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XXXX, New York 11782  
July 17, 2002

Dr. E. H. Bedenbaugh  
Search Consultant  
11 Longfellow Road  
Port Jefferson, Mississippi 39402

Dear Dr. Bedenbaugh,

Please accept this letter as an indication of my interest in the position of Superintendent of the Long Beach School District. I am extremely interested in this position and feel that I could serve the city of Long Beach well in such a capacity. My educational philosophy is that public schools exist to benefit our children and community. That our children learn best when they are challenged by high expectations; and that children are capable of meeting those high expectations when instructional strategies are adjusted to meet individual needs. The support of both families and the community is essential to fulfill this philosophy.

Since July of 2001, I have been the principal of the East Middle School. In this capacity I have gained great insight regarding both elementary and secondary instruction, as well as dynamics necessary to work with students, teachers, and various community members. As principal of the East Middle School, my major goal was to raise the level of classroom instruction in order to improve student performance on the challenging New York State Eighth Grade Assessments. While not an easy task to undertake, I initiated many changes to improve the learning environment in the East Middle School for students and staff. The list of specific changes includes the following: the ongoing assessment of classroom instruction to ensure alignment with the New York State Learning Standards and Assessments, the establishment of parent workshops that focuses on raising a child in the middle years, an instructional component and focus for all curriculum and faculty meetings, zero tolerance for violations of the district code of conduct, and the establishment of a collegially environment that has energized the staff to take part in the revitalization of the East Middle School. The aforementioned have enabled all middle school students and teachers to thrive in a more challenging learning atmosphere.

The results of our 2001-2002 New York State Assessment in English Language Arts and Mathematics showed a dramatic increase from the previous three years of administration. The scores on both exams were well above the state and county average, with our minority population scoring well above students in similar schools. For this achievement, the East Middle School was recognized by the State of New York as school of distinction as well as a model middle school that promotes best teaching practices. The East Middle School was invited to present our middle school program at the annual New York State School Board Association Conference.

I believe that my vision for the task of maximizing achievement for all students and my experiences promoting an atmosphere a community involvement will enable me to perform the duties of the Long Beach School District in an effective and professional manner. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the position of superintendent with you in further detail. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Courtney, Steven, Karl, and Vic

### Critique of initial cover letter

***I realize after analyzing further the Long Beach Superintendents posting that I would not be a viable candidate for the position. While my cover letter focuses on the notion of achievement for all students, this is not a belief by the school board. The mentioning of the fact that many students attend technical schools evidences this. The makeup of the community, many minorities and poor whites, do not see the value of a post secondary education.***

***There is also the issue of equity that cannot be addressed in the cover letter since the posting does not mention that the Long Beach School District is an equal opportunity employer.***

***There is also an underlining assumption that the new superintendent will maintain the school boards current vision. Meaning that the new superintendent will have very little power to initiate change and thus improve instruction in every classroom.***

### Questions: Long Beach School District

What strategic representation of the school district does the search announcement convey?

The Long Beach Board of Education is looking for a dynamic leader, with strong interpersonal and communication skills to promote values and goals of the district. The new superintendent must be knowledgeable of effective classroom instruction and have a clear vision for improvement in order to continue Long Beach's long outstanding vision of academic excellence. The Board of Education is looking for an educational leader that can create a collaborative school/community relationship to continue to support the school district's excellent program. The prospective superintendent must also be strong at handling resources and making sound fiscal decisions.

The strategic representation of the Long Beach Board of Trustees is to make one believe that a Polis model of the school organization exists. Specifically, that there is community, public interest in the school, cooperation exists among stakeholders, and loyalty to all within the organization.

***The strategic representation of the school district does not coincide with educational beliefs listed in the job posting. They are looking for a superintendent that will maintain the status quo and not implement a vision of academic excellence for all. The notion of equity is also not addressed by the school board.***

What opposing representation might be constructed?

The Long Beach Superintendent's posting does not provide insight into the fiscal standing of the district, specifically, the amount of the annual school budget, per pupil expenditure and the status of the professional contracts. Strategically, you would have difficulty attracting a qualified candidate for the superintendent's position if the Board of Education is having difficulty finding support for the school budget from the community and if there are bad relations between the district and the teachers.

The strategic representation of the Long Beach Board of Trustees would be similar to Stone's Persuasion in the Polis model. Based upon the qualifications required by the board, one can infer that manipulation exists and certain groups will have more influence due to access to resources. This also aligned with Stone's interpretation that information is used to influence and manipulate. This strategic representation is prevalent throughout the superintendent's announcement.

According to Stone, "...people promote their program so it appears to be one kind of strategy to one constituency and another kind to another constituency (Stone, p. 261).

What would Stone say about the local Board of Education's representation of itself?

The Long Beach School District Board of Trustees consisted of five members appointed by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Long Beach. Each member serves a five-year term, with one member rotating off the board each year. Since the city mayor and aldermen appoint the board members, one can conclude that politics probably plays a major role in the running of the school system as well as the goals for the district. The announcement tends to present the Board of Trustees as looking for a superintendent that will create an enthusiastic and secure environment and promote academic excellence in the classroom. I would tend to believe that in this environment, the superintendent would have very little power to make change. The elected officials will have an educational agenda and that the new superintendent will need to convey their message. The new superintendent will not necessarily be able to institute research based improvements since he/she will be representing the interests of politically appointed board members.

***The school board actually consists of some influential community members. The fact that the board president uses his nickname "Penny," leads me to believe that a good old boys network exists at Long Beach and that the new superintendent will take specific direction from the school board.***

What version of the goals does it tend to endorse?

The Long Beach School District goals are incorporated within the mission statement. There are fifteen beliefs that the Long Beach School District feels are essential to producing globally competitive and responsible citizens. Incorporated within the mission statement is the notion that all students can learn and the importance of the development of personal values as well as the ability to be healthy lifelong learners. The board is also promoting the notion of family commitment to the education of the child in order for each to reach his/her dreams.

Long Beach District is portraying their goals as equity and liberty. Meaning all students have the opportunity to learn and change is essential to growth and each individual is responsible for his/her actions. Stone would argue that the board is concerned with securing the basic needs of the district, which would mean developing minimum skills to pass basic competency tests and not actually making the students the leaders of tomorrow.

***The notion of equity is also not represented in the school district's goals. The assumption is that students that can achieve will go on to higher levels of education.***

What image does it attempt to create and what line of reasoning is assumed in that image?

The image is of the Polis working together for the benefits of the students and community. Those needs that a community recognizes as legitimate and tries to satisfy, as a community might be termed public needs. The belief system of the community is that the students to develop solid values and the ability to be a productive citizen. The true belief of the school board is that students need only to pass competency tests.

What is the image or motto that would represent the Long Beach School District?

*Long Beach School District*

*Commitment to Excellence*

*The School and Community Working Together To Educate Each Child*

*It Takes a Collective Effort to Educate a Child*