

Memo to Mayor Campbell

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As Cleveland Mayor Jane Campbell confronts her third month in office, the challenges of the job are more apparent than ever.

But as she deals with the daily details - in budgets, personnel, technology - Campbell must not forget that it was her commitment to people and fresh ideas that brought her so many supporters. In that spirit, I offer this alliterative memo to the new mayor.

Remember the Region: The fate of all Northeast Ohio is inextricably tied to the fate of Cleveland. Without a vibrant center the suburbs will falter, whether or not they realize it. Mayor Campbell emphasized this before it was popular. Her still-strong relationships with state and county leaders uniquely position her as a voice for the vitality of Cleveland and the interdependence of us all.

Emphasize Education: High school graduates earn 38 percent more than dropouts, yet the Cleveland schools lose more than 4,000 students each year. Our public schools are integral to the functioning of our economy, the well-being of our families and, indeed, to the integrity of our democracy. Campbell should build on school CEO Barbara ByrdBennett's skills, teachers' commitments, parents' concern and students' energy to emphasize professional development,

reasonable class sizes, high standards, safety, discipline and literacy.

Work on Work - and Wages: Three major forces contribute to increased wages: low unemployment; wage floors (like the living wage); and strong unions (which raise pay, secure benefits and can help firms solve recruitment and training problems). The mayor is lucky to inherit a city with a living wage on the books, relatively strong unions and a labor council head known to be among the best in the nation. She should honor that inheritance by enforcing the living wage, working with unions to preserve and expand high-wage jobs, and requiring neutrality toward unionization efforts before granting development aid to companies.

Target Training: As she did at the county, Campbell must demand that Workforce Investment Board training is targeted intelligently - toward decent-wage jobs with intact career ladders and projected vacancies.

Training people for no-future careers wastes money and, more tragically, wastes time and depletes hope from people who are trying to shape their lives.

Collaborate with the whole Community: The White administration knew to seek input from business but often forgot to consult community, neighborhood, labor, religious, non-profit, housing, health and environmental leaders. The new mayor's deep ties with these constituencies will build a stronger city. A majority-black electorate

entrusted Campbell, a white woman, to govern Cleveland. She must respect that trust.

Protect against Poverty: In her new position, Mayor Campbell may yet regret the county's tough stance on public assistance. We don't have a full-employment economy in this country, let alone in this county; treating low-income people as if we do ignores reality at our collective peril. Recent job losses and threatened plant closings underscore this point. In public policy on education, housing, health care and, yes, welfare, we need to remember most those who have the least.

Hike the High Road: Development priorities in Cleveland have gone awry: from extensive tax abatements that ask little in return, to large retail projects that haven't succeeded, to projects long on gloss and short on stable, high-wage jobs. Firms that pay low wages and benefits are inefficient, costly to the community and undeserving of precious tax abatements. Campbell should stick to smarter economic development by supporting only "high-road" businesses that profit by valuing rather than exploiting workers. Development strategy must remember our still deep manufacturing roots instead of competing for trendy tourist and technology dollars.

Liberate the Lake: Leaving the lake to the marketplace has led to its current predicament, with private and business interests steering the ship while public interests dog-paddle behind. Intelligent communities view their shorelines as public resources; as such, the public should be

able to access them without spending money. The lake may have value as an economic asset, but its greater value is as a simple, public space.

Long after the Campbell Convention Center is torn down, the mayor will be remembered at Campbell Beach.

Respect Research: Looking to other communities' experiences before acting can inform our thinking, help avoid costly errors and point to proven remedies. This will lead to sounder, more efficient policies.

Values and principles help us identify priorities. Learning what works leads to solutions.

Promote Public Goods: Business does an excellent job of looking out for its own interests. The mayor's job is to protect the rest. Public schools, transit systems, utilities, parks, neighborhoods, the lake, the people: These are what make a city special. We share an obligation to nurture and grow these resources.