

SUPERINTENDENT ARTHUR J. FESSLER, ED.D. ENTRY PLAN

ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 59 AS ONE OF THE PREMIER SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN ILLINOIS AND IN THE NATION

SUPERINTENDENT ENTRY PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This document is my entry plan and describes my first 100 days in the position and action planning leading up to my first official day. This entry plan is designed to focus on listening and learning activities with internal and external stakeholders. In addition to information gleaned from stakeholder conversations, the plan also includes a review of various operation and academic data in order to gain a thorough understanding of the school district, including its strengths and challenges, core approach to teaching and learning, business systems, culture, and partnerships with the community. The following plan includes a framework for activities that will begin January of 2013, and end December of 2013. The plan culminates with a summary of findings and recommendations to the District 59 Board of Education in January of 2014. The transition activities outlined in this plan are designed to enable me to quickly and effectively listen to and learn from a wide range of people involved directly and indirectly with School District 59.

Listening and learning sessions will dominate the early stages of Phases I and II. These sessions will consist of numerous meetings with board members, various stakeholders, internal leadership groups, direct reports, external leaders, and members of community organizations. As a team leader, I understand the importance of a successful team functioning as a whole to accomplish clear outcomes. During the first 100 days, the basic building blocks of a high performing team will be discussed and embedded. It is important to note the work of entry occurs simultaneously with the responsibility for operations of the district. The obvious duties of day-to-day operations and problem solving are addressed while entry takes place.

THE PLAN CONTAINS 3 PHASES TO BE EXECUTED IN 2013 AND EARLY 2014:

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Phase I: | Pre-Entry | January - June 30, 2013 |
| Phase II: | Entry | July 1 -December 31, 2013 |
| Phase III: | Action Planning | January 1 -January 31, 2014 |

The District 59 Board of Education has charged me as incoming superintendent with improving achievement for all students, implementing a transparent communications approach that connects internal and external stakeholders, addressing inequalities within the system, and transitioning the district to prepare students to be college and global workforce ready. The following goals will guide the initial learning transition.

GOALS:

This entry plan addresses the following goals:

1. To focus organizational efforts and align resources, financial and human, to ensure all students are provided a world-class education that will prepare them to be high school, college and global workforce ready.
2. To create a respectful, positive district culture centered on teaching and learning, building public trust and confidence through transparent, honest communication and positive relationships.
3. To assess the state of the school district, including core approaches to teaching and learning, operations, business systems, finances and budgeting, reviewing externally

SUPERINTENDENT ENTRY PLAN

funded and conducted audits, evaluations and reviews in order to take timely action for improvement.

4. To review strategic planning with the board and identified stakeholders in order to focus on best practice strategies in teaching and learning and supporting best practice operational strategies.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

It is anticipated that the implementation of this entry plan will result in the following outcomes, thereby enabling the superintendent to make informed decisions and recommendations:

1. A summary of the feedback obtained from the stakeholders conversations during the "listening and learning" meetings outlined in this entry plan.
2. Summarized and detailed findings from all audits, reviews and evaluations of the district's organizational structure, programs, processes, systems and finances.
3. Assessment of executive leadership and organizational structure and identification of any design/staffing changes needed to ensure optimal productivity, efficacy and efficiency.
4. A strategic planning review process to revisit planning work started during the 2012-2013 school year, including a review of shared vision and mission, goals and priorities, and targeted outcomes and metrics.
5. Build foundational understanding to begin facilitating short and long-range planning in identified key areas.

STRUCTURE AND TIMELINE:

The entry plan will begin January 2013, and end December 2013. This time frame will allow the superintendent to meet with identified stakeholders in formal and informal venues, perform data analyses, program and systems evaluations and begin the comprehensive process for developing an operational plan based on the mutual expectations and priorities of the District 59 Board of Education. To help in this process, I will create a transition team to review the District 59 strategic plan, organizational structure, the state of teaching and learning, and the organizational culture, context and communication. The team will include knowledgeable members of the District 59 staff as well as outside experts.

The entry plan's activities, based on goals and anticipated outcomes, are organized into the following key areas:

1. Governance Team
2. Student Achievement
3. Organizational Capacity and Alignment
4. Community and Public Relations
5. Operations and Finance

SUPERINTENDENT ENTRY PLAN

I. GOVERNANCE TEAM/BOARD OF EDUCATION:

The following activities are intended to establish working relationships with individual board members and the board as a whole, ascertain the board's priorities for the district and initiate the strategic process that will guide future district reforms.

- Schedule initial meetings with individual school board members
- Schedule a board-superintendent retreat
- Meet with the Board President and committee chairs (if appropriate) to determine how they work together and with the superintendent
- Determine a schedule for annual retreats with the District 59 Board of Education
- Work with the board to establish a process to review existing board policies to determine alignment with reform and operational goals and objectives
- Visit various community organizations with individual school board members
- Conduct school visits with interested individual school board members beginning in September
- Create a district committee consisting of union membership, administration members and board of education members to participate in District 59 planning

2. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT:

The following activities are intended to establish an understanding of current strategies, as well as strengths and opportunities for improvement in the district's instructional program.

- Meet with district instructional leadership team to discuss achievement data, instructional program design alignment and current goals and priority action areas for the district
- Determine the status of the current District 59 curriculum and CCSS reform efforts
- Conduct learning walks with Board members and administration to assess the current landscape of teaching and learning
- Assess current data and performance of all schools to determine quality of actions designed for continuous improvement
- Explore the current state of assessment tools, strategic data monitoring and reporting
- Assess the current professional development planning approach and structure for all staff and leadership team members
- Examine the role of principals, including autonomy and authority to lead their schools, access and opportunity to play key roles in decision-making
- Review regular education, at-risk and special education program designs
- Identify common characteristics present in highly effective District 59 schools

3. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND ALIGNMENT:

The following activities are intended to establish a strong and appropriately focused district executive team.

- Review the district's strategic plan, accountability for performance, various management

SUPERINTENDENT ENTRY PLAN

systems and overall leadership structure

- Determine how communication and decision-making will occur within the leadership team
- Establish the leadership team's operational ground rules and focus
- Conduct one-on-one conversations with all direct reports and building administration
- Conduct a retreat with superintendent's team to review district's strategic plan, improvement plan, and most recent student achievement data
- Conduct an organizational review to assess functionality, efficacy and efficiency of the current organizational structure
- Initiate planning to establish key metrics for each division to assess alignment to core function and support for student achievement
- Audit current district and school safety planning

4. COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS:

A detailed communication plan will be developed in conjunction with stakeholders in order to create transparent internal and external strategies that provide open communication with the school community to foster collaboration, understanding, support and advocacy.

Communications Audit

- Review current internal communications strategies and approaches
- Review current external communications strategies and approaches
- Analyze current use of social media as a communications strategy
- Explore opportunities to develop a comprehensive, integrated communications plan that includes possible branding strategies

Communications and Engagement Opportunities with District 59 Staff:

- Audit existing communications plan and summarize results
- Schedule informal meet and greet sessions for all staff hosted by District 59 bargaining units
- Attend New Teacher Orientation session
- Group meeting/Retreat with superintendent's team
- Summer Leadership Institute for Administrators
- District 59 summer school visits with appropriate elementary and middle school director
- Visits to every school during first day and weekly as possible throughout the school year
- Initial one-on-one meetings with leadership of all employee unions
- Individual building presentations to staff to discuss our focus and goals

Students, Families and the Community:

- Create a Superintendent's Parent Council and meet quarterly with superintendent
- Attend individual school PTO meetings and events as invited
- Meet with Superintendent's Student Cabinet
- Back to School Celebrations
- Focused Town-Hall meeting over the course of the year
- Attend regular meetings of various groups and organizations
- Community celebrations, including festivals, fairs, etc.

SUPERINTENDENT ENTRY PLAN

Elected and Appointed Officials:

- Initial and ongoing meetings with local public officials and organizations
- Ongoing meetings with local public officials
- Meeting with Illinois State Superintendent Chris Koch
- Participation in ED-RED to connect with Local and State officials

5. OPERATIONS AND FINANCE:

The following activities are intended to understand the current strategies, strengths, and opportunities for improvement in the district's operations and finance.

- Review all employee group contracts, including expiration dates and plans for negotiations of renewals
- Understand district's information technology systems and plans for the future
- Understand district accountability plan for operational areas
- Review key district financial reports, budget, most recent audit, and grants
- Conduct one-on-one meetings with direct reports on finances, operations, and human resources
- Review district's financial projections, long-range planning, resource allocation and budgeting processes
- Assess how District 59's budget and budgeting process is aligned to support student achievement
- Meet with district attorney to review any legal issues impacting the district as well as to be briefed on existing and proposed laws and regulations that may impact the district.

As we all know, School District 59 is widely perceived as a school district possessing great resources with great capabilities. I believe we can utilize our resources to transform a very good school district into a premier school district in the state of Illinois and a top school system in the country. Author Jim Collins has said that "good is the enemy of great" - and in the context of public schools, that means that being good can lead to a culture of "being good enough." That culture does not serve all students well. I share the board's vision of moving District 59 from good to greatness. I will team with the board and community to accomplish this goal. This will require honesty about what we are doing well and what we must do better. I believe that District 59 has the will and the capacity to be a great district, and as superintendent, I will work to make that vision a reality, always placing what is best for students at the heart of every decision.

CULMINATION OF THE PLAN

Although the superintendent will engage the board in ongoing dialogue throughout the entry plan calendar, a report to the board of education will be provided by the superintendent once the entry plan is complete. The report will include a summary outlining findings and proposed plans at the second board/superintendent retreat in January. This will enable the board/superintendent team to create, revise, and/or adjust the direction of the district and modify the individual and district goals in the superintendent's evaluation.