Hathaway Brown School's Education Innovation Summit – Day Three Closing Remarks

November 6, 2010

It's hard to believe that only 44 hours ago, we began this journey together, and what a remarkable journey it's been. When I opened the Summit, I spoke of our desire to create unexpected but magical moments of collision. It is my sincerest hope that you experienced as many of these moments as we on Hathaway Brown's faculty did.

I think it's fair to say that probably all of us have been to conferences that have consumed our school's professional development budgets and that have given us the cover we need to assert that we are engaged in the evolution of our craft. I ask that you not allow these last days become part one of those conferences. I ask that you make much from the energy that we've felt throughout our time together.

I also hope that you take to heart Bill Strickland's wonderful affirmation that independent schools are not bit players in the great drama of our nation's education system. We can lead and we can learn but only if we engage.

The pace of change, the scope of the problems, the seeming intractability of well fortified positions – We cannot allow these forces to be more powerful than our mission to educate the children in our care for the coming world. We must invent new solutions, we each commit to leading in our own way, and we must stay resolved to share what we discover. The stakes are simply too high, the cause simply too great, the time simply too ripe to do anything less.

I need to take a moment now to say some much deserved thank yous. Hathaway Brown's Education Innovation Summit is not only the expression of some of our school's most profound beliefs, but also the culmination of a tremendous amount of work. I must first thank our fabulous presenters for all they delivered. The premise of the Summit was that creative approaches emerge when there's adequate cross-pollination among disparate disciplines. We hope that the architecture of this Summit created this kind of planful serendipity and that the various voices will continue to echo in your ears and imaginations over the next months. Thank you also to the Hathaway Brown faculty including those who introduced and moderated the sessions. We wanted all our visitors to meet our fantastic
teachers and administrators and see how special they are. I need to say a huge thank you to all the members of the HB community who helped, the students and parents who volunteered, the members of the advancement and admissions offices who made everyone feel welcome and comfortable. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the maintenance staff that set up, tore down and set back up all the rooms and the dining staff who took such good care of us. I’d like to mention a few individuals who were part of the team that made the Summit such a spellbinding success. I know I will forget somebody of course, which will cause me bouts of regret, so please forgive me and know that if I missed your name, it doesn’t mean I missed your contribution.

If you’re here, please raise your hand, take a bow, or flutter an uncomfortable wave.

Kathy, Tara, Barry, Carole, Matt, Rob and James from our IT and performing arts departments who brought us wireless, taped the programs, set up the presentations and so much more.

Associate Head of School, Sue Sadler, who coordinated the volunteering; Sarah Johnston, our director of admissions and financial aid, who made sure each presenter was warmly welcomed and introduced; Vanessa Butler, who created and managed all the beautiful printed pieces; and Deb Herman, who helped us manage the events.

I owe my most profound gratitude to the team that lived this Summit for the better part of two years:

Meredith Camp, our superhero of details. She’s an event coordinator, which it turns out is shorthand for someone who willingly descends into someone else’s big and messy idea and turns it into a smooth operation.

Terry Dubow, who helped define the message of the Summit and communicate it to the world; and finally, two women who breathed life into the ideas that we developed: Kelly Wilson and Kathleen Osborne. They are the architects that made the days go so well and vital contributors to the content and shape of the summit. They worked day and night, winter, spring, summer and fall and in ways that very few of us saw but all of us now appreciate. I am deeply grateful.

And one last thank you to all of you who came to Cleveland from Honolulu to Bangor and thirty states in between. Hathaway Brown is boundlessly grateful for your partnership and commitment to educational innovation.

Let me close with a few words from the letter I wrote to welcome you. If we create new designs that benefit only our students, if we forget that we are private schools with public purposes, if we neglect to recognize the signs that tell us that our nation’s educational crisis is a shared obligation, then we will have learned nothing in these days. Invent, lead, and share. That is our charge and our duty.

Thank you very, very much.