



Superintendent's Entry Plan Report

Home of the Spartans

Superintendent Rob Miller
October 22, 2018

Listening, Learning, & Leading

I greatly appreciate the warm welcome I have received from the Bixby Community since starting my tenure as Superintendent of Schools in June. Faculty, staff, parents, community members, and students have been universally gracious and welcoming, which has made my transition to Bixby very smooth. As a new superintendent, I have spent my first four months in Bixby getting to know the district and the community. This process has given me the opportunity to meet with hundreds of people from all stakeholder groups as I sought to see the district from each of their perspectives. While I have gained a great deal of insight into our school community during this time, I am also well aware that there is still much for me to learn.

The design of this entry plan provided me with the opportunity to gather and analyze data from a wide variety of sources. The plan consisted of discussions with key community leaders, school administrators, teachers, parents and students;

classroom observations along with observations of other school activities including grade level meetings, faculty meetings, and professional development programs; and a review of relevant district and school reports, including but not limited to, student performance data, teacher and administrator evaluation reports, school and district improvement plans, and district budget documents. Each of these sources of information provided me with a deeper and more complete understanding of the Bixby School District, as they highlighted those characteristics of the district of which we are proudest, while also providing some insight into those areas where further work would be beneficial.

Over its history, Bixby Public Schools has enjoyed a strong tradition of excellence in academics, athletics, and the arts. Such commitment to excellence comes in part from Bixby's vibrant community spirit, where citizens are proud of their youth and show great support for the district's

programs and educational initiatives. Even with the district's many strengths, this transition of leadership presents an opportunity for positive change and enhancements. At its core, this plan represents my beginning efforts to ensure that quality teaching happens for every child in every classroom, every day.



“The purpose of this entry plan was to listen and learn about the strengths and challenges as a district through a public engagement process in our schools and community.” ~ Rob Miller

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My Entry Plan was based on a series of values that serve as the foundation of my leadership style. These core values will inform and guide my practice during my tenure as superintendent.

- ❖ Children come first
- ❖ Leading by example and valuing people builds trust and positive culture.
- ❖ Parents are our partners.
- ❖ Collaborative leadership and accountability are keys to our success.
- ❖ It takes an entire community to ensure the success of our school district.
- ❖ Successful 21st century leaders embrace technology, manage for innovation, and focus on the future.
- ❖ A systems approach to organizational performance management provides sustainability, agility and continuous improvement.

On the whole, my findings are overwhelmingly positive. Parents, students, teachers, administrators and community leaders give the district high marks relative to student learning, education experiences, athletics, extracurricular programs, positive culture, and caring community. While interviews and observations did identify areas for further inquiry and work, the level of satisfaction and pride in the district was very evident.

Students First

During my listening tour, I consistently heard from community members and families that decisions made by Bixby Public Schools administration and employees are grounded in what is considered the most current best practices to meet the needs of all students.

Strong Partnerships

Developing children who will be fully prepared to be productive, contributing citizens in the 21st century requires close coordination and partnerships with community leaders, businesses, civic groups, and faith-based organizations. We appreciate the support our school district receives from our community in meeting the needs of children which extend beyond providing access to a quality education.

Findings

I have summarized my key findings into six broad categories: (1) Teaching & Learning, (2) Support Structures, (3) Leadership & Culture, (4) Community & Communications, (5) Athletics & Activities, and (6) Facilities & Operations. The source(s) for each observation is included in parenthesis after the item.

Teaching & Learning

- Compared to Oklahoma school districts of similar size and with a similar demographic profile, Bixby students perform exceedingly well on state and national standardized assessments. [Oklahoma State Testing Program (OSTP), ACT, Advanced Placement (AP) data].
- Students are engaged in classroom activities that require thought, creativity, and involvement. (Classroom observations).
- A high percentage of Bixby graduates progress into two- and four-year colleges or technical career credentialing programs. (HS longitudinal data, Annual District Report Card).
- Teachers integrate technology effectively into teaching and learning (PD calendar, teacher presentations at faculty meetings, classroom observations, and evaluation documents).
- Teaching and learning has been enhanced by the integration of technology (classroom observations, teacher evaluations, PD records, and student & parent testimony).
- Teachers pursue professional development both within and outside of school (PD records).
- A highly collaborative environment for teachers and staff is evident (schedule design, PLC meeting observations, BEA Survey, and teacher testimony).
- Curriculum and instruction are aligned with state frameworks (curriculum documentation, classroom observations, teacher testimony).
- Teachers vary their instructional practices to meet the needs of all learners (classroom observations, PD activities, minutes of PLC meetings, evaluation documents).
- Teachers are supportive of one another and district leadership (BEA Survey, teacher

and admin evaluations, observations, parent, and teacher & administrator testimony).

- Bixby has highly qualified, skilled and creative teachers (teacher evaluations, classroom observations, PD records, community feedback, parent, teacher & administrator testimony).



Support Structures

- District and community organizations work to provide students and teachers with necessary resources to enhance student experience (budget development process, PTO, and B.E.E.F grants, documentation of civic volunteer work in schools).
- Teachers have the ability to focus on teaching and are not overly burdened with additional responsibilities (schedule design, teacher responsibilities, BEA Survey Results, Negotiated Contract).
- Teacher assistants are professional and highly qualified individuals who support student learning (Teacher testimony, parent testimony, and classroom observation).
- Special education supports are designed to foster success for all students served on IEPs/504 Accommodation Plans (special education outcomes, parent and teacher testimony).



Leadership & Culture

- Teachers have high expectations for all learners (OSTP Testing Results, parent and teacher testimony).
- Teachers care about all students and make close personal connections with students and families (Bixby Education Association Survey, Beginning of the Year Parent Survey, classroom observations, evaluation documents, and parent and teacher testimony).
- Students feel connected to their teachers and to their school (classroom observations, Beginning of the Year Parent Survey, parent testimony)
- The district has experienced building administrators and district directors (educator evaluation documents, personnel records, parent and teacher testimony).
- The district leadership team has extensive experience and institutional knowledge (direct observation).
- The district has a collaborative and supportive learning culture (master schedule, faculty meeting agendas, PLC documents, PD opportunities).



Community and Communications

- Teachers and service providers communicate and collaborate effectively (Beginning of the Year Parent Survey, parent testimony, and teacher testimony).
- The district enjoys strong relationships with community organizations, including City Hall, Bixby Metro Chamber, Rotary and Optimist's Clubs, Bixby Outreach Center, and numerous faith-based organizations.

- The Bixby community generously supports our teachers and schools (Parent and teacher testimony, BEEF Grants, numerous community donations)



Athletics and Activities

- Nearly 90% of secondary students are involved in one or more athletic, extracurricular, or co-curricular activity (membership data).



- The district has highly competitive athletic programs and award winning music and arts programs.
- The district benefits from high levels of parent and community support of athletics and activities (Booster club financial records, volunteer documentation, parent and teacher testimony).

Facilities and Operations

- Patron support of the 2016 bond issue has allowed for multiple construction projects to be scheduled and/or completed, to include: construction of new band practice facility (2017), completion of Northeast Intermediate School (2018), a classroom addition to the Ninth Grade Center (2018), Track resurfacing and updates (2018), a renovation of district pool (scheduled for Spring 2019), a new classroom addition to the Middle School (scheduled completion July, 2019), new West Elementary and Intermediate School (open August 2020), and future classroom additions at Bixby High School.
- The district is experiencing strong and consistent ad valorem growth (property tax base) which will support future capital investment.
- Despite several years of state revenue failures, the district has been able to manage its personnel staffing and resources effectively while maintaining a stable fund balance.

Summary

As a result of my interviews with community members, parents, students, administrators, teachers and staff, several distinct themes emerged:

What is going well?

- ❖ In general, Bixby students are performing very well academically. This finding is based on results from state and national assessments which reveal Bixby Schools perform well above regional and Oklahoma averages.
- ❖ The district is achieving its goal of preparing students for productive citizenship in the 21st century. Over 92% of Bixby students graduate on time, with nearly 80% progressing to into two-and four-year colleges or technical school credentialing programs.
- ❖ Bixby students have access to high quality athletic programs and extracurricular activities.
- ❖ Bixby has highly qualified, skilled and creative teachers.

- ❖ The district has a well-established, generous, and forward-thinking education foundation (B.E.E.F.)
- ❖ The district has strong community support, as evidenced by high approval rates of local bonds and attendance at school activities.
- ❖ The work of district schools is strongly supported by engaged parents and families, site-level PTOs, booster clubs, and youth athletic programming.
- ❖ Generally speaking, school sites reflect a positive culture and student-centered climate.
- ❖ The district has up-to-date facilities and a positive growth trend in our district tax base.

What could improve?

- ❖ Class sizes, especially at lower grade levels.
- ❖ Support for children who struggle with managing behaviors.
- ❖ Recruitment, training, and retention of high quality teachers and support staff.
- ❖ Facilities maintenance (staffing, project management, custodial services, building maintenance).
- ❖ Technology infrastructure and support of new technology initiatives.
- ❖ Access to career tech programs, AP programming and support of concurrent enrollment.
- ❖ Programming at all grade levels for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

Next steps...

I have valued the opportunities I have had over the past few months to connect with a wide range of community stakeholders. Since the last major update to the district's Strategic Plan occurred several years ago, I believe it is an optimal time to intentionally and systematically engage patrons (community, families, staff, and students) in a process to develop a new, updated Vision and Strategic Framework. The process will begin in November and be completed by June 2019. Please stay tuned as we will share opportunities to be involved in the process via communications from the District Office.