

Entry Plan

Superintendent James Everett, Ed.D.
2018-19 Meridian School District
Developed April, 2018



Rationale

An entry plan is a purposeful means in which one comes to understand the essential principles and culture of an organization. Entry plans provide a roadmap for all stakeholders to understand the areas being examined and the goals of the process. It is extremely important to gather as much information as possible through being present and accessible, meeting with students, parents, community partners, and staff members, reviewing data, and listening – while concurrently leading the district. This entry plan is Dr. James Everett’s pledge to listen and learn as he leads the Meridian School District.

Introduction

Dr. James Everett is honored to rejoin Meridian School District. It is his mission to serve the students, parents, staff, and community partners of the Meridian family to ensure the quality and integrity of the programs and opportunities provided are exceptional for all students. Meridian School District has demonstrated outstanding potential to exceed expectations, foster excellence and empower students to pursue their passions to be strong contributors to our community and beyond. Dr. Everett is motivated and encouraged to gather critical personnel, systems, and program information; establish strong community presence and relationships; assess the district’s readiness to grow from multiple perspectives, identify challenges and foster opportunities for increased collective impact to achieve excellence.

Entry Plan Purpose

- Develop and strengthen the governance team Board-Superintendent relationship;
- Strengthen family and community engagement in our schools;
- Foster positive relationships and cultivate a student-centered culture grounded in compassion, collaboration, and trust;
- Examine alignment of systems, performance data, and climate to determine the effectiveness of meeting the needs of all students;
- Update the needs, objectives and work priorities of the school district as outlined in the district’s strategic plan for the successful all students; and
- Articulate priorities and develop an action plan based on the themes that surface through the entry plan process.

Activities specified in this plan represent Dr. Everett’s commitment to understanding the Meridian School District’s incredible history, strengths, and challenges while honoring the work of the past. Moving forth, please know that your input is both welcomed and desired. There are several opportunities to become involved in this plan. Dr. Everett will share the findings, so all may fully understand the important work in front of us. This information will inform the development of strategies to build a responsive, supportive, world-class district for all students, where achievement is increased, gaps are closed, communication is frequent, and every student experiences success.

Special consideration has been given to include a variety of stakeholders in this plan and voices that may not be heard through traditional forms of communication.

The stakeholders mentioned in this plan do not comprise a comprehensive list of all community organizations. If a district stakeholder group was inadvertently omitted, please contact the district office at (360) 398-7111.

Transition Goals

1. Foster a smooth and successful transition of leadership while building relationships with stakeholder groups in support of student achievement.
2. Increase personal knowledge and understanding of the Meridian School District and community including its culture, traditions, and history.
3. Ensure multiple perspectives and voices are heard with respect to the strengths, challenges, and goals of the Meridian School District.
4. Review organizational structure, climate, and key work priorities to ensure alignment of resources, efficiency, and effectiveness in meeting the educational needs of all students.
5. Determine concerns and issues regarding improving children's performance that need to be clearly examined and addressed.
6. Develop transparent and positive communication, access to data and a network of community partnerships to include local officials, state legislators, businesses and civic organizations, higher education, cultural, and faith-based leaders.
7. Set clear expectations for the superintendent and others.
8. Use data and feedback gathered to formulate priorities to update the district's strategic plan and develop a plan to accomplish them.

Phase 1:

Pre-Entry, Spring 2018

Activities Designed to Prepare for Seamless Transition into Superintendent Role

- a. 11 Transition days: Present within the Meridian School District;
- b. Attend all MSD Board Meetings;
- c. Host Community Forum in April;
- d. Attend the State Superintendent Conference in May;
- e. Meet with local superintendents in April and May;
- f. Participate in hiring, budgeting, bargaining, and staffing decisions;
- g. Meet with program leaders: District Executive Team, Administrative Teams, Student Leaders, Board Members, Family Engagement, CTE, Special Education, English Language Leaders, Labor leaders, Booster Clubs, PTSAs and others.

Phase 2:

Entry, July 1 – December 31, 2018

Priorities to Ensure a Successful First Year of Superintendent Role

- a. Engage in entry interviews, informal discussions and activities;
- b. Review state & local assessments, as well as Healthy Choice survey results;
- c. Arrange formalized activities to be accessible to staff and community members; and
- d. Engage in the following representative activities to engage students, families, staff and community partners:

Students

Reach out to diverse students through clubs and student groups to meet and discuss various aspects of student programs and culture at the elementary, middle and high school levels;

Examine the results of the past four years of Health Youth Survey Results and discuss them with students;

Invite individual students who have recently graduated, dropped out, or engaged in Running Start to meet and discuss several aspects of Meridian School District programs and culture;

Meet with leaders of student clubs, leadership classes, and ASB officers to discuss various aspects of elementary, middle and high school level programs and culture; and

Develop and conduct an online and hardcopy student survey to solicit input on Meridian School District programs and culture.

Families

Meet with Family Service Coordinator to discuss the history and vision for engaging all students and families as well as supporting Meridian School District staff in communication, outreach, and opportunities to support all students and families equitably;

Work with Family Services Coordinator to identify families and community groups to visit out in the district;

Meet with English Language Learner (ELL) parent groups, Hispanic and Punjabi community leaders;

Establish Parent Roundtable Meetings: Arrange evening meetings once a month to check in, allow parents an opportunity to ask questions about topics they are interested in knowing more about and provide a venue for sharing upcoming district plans and initiatives;

Meet with Meridian Booster Club, Irene Reither Elementary PTA, Meridian Youth Athletic Association, and Meridian FFA Booster Club leaders – attend meetings;

Establish a Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council; and

Develop and conduct an online and hardcopy parent survey to solicit input on Meridian School District programs and culture.

Staff

Arrange afternoon meetings once a month to check in and allow staff members an opportunity to share and ask questions about topics they are interested in knowing more about;

Conduct voluntary interviews with teachers & classified staff at each level – while visiting Irene Reither Elementary, Meridian Middle School, Meridian High School, and MP3 campuses, as well as central office, food service, technology services, and transportation staff:

Interview Questions:

1. Please tell me about yourself, your family, and your goals.
2. What is going well and what do you love about the Meridian School District?
3. What are some challenge areas? What do we need to pay attention to?
4. Who else might it be beneficial to talk to as I work to understand the Meridian School District more fully?

Visit each classroom to watch interactions with students and their teacher, between students and be present among students and staff at each respective school;

Attend two staff meetings at each level prior to December 2018;

Meet with Meridian Education Association (MEA), Meridian Classified Education Association (MCEA) and Public School Employees of Meridian School District (PSE) leadership and building teacher representatives to discuss concerns, issues, priorities, ideas, vision, direction and expectations in support of all students' success; and

Develop and conduct an online and hardcopy staff survey to solicit input on MSD programs and culture.

Community Partners

Dr. Everett will conduct informational meetings with community member partners, policymakers and stakeholders. These meetings will address items Dr. Everett should understand about the Meridian School District and the community, as well as what is working well and what deserves attention – all with an emphasis on future collective partnerships in support of students and families in the Meridian Community.

Higher Education officials from Western Washington University, Northwest Indian College, Whatcom Community College and Bellingham Technical College;

Whatcom County Superintendent's Group and local superintendents, including Northwest Educational Service District (ESD) 189;

Meridian Public Schools Foundation, Dollars for Scholars and Whatcom Community Foundation;

Homeport and Discovery alternative learning programs;

Early Childhood, Head Start, the Opportunity Council, YWCA of Whatcom County, and Northwest Youth Services, Communities in Schools, Big Brothers and Sisters of Whatcom County;

United Way of Whatcom County, Whatcom Family and Community Network, Whatcom County Association of Realtors and Building Industry Association of Whatcom County;

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) leaders from Alcoa, Conoco-Phillips, BP Cherry Point, SPIE;

Whatcom County Council Members, County Executive, and other elected officials;

PeaceHealth Hospital and local health/mental health professionals;

Chiefs of public safety organizations and local emergency response leaders;

Whatcom County Retired Educators Association;

Bellingham Public Library director;

Northwest Career and Technical Academy and the Technology Alliance Group; and

Northwest Economic Development Council.

Phase 3:

Post Entry, January – April 2019

Development of Summary Report and Strategic Plan Updates

Dr. Everett will provide a summary report of observations, key findings, and actions taken in May of 2019 consisting of alignment to and updates for the 2018-2023 District Strategic Plan.

Board Relations

Dr. Everett will meet individually with the School Board of Directors to develop a strong working relationship. He will also meet with the School Board in a work session format in summer 2018 for Board professional development, visioning, and planning.

Data and Document Examination

The superintendent will conduct an examination of performance indicators and examine a wide variety of data sources pertaining to student achievement data to examine trends, accomplishments, and opportunities for improvement. Student outcomes on standardized tests, value-added data, dropout and graduation rates, staff and student attendance rates, truancy, attendance and discipline data, Advanced Placement course enrollment and passing rates, SAT and ACT scores, college-bound rates, and other indicators will be disaggregated by program, ethnicity, and geography, and carefully examined.

Dr. Everett will review all critical documents, the district's organizational chart, employee handbooks, policy and procedure manuals, district and school strategic plans and commissioned studies by outside agencies.

Operating and capital improvement budgets will be closely assessed through the lens of effectiveness and efficiency, along with their alignment to the educational goals of the district and the needs of the children we serve. The current budget development process will be evaluated, as well as how the district is meeting its goals and the service expectations of our community. Given the state's court decision for McCleary and their legislative fixes, considerable attention will be paid to the bargaining process for the Meridian Education Association, Meridian Classified Education Association, Meridian Administrator Team, and Exempt staff. Levy and bond status will also be examined closely.

Conclusion

Dr. Everett, working with administrative staff, teacher leaders, student leaders, and families will analyze the data, experiences, and feedback provided from March to December. This plan provides several opportunities to listen, observe, and engage while concurrently building on an outstanding district with enormous potential. This plan will serve to help the superintendent begin to formulate ideas and frame strategies to improve our school system so that we may increase student achievement for all students while simultaneously closing achievement gaps and ensuring success for every child.

A summary of findings will be presented to all stakeholders in May 2019 identifying observations, findings and next steps with respect to the district's objectives and priorities in the existing District Strategic Plan.

Several of the ideas for this plan came from others, in particular: *"Entry: How to Begin a Leadership Position Successfully,"* by Barry Jentz and Joan Wofford; *"Entry: The Hiring, Start Up and Supervision of Administrators,"* by Barry Jentz, Dan Sheever, Jr., Stephen Fisher; *"Starting Confused: How Leaders Start When They Don't Know Where to Start,"* by Barry Jentz; Dr. Tammy Caldwell's *"Superintendent Entry Plan: Listen. Learn. Lead. Leading Federal Way Public Schools Towards a Bright Future for ALL Students,"* and Dr. Gregory Baker's *"Plan of Entry for Bellingham Public Schools: Listening and Learning to Strengthen Relationships for Student Success."*