

I will start by thanking Mr. Favre for his leadership during the last year and for his commitment to this Board – I will make every effort to maintain the open lines of communication that marked his term as President.

I first ran and was elected to the Board of Education in 1993 – many of the questions that face us today are similar to those faced by the Board at that time – how do we expand educational opportunity for our children – how do we meet the needs of every child through meaningful parental involvement and ongoing support for teachers and building staff – how do we secure community involvement and build support for the schools when most families do not have children in school – how do we make the best use of our valuable resources, human and financial.

We have met and will continue to meet challenges when we as a Board respond, not by reacting to crisis and pressures, but rather by working to a plan, following a map – a plan based on thoughtful assessment and discussion, on the identification and anticipation of both opportunity and threats – a plan that provides structure, discipline and rationale for our actions and to which we are held accountable. In the face of serious facility problems and increased academic expectations a plan was created to meet the intertwined needs in both areas. This expansive and forward looking plan has enabled us to be poised on the final phase of the total rebuilding of the Lakewood City Schools and has contributed to the first of what we expect to be many “Excellent” ratings. Without remaining committed to action based on a broad and long range vision I believe it will be difficult to continue our steady progress in building academic strength and a stronger community.

We – as individuals, as school districts, as cities - find ourselves in difficult economic times. Unfortunately, when there are difficult decisions to be made and a multitude of opinions exist, we may more quickly attribute negative motives to those with whom we disagree. I pledge to be mindful of this as I go forward and ask that we treat each other with respect and understanding as we move through this challenging year. It is important that we respect the difficulty that some voters may have in deciding to support a school levy in these stressful times. We need to remember that most of our voters do not have children in our schools and we need to be tireless and patient in our efforts to explain our need for financial support and why this levy is critical to our schools and our city. I believe that we need to acknowledge and respect the effort that our administrative staff puts forth every day and support the Superintendent as he guides us through this year

with the knowledge that even with a levy we will continue cuts to continue progress.

We need to convey our respect for the commitment our teachers and support staff have made to the ongoing efforts to maintain successful programs. We need to listen to and respect the concerns and commitment of the parents in our district and the marvelous students we have the opportunity to serve.

It is worth noting that as individual members of the Board of Education we have no authority – it is only as a collective body that we are able to establish policy and to uphold our pledge to use our informed judgment to promote the educational welfare of all students attending our public schools. We, as Board members, will need to respect the individual experience, skill and knowledge that each of us brings to this Board of Education if we are to provide the leadership that this school district deserves.

The achievements of the last years, rebuilding our schools, improving achievement, investing in the ongoing education of our staff, using test data to meet the needs of individual students, instituting all day kindergarten, have created a strong foundation for our continued growth despite the challenges. Our actions as a Board this year will be critical to the continued progress of our schools and our community in the next 5, 10 or even 50 years.

I am honored to serve as president this year and to serve as a Board Member for the next 4 years. I am proud to be associated with the Lakewood Board of Education, the staff, parents and students of this district and to represent this vibrant and community which has supported public education in the past and will in the future. I will always be grateful to the voters of Lakewood for giving me this gift and I look forward to working with all of you in this New Year.

Thank you very much.