

SUPERINTENDENT FRED MCDOWELL

90 DAY ENTRY PLAN





February 1, 2021

Dear Collingswood School Community:

I am truly honored to have the opportunity to serve as your Superintendent while furthering the goals of the community and the Board. The mission of Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools is to inspire confidence, critical thinking, creativity, and perseverance. I am excited at the opportunity to work closely with educators, students, families, and community stakeholders to focus on developing lifelong learners by providing an inspiring and challenging education for **every student**. There have been significant strides on behalf of the Collingswood and Oaklyn school community, and I will continue to build upon the strong foundation previously established.

I believe that it is important to share the vision and beliefs that drive my leadership. These beliefs have guided my career and are the foundation for my 90 Day Entry Plan into the Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools. We are fortunate to be members of a diverse community and must leverage this as a strength while **embracing equity** and providing necessary support to all students. The most important aspect of our work takes place in the classroom and must prioritize **high-quality instruction** that is culturally responsive. The Collingswood and Oaklyn school community has already demonstrated its dedication to the students and **collaboration** is a critical lever to ensure relationships are built on trust, common purpose, and high expectations. Given the diverse needs of students it is also important that we use data to learn from our successes and challenges while promoting a culture of **continuous improvement**.

Creating and sustaining an excellent school system is central to the long-term success of our community. This past year has been challenging as we work together to keep our school community safe during COVID-19. The work ahead will require that we think differently about school, and how we prioritize academic excellence, creativity, problem-solving, and social emotional growth. It is also important that we have open and honest conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion. I am committed to fostering a robust learning environment that strives to do what's best for all children.

To truly grow and build a stronger Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools, I believe that the following questions will need to be answered by our school community stakeholders during this 90 Day Entry Plan:

- How close is Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools to achieving its vision?
- Will we get there following our current path?
- Are we satisfied with the outcomes we have achieved thus far? If not, what changes are needed?
- How can we make them as quickly and efficiently as possible?
- How do we demonstrate our commitment to put the needs of all students first?

By answering these guiding questions openly and honestly, we can improve our district in a way that is worthy of our children and allows each student to meet and exceed our expectations. Due to the uncertainty of the times and the realities of social distancing, we will need to be flexible in the way we engage the community. However, I want you to know that listening and learning is central to my work with you as a school community. There will be multiple opportunities for us to connect and I look forward to those encounters. The outcome will be to present key findings and opportunities to accelerate our progress towards achieving our vision.

Thank for this amazing opportunity and I look forward to getting started.

Sincerely,

Dr. Fredrick H. McDowell Jr.



February 1, 2021

Dear Oaklyn School Community:

I am truly honored to have the opportunity to serve as your Superintendent while furthering the goals of the community and the Board. The mission of Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools is to inspire confidence, critical thinking, creativity, and perseverance. I am excited at the opportunity to work closely with educators, students, families, and community stakeholders to focus on developing lifelong learners by providing an inspiring and challenging education for **every student**. There have been significant strides on behalf of the Collingswood and Oaklyn school community, and I will continue to build upon the strong foundation previously established.

I believe that it is important to share the vision and beliefs that drive my leadership. These beliefs have guided my career and are the foundation for my 90 Day Entry Plan into the Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools. We are fortunate to be members of a diverse community and must leverage this as a strength while **embracing equity** and providing necessary support to all students. The most important aspect of our work takes place in the classroom and must prioritize **high-quality instruction** that is culturally responsive. The Collingswood and Oaklyn school community has already demonstrated its dedication to the students and **collaboration** is a critical lever to ensure relationships are built on trust, common purpose, and high expectations. Given the diverse needs of students it is also important that we use data to learn from our successes and challenges while promoting a culture of **continuous improvement**.

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By answering these guiding questions openly and honestly, we can improve our district in a way that is worthy of our children and allows each student to meet and exceed our expectations. Due to the uncertainty of the times and the realities of social distancing, we will need to be flexible in the way we engage the community. However, I want you to know that listening and learning is central to my work with you as a school community. There will be multiple opportunities for us to connect and I look forward to those encounters. The outcome will be to present key findings and opportunities to accelerate our progress towards achieving our vision.

Thank for this amazing opportunity and I look forward to getting started.

Sincerely,

Dr. Fredrick H. McDowell Jr.



I am truly honored to serve as your Superintendent while furthering the goals of the community and the Board. My family and I are thrilled to be a part of this vibrant community and I look forward to beginning our work together.

Prior to outlining the entry plan process, I believe that it is important to share the vision and core beliefs that drive my leadership. These beliefs have guided my career as a teacher, principal, and district leader, and are the foundation for my entry to Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools.

Vision

I believe all students have the potential for greatness and therefore it is important to regularly challenge the culture of low expectations. My vision consists of being innovative, yet intentional, while developing systems that allow all students to grow and thrive. It also consists of creating safe and nurturing learning environments where all students are valued and supported as they pursue their dreams.

Equity

I believe our core responsibility is to make sure all students are valued, challenged, and supported based on their strengths and assets. We are fortunate to be members of a diverse community and must leverage this as a strength while preparing students for the future. We must embrace equity and provide the necessary resources and support(s) to ensure all students are able to achieve.

High-Quality Instruction

I believe the most important aspect of our work is what happens in the classroom. We must ensure that teachers have the necessary resources and tools to provide high-quality instruction. Because our teachers have the closest relationship with our students, we must also empower them to adjust instruction to meet the evolving needs of our students during and after COVID-19.

Collaboration

I believe that students, families, schools, and communities must work together closely to achieve their goals. Deep engagement and collaboration built on trust, solution-based problem solving, and productive conflict resolution leads to better outcomes for students. It is vital that each member is valued and willing to work together to move the work forward.

Continuous Improvement

I believe that every solution has an expiration date. Data driven practices allow us to review and reflect on what is working, what needs to be improved, and what comes next. Learning from our successes and challenges is essential when determining the most effective strategies and practices needed to achieve our vision for supporting all students.

My entry plan focuses on learning as much as possible about our schools and community so that we build on our strengths and continue to improve. Because of the pandemic, the engagement process will look different, but focus on the same guiding principles. Listening and learning will help us to refine our goals, align resources, and move forward. The entry plan is designed to lay the groundwork for a strategic action plan that distinguishes itself by:

Supporting People

Learning about the current direction of the district as much as possible to gain insight into its strengths, challenges, and areas of improvement.

Improving Effectiveness and Responsiveness

Learning how the district's initiatives and priorities are being implemented in our schools by our dedicated staff, publicized, and understood in our community.

Solidifying District Priorities

Learning about the values, norms, and expectations of the community and how the district's initiatives are prioritized. Reduce "priority overload" and focus on strategies determined to have the greatest impact on student outcomes.

Organizing Departments and Resources

Learning about district investments and resources allocated based on student needs. Using a transparent and reciprocal process to leverage the strengths of the district. Accelerating student progress by supporting the efforts of our educators and reinforcing positive school culture.

Objectives

To prepare for these goals, I will:

Listen

Engage with students, parents, teachers, principals, support staff, community leaders, elected officials, business leaders, philanthropists, activists, and media outlets to hear their perspectives on Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools and what it might take to improve all schools

Share

Present my leadership story, educational philosophy, and guiding principles. This will help others understand what drives me to help young people succeed. It also gives others the freedom to bring their passion to this work to raise expectations for all Collingswood, Oaklyn, and Woodlynne students

Study

Review the history of the Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools and collect data on all schools, student performance, demographic needs, district levels of service, and community feedback.

Partner

Intentionally build relationships with our teachers, school leaders, parents, and community stakeholders to significantly improve our ability to meet the needs of all students.

Plan

Review the current strategic plan and district initiatives to identify priorities, develop action steps for staff, provide guidance to the Board, and prepare for the budget and legislative agendas.

Supporting People: Learning about the current direction of the district as much as possible to gain insight into its strengths, challenges, and areas of improvement.

- Review the Restart and Recovery Plan and solicit feedback from schools
- Convene the Reopening Committee to review pandemic-related protocols and adjust per health officials' guidance
- Schedule one-on-one meetings with all department heads and school leaders
- Visit all schools in Collingswood and Oaklyn to observe instruction, culture, climate, and operational systems
- Visit Woodlynne School District to observe instruction, culture, and climate
- Review the professional development plan and solicit feedback for additional opportunities for professional growth
- Review and evaluate plans for family and community engagement and external relationships
- Review and evaluate plans for staffing, recruitment, and retention
- Review all educator effectiveness, induction, and mentoring programs
- Review all collective bargaining agreements and labor management protocols
- Review organizational traditions, celebrations, and ceremonial activities to understand their meaning and importance

Improving Effectiveness and Responsiveness: Learning how the district's initiatives and priorities are being implemented in our schools by our dedicated staff, publicized, and understood in our community.

- Review the Remote Learning Plan to identify areas in which we can better support families
- Conduct an in-depth review of data systems to analyze academic achievement
- Review the Code of Conduct and relevant climate and culture data
- Review all emergency response plans, protocols, and systems of support
- Review curriculum materials, instructional technology assets, and training
- Review Special Education programs, related services, and contracted services
- Review financial systems/fiscal controls, pertinent audit findings, and grant compliance reports
- Review protocols for Board Meetings and prioritize key preparation tasks
- Review and evaluate plans to support public relations and communication
- Review and evaluate usage of all district communication/social media channels
- Schedule a series of student and teacher focus groups at all schools
- Schedule a series of virtual parent engagement events at all schools
- Schedule a series of virtual stakeholder engagement events

Solidifying District Priorities: Learning about the values, norms, and expectations of the community and how the district's initiatives are prioritized. Reduce "priority overload" and focus on high leverage strategies determined to have the greatest impact on student outcomes.

- Review the District budget, treasury reports, and comprehensive audits
- Review the District Equity Committee action plan, artifacts, and progress reports
- Review the District Strategic Plan, progress reports, and artifacts
- Review all demographic and enrollment studies
- Review long-range facility plans and building utilization reports
- Review 1:1 Chromebook Initiative reports, District technology plans, and infrastructure investments
- Establish advisory groups that meet regularly to advise the Superintendent on key issues
- Meet individually with Collingswood and Oaklyn Board Members to understand the needs of the district
- Meet with all Collingswood and Oaklyn Association Leadership and establish a regular meeting schedule
- Meet with the Collingswood Mayor and Commissioners to establish a regular meeting schedule
- Meet with the Oaklyn Mayor and Council Leadership to establish a regular meeting schedule
- Meet with the Woodlynne Mayor and Council Leadership to establish a regular meeting schedule
- Meet with Camden County Freeholders and establish a regular meeting schedule
- Meet with local law enforcement officials and first responders and establish a regular meeting schedule
- Collaborate with the Board on a retreat to establish shared values, expectations, and targets
- Review the District Communication Plan to promote district priorities, shared values, and progress made

Organizing Departments and Resources: Learning about district investments and resources allocated based on student needs. Using a transparent and reciprocal process to leverage the strengths of the district. Accelerating student progress by supporting the efforts of our educators and reinforcing positive school culture.

- Identify key staff members and external stakeholders to assist with the transition efforts
- Conduct staff focus groups to develop clear understanding of responsibilities, standards, and practices
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment to asset map District and Borough resources that may be underutilized
- Review the Organizational Chart and clarify roles and responsibilities
- Review District office policies and processes for operational efficiency and alignment

Phase 1

Listening and Learning

Feb

2021

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This phase will consist of meetings with district staff, school staff, and community members to discuss current district goals and initiatives to learn about the strengths, challenges, and areas of investment for Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools. It is important to listen and learn from students, parents, district staff, and the community. Diverse perspectives are needed to gain clear understanding of how to move the district forward. I will also establish a Superintendent Transition Committee to assist in this comprehensive district review process.

April

2021

Site visits and instructional walkthroughs will take place at all schools. In addition, significant amounts of data will be reviewed and analyzed as it becomes available to determine whether we are on track to achieve our goals.

Key Questions

1. What should Dr. McDowell know about the Collingswood and Oaklyn school community?
2. What are the strengths of the Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools that should be continued?
3. What are the challenges facing Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools?
4. What are some of the opportunities that Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools needs further exploration and/or development?
5. Is there anything else you want Dr. McDowell to know about Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools or the greater community?

Meetings

One-on-one meetings with:

School Board Members, Elected Officials, District Supervisors, School Leaders, Association Leaders

Meetings with each district office including:

Curriculum & Instruction, Assessment, Special Education Services, Equity, Business Office, Instructional Technology, Communications, Information Systems, Human Resources, Facilities, Professional Learning, Leadership Development, English Learners, Gifted & Talented, School Safety, Information Systems, Performance Management, Family & Community Engagement

Meetings with key stakeholders including:

Teacher Leaders, Teachers, Students, Parents, Parent Teacher Associations, Student Groups, Collingswood Business Partners, Oaklyn Civic Association, Community Organizations, Business Leaders, University Partners, Philanthropic Groups, Education Advocacy Groups, NJ Education Officials

* Meetings are not limited to the individuals or groups listed above. If a stakeholder group is interested in participating, please contact the Superintendent's Office.

Phase 2

Analyzing, Planning, and Reporting

Apr

2021

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May

2021

I will use the data that is gathered during the listening and learning phase to develop a comprehensive summary report and presentation. The summary will outline my findings and observations, while identifying next steps. This information will also serve as a resource to help inform the Board on the district's goals, areas of focus, and long-term system planning. Information from each phase will be shared with Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools staff and published online.

Summarize

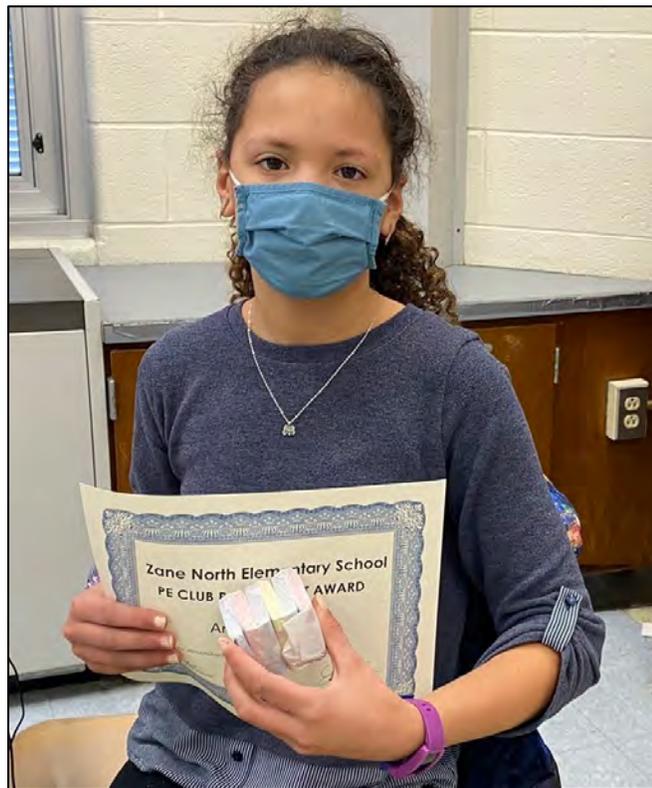
The information gathered will be used to create a detailed summary report. This important resource will help guide the school board, district staff, and instructional staff in strategic thinking and planning to better support schools.

Board Retreat

A work session with the Board will be held to study results of the Listening and Learning Phase

Review & Adjust

At a work session, the Board and I will review and adjust goals, initiatives, and set new priorities.



We are at a unique moment in history for Collingswood and Oaklyn Public Schools, our community, and our nation. This is a time of tremendous challenges and anxiety, but also a time of great opportunities. Now is the time to listen, learn, collaborate, and work together. Now is the time to reach common understandings about the culture of our school community, and how we can work together to achieve our goals. It is my hope that we use this time wisely, to make sure that we are doing everything possible to ensure that every student grows and thrives in our community. As we reflect on our successes, let us also acknowledge our challenges and embrace the future with confidence and purpose. I look forward to meeting you and working together to create an equitable system and bright future for every student.

Fred McDowell, Ed.D.



Source: Collingswood High School Website