

July 1, 2009

To the community of South Fayette:

Today, I officially began my work as the Interim Superintendent of the south Fayette School District. I am honored and excited to be in this outstanding school district. South Fayette has a wonderful reputation throughout the state for being a high quality school district. My goal is to give my best effort to make certain that this high quality is sustained, especially with the loss of two outstanding educational leaders – Dr. Linda Hippert and Dr. Mary Ravita.

We are saddened with the passing of Dr. Mary Ravita. She was a noted expert in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Leaders from other districts often consulted with Dr. Ravita seeking her opinion and research on best educational practices. She was always supportive and willing to assist others to improve their educational programs. Personally, I was looking forward to working with Dr. Ravita when I knew that I would be coming to South Fayette because she had such a great reputation as a highly dedicated leader and a quality person.

Dr. Linda Hippert was a close professional colleague of mine for over 10 years. Pine-Richland, where I served as Superintendent, is a very similar district to South Fayette with both being growing school districts with high student achievement. Dr. Hippert is a well respected Superintendent. She is viewed by her colleagues as a leader among leaders. Dr. Hippert is a total leader who sets the example for all of us to follow. She not only shows the way – she goes the way. Through her efforts, there is a spirit of excellence throughout the school district. Although she will be deeply missed, I know that she will serve all children in Allegheny County very well as the Executive Director of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

I am very impressed with the Board of School Directors led by Board President Mr. Leonard Fornella who has served the Board for 29 years and my 27 years as a Superintendent we have the experience to handle most if not all of the challenges we face.

Students are my top priority and I look forward to meeting our students as they participate in various summer practices and activities. Our goal is to give South Fayette a competitive advantage in our global society. To accomplish this goal, we must view parents as our partners, which mean that they will be welcomed and involved.

We must continue to promote the spirit of excellence in our district. I believe in the quality everywhere approach especially in the academics, the arts, and athletics. I subscribe to the 3 P's of excellence – People, Places, and Programs. Establishing a personalized learning environment requires **people** who care and give an extraordinary effort in establishing a welcoming and students first climate; **places** that are well kept, clean, and safe; and **programs** that are rigorous and intellectually stimulating.

Although I am here as an Interim Superintendent until the new Superintendent comes on board; I promise to give my very best effort to make a positive impact on the district and especially our students. I look forward to meeting our students, parents, and community members as we prepare to open a great 2009-10 school year.

Sincerely,

Dr. James Manley

