



## Office of the Superintendent

James J. Shaw, Ph.D.

August 1, 2011

Dear Staff Members,

Today, I submitted my resignation to the Board of Education effective September 1, 2011. The Board of Education will consider the resignation as part of its Special Board meeting agenda on August 2. I came to Racine after accepting a two-year contract. My tenure has now been three years and this is the right time for new leadership in Racine. It is also the right time for me to personally retire after more than forty years of service to education.

Over the past five years, RUSD has developed the North Star vision of excellence for all students, and a new data driven school improvement system; effective leadership teams involving all staff are functioning throughout the District; tough budget decisions have been made working collaboratively with our unions to reduce expenditures by twenty five million dollars; fifteen new principals are eager to begin a new school year; central office, or the Administrative Service Center, has been downsized and reorganized to better focus on supporting schools in improvement efforts; a new central office building and a District Improvement Plan will improve service to parents, schools, and community; finally, RUSD has strong leadership in an excellent School Board and the well established leadership structures: the Guiding Coalition, the District-Wide School Improvement Council, Payday Teams, Data Teams, and School Leadership Teams.

These leadership bodies are comprised of outstanding community, union, staff, and administrative leaders committed to advancing and continuously improving RUSD. The work of these leadership groups is also supported by local community business leaders, parents, and higher education partners. The superintendent is an important leader, but the School Board, staff, and community are the even more important, long-term leaders who maintain critical values and set direction over the long haul.

RUSD has a clear superintendent succession plan in place with Dr. Ann Laing, a twenty-two year, highly respected Racine administrator nominated for appointment as Interim Superintendent. Everyone knows Dr. Laing or is familiar with her important work in special education, inclusion, and early childhood education. Dr. Laing has worked in numerous leadership positions, including Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education. Dr. Laing is one of the best educational leaders I have worked with anywhere. I know she will continue the shared leadership effort to make Racine Unified one of the finest urban school districts anywhere.

This is the right time, personally, for me to retire. My wife, Jean, is recently retired and my new granddaughter, Esme, needs to see her grandfather more often. Thanks to your support and hard work, my service as RUSD Superintendent is the most fulfilling and important experience of my educational career. I have learned a lot in three years, but it is time.

For the past forty years, I have served as a teacher, administrator, professor, and superintendent. I know of no better staff than RUSD employees. All means all. I am proud to say I am part of the RUSD team that shares a vision and commitment to improve learning for all students. Despite all the criticism of urban public education and the challenges we will continue to face, you make a difference in the lives of children every day. Thanks for allowing me to share in that important work.

Sincerely,

James J. Shaw, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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