



Medfield Public Schools
Entry Plan Report
2013– 2014

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In July of 2013, I put forth my plan for learning about the Medfield Public Schools as the new Superintendent. Over the past ten months I have had numerous interactions within the schools and community to get a better sense of the district. During the summer of 2013, I set aside eleven (11) full days to meet with staff members. Over 100 staff members took advantage of my offer and a lot of data were collected.

My entry plan had four goals:

1. To develop a general understanding of the school system in a brief period of time including the culture, values, and beliefs which define the Medfield Public Schools.
2. To establish a presence in the District and the community to ensure confidence across all constituencies.
3. To review important issues and the process which has been used to resolve problems including the norms that have been established to problem solve and the decisions which may impact decisions in the future.
4. To develop a list of strategies and to identify current areas for improvement that emerges from the data. This list will be used to work with the School Committee and administration to set priorities and action plans for the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years.

I am pleased to report that all twenty-five (25) objectives and the thirty (30) activities were accomplished during the data collection process. I now have a deeper understanding of this outstanding school district. I am grateful for the time members of the school community gave me during the past months, particularly members of the School Committee, administration, school staff, town and state officials.

This report will review data collection activities, describe major findings from the data analysis and give an overview of the culture, values and areas of improvement that were articulated during the interview process. This report should be viewed as informational document that the school district can use for planning and goal setting during the next few years.

Data Collection and Analysis

Methodology

Information was collected using different methods including formal and informal interviews, meeting observations, document review, and other informal discussion and observation formats.

Data were collected as follows:

Group

School Committee

Leadership Team

Staff

Parents/Community Members

Town/State Officials

Data Collection Methods

Individual Interviews, Meeting Observation, Supt. Search Focus Groups and Formal/Informal Discussions

Individual Interviews and Meetings/Discussions

Individual Interviews and Formal/Informal Discussions

Individual Interviews and Formal/Informal Discussions (also, Lions, MEMO, New-N-Town meetings)

Individual Interviews, Formal/Informal Discussions, and Meeting Observation

An important component of the Entry Plan and the major source of data was the Individual Interview. These interviews typically lasted thirty (30) minutes however; the range was fifteen (15) minutes to one hundred (100) minutes. During the data gathering process over one hundred twenty (120) interviews were conducted from July 2013 to March 2014 . During the process, many interviewees were both staff members and residents. Those that were in this

category were also asked questions from a “citizen perspective” in addition to their staff status. In addition, the results of the focus groups used for the superintendent search were examined.

Major Findings

After reviewing the enormous amount of data, there were several themes that emerged:

1. There is an incredible sense of community pride in the Medfield Public Schools. Citizens and staff are supportive of maintaining and improving an excellent school system. Many parents reported moving to Medfield “just for the schools.”
2. The staff truly enjoys the children and working in Medfield. This was especially apparent to those staff members that have worked in other school districts during the career. Many comments from the secondary schools on how “respectful” Medfield students are to adults and each other.
3. Many staff and parents want a more balanced focus on all schools in the district.
4. There were numerous reports from teachers and parents that Medfield does an outstanding job preparing students for college. Several parents reported their children finding their first year in college less rigorous than their Medfield experience.
5. The community organizations (CSA, MCPE, MMA) and parents are very supportive of the schools.
6. Parents and staff value a leadership model of visibility, effective communication, transparency and approachability.
7. Many staff and parents want a Full Day Kindergarten option in Medfield.
8. Staff is very concerned about the implementation of the new educator evaluation .
9. While there is a general willingness to finance a quality public school system, the low per pupil expenditure is seen by some as a positive and by others a negative.

Areas for Focus and Improvement

The data point to a number of areas that should be the focus and improvements made in the areas. These results outline the major themes that emerged from multiple individuals and through multiple sources. I organized the responses under the appropriate headings, even though some could fall under multiple categories.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development

- Need for a clearly articulated curriculum PreK-12 and the curriculum development process
- Lack of consistent instructional practices and learning experiences between all classrooms and schools
- Need for Full Day Kindergarten
- Use of technology to support instruction and learning in all schools
- A professional development plan that is connected to a districtwide vision
- Professional development that is differentiated by teacher and school
- The structure and schedule of the elementary day need to be examined.
- Clear articulation of the technology initiatives and a plan going forward
- Move away from the “train the trainer” model of professional development

Personnel

- Professional development options for teaching assistants
- Implementation plan for educator evaluation
- The amount of “interim principals” in the past 10 years
- Ongoing teacher training and support
- Declining enrollment

Leadership

- Visibility, accessibility, transparency, communication
- Decision making process
- Leadership team building and mentoring
- District vision/strategic plan/core values vs. building based decisions
- Consistent attention/expectations for all schools

Operations

- Building safety and security
- Cleanliness of buildings
- HS field improvements
- Quality of school lunch program
- Improvement of buildings and grounds appearance
- New Dale Street School?

Resources

- Low per pupil expenditure
- Efficiency of Business Office
- Student information software
- Funds to support technology