

Memorandum

TO: Chairperson and Members
Warren County Schools
FROM: Mary L. Young, Ed.D.
Superintendent
SUBJECT: Entry Plan – First 90 Days (2019-2020)
DATE: August 13, 2019

First, let me say how grateful and fortunate I am to have the opportunity to work with you as we educate and serve the children of Warren County Schools. I appreciate and thank you for your warm welcome and the many insights you and others have already provided over the last month. I am energized by the interests, spirit of support, and partnership already extended by those in the greater Warren community (students, parents, staff, and other stakeholders). I believe we have a strong foundation from which to accelerate learning for those who are underachieving as well as those students who have already experienced success.

Attached is a preliminary outline to guide my initial months in the district. As you will note, this plan involves the following: (1) a period of getting to know and better understand the people, programs, and community cultures represented throughout Warren county; (2) an examination of student performance data and critical barriers and opportunities for academic success, including family involvement, student engagement, teaching quality, financial constraints, and central services support; and (3) an identification of some initial tasks and partnerships that must be aligned for us to communicate and accomplish the work ahead.

I expect that you will provide additional guidance to me as we work together and develop a plan of action, continuing to focus on children and their academic success.

Again, many thanks for your support. I invite and welcome your feedback.

Entry Plan (PRELIMINARY)
Warren County Schools, 2019-2020

The purpose of the Entry Plan is to create an intentional process and a working document for getting to know and better understand the people, programs, partners, and the community cultures that support the Warren County Public Schools. This Entry Plan defines five (5) broad goals and is expected to guide my initial transition over the first 90 days. This document is considered a preliminary draft, subject to modifications based on input/feedback from School Committee and other key stakeholders.

Goals

1. To develop a working partnership with the Warren County School District stakeholders.
2. To develop a Transition Strategy and to get to know the people, programs, and partnerships that represent the diverse voices and constituents within the school district as quickly and fully as possible.
3. To examine the critical issues that represent barriers and opportunities to accelerate academic performance; to familiarize myself with the academic, operations, and support services that currently exist to address these barriers and opportunities, including fiscal and capital/facility resources.
4. To develop a set of initial priorities and a strategic plan (with both short-term and long-term strategies) that will ensure the district's ability to meet its responsibility of improving academic performance, increasing graduation rates, and closing achievement gaps in performance.
5. To improve the flow of information and communications internally and externally to ensure that staff and the community have accurate, timely information around district goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes.

Entry Plan Process

Three (3) mediums of engagement will be used to gather information during the initial phase:

1. Interviews and Feedback Sessions
2. Data and Document Review
3. School Visits and Community Outreach

1. Selected Interviews and Feedback Sessions

Interviews will be conducted with key staff, stakeholders, and community groups whose history, position, or work directly impact, influence, or interact with the district's work. In addition, Formal and Informal Feedback Sessions with selected partners or community stakeholders will offer a context for understanding on-going district initiatives and future implementation challenges. Examples of conversations planned or undertaken with stakeholders include:

- WCPS Executive Leadership Team and Central Office Staff
- Principals and Administrators
- School Committee Members
- Mayor Walter M. Gardner, Jr.
- Parents and Families (e.g., School Site Councils/Parent Councils)
- Teachers
- Students (e.g., Student Advisory Council)

- City and State Agencies and Partners (e.g., Public Health Commission, Department of Education, Department of Youth Services, Sheriff/Chief of Police)
- WCPS External Partners and Funders
- County Commissioners and Legislative Delegation
- Print and Electronic Media
- Native American Community
- Higher Education Partners
- Community- and Faith-Based Groups
- Business Leaders

2. Data and Document Review

Over the last decade, a number of significant documents and reports have been generated that offer a historical perspective on the district's past accomplishments as well as future challenges. Among the data and documents reviewed will be:

- a. Past and current graduation and performance data, accountability reviews, demographic summaries, recruitment and staffing profiles, budget and fiscal (limitations and opportunities) documents.
- b. External reviews and reports.
- c. Accountability documents related to the past Superintendent's Performance Review Process, including goals and specific measures and indicators.

3. District Site Visits

Warren County Schools serves approximately 2,000 students in 7 school settings (pre-kindergarten through grade 12). In my first two days, I visited every school and held a conference with each principal. In addition, I met the staff of five of the seven schools when teachers returned for the SY19-20. Weekly visits will be made to school sites throughout the school year. Lastly, I met with the staff at Hawkins, Transportation and Maintenance.

Community Outreach

To accommodate and provide access to all citizens, a series of community forums will be convened in various neighborhoods in the county. These, combined with the Superintendent's presence at community-organized events, will offer helpful insights about the community and the best ways for reaching a wider and more diverse segment of the population.

Transition Strategy

Individuals selected to work with the Superintendent on various transition tasks will be knowledgeable about the history, community, and the progress of work. They will assist in identifying issues, contacts, and special challenges to the entry plan process. Special populations and those who might have been traditionally under-represented will be contacted to ensure that a broad range of voices are represented. The transition work may also be assisted by advisors who will assist with information and data about specific topics, including academic and operational issues. The Transition Strategy will inform the Superintendent's findings and recommendations for future work.

Timeline and Conclusion

This Entry Plan will provide time and opportunity to complete a comprehensive review of existing programs and services, current student data performance, and the fiscal condition of the district, as well as enrollment trends and projections that may impact growth, facilities, programs, and special services to students. During this process, we will identify and determine key leadership and organizational design needs, and develop a plan of action for supporting school and school district performance and student success. This review will identify what support is available to schools, detail what changes need to be made, and develop a plan that will define the rationale and principles supporting the action steps taken.

Following is a preliminary timeline for the Entry Plan:

- August – October 2019:
 - Interviews and Feedback Sessions, Data and Document Review, and School Visits and Community Outreach.

- November – December 2019:
 - Development of strategic plan and organizational structure.

- January 2020:
 - School Committee receives and gives feedback on preliminary plan. Budget implications developed for 2020-2021.

- February – March 2020:
 - Development of strategic plan and organizational structure.
 - Communication to internal and external stakeholders.

- April – June 2020:
 - Develop implementation plan for strategic direction.