

PALM BEACH COUNTY SCHOOLS



**PBC PUBLIC
PROUD**

Entry Plan

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Building our Future—The First 90 Days

Introduction

The School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC) is a successful urban, suburban, and rural district that has made progress over the last decade but faces many challenges ensuring that all students reach their highest potential. As the new school superintendent, it is critical that I establish a formal entry plan to expedite my understanding of the successes and challenges we face. This listening and learning phase will quickly turn to leading, but establishing a solid understanding of the District is crucial before thinking about the ways to improve.

The following are examples of a few key questions I'll need answered before we begin thinking about a critical path forward:

- How does the Board and community measure success?
- How close is the District to realizing its goals?
- What are the challenges that must be addressed to actualize the vision – both short-term and long-term?
- Do all stakeholders share in the District's path forward?

As the new superintendent, I must address these and many other questions to ensure that SDPBC is on a path toward becoming a world-class district for all students. The information and data collected over these 90 days will become the pillars to the strategic plan. At the end of the 90 days, I will provide a written report to the School Board outlining my findings and ideas about establishing a strategic plan that will help align our work in a cohesive and efficient manner.

Vision Statement

The School District of Palm Beach County envisions a dynamic collaborative multi-cultural community where education and lifelong learning are valued and supported, and all learners reach their highest potential and succeed in the global economy.

Mission Statement

The School Board of Palm Beach County is committed to providing a world-class education with excellence and equity to empower each student to reach his or her highest potential with the most effective staff to foster the knowledge, skills, and ethics required to responsible citizenship and productive careers.

What's great about Palm Beach County Schools?

- Top-performing of all of Florida's largest school districts
- Fully accredited by AdvancED, the world's largest education community using International Standards (third largest school district in the world to receive this distinction)
- We provide exceptional school education and offer gifted education programs
- After School Enrichment Programs for 22,000 students
- District schools offer instruction in several languages including Chinese, French, Italian, Latin, Spanish, and American Sign Language
- Two District schools earned Newsweek's Best High Schools In America 2015 and three earned Washington Post America's Most Challenging High Schools 2015
- Recognized by Education Week as having the eighth-highest graduation rate in the nation
- 11,500 graduates earned more than \$112 million in scholarships (2014). Students were accepted to Florida colleges/universities; Ivy Leagues, including Harvard, Yale, Princeton; Historically Black Colleges and Universities; international institutions, including Oxford; arts schools, including Julliard; six military academies; and numerous others
- 1,200 Business Partners in all industries, including banking, bio-tech, utilities, retail, medical, communication, hospitality, and construction
- 41,357 community volunteers serving students and schools
- 279 award-winning Choice Programs and Career Academies

Choice Programs

- International Baccalaureate (five elementary, four middle, six high schools)
- International Spanish Academy and Dual Language Programs
- Montessori
- Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts
- STEM (Science/Technology/Engineering/Mathematics)

Career Academies

- Aerospace Science/Engineering and Technology (Project Lead the Way)
- Animation/Computer Science/Information Technology
- Biotechnology/Equine/Medical Science/Pre-Veterinary
- Business/Entrepreneurship/Finance/Marketing
- Sports Marketing
- Biomedical Informatics
- Construction/Drafting and Design
- Criminal Justice/Pre-Law
- Culinary Arts/Hospitality and Tourism
- Digital Design/TV and Film Production

- Early Childhood Education
- Environmental Science and Field Research
- Fire Science Academy
- JROTC-Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines
- Leadership Academies
- Multimedia, Music, and Communications

Goals

This entry plan is designed to address the following goals:

1. To ensure an effective, efficient, and orderly transition of leadership, keeping the focus on increased student achievement for all children.
2. To develop a trusting, productive, collaborative relationship with the School Board.
3. To create opportunities for me to listen broadly and deeply to a multitude of stakeholders and gain a comprehensive understanding of all key aspects of the SDPBC including the District culture and teacher morale.
4. To proactively ensure that all voices, not just those who traditionally avail themselves to collaboration with the school system, are heard and engaged in the process of continuous improvement.
5. To identify and execute activities that must happen immediately to ensure an outstanding beginning to the school year.
6. To build excitement and momentum for SDPBC's vision, mission, and future strategic plan, while also establishing the commitment to engage in needed change to ensure a system of continuous improvement.

Outcomes

Expected results of this entry plan include:

- The focus and direction of the SDPBC
- A comprehensive summary of the findings, observations, and key findings from my "listening and learning" activities
- Establishing the foundation of a five-year strategic plan and possible short-term improvement plans for urgent matters and to establish how the School Board and I will address the "big question" about how to engage in systemic reform that ensures we're raising the bar while eliminating achievement gaps

Structure

This Entry Plan encompasses 90 days to engage key stakeholders who will represent a wide range of constituents that include, but are not limited to: students, parents, teachers, principals, senior staff, School Board Members, business community, advocacy groups, civic leaders and organizations, and governmental agencies (the list will expand as School Board Members add other key constituencies). This plan also relies on a series of "pre-entry" activities which include studying the following: School Board Policies, budget, organizational charts, student achievement data, personnel trends, and other key functions.

I. Governance Team: School Board of Palm Beach County School District

In order to ensure that the District has an intense focus on meeting the needs of all children, the Board and I must develop a trusting, positive, collaborative, team-oriented relationship. These relationships must be established with each individual Board member and the Board as a whole. During this Entry Plan phase, I will work with the Board to discuss issues and matters of governance, management, core values and beliefs, structures of their working relationship, and consider issues reform and our approach to the work (Theory of Action).

Pre-Entry

Share Entry Plan with the School Board and senior staff for feedback, suggestions, and guidance.

- Engage in one-on-one meetings with Board members to deepen relationships and broaden perspectives.
- Ask key District employees to provide important information about the District and their work.
- Present the 90-day Entry Plan to the School Board to gain their input.

Entry

- Conduct one-on-one meetings with all Board members to continue to build positive, productive relationships.
- Meet with all union leaders.
- Hold a Board retreat to discuss communication protocols, roles and responsibilities, norms of behavior and interaction, expectations for first year, and agenda setting.

- Meet with the Board Chairman and Board committee chairs to determine how they work in partnership with me and senior staff.
- Collaborate on a performance evaluation process and format with indicators of success to evaluate me for year one.
- Determine the schedule and proposed agendas for Board meetings.
- Collaborate on the next Board retreat to focus on shared values, initiate reflections on organizational structure, and areas of improvement.
- Establish a Board Management Oversight Process.
- Review and/or develop a Constituency Services Process.
- Establish regular meeting times with the Board Chairman for reviewing and constructing agendas (what's working and what the Board would like to change).

II. Organizational Capacity and Alignment: Executive Staff

It is critical that I understand how the organization is currently operating – what's working well and where there are opportunities for improvement. The executive team's primary role is to support the key functions of the District. It is my responsibility that we operate as a highly effective cross-functional team, dedicated to a positive, professional culture focused on service and improving morale. The focus remains on meeting the needs of all students.

Pre-Entry

- Review the current District office structure to determine its alignment on student achievement and maximizing operational efficiency.
- Conduct one-on-one interviews and review resumes and briefing papers with all direct reports and senior staff.

Entry

- Conduct a retreat with senior staff to review department strategic plans, improvement plans, most recent achievement data, balanced scorecards or metric documents, review current or anticipated vacancies in the District office or with school leadership, and discuss leadership team structures, protocols, norms, and practices.

- Determine how communication and decision-making occur with executive team and how it might need to improve. Reestablish meeting norms and protocols designed to focus on increased efficiency and alignment.
- Conduct one-on-one interviews with all department heads in District office, focusing on alignment and execution of key strategies.
- Conduct department reviews to ensure there is alignment and coherence within the current organizational structure.
- Initiate plans to establish key metrics and customer service goals for each department to ensure the performance of District office can be measured.
- Meet with Area Superintendents to assess current data and performance of all schools under their supervision and review their plans for making improvements – particularly for the lowest performing schools.
- Understand the role of District office vs. area offices in terms of supporting students and their performance, and what strategies are in place for those students who are not meeting expectations – are they receiving appropriate and targeted interventions?
- What specific strategies are in place to increase access and equity in our most advanced classes (Honors, Advanced Placement, etc.)?
- What specific methods or initiatives are in place to increase overall SAT scores, National Merit Scholars, and AP/STEM schools?
- How are students identified as Gifted, Special Education, and English Language Learners and what strategies have been identified to improve outcomes for these students?
- Determine how much autonomy and authority principals have in the current organizational structure and establish how much access and opportunity they have in decision-making at the District office.
- Plan a second retreat with senior staff to review accountability plans for all functional units, clarify process and progress toward improvement with strategic plan and District improvement plan, review current and future budget issues, and current organizational structure.
- Ensure all necessary plans and preparations are in place for an outstanding opening of school; establish protocols for assessing effectiveness of the opening of schools (scheduling, transportation, facility preparedness, etc.).
- Review our agreement with the Department of Justice.
- Review and/or develop succession planning and leadership development plans.

III. Student Achievement:

It is the responsibility of every employee to ensure all students graduate from our District ready for college and/or a career. To ensure instruction is occurring at high levels, teachers must have a rigorous K-12 instructional curriculum, pacing guides, unit plans, and systems designed to facilitate optimal learning opportunities. They need tools to monitor student progress, as well as research-based interventions to deploy when the students are not successful. Ensuring all decisions are made using the barometer of: "1) Is it good for children; 2) Is it research-based; and, 3) Is it fiscally sound?" will be emphasized in all discussions.

Pre-Entry

- Analyze patterns in student achievement data and achievement gaps in order to begin assessing the current state of teaching and learning.
- Assess District's expectations for all students' academic success and commitment to meeting the needs of all its diverse learners.

Entry

- Review and/or evaluate the current assessment regiment with the curriculum and instructional staff. Additionally, review the status of infrastructure that handles the demands of online assessments.
- Evaluate what processes are in place to provide the following services: Guidance Counseling, Mental Health, Physiological, and Social Services.
- Meet with District's instructional leadership team to review disaggregated achievement data, instructional program alignment and current goals, and priority action areas for the District.
- Identify chronically under-performing schools and initiate root-cause analysis for why they are not meeting the needs of students; determine a course of corrective action.
- Determine how comprehensive and research-based the current curriculum is and to what degree it is aligned between schools that have high student mobility; assess the fidelity with which the curriculum is used throughout SDPBC.
- Review the teacher evaluation system.
- Review all other employee evaluation systems.
- Review and engage in the academic disparity study that the District has underway.

- Conduct a review of curriculum and programs, especially with student populations currently not meeting with success, such as English Language Learners, Special Education Students, and other subgroups.
- Assess current professional development efforts and capacity for meeting the training needs of principals, teachers, and central District staff; determine the degree to which it is job-embedded, differentiated, and student-achievement directed; do a "deep dive" in determining how much of the budget is devoted to professional development and how and if it is being assessed.
- Evaluate SDPBC efforts toward improving graduation rates for all students with special focus on African American, Hispanic, and children living in poverty.
- Determine what monitoring is used in SDPBC to ensure all students are performing at grade level or are receiving appropriate, targeted interventions (are there risk factor scorecards?).
- Review and/or develop succession planning and leadership development plans.
- Review the procedures to report suspected child abuse.

IV. Engagement and Communications

Public schools require a deep commitment from the entire community to be successful. It is critical that I understand the culture, history, and expectations of the entire community. Working with staff, I will be proactive and deliberate in reaching out to all stakeholders - particularly those who are traditionally under-represented in public engagement - to ensure their voices are included and valued. There will be a focus on establishing openness and transparency in all communication systems and protocols used to communicate both internally and externally. Key questions for all stakeholders may include:

- What are the strengths of SDPBC?
- What opportunities exist to improve SDPBC?
- As the budget remains a challenge for so many districts across Florida - what are the priorities of the District?
- What would you like SDPBC to look like in five years – what does "world-class" mean as a standard in SDPBC?

Pre-Entry

- Call key leaders and introduce myself and begin to build relationships.
- Letters to teachers, staff, and other key constituents.
- Meet with key leaders in consultation with the School Board members.

Entry

- Reach out to a multitude of critical stakeholders and establish routine meetings, communication protocols and reciprocal dialogues, focusing on increasing student achievement and continuous improvement; initiate open, honest, and transparent dialogues with the goal of strengthening and improving strategic partnerships. This would include, but not be limited to:
 - Philanthropy and local funders
 - Elected officials
 - Area legislators and/or representatives—state and national
 - State Board of Education, the Education Commissioner, and the Governor's point person on education
 - Chamber of Commerce officials
 - Heads of teacher, administrator, and other unions
 - Parent organizations and local PTAs
 - University officials
 - Key business leaders and partners
 - Educational or Community Advocacy groups
 - Civic leaders
 - Non-profit groups
 - Faith-based leaders
 - Superintendents
 - Media

- Editorial Boards
- Review and/or develop succession planning and leadership development plans.

School Visits

- I will conduct visits to 50 schools (10 in each of the five geographic areas) meeting with principals, teachers, support staff, and parent volunteers about where we are as a District and where we need to be in order to meet the needs of all children.

Community Forums

- I, along with Board Members and senior staff, will host multiple "town hall" meetings using the Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis model (or other protocols) to gather community input and initiate continuous dialogues about student achievement and improvement. These meetings will occur throughout all areas of the District. There will be proactive efforts to meet with stakeholders who have traditionally not attended such forums.

Media Strategy

- I will meet with leaders of local media outlets, editorial boards, and education reporters—including ethnic and business press. These meetings will set expectations for collaboration that is open, honest, transparent, and accurate. TV, radio, and newspaper reporters will be invited to appropriate community sessions and first day of school events. These meetings will be important to engage the media in current education issues and system improvement efforts. I will work proactively and transparently with the media. If we do not tell our story—others will.

V. Operation and Finance

In order to meet the needs of all students in the SDPBC, it is critical that Operations and Finance are "world class" as well. Understanding the current strengths, strategies, and opportunities for improvement, in light of current budget challenges, will be a critical focus. Each division will be reviewed to determine how they maximize support and services to schools using the continuous improvement model.

Pre-Entry

- Review key District financial materials, budget, most recent audit, and grants.
- Conduct one-on-one meetings with direct reports on budget, operations, and human resources.

Entry

- Request briefing papers from all Directors/Division heads providing an overview of their current area of responsibility, major initiatives under way with projected timelines, and a review of significant or potential problems in each area of responsibility.
- Conduct one-on-one meetings with all office heads, ensuring each division has fidelity to its core function and has a student-focused agenda.
- Review employee contracts, salary schedules, and benefits.
- Review District's financial projections, resource allocation, and budgeting processes; assess how District's budget and budgeting process is aligned to support student achievement.
- Determine what should be centralized and what should be decentralized within the current organizational structure to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and support to schools.
- Conduct one-on-one meetings with District attorneys to review any current legal proceedings or outstanding judgments against the District and to provide a briefing on state education code with particular attention to statutes currently impacting or likely to impact the District.
- Review District's safety, inclement weather, and crisis communication plans.
- Conduct a review of the District's Department of Communications and Engagement. Review the history, services, and outreach to entire community.
- Assess the degree to which all offices are cross-functional and begin to establish key metrics and customer service goals to ensure peak efficiency and support for student achievement.
- Examine the effectiveness of the SDPBC information-data management system, especially around student achievement, budget, and human resources.
- Evaluate what type of technological tools and digital resources are available to teachers and students.
- Review and/or develop succession planning and leadership development plans.

My First Day and First Day of School

My first day in the office will be Monday, June 15, 2015.

That first week, I will meet with union leaders, School Board Members, and other key community members. I will attend the planned “Back-To-School events” and the scheduled new teachers meetings. The rest of the summer will be spent connecting with a variety of stakeholders.

On the first day of school, I will visit a variety of schools throughout the District. This will be an important day to meet with faculty, staff, volunteers, students, and families. I will meet with senior staff to evaluate the quality of opening day/week activities, making any needed adjustments and improvements.

90-100 Days

Once the 90-day listening and learning period has concluded, the findings will be presented to the School Board to garner further feedback and or validation. These findings will be shared at a Board workshop or retreat. Once the areas of focus have been identified, staff and I will begin creating the strategies and initiatives designed to improve the identified areas. Working together throughout this entire process as a governance team, the School Board and I will ensure shared ownership of the work and results. A strategic planning process that includes all stakeholders also ensures the SDPBC strengthens its commitment to a positive, productive culture, which is focused on great results for all students.

Acknowledgments

- Dr. Peter C. Gorman
- Dr. Heath Morrison
- Dr. Tim Quinn
- The Broad Superintendent’s Academy