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Columbia Public Schools Foundation

Progress Report 2

24 September 2012

A. Summary

Working with the Columbia Public Schools Foundation is definitely a new experience for me. As a Secondary English Education major, I have a lot of experience in the classroom, student teaching and observing. I also interned this past summer as a teacher for underprivileged children in Kansas City. Although the Columbia Public Schools Foundation main goal is for the betterment of students and educational institutions, it's the complete opposite of what I have worked with.

This past week, I went to my first Board of Education Meeting with the Columbia Public Schools. We discussed the ways to reach our donors through social media, while battling the fact a lot of our donors are older and may not be able to navigate the sites.

Also at the board meeting, I met the superintendant and his staff. I was really excited about this because I want to eventually work in the Columbia Public School District Networking now and making a good impression will be very valuable to my career later. I made sure I introduced myself and let them know how much I enjoy shadowing in the school district during my student teaching; they loved that.

B. Personal Learning and Professional Development

This past week, I've learned the importance of speaking loudly and choosing wisely the words I say. While drafting my speech for the Columbia Public School Board, Mrs. Read, my

supervisor, read over it and noticed that I mentioned “old” people in my speech. Of course that is offensive and she advised me to reword the sentences.

In addition to that, I began to take note of my choice of outfits for these meetings. I have to remember who my audience is and dress accordingly. No low-cut shirts and no tight-fitted pants. Although I didn’t have trouble with that when I went to the meeting, my supervisor reminded me frequently.

C. Community Issues and Challenges

Last week while reading my articles for my progress reports, I realized that this problem of low funding isn’t just one in the Columbia or not even the state, it’s nation wide. As school districts are facing massive budget cuts across the country, school programs, teachers and students are taking the hit. Across the country, 120 school districts had, as of August, moved to four-day school weeks while others are canceling field trips, shuttering after-school programs and charging students to play sports (Huffington Post).

The cuts are seen in Keller, Texas, where the district opted for a pay-for-ride transportation system versus cutting busing as a whole; In Georgia, where 20 days were slashed from the pre-kindergarten academic year; In California, where nearly half the districts axed or whittled away at art, drama and music.

The Columbia Public Schools Foundation is noticing that music and art are huge in schools. That is why in addition to monetary donations, we are also accepting violins and clarinets to put in the elementary schools.

Another article that stood out to me was titled, “Stop Budget Cuts for California Public Schools” by Erica Ruedas. It talks about California Governor Jerry Brown threatening to cut \$4.8 billion from public school funding unless his November tax-hike initiative passes. California public schools are already underfunded, and are facing laying off teachers, increasing class sizes to over 30 students, and shortening the school year by another week. All three already affect that amount of time and energy a teacher can spend with their students, and if the tax-hike fails at the polls, California schools will be forced to find as many ways to cut as much money from their

budgets as possible, even as they reduce summer programs, music and arts programs, and auxiliary staff such as counselors and nurses. Additionally, bus programs and equipment budgets will also be affected, leaving students stranded and using outdated or broken equipment (FreePetition.com). This is extremely saddening to me and it further proves my point of needing more not-for-profit organizations such as the Columbia Public Schools Foundation.

Chicago public school teachers began picket lines instead of classrooms Monday, launching the first teacher strike in the city in 25 years. The strike, announced Sunday night, left about 350,000 students without schools to attend and parents scrambling to find alternatives. The union that represents nearly 30,000 teachers and support staff in the nation's third-largest school district called the strike after negotiators failed to reach a contract agreement with school administrators despite 10 months of negotiations. Although this affects students heavily, things like this makes us remember that teachers are people too. We often times forget that and they are very much underrated in America. That is why I was so happy when I found out that every year, the Columbia Public Schools Foundation has a teacher's appreciation week where donors' money goes straight toward the Teacher's Union. This shows that the teachers are not being taken for granted for the things they do

D. Reflections on Leadership

I mentioned in my last report that envisioning goals was prominent in the Foundation. In addition to envisioning goals, I have learned that all of the people I have come in contact with during my work make sure their values are at the forefront of anything they do. What I mean by that is when asking for donations and contributions to a foundation; it is easy to sometimes seem greedy and not sincere. The people on the board have always made sure that the donors knew