

# Superintendent's Transition Plan

Dr. Jeff James

Effective August 2020

## ***INTRODUCTION***

As the new leader of Iredell-Statesville Schools, it is essential that I have a productive and successful entry into the role of Superintendent. The development and implementation of a transition plan, designed for this role, will help make this transition successful for all by showing the current and desired state of our school system.

This transition plan outlines goals, objectives, and significant activities along with timetables as I transition into the role of Superintendent<sup>1</sup>. The goals and activities are not listed in order of importance or chronologically. During Phase I and Phase II, I will conduct numerous listening and learning sessions that will consist of meetings with Board members, internal leadership groups (directors), principals, staff, employee groups, students, external leaders, various leadership groups, parent groups, community organizations, and community members.

At the end of the first 100 days (approximately February-March), a report will be developed for the Board. The 100 Day Report document will outline the current status of the district in the areas of Education, Operations, and Human Resources. These areas represent the primary focuses of our district. The report will include appropriate supporting data that can be used as a starting point for the Board to consider the district's strengths and what opportunities exist for improving areas of the organization. The data collected will inform the decision to keep or adjust our current strategic direction in each area and can be used to develop a restructuring plan.

## ***GOALS, OBJECTIVES, MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND TIMETABLE OF THE ENTRY PLAN***

The overall goal of this entry plan is to listen, learn, share, build, and plan goals for improving the school district. The entry plan has three phases:

### **Phase I: Pre-Entry**

July 1, 2020-September 1, 2020

Preliminary Development of the District's/Superintendent's Annual Goals- 2020/2021

September 2, 2020-February 1, 2021

### **Phase II: Entry/Transition/First "100 days" with all staff**

Listening and Learning

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<sup>1</sup> The framework for this entry plan draws from professional experiences; work with other Superintendents across the state and nation; and research on successful leadership transition. This entry plan is tailor-made for Iredell-Statesville Schools and fits my educational philosophy and leadership style.

February 2, 2021-June 30, 2021

**Phase III: Executive Summary to the Board and Creation or Adjustment of the District's Strategic Goals**

Update to the Board about progress towards Annual Goals/Revisions to Goals and present to the Board a 100 Day report outlining recommendations for Education, Operations, and Human Resources.

**GOAL 1**

**Build and enhance meaningful and positive relationships with the Iredell-Statesville community, which include students, parents, staff, community members, and leaders at all levels, particularly the Board of Education. (Owner –Dr. James)**

***Objectives***

1. Establish positive and collaborative relationships with staff members, directors, principals, and community members. **Board of Education:** Engage in one-on-one meetings with Board members and establish communication protocols desired by each member. Plan ongoing professional development for the Board and myself.
2. Communicate with parents and develop partnerships on behalf of our students. Develop a parent survey for parents that leave our system in hopes to understand better where we are failing to meet customer needs.
3. Establish positive and collaborative relationships with faith-based organizations and develop partnerships on behalf of our schools and students. Leverage this support to increase community and home interventions with our most at-risk youth.
4. Work with schools to establish community-based partnerships and increase these as part of the School Improvement Plans. Mesh the community needs and support with the programs the school offers and use this to launch additional innovation.
5. Establish positive and collaborative relationships with the leadership of Iredell-Statesville Schools, Iredell County governing bodies, and National governmental agencies to establish clear lines of communication, advocacy, and support for our schools and students.
6. Establish positive and collaborative relationships with leaders in the district and employee associations that are focused on increasing student achievement and preparing students to be college/work-ready by aligning resources. Work to improve and enhance the support of these agencies. (NCAE, PENC, Golden Leaf, Burroughs Welcome, John Locke and other foundations that support education)

7. Establish positive and collaborative relationships with critical leadership and members of business, service, civic, non-profit, philanthropic, and political organizations within the Iredell-Statesville community.
8. Promote the success and image of Iredell-Statesville Schools through many different outlets—devise a market plan. Advertise the many programs, especially the iAcademy on Spectrum television, key radio stations, and other news outlets and magazines. The competition is doing this already. (Owner-Dr.Nutting)
9. Continue ongoing, clear, and consistent communication with all stakeholders. Use a feedback system to collect constant input from stakeholders.
10. Increase personal knowledge of Iredell-Statesville Schools, the community, cultural heritage, traditions, and expectations for the district in the eyes of the community with the mindset to lead the entire system better.
11. Build trust and staff morale through follow-through, transparency, consistency, celebrations, reciprocal communication, and modeling of appropriate behaviors/expectations. Use a district plus/delta bin where employees or other stakeholders can submit items. Determine from staff feedback if we need to do this at each school.
12. Develop or enhance facilities and education taskforce to determine current and future state of the facilities and educational offerings.

***Activities to implement this goal- (Owner-Dr. James)***

1. Set up a meeting with each Board member. Learn how each prefers to receive updates, communication, and alerts. Learn each member's compelling "Why." Gather what they see as the things we do well and the areas we need to improve.
2. Listening and Learning tour of Iredell-Statesville Schools. Visit all schools; meet with principals, office staff, teachers, and students to establish trust and meaningful relationships. Meet with each principal and director.
3. Establish routine communication procedures and meeting times with these groups.
4. Ask all principals and directors to write a short synopsis describing their family, hobbies, school/department, number of employees and structure of the department, test results, the main challenges they will be facing in the future, and their compelling "Why." How the Superintendent can help them overcome these challenges and celebrate their "Why."
5. Ask all principals and directors to fill out a three-question survey.
  - a. What is working in our district to further student success?
  - b. What are the barriers to student success in our district?
  - c. What are your expectations of me as your Superintendent?

6. Meet with executive leadership to discuss the school system, schools, departments, challenges, budget, needs, etc....to make the transition as smooth as possible.
7. Identify faith-based organizations and meet with them for an initial listening and learning session. Establish a routine communication protocol.
8. Schedule meetings with community leaders. Establish a routine communication protocol.
9. Attend meetings with key organizations to establish a clear line of communication and trust. Establish a routine communication protocol.
10. Establish a meeting schedule with the Superintendent's Advisory Council quarterly.
11. Establish a meeting schedule with the Staff Advisory Council. Establish a routine communication protocol.
  - a. Certified advisory
  - b. Classified advisory
12. Schedule meetings with PTO presidents. Establish a routine communication protocol.
13. Establish a Leadership Team concept and develop a meeting schedule, agenda, norms, expectations, and protocol for meeting with this team.
14. Meet with Iredell County Manager, Iredell County Commissioners, Mayors, Sheriff, and other local elected officials as appropriate. Establish a communication process.
15. Meet with Dr. Brewer from Mitchell Community College and develop a positive working relationship.
16. Establish an open-door policy for all Iredell-Statesville staff and community members to discuss the future of Iredell-Statesville Schools. Establish town hall meetings at each high school to collect what is working, what is not, and where the district's and the Superintendent's focus should be moving forward.
17. Schedule meetings with the district's legislative delegation to the North Carolina General Assembly. Discuss an acceptable format for ongoing communication for the needs and concerns of Iredell-Statesville Schools.
18. Establish a good relationship with the media and develop a routine communication protocol. Invite the press to all key and significant events.
19. Develop and deploy a **central office survey** to collect data on the effectiveness of our support system. This data will become part of each director's professional development plan. The goal is to have a 3.5 ranking at a 4.0 system; thus, showing we are supporting the work in our schools and providing a high level of customer service.
20. Attend school and community functions as possible.

## **GOAL 2**

### **Develop effective and positive Board/Superintendent relations- (Dr. James)**

#### ***Objectives***

1. Develop and maintain a positive relationship between the Board and Superintendent that is focused on what is best for the students of Iredell-Statesville Schools.
2. Develop and implement appropriate communication procedures and protocols.

#### ***Activities to implement this goal***

1. Schedule a meeting with the Board Chair (and others) to discuss the format and agenda for Board retreats and general Board meetings.
2. Establish a clear understanding of the role, expectations, and responsibilities of the Superintendent as we work together as a team.
3. Establish regular communication protocol and procedures for communicating information via letter, phone, email, or meetings.
4. Ask all Board of Education members to fill out a short three-question survey.
  - a. What are we doing well?
  - b. What barriers to learning does the superintendent need to work on first?
  - c. What are your expectations for me as the Superintendent?
5. Attend NCSBA meetings, training, and other professional development.
6. Plan Board retreats as necessary to review data. (End of year review and mid-year review)

## **GOAL 3**

### **Expand a framework for increasing student achievement for all students while also preparing all students to be career and college ready- (Owners-Kelly, Jon, and Laura)**

#### ***Objectives***

1. Analyze student performance on standardized tests using multiple measures and EVAAS with trend data for the past three years at each school.
2. Review and become familiar with all school-based academic programs and the need to expand educational opportunities in Iredell-Statesville Schools.
3. Use data to drive decision-making for staff, schools, students, and the district.
4. Do an in-depth academic needs assessment for the district if budget permits, if not, at least the schools with the most significant learning gaps.

5. Analyze areas for growth in SAT, ACT, and WorkKeys scores for high school students.
6. Analyze areas for growth to keep increasing the graduation rate while decreasing high school dropout numbers.

***Activities to implement this goal***

1. Develop a growth mindset and framework with leadership. Establish, measure, and analyze 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>-century skills in our district and develop plans to improve. Analyze the current classroom walkthrough tool and make sure it includes the above.
2. Review the instructional programs that are being used, initiatives, practices, curriculum, and support materials.
3. Determine the level of need across the county for research-based programs that would specifically address areas of academic need.
4. Meet with leadership to discuss the performance and needs of each school.
5. Meet with principals to discuss the academic performance of their school and their main challenges.
6. Create opportunities for vertical and horizontal articulation between schools.
7. Continue the development of Professional Learning Communities within the schools and Central Office using the best practices-McRel, AllthingsPLC, and Team to Teach. K-5 reading must include recent research on reading and how to incorporate this into Iredell-Statesville Schools.
8. Continue to give our teachers opportunities for quality professional development and exposure to research-based instructional techniques with best practices from across the nation.
9. Continue to provide professional development that integrates technology into the curriculum and expands remote learning opportunities.
10. Expand the use of EVAAS within each school and for the district as a whole. (Long-term)
11. Analyze the assessment, monitoring, and evaluation systems.
12. Review current SAT/ACT and WorkKeys preparation/participation and areas for potential growth in the future. (Long-term)
13. Implement an Environmental Scan Process where there are significant staff issues.
14. Review current graduation intervention programs used to help keep students on track while decreasing drop out numbers. Determine long-term needs with input from high schools. Look at night school as an option for potential dropouts.
15. Review the School Improvement Plans and planning process for each School Improvement Team. (NCSIP)

16. Engage higher education partnerships in strategies for improvement and expansion of current or new programs offered to Iredell-Statesville students. (Appalachian State, Gardner-Webb, UNCC, and UNCG should be partnering with us on numerous fronts.)
17. Review potential needs for Common Core/Essential Standards unpacking and understanding working with teachers to further develop content delivery and support materials.

## **GOAL 4**

**Evaluate the organizational structure and determine immediate vs. long-term needs of each department-(Owner-Dr. James, Melissa Wike)**

### ***Objectives***

1. Implement a bonus system and plan for sustainability. Start with classified staff. See if attendance incentives can be included as well as a local salary schedule for classified.
2. Evaluate the overall organizational structure. Where can we consolidate duties and reduce expenses? Redirecting the savings to the classroom.
3. Determine the immediate vs. long-term needs of Iredell-Statesville Schools from an organizational standpoint.
4. Become familiar with the Iredell-Statesville Schools budget development process. Determine what systems work, which need improvement, and why.

### ***Activities to implement this goal***

1. Review critical documents including policy and procedures manuals, Board meeting minutes, student achievement data, financial projections, and budget processes, inclement weather procedures, legal proceedings, accountability plans and proceedings, safety, and emergency plans.
2. Review all studies, reports, and audits from outside agencies.
3. Establish a schedule to meet with all principals and directors to discuss a three-question survey administered by Superintendent.
4. Meet with Dr. Lesane to discuss personnel needs. (Short vs. Long-term) Do we have a documented and deployed recruitment and retention plan?
5. Identify key staff to assist with my transition into the district.
6. Build a leadership team that works closely together and feels comfortable sharing ideas and information.
7. Assess budget appropriations to ensure they align with district mission and vision.

8. Assess School Improvement Plans to ensure they align with district mission and vision.

## **Goal 5**

### **Develop Board of Education Annual Goals that fulfill the mission and vision of the School Board**

#### ***Objectives***

1. Develop key themes that will serve as the work for the district and the Board's Annual Goals, ensuring those plans are in alignment with the Board of Education's mission and vision.
2. Communicate the themes to all staff, the Board of Education, and the community.
3. Encourage support of the themes by all.

#### ***Activities to implement this goal***

1. Develop key themes with all stakeholders that will serve as the foundation for the work of Iredell-Statesville Schools and the Annual Goals.
2. Be visible in schools and communities to communicate these themes when appropriate.
3. Celebrate the completion of and launch Board Annual Goals with excitement at Convocation in 2020.