced by teachers and administrators and works to help remove obstacles whenever possible.”
- 3.”Dr. Kingston has helped to restore a sense of "calm" that had been absent for a few years.”
4. “He’s great”