

The Superintendent's 6-Month Entry Plan

Edited by

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The new Superintendent has an immediate and moral charge to look, listen, and learn about the entire district. This outline serves as the entry plan for Superintendent's first six months, including meetings with other school administrators, supervisors, board members, and community leaders. **The Superintendent will revise the Plan based on feedback from a listening tour.** This Plan will address the district's challenges, opportunities, and the focus is on student achievement.

Organization of District Leadership. The Superintendent will always focus on accelerating student achievement and will do the following:

1. **Build on a Strong Foundation: When developing the entry plan, use an agreed-upon** (Board and Superintendent) operational and teaching/learning framework to guide and prioritize the goals, activities, and measures. This framework can be customized based on the current district-wide Strategic Plan and initial board priorities. Review pre-existing goals (strategic plans, board goals, core. Build on and celebrate the excellent work underway. Be Strategic about the need to see and in what order. Be intentional and purposeful in the timing of events and conversations with specific groups and individuals.
2. **Ask the Board for access to the Superintendent Search documents** used to establish the specifications to select the finalists. This document will likely include results of focus groups of staff, students, parents, community and provide input on the priorities for the district and the new Superintendent.
3. **Co-Design the Entry Plan: Work out the design of the Entry Plan jointly with the school board, cabinet, and stakeholders.** The Plan becomes particularly important in identifying leaders from within the community to be visited. The Superintendent does not want to come back to the Board with the Plan only to have the Board saying, "You did not talk to the right people."
4. **Give it Legs: Build the Plan into the evaluation. Be in alignment with the Board, individually and collectively, on the goals of the entry plan.** How is the Board involved? How is this Plan may contribute to the evaluation? Set a target of November 1 to have goals for the evaluation.
5. **Set Timelines with Caveats. Local conditions vary – as a result, the agreed-upon timeframe (100 days, six months, one year, 18 months) may need to be adjusted** based on conditions that support or inhibit completing the Plan and collecting accurate data. For example, some superintendents indicated that conditions related to COVID19 impacted the ability to complete the Plan on time and may have impacted the accuracy of data collected from respondents compared to "typical or normal" conditions.
6. **Communicate progress Regularly: It is the responsibility of the Superintendent to keep the Board of directors and community informed of progress** during the entry plan experience. **Developing a calendar of entry plan updates/reports to the Board, a**

check-off system posted on the website, and calendared phases support the Superintendent in being accountable to the Plan and community. Trust is built one building block at a time. "Keep doing what you said you would do."

7. **Get feedback from multiple stakeholders.** Retired Superintendents, trusted colleagues, or "critical friends" for feedback in developing the Plan. Develop a public 'guiding coalition' of key stakeholders to give feedback along the way.
8. **Set Targets:** Use tools like a "Thought Exchange" to invite feedback on your initial plans. Invite people into the thinking and communicate progress. The advice and feedback contribute to a more comprehensive plan with measurable data-based outcomes.
9. **Formalize it:** Aim for board approval of the draft plan by November. Use the entry plan design/experience to develop relationship-building and trust with the Board of directors. The Plan will set initial and long-term shared objectives and goals and define superintendent/board roles and responsibilities.
10. **The entry plan is a roadmap to the daily calendar of events** contributed to connecting/relationship building with the community and beginning the development of coalitions. Report out regularly on social media regarding the visibility in implementing the Plan.
11. **Celebrate Success:** When speaking anywhere, formally, or informally, celebrate the successes. Unless hired to correct specific problems, take the high road. Celebrate strengths and be cautious about weaknesses. Every program represents blood, sweat, and tears by many in the district. Never speak ill of the past efforts of the former Superintendent, community members, or association leadership.
12. **Share the Heart:** Why am I here? What is the overlap between my big WHY and the District's? Everyone wants to know what makes me tick. No, I do not have all the answers yet, but I am hired for a purpose. Use the three P's everywhere I go: **People** here are the lifeblood of what we do. "I am listening and learning." **Plans:** "I am developing key goals with the Board and other stakeholders." **Purpose:** I am here to help kids – each and every child.
13. **When speaking anywhere, formally or informally, never speak ill** of the past efforts of the former superintendents, community members, or association leadership. Likewise, avoid negative comments about a previous school district.
14. **Listen carefully. Accept everything, Believe Nothing.** A new Superintendent will be a lightning rod for people with personal agendas, gripes, and vendettas. These issues are vital to the individuals, but a new Superintendent is a potentially vulnerable listener. A new Superintendent must learn quickly who lies, cheats, or steals!
15. **Be aware that the new superintendent will be lobbied** to re-open shuttered schools, reinstate a popular coach, and to revisit countless decisions made by their predecessors. For example, a new superintendent was told about a horrific event that might merit their immediate attention. When asked, "When did this happen?" The answer was "During the Great Depression." Obviously, the new superintendent was in no position to solve that problem!
16. **People generally mean well when** sharing their stories with a new Superintendent, but it is crucial to get "the lay of the land" before launching any plan of action. Not everyone is interested in your success!

17. **An old axiom about the new superintendent in town.** “Those who want something, and need your help, will seek you out quickly.”
18. **Build solid relationships with the Board.** Find out what they think is essential. "I am not the be-all and end-all. I replaced someone and will soon be replaced. I am the "current" Superintendent. Leave it better than I found it. Build the team. Celebrate and build on current successes. I am not the hero, but rather a hero maker. The Board and staff, and community are the heroes. How am I helping them be a success?"

The first 6-months on the job will be critical to setting the tone and direction for the school district. The 6-month timeline will allow the new Superintendent to listen to internal and external stakeholders, evaluate the various programs, and develop relationships.

Modified from the "First 90 Days of the New Superintendent on the Students First site.

The New Superintendent's Plan Rating Form



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The following is a list of activities and a rating format for your " Plan." The rating scale is designed to provide a report on progress made to date on activities intended to help you, as the new superintendent, be successful in school board relations and longevity in the position.

Part 1. Visibility:

- 1.1. The following will help determine the strengths and challenges for the school district: Visit every school and visit as many classrooms as possible in the district.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed
- 1.2 Have "Meet and Greet" scheduled at every site to gather input from staff members.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed
- 1.3 Interview critical stakeholders in civic clubs, city government, and other vital positions in the community. What are the strengths? What are the weaknesses? What are the opportunities? What are the challenges facing the school district?
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed
- 1.4 Listen to parents, teachers, students, administrators, parent-teacher organizations, booster organizations, teacher and support unions, faith-based groups, chamber of commerce, city government, community members, retired school administrators.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed
- 1.5 Visit with students and student groups.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

Part 2. Review Data –

- 2.1 Data will help me understand the current reality of the school district. A review of all student achievement data will be critical in making decisions.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed
- 2.2 Review the financial records, workflow analysis, and internal controls to ensure the district is fiscally responsible.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

2.3 Interview District Administrators - Ask for a debriefing of all administrators in the district. What are their challenges and opportunities?

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

2.4 If not in place, form an administrative team to evaluate the significant areas of the school district. Ask each team member for a detailed report from their respective departments.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

2.5 Equity should include a look at disaggregated data and meetings with historically marginalized stakeholders.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

Part 3. Board Operational Beliefs –

3.1 Learn about the operational beliefs of the Board of Education and how they correlate to the policies they have created.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

3.2 Conduct an internal review to see if our employees follow the policies and regulations appropriately.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

3.3 Set up a meeting with each board member to input all issues and opportunities.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

Part 4. Review Student Programs –

4.1 Review all student programs to understand the functionality and capacity. The internal staff will be the crucial source of information about the perceived success of these programs.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

4.2 Assess every decision to ensure it is in the best interest of students.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

4.3 Positive Board/Superintendent Relations "The quality of your life is the quality of your relationships." Understand the operational beliefs of the Board of Education. How do they correlate with the policies created for the district?

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

4.4 Establish a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, expectations, and systems of mutual accountability.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

Part 5. Meetings with Stakeholders

- 5.1 Develop consistent forms of communication with all board members about weekly emails, newsletters, and calls.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed
- 5.2 Schedule individual meetings with each Board member to begin developing relationships and trust with the Board.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed
- 5.3 Ask the Board of Education to commit time for bonding activities. Help build relationships and trust between the Board and the Superintendent. Schedule a retreat to prioritize and set goals.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed
- 5.4 Work out a strategy with the school board that identifies leaders from within the community.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed
- 5.5 Ensure (or find ways to ensure) that members of the school board and leadership team understand and share similar beliefs.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed
- 5.6 Create a self-evaluation system that informs the board members what your priorities/goals are for the first six months and the first year.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed
- 5.7 Ask for access to the Superintendent Search documents used to establish the specifications used to evaluate candidates. This document includes the results of focus groups of staff, students, parents, and community members. This document may provide the priorities for the district are for Superintendent.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed
- 5.8 When speaking anywhere, formally or informally, never speak ill of the past efforts of the former superintendents, community members, or association leadership. Likewise, avoid negative comments about a previous school
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed
- 5.9 Establish a practice with the school board to channel all questions or concerns from employees, citizens, and students to the superintendent.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

Part 6 Interview Key Stakeholders

6.1 "The Superintendent must maintain unwavering faith that they can and will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties, AND at the same time, have the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be." Identify the key stakeholders: teachers, site principals, parents, students, parent-teacher organizations, central office staff, civic clubs, chamber of commerce, city council, and faith-based groups.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

6.2 Survey the faculty and staff to find out the organization's current reality. This process will be the first step in moving the organization forward.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

6.3 Meet with teachers and the local education association leadership. Listening to these groups will give insight into the critical issues
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

6.4 Meet with students and student groups. Make sure that students have opportunities to be included.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

6.5 Identify the key leaders in the community and set up meetings to hear their concerns and recommendations.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

6.6 Provide open, honest communication and positive relationships.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

Part 7. Review Current Data and Evaluate Programs

7.1 "True genius resides in the capacity for evaluation of uncertain, hazardous, and conflicting information." Utilize financial and personnel data to understand the current reality of the district.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

7.2 Review all financial records and financial procedures. Review the ending fund balance to determine stability
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

7.3 Ensure the district staff follows state law and board policy in hiring, purchasing, and competitive bidding. Review all bond funds to ensure that funds are on the projects advertised in the previous bond issues.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

7.4 Review the internal controls to ensure the district is being fiscally responsible.
Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

7.5 Review all critical documents such as organizational charts, employee handbooks, and employee negotiated agreements

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

Part 8. Review of Student Achievement and Programs

8.1 "One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results." Review the district strategic plan and the process of its development.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

8.2 Review the mission and vision and all student achievement data. Include all instructional data such as curriculum guides, benchmark assessments, and state achievement data.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

8.3 Review the site improvement plans to ensure these are consistent with the mission and vision.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

8.4 Identify those schools/programs that may not be performing to expectations and review to understand the reasons for performance levels.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

8.5 Request the administrative team to analyze programs in their respective areas.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

8.6 Review all student programs and grant-funded projects to understand the functionality, capacity, and the current philosophy of title programs.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

8.7 With the administrative team the perceived successes and challenges of the current student programs.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

Part 9. Review of Technology, Operations, and Support Functions

9.1 "The most serious mistakes are not being made due to wrong answers. The truly dangerous thing is asking the wrong question." Review the support functions: technology services, transportation services, child nutrition, custodial, and maintenance services.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

9.2 Request the team members in the support areas to review programs in their respective departments.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

9.3 Review the infrastructure of the technology services. Analyze the number of computers-to-student ratios and where the computers are accessible to students.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

9.4 Review the effort for using technology as a tool in the classroom. Do teachers receive appropriate professional development for technology? Do teachers receive the proper hardware and software for classroom use?

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

9.5 Review the process of technology usefulness at all levels of the district. Analyze the outcomes from these efforts.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

9.6 Review transportation services to ensure safety and student needs.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

9.7 Analyze how child nutrition needs. Have federal school lunch regulations been followed? Identify how maintenance and custodial services are across the district?

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

Part 10. Balance Family and Work Activities

10.1 "Happiness depends more on the inward disposition of mind than on outward circumstances." Eat a healthy diet every day and set aside time daily for exercise to maintain a healthy body.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

10.2 Make time for my family. Take time to enjoy my hobbies to refresh myself each week.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

Part 11. Report on the Progress of the 6-month Plan.

11.1 Create a format that conveys progress made for each goal of the six-month Plan.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

11.2 Create a set of suggestions and recommendations, based on the visits, listening, and analyzed data, that relate to each original goal, as well as other goals, if needed.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

11.3 Create a plan to communicate suggestions and recommendations. Include what was said and progress made.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

11.4 Repeat the process of visiting, listening, and analyzing data for the next six months, the following year, and three years ahead.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

11.5 Finally, avoid surprising the school board. Anticipate issues and opportunities, Be inspirational in working with others, and be visible in the classroom, at school events, and in the community.

Not Started 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Completed

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