

NEWBURYPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SUPERINTENDENT'S ENTRY PLAN
FEBRUARY 3, 2014

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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Learning About Newburyport

Through:

- Inquiry
- Formal Meetings
- Observation
- Participatory Collaboration

Interaction With:

- Staff
- Students
- Municipal Leaders
- Parents
- Community Members
- Community Groups
- Elected Officials

Recurring Theme

**SENSE OF PRIDE IN THE
NEWBURYPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
AND THE BELIEF THAT ALL
CONSTITUENTS ARE COMMITTED TO
THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.**

Superintendent's Entry Plan

IS A GUIDE, FROM WHICH SIMPLE AND COMPLEX ACTION PLANS ARE DEVELOPED AND EXECUTED OVER TIME.

THIS DOCUMENT IS TO BE VIEWED AS FLUID AND MALLEABLE; THE ABILITY TO TWEAK DETAILS AND EVEN WHOLE SECTIONS IS ESSENTIAL TO THE ENTRY PLAN, THE DISTRICT, AND THE SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTINUED SUCCESS AND PROGRESS MOVING FORWARD.

Superintendent's Entry Plan

(SWOT ANALYSIS): IDENTIFY STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS.

VIA INTERVIEWS WITH:

- ✓ **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**
- ✓ **ADMINISTRATORS**
- ✓ **STAFF**
- ✓ **STUDENTS**
- ✓ **PARENTS**
- ✓ **MUNICIPAL LEADERS**
- ✓ **COMMUNITY & BUSINESS LEADERS**

Superintendent's Entry Plan

IN ORDER TO ASCERTAIN AN ACCURATE PICTURE OF CURRENT DISTRICT FUNCTIONS THE SUPERINTENDENT GATHERED DATA REGARDING:

- **THE HISTORY OF THE DISTRICT**
- **PREVIOUS STRATEGIC PLANS**
- **VARIETY OF INTERNAL DOCUMENTS**

Areas of Focus

**IDENTIFIED IN THE MASSACHUSETTS
EDUCATOR EVALUATION SUPERINTENDENT
RUBRIC, THE FOUR AREAS ARE:**

- I. INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP**
- II. MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS**
- III. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
- IV. PROFESSIONAL CULTURE**

Areas of Focus

ADDITIONALLY, THE SUPERINTENDENT WILL ADD TWO MORE AREAS OF FOCUS:

V. GOVERNANCE

VI. FISCAL MANAGEMENT

THESE TWO AREAS WERE ADDED AS DATA SUGGESTS THEY HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE HEALTHY FUNCTIONING OF THE NEWBURYPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

I. Instructional Leadership

STRENGTHS:

✓ **LEADERSHIP TEAM:**

- Works well together
- Committed to becoming a professional and productive team

✓ **DISTRICT LEADERSHIP:**

- Provides a framework and guidance for building teachers and support staff

✓ **BUILDING LEADERS HAVE:**

- Clear goals regarding their staff and students
- Buy-in from staff (varies from building to building)
- Staff committed to improving student achievement
- Detailed curriculum maps that cover all subject areas

I. Instructional Leadership

STRENGTHS CONTINUED:

✓ **TEACHERS:**

- Are at the heart of curriculum development and refinement
- Hold a significant voice in development of standards based units as they relate to the Common Core Standards
- Have flexibility in their instructional practices and in assessments used
- Continued success and cooperation from all parties with implementation of the Educator Evaluation Plan
- Support from the Newburyport Education Foundation (NEF) in the areas of technology and literacy have allowed schools to remain current in some areas
- A staff induction plan that supports new teachers and teachers new to the district

I. Instructional Leadership

GAPS:

✓ **ADMINISTRATORS:**

- Must demonstrate respect for each other & individual roles with a responsibility to each other and the district
- Need to work together to form an effective district leadership team
- Have limited time to implement the Ed Evaluation system as a result of admin staff reduction

✓ **BUILDING LEADERS:**

- Have limited knowledge of other building/district needs
- Staff buy-in to building/district initiatives is variable; more parity needed across buildings/district as a whole

I. Instructional Leadership

GAPS CONTINUED:

✓ **TEACHERS/STAFF:**

- Have limited time to interact with grade level teams/departments for curriculum and assessment development, as well as, discussion of student progress
- Are unclear where special education and “specialized instruction” fit into the curriculum as a whole
- Not all staff have thorough understanding of curriculum
- Have inconsistency in implementation of curriculum
- Gaps in vertical articulation of curriculum in many subject areas; needs development across buildings and district as a whole
- Inflexible scheduling limits opportunities for innovative approaches to academics and staffing

I. Instructional Leadership

GAPS CONTINUED:

✓ TECHNOLOGY:

- There is no long term plan for technology use
- Replacement has not been funded
- A complete technology inventory does not exist for hardware/software
- Skill level assessment of staff and students is unknown
- Support for technology integration is not balanced across the district

I. Instructional Leadership

GAPS CONTINUED:

✓ **NHS:**

- Content areas are understaffed in some areas resulting in large class sizes
- Electives are minimal due to staffing constraints
- There are limited STEM & STEAM opportunities for students
- There are limited career opportunities for students
- The NEASC report will outline areas of focus that will need to be addressed

II. Management & Operations

STRENGTHS:

✓ **STUDENT SAFETY:**

- Building plans, procedures, and routines exist, district-wide
- Includes social, emotional and behavioral needs as a primary focus in each building

✓ **ADMIN, TEACHERS, STAFF:**

- Highly qualified staff employed across the district
- Strong induction program for newly hired staff, the program is highly regarded among mentors and mentees
- Teachers collaborate across all levels in curriculum development, student needs and assessment

✓ **BUILDINGS/GROUNDS:**

- Building projects underway: new PreK-3 Bresnahan School, and renovation of the Nock/Molin Schools

II. Management & Operations

GAPS:

✓ **STUDENT SAFETY:**

- District/building plans, procedures & routines not consistent building to building or across the district
- Protocols for student safety including social, emotional & behavioral needs must be refined and clarified district wide

✓ **PROCEDURES:**

- Hiring process needs to include a provision for demonstration lessons and observation of prospective hires interacting with students
- No comprehensive training program exists for new hires on district initiatives and instructional practices in a timely manner

II. Management & Operations

GAPS CONTINUED:

✓ **PROCEDURES CONTINUED:**

- Concerns of staff and parents around special education instructional practices and special education organization

✓ **SCHEDULING:**

- Staff collaboration time is limited by building schedules and start and end times, as well as, time constraints of the teachers' contract

✓ **ADMINISTRATION:**

- New leadership model will require on-going focus and refinement

III. Family & Community Engagement

STRENGTHS:

✓ **STUDENTS:**

- Parents & families are actively engaged in the Newburyport Public Schools
- Parents/Guardians overwhelmingly report positive experiences and expectations regarding their child(ren) in the Newburyport Public Schools

✓ **DISTRICT & COMMUNITY:**

- Numerous resources exist to support students and families

III. Family & Community Engagement

STRENGTHS CONTINUED:

✓ **DISTRICT & COMMUNITY CONTINUED:**

- NEF-Newburyport Education Foundation is a significant source of revenue and materials, and have donated over \$2.2 million over the last 10 years
- NEF/Business Coalition has had a noteworthy impact in developing collaboration with staff over several grade levels, resulting in partnerships through the Partnership Grants program, internships for teachers with businesses in summer, and Place Based Education (PBE) opportunities

III. Family & Community Engagement

STRENGTHS CONTINUED:

✓ **DISTRICT & COMMUNITY:**

- The Beacon Coalition/Youth Services offer after school and vacation opportunities for students, speakers for the community, and ongoing support to the schools
- Newburyport Learning Enrichment Center, supports those in the community with tutoring, homework help, neighborhood activities
- The Swasey Fund supports professional development and leadership opportunities for teachers over the last 20 years
- Local banks, businesses, and community organizations continue to donate goods, time, or expertise to enhance the educational experience of Newburyport's students

III. Family & Community Engagement

GAPS:

✓ **COMMUNICATIONS:**

- Antiquated website limits communication to parents, staff, students, and the community
- Limited opportunities for parents and community to engage in dialogue regarding direction of the district
- No clear procedure for families seeking district support or resources
- Limited formal process to engage parents and community
- No vehicle for the Superintendent to engage with staff, students, parents or community on a regular basis

IV. Professional Culture

STRENGTHS:

✓ **STAFF:**

- A majority of staff are committed to upholding high standards
- Many staff members participate in extra curricular/community events that directly supports students
- There is a strong sense of pride in the Newburyport Teachers Association
- The School Committee has developed a calendar that allows for on-going professional development

IV. Professional Culture

GAPS:

- ✓ Stakeholders had little to no involvement in the development of the district's Mission Statement
- ✓ Core Ethical Values have yet to be identified
- ✓ The school calendar and early release days that ensure staff professional development continue to be difficult for parents and child care
- ✓ Certain groups of staff (i.e., custodial, secretaries, instructional assistants, School Committee) do not have a plan for on-going professional development
- ✓ Administrative and staff turnover has negatively impacted the culture of the district
- ✓ Limited data regarding evaluation of district culture from all stakeholder groups

V. Governance

STRENGTHS:

✓ School Committee Members:

- Are individually committed to the success of the school district
- Have explored governance models and systems of operations
- Have many years of experience and take their roles seriously
- Role delineation with the Superintendent has been discussed and agreed to in principle

V. Governance

GAPS:

- ✓ The roles of the School Committee and the Superintendent have blurred in the past with School Committee members being involved in the day-to-day operations and personnel decisions
- ✓ Clear role delineation has been agreed upon and needs to consistently be practiced
- ✓ The School Committee has not settled on a model of governance that all members can support
- ✓ Professional development has been limited for School Committee members
- ✓ Participation in professional organizations such as the MA Association of School Committees (MASC) has been limited among members
- ✓ A more positive culture between the School Committee and the schools is needed

VI. Fiscal Management

STRENGTHS:

- ✓ Budget priorities have focused on staffing and maintaining class size
- ✓ Newburyport Public Schools are a *Race to the Top* district
- ✓ The district takes full advantage of grant opportunities
- ✓ The Newburyport Education Foundation has greatly enhanced “Excellence Opportunities” over the last ten years

VI. Fiscal Management

GAPS:

- ✓ Funding limits have caused significant cuts in programs and personnel over the last 10 years
- ✓ There is a current deficit of approximately \$500,000, which may rise or fall dependent on variables in the next 5 months
- ✓ All district surplus funds have been exhausted
- ✓ Unplanned special education placements negatively impact the budget
- ✓ Without intervention or a new budget plan, the district will continue to begin each year with a deficit

VI. Fiscal Management

GAPS CONTINUED:

- ✓ No new staff or educational programs can, or should be, considered until a new solid budget plan is developed and supported
- ✓ The foundation budget must be raised in order to maintain current programs, account for negotiated wage increases, and to be able to build back previous staffing and programmatic cuts
- ✓ Lack of contingency funds impacted past budgets negatively
- ✓ Communication between the Leadership team and the School Committee regarding budget specifics has been lacking and a source of contention in the past

Conclusion

Over the next several months, the Superintendent will work with the Leadership team to vet these findings and to prioritize key areas while continuing to tie them to current areas of focus. These key areas should be explored as part of a long-term strategic plan that results in the development of a realistic number of action plans to be executed over the next five years.

Thank you.