

Superintendent's Entry Plan

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Watertown Public Schools



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Purpose of the Superintendent's Entry Plan

- To learn about the Watertown Public Schools and the larger community
- To identify key strengths of the District to be continued
- To identify key issues and challenges that the District faces
- To develop and strengthen working relationships with key members of the school district, town government, and the greater community
- To improve public confidence and trust through open and honest communication while developing positive relationships

Over the past year, the Watertown Public Schools has undergone substantial change. This change is evident in the hiring of a new Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, and a Director of Student Services. Additionally, there has been a reorganization of the roles within the larger administrative team and a new principal has been hired at the Lowell Elementary School with a start date of July 1, 2017. The District is currently in the process of developing a master facilities plan that will have a long-term impact on the future of our school buildings and how we deliver education to our students within them.

Given the amount of change present in the District, a thoughtful and thorough entry plan will ensure that the transition to a new superintendent will sustain the momentum of the District while providing a strong vision and direction for the schools well into the future. It is incumbent upon me to take the necessary time to learn about the system as a whole in order to be a successful leader for the Watertown Public Schools.

My entry plan is designed to provide a comprehensive picture of the Watertown Public Schools, what our strengths and challenges are, and what our best opportunities are for growth in the coming years. As part of this process, I will be interviewing students, staff, parents, and community stakeholders. I will also be conducting school visits where I will observe learning in classrooms, and will be reviewing documentation, policies, and reports to further explore the context of our work.

During the next few months, my main role will be to listen, observe, learn, be present and ask questions. Each time I meet with individuals and groups, the interactions will be focused on five key questions:

- What are the strengths of our school system and our community?
- What are the biggest challenges that we face?
- As we think about our schools in the next 5-10 years, what would be two of your hopes for the schools?

- What must we protect or sustain in our system?
- What are our biggest opportunities for growth?

After a thorough analysis of the data that I collect, I will produce a report of my findings that will form the foundation for development of the District's plan to attain its goals.

The report will be initially presented to the Watertown School Committee at its first meeting in early winter 2018, and will be followed by a presentation to the Town Council. Its contents will also be shared publicly with the community, as one of the key components for the success of our schools is having strong working relationships with town government and broad-based community support for our actions.

Current Vision Statement of the Watertown Public Schools

The Watertown Public Schools promote high achievement through inquiry, problem solving, collaboration, creativity and hard work. We provide students with a robust education so they will acquire, apply, and practice the knowledge and skills needed for life-long learning. All programs support diverse learning styles, civic interaction, global awareness, and personal success.

Current District Goals

- Support high academic achievement
- Foster life-long learning
- Promote local and global citizenship

My Core Values:

- Focus on the instructional core
- Collective responsibility for all students
- District-wide improvement based on collaborative inquiry
- Highly effective communication and promotion of student, school, and district successes
- Facilities that meet the educational needs of the children in Watertown

Specifics of the Entry Plan

Outcome: To determine the core values of the Watertown Public Schools, to celebrate the accomplishments to date, to establish a community presence, and most importantly, to understand and shape the vision for the District moving forward

Stages and Timeline:

- Pre-entry and introductions: (March 13 -July 1): Meeting with school district administration, School Committee members, and town officials; review documents; and attend meetings and events

- Entry (July 1-November 1):
 - Summer:
 - Meet with various groups within the Watertown community
 - Continue to meet with WPS Staff that are available in the summer
 - Attend events in the community
 - Fall:
 - Visit all schools and programs, meet with teachers, students and parents in each building
 - Continue to meet with groups within the community
 - Attend school and community events

- Engagement and Planning (November 2017-April 2018): Analysis of the data, presentation of findings, formation of Strategy Team
 - Use the data gathered to work with a representative team to foster the shared vision for the Watertown Public Schools, to determine the strategies necessary to actualize the vision, to develop yearly strategy-driven action plans, and to set benchmarks and outcomes to ensure the success of the plans

Process

The process that I will follow for my entry plan involves interviewing key stakeholders, faculty, staff, parents and students both individually and in small focus groups; conducting site visits in the schools; reviewing pertinent existing documents; analyzing the data collected; and forming a strategy development and execution team

Interviews

The following individuals and groups will be interviewed as part of the transition plan:

School Department/Students/Parents:

- School Committee Members (individually)
- Central Leadership Team (Assistant Superintendents, Director of Student Services, Director of Human Resources)– individually
- Building Principals, Assistant Headmaster and Assistant Principals (individually)
- Directors/Coordinators – (individually)
- Union president (individually)
- Teachers in each building (both individually and in small groups)
- Students in each building (small groups)
- Instructional Assistants (small groups)
- Central Services staff (individually)
- Administrative Assistants (individually)
- Custodians (both individually and in small groups)
- Community Education personnel (both individually and in small groups)
- Food Service personnel (both individually and in small groups)
- Bus drivers (small groups)
- PTO Presidents (both individually and as a group)
- Site Council Chairpersons (individually)
- Special Education Parent Advisory Council (small group)
- Community Forums in each school (small group)

Government:

- Town Manager
- Assistant Town Manager
- Town Auditor
- Town Councilors
- Police Chief
- Fire Chief
- Town Treasurer
- Town Assessor
- Town Department Heads (Library, Recreation, DPW, etc.)
- Town Councilors (individually)
- State Representatives (individually)
- State Senator (individually)

Community Groups:

- Watertown Educational Foundation
- Watertown Community Foundation
- Watertown Athletic Association
- Watertown Friends of Music
- Clergy Council
- Saheli
- Watertown Rotary
- Wayside Youth and Family Support Center
- Watertown Boys and Girls Club
- Watertown Recreation
- Council on Aging
- Superintendent Coffees
- Local Media (WCATV, Watertown Tab, Watertown News)
- Other Community Leaders

School Visits and Classroom Observations

During the first two weeks of school, I will visit each of the school buildings, including the integrated preschool, for the purpose of acquainting myself with the staff and the building's operations. By the end of the last week of September, I will spend a day in each school visiting classrooms and interviewing staff and students while getting an overall sense of the culture of the school. A follow-up visit to each school will be scheduled in October with each principal to visit classrooms with each of them.

Document Review

- School Improvement Plans
- School Committee Meeting agendas, minutes and accompanying documents
- District Evaluation Documents
- District Professional Development Plan
- District Induction Plan
- School Report Cards
- District/School PARCC, MCAS, AP and SAT Analysis
- District Curriculum Accommodation Plan
- Coordinated Program Review
- School Safety Plans and Emergency Response Protocols
- Survey Data (TELL Mass Survey, NEASC Self-Study, Superintendent Focus Group Survey)
- Superintendent Search Focus Group Report

- Collective Bargaining Agreements
- Budget Documents (FY17 and FY18) – School and Town
- Financial Audits
- Grants
- Policy Manual
- Administrator Job Descriptions and Evaluations
- Curriculum Guides
- School Handbooks
- Curriculum Brochures
- Annual Town Reports

Data Analysis

Throughout the entry plan process, I will collect data from the aforementioned sources on the five key questions:

- What are the strengths of our school system and our community?
- What are the biggest challenges that we currently face?
- As we think about our schools in the next 5-10 years, what would be two your hopes for the schools?
- What must we protect or sustain in our system?
- What are our biggest opportunities for growth?

Through a thorough review of the data that is collected, I will seek out trends and patterns that are reinforced throughout the various data sources. These trends and patterns will form the basis of the report that I will present to the School Committee in January 2018 and will inform the work of the Strategy Team, whose charge will be to develop a three-year District Improvement Plan. This work will take place between November and April, 2018.

Strategy Team

Beginning in November 2018, a standing Strategy Team will be formed to determine a strategy-driven plan to actualize the vision of the Watertown Public Schools. This team will be comprised of various stakeholders within the community who have an in-depth knowledge of the values of the District and the community, a willingness to actively participate in the collective process, and a commitment to seeing the work through to its fruition. In the early stages of the work, the team will meet frequently between the months of November and April 2018. Once the plan has been established, the team will continue to meet quarterly or as needed to ensure the actualization of the plan and to evaluate its effectiveness.

Timeline for the District Strategy Team:

November 2017:

- Team is formed, meets with superintendent to review findings and to assist in identifying patterns and trends

December 2017:

- Strategy team reviews pertinent data and emerging findings from the entry plan process to determine District priorities and identify key issues facing the District.

January 2018:

- Strategy team revisits the District vision and goals to determine alignment with the findings from the entry plan
- Superintendent reports findings from the entry plan to the School Committee
- Superintendent updates the School Committee on the work of the Strategy Team and solicits feedback from the School Committee

February 2018:

- Strategy team determines strategic objectives based on the findings from the entry plan and the District's vision and goals over the next three years and proposes strategies to achieve the objectives.
- Vision, goals and strategic objectives are shared with larger Watertown community for feedback.
- Superintendent updates the School Committee on the proposed strategic objectives and gathers feedback from the School Committee
- Strategic objectives are shared with principals and site councils to be used as basis for School Improvement Plans.

March 2018:

- Strategy team creates year-long action plans that delineate action steps, timelines, necessary resources, specifics of implementation, benchmarks and measures of success to ensure the achievement of the strategic objectives.
- Superintendent provides the School Committee with draft of the District Improvement plan for feedback and recommendations
- Draft strategy plan is shared with larger Watertown community for feedback.

April 2018:

- 2019-2021 District Improvement Plan will be presented to the School Committee for adoption.
- District Improvement Plan will be shared with the Watertown community.

Superintendent's Goal Setting

Part of the entry plan process will be to collaborate with the Watertown School Committee to develop evaluation goals based upon my core values, the Watertown Public Schools Vision and Mission and the short term needs of the District. These goals will be developed during the summer, presented to the School Committee for feedback on August 14 and finalized at the September 11 School Committee meeting. The successful attainment of the goals depends heavily on collaboration among the principals, central administration, and the full District Leadership Team.

Proposed Goals:

Goal 1: Effective Entry and Direction Setting. By early spring, the District will have broad agreement from key stakeholder groups about (a) the District's most critical needs, (b) the strategies and goals that will address them most effectively, and (c) the measures that will be used to assess progress.

Key Actions

1. By mid-August, present to the school committee a written Entry Plan, including (a) types of evidence to be analyzed, (b) stakeholders to be interviewed, (c) methods for assessing instructional practice, and (d) methods for assessing district systems of support including financial management, human resources, and operations.
2. By January, complete and present a report of Entry Findings that (a) synthesizes evidence collected, (b) identifies strengths of the system and the most critical areas for improvement that require further inquiry, and (c) identifies next steps for study.
3. By February, propose key strategies to improve student learning and other district systems of support.
4. By April, collaborate with School Committee and WPS Strategy Team to identify three to five strategic objectives focused on district improvement and student learning.
5. Secure stakeholder feedback about engagement, awareness, and commitment to the strategies and goals.

Benchmarks

- Report on the entry findings will be presented to the School Committee in January 2018.
- District Improvement Plan adopted by the School Committee by Spring 2018.
- Results of spring survey of key stakeholder groups demonstrate engagement in the process (85 percent), awareness of the outcomes (75 percent), and agreement (60 percent) with the District Improvement Plan.

Goal 2 (Professional Practice): New Superintendent Induction Program. Develop skills in strategy development, data analysis, and instructional leadership by completing the first year of the New Superintendent Induction Program and earning at least *Proficient* ratings on each major assignment.

Key Actions

1. Attend eight daylong sessions.
2. Complete all assignments.
3. Consult with my assigned coach at least monthly.
4. Utilize the NSIP guidelines for developing a district strategy while creating the Watertown District Improvement Plan

Benchmarks

- Calendar documents attendance and contact with coach.
- Rubric rating on each assignment for the NSIP program demonstrates proficiency.
- District Improvement Plan is developed by April 2018.
- District leadership team shares the vision for the school district and commits to the necessary steps to achieve and sustain the vision.

Goal 3 (District Improvement): Fair and Effective Administrator Evaluation. Through the administrator's evaluation process, I, along with principals and other district leaders, will ensure that meaningful progress is made on critical district and school improvement goals.

Key Actions

1. Within six weeks, complete with all principals and district administrators Step 1 (Self-Assessment) and Step 2 (Goal Setting and Educator Plan Development) of the Administrator Evaluation process.
2. By end of February, complete Formative Evaluation conferences with each principal and the district administrators the superintendent supervises.
3. By late spring, conduct at least three 3-hour visits to each school with the principal to determine progress towards the administrator's goal attainment and the implementation of the School Improvement Plan.
4. By June 30, complete the summative evaluation process for principals and District administrators and assess outcomes based on the 2017/2018 School and/or District Improvement Plan.

Benchmarks

- Completed Administrator Evaluation Plans.
- Log demonstrating at least three visits per school.
- Analysis of Summative Evaluation Reports demonstrates “meets” or “exceeds” rating on 75 percent of principal and district administrator goals with ratings being based on accumulated data collection and observation.

Goal 4 (Student Learning): Fair, Effective Classroom Teacher Evaluation. By June, principals’ and district administrators’ ratings of classroom instruction will reflect a shared understanding of what classroom instruction entails when it is being done at the *Proficient* level.

Key Actions

1. Monitor the frequency of principal visits to classrooms and review the quality of their feedback to teachers.
2. During school visits, observe classrooms with the principal and share conclusions about the level of practice observed in order to promote consistent evaluations across the District.
3. Devote time at five leadership team meetings to viewing digital recordings of teaching and sharing conclusions about the level of practice observed.
4. Conduct five learning walks with the larger District Leadership Team, one in each of the schools to ensure interrater reliability.

Benchmarks

- January administrator ratings of selected digital recordings of classroom instruction are comparable.
- District Leadership Team provides feedback to teachers in a consistent manner. Feedback will be based on claims focused on student learning, evidence to support the claim, and the resulting impact on student learning.

Goal 5 (District Improvement): Implement a District-Wide Communication Plan

By June 2018, develop and begin implementation of a district-wide communication plan to enhance public perception of the Watertown Public Schools.

Key Actions

1. By October 2017, form a District Marketing Team comprised of people with a background in marketing and a connection with the schools.

2. Determine a strategy for the effective use of social media, including timelines and content curation guidelines.
3. Update and make improvements to the existing website for better access and navigation.
4. Develop a Watertown High School public relations campaign, emphasizing the opportunities that the high school provides for incoming freshmen.
5. Continue holding Superintendent's Coffee Hours once a month through June 2018.
6. Provide updates to school community on pertinent issues that impact families in the District in a timely fashion.

Benchmarks

- Marketing team meets four times during the year and creates a marketing plan for the District.
- Website provides a more user-friendly interface and provides current content for end users.
- Grade 8 students have a better understanding of the opportunities available at the high school, increasing the number of students who choose to attend Watertown High School.

Goal 6 (District Improvement): Building for the Future Elementary Project. In conjunction with the School Committee and the soon-to-be formed Building Committee, identify by May 2018 a preferred schematic design option for the elementary school building project which takes into account the educational needs of our current and future students.

Key Actions

1. OPM and Designer Selection Team procures the Owner's Project Manager and designer services for the preliminary and schematic design process by early October 2017.
2. Assist in the creation of a representative Building Committee comprised school, town and community members by November 2017.
3. Conduct school-based meetings with teachers, parents and community members in each of the elementary schools to determine the educational vision for the school, March-May 2018.
4. Determine the preferred building design option at each elementary school by May, 2018.

Benchmarks:

- Building committee is formed by October 2017.

- Educational visioning meetings are held in each of the elementary schools by May 2018.
- Preferred design options are identified by May 2018.

Goal 7 (Student Learning): Increase student achievement for all students in the Watertown Public Schools. Working with WPS faculty, staff, and administrators, continue to narrow the achievement gap and increase all overall student achievement as measured by available standardized and local assessments.

Key Actions:

1. Strengthen literacy and math instruction at the elementary level.
2. Incorporate authentic learning opportunities for students at the secondary level.
3. Foster and support inclusive practices, including co-teaching, at all levels.
4. Select a universal screening assessment along with ongoing progress monitoring tools for students in grades K-9 in order to provide teachers with ongoing responsive data to inform instruction.
5. Increase PSAT and SAT participation rates for students in grades 10 and 11.
6. Increase AP participation rates and increase the numbers of students achieving a 3 or better on the AP exams by 5 percent.
7. Develop an articulated multi-tiered system of support for both academic and social/emotional learning.

Benchmarks:

- The number of students scoring in the advanced and/or proficient categories in both reading and math will increase by 5 percent as evidenced by the 2018 MCAS results both in the aggregate and at the subgroup level.
- Authentic learning opportunities which include inquiry-based and project-based learning will be provided to students across the grades and disciplines at Watertown Middle School.
- Special education students in co-taught or inclusion classes will achieve greater than predicted achievement on both local and standardized assessments.
- The District will have a plan for implementing a multi-tiered system of support for the 2018/2019 school year.

Goal 8 (District Improvement): Watertown Public Schools District Improvement Plan. Develop and execute a three-year District Improvement Plan that articulates the District's vision, goals, strategic objectives, action plans and intended outcomes by April 2018.

Key Actions:

1. Review pertinent data and emerging findings from the entry plan process with the Strategy Team to determine District priorities and identify key issues facing the District.
2. Revisit the Watertown Public Schools vision and goals to determine alignment with the findings from the entry plan.
3. Along with the Strategy Team, determine strategic objectives based on the findings from the entry plan and the District's vision and goals over the next three years and proposes strategies to achieve the objectives.
4. Update and collaborate with the School Committee on the District Improvement Plan development process for feedback and recommendations.
5. Share strategic objectives with principals and site councils to be used as basis for School Improvement Plans.
6. Along with Strategy team, create year-long action plans that delineate action steps, timelines, necessary resources, specifics of implementation, benchmarks and measures of success to ensure the achievement of the strategic objectives.
7. Embed measurable outcomes in the District Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plans and prepare an end-of-the-year analysis for the community that describes the District's progress on the outcomes.

Benchmarks:

- 2019-2021 District Improvement Plan will be presented to the School Committee for adoption in April 2018.
- District Improvement Plan will be shared with the Watertown community in Spring 2018.
- School Improvement Plans are aligned with the District Improvement Plan and reflect the overall district strategy for increasing outcomes for WPS students.