



# LANCASTER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT ENTRY PLAN

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## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Superintendent entry plan is to establish a set of activities that will guide my transition to the role of Superintendent of the Lancaster Independent School District.

It is my intent to “hit the ground listening and learning.” Throughout the first 180 days the entry plan will be used as a guide so that critical time and attention is focused on collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing information from stakeholders within and outside of the organization. These activities are designed to enable the leadership team to efficiently gather information about the community and the organization; to establish a strong community presence; to assess the organization’s strengths and limitations; to identify critical issues; to build on strengths; and to create a network of contacts and resources that will assist in the work of improving Lancaster Schools and ensuring equity and excellence for all.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The entry plan is designed to guide the listening, learning, and leading process. The entry plan has been organized into three phases:

### Phase I: Listening & Learning

- May 15 – August 14 (1st 90 Days)

### Phase II : Listening, Learning, Leading & Synthesizing

- August 14th- September 29th (Next 45 Days)

### Phase III : Leading and Progress Monitoring

- September 29th- November 16th(Last 45 Days of Entry)  
*Quarterly Progress Monitoring Report*

Listening and learning will dominate Phase I and Phase II. These phases will consist of meetings with constituent groups, internal leadership groups, as well as external leaders, parent groups, and community organizations. Updates will be provided to the Board of Trustees along the way for feedback. A formal report will be given at the conclusion of each phase of the Entry Plan. The reports will include information learned during the entry process and will assist the leadership team in defining the current reality for Lancaster schools.

Leading will dominate the second half of Phase II and all of Phase III culminating with the development and presentation to the Board and community of an Excellence Agenda. The Excellence Agenda will incorporate priorities identified from the strategic plan and information gathered during the entry process and will be used to facilitate the movement from strategic planning to intentional excellence. This agenda will include benchmarks for excellence synthesized from information received during entry and will provide focus and direction for the school year.

The Action Plan will be a tactical plan to improve the achievement of all students and to set internal operating, reporting, progress monitoring and accountability systems in place. The Action Plan will also serve to put into action the Strategic Plan and support the Vision, Mission, and Core Beliefs developed by the community during the strategic planning process.



### **Lancaster ISD Mission**

*The mission of Lancaster Independent School District, a leader in providing innovative, quality programs, is to educate every student with the knowledge; skills; and principles to succeed and contribute in a competitive and technologically advancing world by providing rigorous and engaging learning opportunities that promote diversity; create an environment of integrity and respect; and establish a commitment to continued improvement in partnership with families and community.*

### **Lancaster ISD Strategic Plan Goals**



**By 2014, the district will achieve exemplary rating on the state assessment system and will double the percentage of students at the commended level.**



**Every student will achieve personally challenging goals in academics, interests, and career aspirations.**



**All students will develop and consistently demonstrate the principles of character necessary to succeed and contribute in society.**

## Phase I & II: Listening & Learning

• May 15 – August 14 ( 1st 90 Days)

The components listed below are important aspects of the listening and learning process. The methods, target groups, and documents to be reviewed are provided. The scheduling of interviews with target group members will be ongoing throughout the entry process. Document reviews will also be occurring simultaneously during Phase I and II. Much attention will be given to the work done and data collected during the strategic planning process and this information will be used as a springboard for further inquiry.

### Data Collection Methods under consideration:

1. Individual interviews
2. Focus group interviews
3. Surveys
4. Site Visits
5. Document analysis
6. Board Member guided neighborhood tours

### Target Groups:

Internal Stakeholders		
Board Members	Campus Staff	Booster Clubs
District Adm. / Support Staff	Teachers (select group by campus)	Coaches and Sponsors
Principals	Students (select group by campus)	Maintenance and Transportation
Assistant Principals	Administrative Support Staff	Child Nutrition
Counselors	Parents	District Legal Counsel (Board & Superintendent)
External Stakeholders		
Elected officials/ Municipal Administration	Media Representatives	Not for Profit Leaders
Religious leaders	Realtors	Housing Authority/Apt. Managers
Business Leaders, Chamber of Commerce, Lancaster Education Foundation, Rotary Club, Lions Club, MLK Organizer, Historical Society, Economic Development Council, etc.	Business owners	Strategic Action Team Members

## Documents Needed:

### Document Review and Analysis:

District Strategic Plan	Board Policy and Board Operating Procedures	Facility Studies, Efficiency Studies, Operational Audits, etc. (2005-2010)
All Budget Documents (2005-2010)	Internal Board Weekly Updates (2005-2010)	Any Department Evaluation Reports (2005-2010)
Audit Reports and Conservator's Reports	Board Minutes(2005-2010) Board Reports (2008-2010)	Prior Bond preparation reports: Demographic Study, Needs Analysis, etc.
District and School Improvement Plans	City Growth Trends, Census Data	Legal Proceedings, Past and Current (2005-2010)
District and School Report Cards	Media Reports (2008-2010)	Economic Development Data

### Phase I & II: Listening & Learning

• May 15 – August 14 ( 1st 90 Days)

### Board Retreat:

The school board and superintendent must operate as a team focused on ensuring equity and excellence for all students of Lancaster schools. The board and superintendent will meet to collaboratively build relationships, set priorities, engage in teambuilding, establish meeting norms, review operating procedures, discuss governance, and examine communication protocol. It is anticipated that this meeting will occur early in the Superintendent's tenure. Holding a board retreat is priority number one for a successful leadership entry. The details of the entry plan will be shared and detailed discussions will occur about other transition activities. It is my desire to conduct quarterly board retreats throughout the first school year and evaluate this practice for effectiveness and efficiency.

### Transition Meetings

In order to build a shared awareness of the successes, challenges, trends, and opportunities that are present in the district, each department head, principal, and/or program leader will be required to provide a transition report and presentation to the district leadership team along with recommendations for continuous improvement. The reports will be in presentation format and will be shared with the board and community. Presentations will follow a template for consistency in communication and will be designed to increase transparency. Immediately following presentations a question and answer session will occur and recommendations for continuous improvement will be discussed. Additionally, the alignment of initiatives with the District Strategic Plan will be made explicit during this process.

## Interview Protocol for Phase I & II

(A thorough review of questions posed during the strategic planning process will occur to ensure that duplication of effort does not occur.)

### Potential Questions for Board Members

1. What made you decide to run for the school board?
2. Now that you're on the board, what do you enjoy most about it and what do you dislike?
3. What do I need to know about the school system's history and politics for us to be successful?
4. What are three things about the school system that make you feel proud?
5. What are three things about the school system that need to be improved or changed?
6. Who are three school system people with a great deal of influence that I might also want to interview?
7. Who are three particularly influential community people from whom I should seek support for the school system?
8. Is there anyone you haven't mentioned whom I need to get to know and why?

### Potential Questions for other internal and external stakeholders

1. Tell me your career story. Where have you worked and what do you do well?
2. Tell me about the inner workings of the school system (your organization).  
What do I need to know to be successful?  
Also ask 3 --- 8 from above.

## Phase III : Leading and Progress Monitoring

- September 29th- November 16th(45 Days)
  - *Quarterly Progress Monitoring Report*

### **Leading and Progress Monitoring**

In order to make systemic change and ensure continuous improvement it is important that we “inspect what we expect.” During Phase III a laser-like focus will be placed on monitoring of results. Monitoring systems will be implemented to ensure fiscal responsibility and high levels of learning for all students.

### **Structured Campus Visits**

Focused campus visits will occur during this phase and an instructional profile of each campus will be developed. The objective of the campus visits will be to identify the level of student learning and instructional capacity of educators within the district. This is an important component of the entry process because the teacher in the classroom and their instructional practices are the factors most influential on student learning. The instructional profile of each campus will be used to monitor implementation of the curriculum and level of student learning in each building throughout the district.

## Campus Visits Format:

- Minimum of four hour visit to each school in the district by leadership team members.
- The leadership team will meet with the Principal to review visit protocol
- Visit classrooms
- Conduct 30 minute meetings with four groups: students, classified staff, professional staff, and parents
- Exit conversations with the Principal

Questions used with each group are provided below: *(A thorough review of questions posed during the strategic planning process will occur to ensure that duplication of effort does not occur.)*

### Staff Member:

- What's working well in the district?
- What isn't working?
- What are you doing that you think is making the greatest contribution to student achievement and school effectiveness?
- What might I do as superintendent that would give you greater support for your work?

### Parents:

- How would you rate this school and why?
- How would you describe that effectiveness of the school district and why would you describe it that way?
- Name the one person who is the most believable to you when they talk about the school district.
- What is it important for me to do or not do as superintendent? What do you want from a superintendent?

### Students:

- What does the school expect of you? What encourages you to do your best work?
- What gets in the way of your doing your best work?
- What is the one thing that you would change about your school that would help you to learn more -- not that would be more fun, but would actually help you be a more successful learner?
- How many of the adults at your school believe that all of the students here can be highly successful -- not that you or some of the students can be successful, but all of the students? And how do you know?

## **Quarterly Reports**

A key part of the continuous improvement cycle is regular monitoring of results. In order to ensure transparency and accountability district department leaders and campus principals will provide quarterly reports and presentations to the leadership team. These quarterly meetings will focus on progress monitoring and will allow us to identify trends, challenges, and areas of refinement. By presenting information on a quarterly basis it will allow for interim corrections before results are final. The process will be formative in nature as the feedback will be used to make informed decisions and ensure that actions are aligned with the District Strategic Plan. The reports will occur in November 2010, April 2011, and August 2011.

## **Closing the Communication Loop**

Periodically throughout the entry phases the Board will be provided with updates on the process and a summary of information being discovered. The community will also be provided with briefs concerning the entry plan and the learning that will be occurring. Because building a shared awareness is critical to the school improvement process and transparency in decision-making is an important component of my leadership strategy a community update will be provided at the end of Phase II and again at the Quarterly Report meetings. Department presentations will be made available through the web for all stakeholders. Also we will be investigating the creation of a weblog, podcast, and other mechanisms to disseminate information about the findings during entry and receive stakeholder feedback concerning our improvement efforts.

## **Culmination of the Entry Plan**

Implementation of the Entry Plan will allow the leadership team to act with intention and ensure equity and excellence for all students by providing a clear guide to hit the ground listening, learning, and leading. Upon successful completion of the activities in this plan, I will report to the Board a summary outlining the findings and proposed action plans at the November Board-Superintendent retreat. This will enable the Board-Superintendent team to create, revise, and or adjust the direction of the District and ensure that the District Strategic Plan is being implemented with fidelity.

