

CHEROKEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUPERINTENDENT'S
ENTRY PLAN
100 Days in the CCSD Community
Mary Elizabeth Davis, Superintendent





First 100 Days | Listening, Learning In & Learning

Mary Elizabeth Davis, PhD | Superintendent's Entry Plan



A Letter to the Community of Cherokee County

From my very first day, in my very first classroom 24 years ago, I have believed in the limitless potential of every single young person. I have been driven by an unwavering student-centered focus and a deep belief that students should learn more on my watch than they could anywhere else. It is with that uncompromising belief and relentless drive that I eagerly anticipate joining the Cherokee County School District team and serving this community as the next Superintendent.

The Cherokee County School District has a national reputation for excellence and pioneering innovation for public education. The community's high expectations for our schools is inspiring and will be a source of motivation in the journey ahead. As I begin in this work, I will seek many opportunities to meet young people, families, teachers, leaders, staff, and partners throughout our community. This will be a season for me to Listen, to Lean-In, and to Learn from your experiences, your perspectives, and your aspirations.

This entry plan outlines the activities that will occur as I seek as many opportunities as possible to meet you and discover the current strengths and opportunities in the Cherokee County School District. I will organize the first 100 days around the pillars of Governance, Student Learning & Achievement, School & District Organizational Capacity and Alignment, and Internal & External Engagement. My commitment to you is to listen deeply, lean-in to understand and remember your perspective, and learn how you would construct solutions so that—together, all students learn more on our watch than they could anywhere else.

I look forward to meeting you over these next several months, staying connected, and building the future for young people in Cherokee County together.

Sincerely, *Mary Elizabeth Davis*

In collaboration and partnership...

I am grateful to the Cherokee County Board of Education for the trust they have placed in me to serve our community as the next Superintendent of Schools. A high performing school district starts with a high-performing governance team and high performing governance teams are only possible when the Board of Education and Superintendent work collaboratively together to advance the core mission of student learning and successful student outcomes. I am eager to join the CCSD Board of Education and together advance improvement in performance for all students, build on the culture of professionalism, joy, and care, and ultimately set the standard for what is possible in public education today.

We share a commitment to getting it right in the board room so that we can get it right in every classroom in every corner of our community. I look forward to the extraordinary successes that are on the horizon for CCSD students and together creating the best possible place for teachers to teach, leaders to lead, support professionals to impact, and students to learn.



Cherokee County Board of Education





GOVERNANCE



STUDENT LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT



SCHOOL & DISTRICT CAPACITY



INTERNAL & EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

THE PURPOSE BEHIND THE PLAN

Discovering, Experiencing, and Valuing the Cherokee County Community: This plan has been designed as an intentional period of study to learn from CCSD employees and the entire Cherokee County Community. I am eager to learn and understand what brings the most joy to our team of professionals and how that translates into student success, family trust, community confidence, and a shared direction forward.

KEY QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE PROCESS

- 1 What are your beliefs, expectations, and aspirations for education in Cherokee County?**
- 2 What are you most proud of and where could we improve?**
- 3 How would you measure growth and success in Cherokee County Schools?**

As I join the Cherokee County community, I am committed to immersing myself in the community to experience the history, values, workforce priorities, and post-secondary priorities to fully embody the community's aspirations. Throughout every activity that encompasses my first 100 days, I will consistently be seeking ways to learn people and remember names, visit places and spaces that have shared value in the community, and join along with my family to understand and appreciate the history of Cherokee County, the growth of our community, the uniqueness of each region, and the experiences of Cherokee employees and families. My family and I look forward to living, playing, serving, and learning alongside the nearly three hundred thousand members of the Cherokee County community.



GOVERNANCE

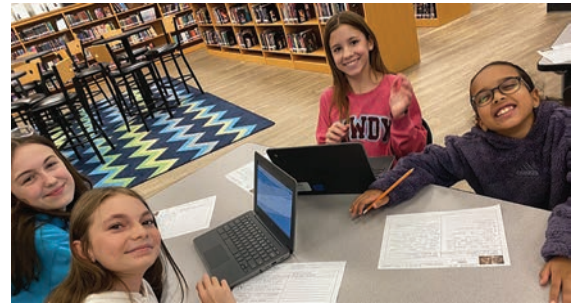
Establish and foster relationships with the members of the Board of Education that are trusting, collaborative, and productive.

OBJECTIVES

- **Establish** the Board of Education and Superintendent as a cohesive governance team focused on the academic and operational accountability of CCSD.
- **Develop and implement** appropriate communication norms and protocols between the Board of Education and Superintendent to foster timely and robust information exchange along with consistent commitments regarding routine matters.
- **Develop clear and consistent lines of communication** with each Board Member to develop confidence, build relationships, and establish trust.

PRE-ENTRY ACTIVITIES

- **Review** the Board's core beliefs around rigor, relevance, and relationships, aligned articulation in local school improvement plans, division key performance indicators, and progress made toward meeting the goals.
- **Study** the Five Priority Areas of the Board's Blueprint, the goal setting process, calculation methodology, progress monitoring, and the cadence of reporting to the Board of Education.
- **Examine** all policies, regulations, and board guidance materials.



LISTENING, LEARNING IN, & LEARNING ACTIVITIES

School Visits

- ☐ Plan and conduct school visits and classroom observations throughout the district with individual board members; what does high quality instruction look like? What do teachers teach, what are students learning, and what resources to support teachers and students are evident?

Listening Sessions

- ☐ Review Entry Plan with Board leadership and individual board members to gain feedback and solicit additional activities to include.
- ☐ Conduct regularly scheduled meetings with individual board members to establish relationships and learn unique perspectives.

Working Sessions

- ☐ Convene initial Board work session to discuss issues, governance related matters, norms & protocols, agenda preparation, constituent services, and strategic direction for the Board of Education and Superintendent.
- ☐ Establish regular meeting schedule with Board Chair.
- ☐ Collaborate with Board of Education to establish superintendent performance evaluation and indicators of success for evaluation of Superintendent's first year.

Study & Review

- ☐ Review the process, structure, and timeline to assess the 2020-24 Blueprint, progress on goals, and school district budget.
- ☐ Review and study the components of the Board's Blueprint to understand the current and desired status.



STUDENT LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT

Ensure an effective and efficient transition process while maintaining focus on increased academic achievement for each Cherokee County student.

OBJECTIVES

- **Collect and analyze patterns in student achievement data** (ie. demographic, process, perception, trends, formative indicators) in order to accelerate the improvement of teaching and learning.
- **Listen to teachers** to understand their experience in the classroom, the impact of support, the availability of current and timely resources, effectiveness of professional learning, and opportunities for teacher leadership; and their recommendations to improve as a district.
- **Understand current academic achievement expectations** for district leaders, school leaders, staff, students, parents, and the broader Cherokee County community.
- **Develop lines of communication** and foster relationships with school leaders, teachers, and staff to fully get to know the people that make CCSD schools special and to listen and learn from our team of employees.

PRE-ENTRY ACTIVITIES

- **Review** state and local student performance and accountability data; along with posted school improvement plans
- **Study** student services that address readiness to learn, student health and wellness, and support services.
- **Explore** special education services, gifted education services, English learner supports, talent development, and other related programs.
- **Analyze** investments in professional learning, paths for teacher leadership, and plans to develop staff, teachers, and leaders.
- **Examine** policies and practices related to promotion/retention, grade reporting, graduation requirements, and academic systems.



LISTENING, LEARNING IN, & LEARNING ACTIVITIES

School Visits

- ☐ Schedule a rigorous pace of school visits and classroom observations to observe evidence of systems, resources, and support for teaching and learning.
- ☐ Observe classroom instruction with a specific focus on literacy instruction and approach to monitoring reading proficiency at every level.
- ☐ Observe special education program areas and review instructional supports, resources, and alignment to IEP goals and objectives for students served in special education.
- ☐ Observe gifted education programming, along with talent development and intervention approach for advanced courses.
- ☐ Observe service delivery and instructional approach for English learners.

Listening Sessions

- ☐ Meet with teacher groups at all levels, content areas, and specializations to understand the strengths of teaching and learning, the areas to improve, barriers to instruction, and the access to support, development, and resources.
- ☐ Meet with principals and administrative teams to understand perceptions of the accessibility to quality instructional resources, professional development, student data, and instructional and operational support provided by the district level staff.



STUDENT LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT

Listening Sessions - Cont.

- ☐ Meet with student groups to listen to and learn their perceptions of the quality of relationships, levels of engagement, and access to rigorous instruction within their schools.
- ☐ Meet the district instructional leaders and staff to assess alignment between curriculum, assessment, and instruction - particularly formative, interim, and summative tools.

Study & Review

- ☐ Review student achievement and other relevant data for each student subgroup, i.e., formative and summative assessment, accreditation report, literacy performance indicators, student enrollment, graduation rate, dropout data, discipline data, and attendance data.
- ☐ Gauge staffing strengths and needs across school district and within local schools. Review models for teacher and leader development.
- ☐ Review course availability, course selection, and course completion data with a focus on enrollment and success in advanced courses.
- ☐ Review and evaluate system-wide efforts to improve reading proficiency in every grade and graduation rates for each student.
- ☐ Examine the status of strategic data monitoring in CCSD to ensure each student and student group is performing at or above grade level and receiving subsequent enrichment or interventions.





SCHOOL & DISTRICT CAPACITY

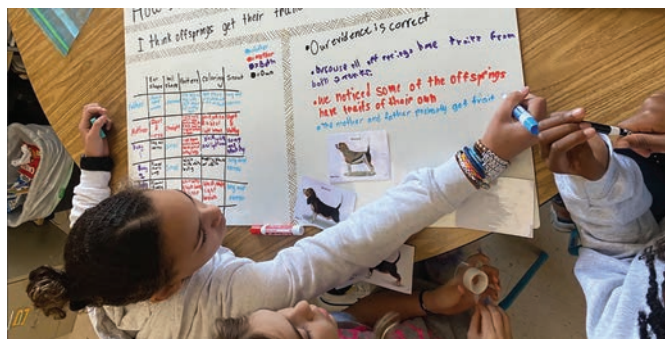
Initiate and foster relationships with district and school leadership personnel, and team members from all certified and classified job families to explore the current organizational structure, guiding practices, and district systems related to each area of operations.

OBJECTIVES

- **Analyze existing organizational structures;** evaluate the alignment of people and positions to maximize the overall effectiveness of CCSD operations, support, and allocation of resources; understand the performance culture and expectations for each division within CCSD.
- **Understand the alignment of operational systems** throughout the organization including safety and security, threat assessment and crisis response protocols, transportation services, food & nutrition services, after school enrichment programming, technology support, cybersecurity strategy.
- **Study the budget,** resource allocation per student, per employee, and per school, and study long-range revenue and expenditure forecasting.
- **Develop lines of communication** and foster the development of relationships with the current staff throughout the district to listen, learn, and seek to understand the experiences, insights, and priorities of our team.

PRE-ENTRY ACTIVITIES

- **Review** organization charts, schools, and feeder patterns
- **Study** the budget, budget preparations, and budget materials, including historical budgeting trends and forecasting.
- **Compare** student assignment policy, processes, and supporting resources
- **Analyze** Comprehensive Safety & Security Strategy and current investments in secure schools



LISTENING, LEARNING IN, & LEARNING ACTIVITIES

School Visits

- ☐ Schedule school visits to review and understand safety measures and daily safety protocols.
- ☐ Conduct school visits, campus walks, and operational observations with district operational leaders.
- ☐ Conduct school visits with the purpose of understanding the work experience and support models for each job family, including counselors, psychologists, social workers, clerks, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, school nutrition staff, and substitutes.

Listening Sessions

- ☐ Schedule safety and security meetings with SRO leadership staff and review safety and security monitoring strategy and crisis readiness and response protocol/plans.
- ☐ Conduct individual meetings with senior level staff to learn about the experiences, perspectives, current workflows, and aspirations of each individual.
- ☐ Conduct department meetings to learn about the experiences, perspectives, aspirations, and current key performance indicators of our teams.



SCHOOL & DISTRICT CAPACITY

Working Sessions

- ☐ Learn the cadence of meeting, communicating, organizing work-flow and timing of deliverables, and monitoring of organizational work across and within each division/department.
- ☐ Learn the daily cadence of communication related to issues within CCSD and assess effectiveness of all other mechanisms of communication and work-flow productivity within CCSD.
- ☐ Learn the roles, responsibilities, priorities, and impact of each department and assess alignment of department services toward amplifying effectiveness fo principals and teachers.

Study & Review

- ☐ Review data representing operational effectiveness measures (KPIs) available for each operational division.
- ☐ Review foundational documents, including policy and procedure manuals; board meeting minutes; student achievement data, budget processes and financial projections over the past three-five years; current and pending litigation documents; facility planning reports; accountability plans; school improvement documents, and safety and emergency plans.





INTERNAL & EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

Connect broadly across the community with CCSD team members, families, students, business leaders, faith leaders, civic leaders, and community members to understand current strengths and opportunities for CCSD to explore desired outcomes for each student and school in CCSD.

OBJECTIVES

- **Form positive and productive relationships** with each member of the CCSD Board of Education, CCSD district staff, principals, teachers, support staff, students and parents to establish communication, trust, and accountability for the overall improvement and sustained performance of the CCSD.
- **Develop lines of communication** throughout the community that foster deep engagement with parents and families; and seek innovative ways to listen and learn from individuals with limited access to traditional forms of engagement.
- **Establish positive, professional, and collaborative relationships** with the elected officials of Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs, Woodstock, Waleska, and Cherokee County and their leadership staff, the community's faith-based organizations, key leaders of business, service, non-profit, political, philanthropic organizations, institutions of higher education and media outlets.
- **Accelerate understanding of CCSD** and the surrounding community, culture, traditions, and history.

PRE-ENTRY ACTIVITIES

- **Place** phone calls to bordering county Superintendents, the Cherokee County Educational Foundation, the county manager, the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce, the respective members of Cherokee County's legislative delegation, and other individuals or groups recommended by each CCSD Board member.
- **Review** website and public communication materials.
- **Develop** contacts for the leaders of business organizations, large companies, small businesses, non-profit organizations, faith-based leaders, philanthropy leaders, and public service leaders.

LISTENING, LEARNING IN, & LEARNING ACTIVITIES

School Visits

- ☐ Attend school and community functions, including school-related and extra-curricular activities.

Listening Sessions

- ☐ Meet with parent organizations for initial listening and learning session to discuss critical issues facing CCSD. Establish scheduled forums and opportunities for meaningful, two-way communication.
- ☐ Meet with city and county elected officials to listen and learn about successes and areas of greatest concern; and possible solutions.
- ☐ Meet with the County Manager, city managers, and key city agency leads.
- ☐ Meet with state education leaders to listen and learn about successes and areas of greatest concern.
- ☐ Identify the community's largest corporations, business foundations, civic, non-profit, local college and university partners and relative organizations and meet with them to listen and learn about successes and areas of greatest concern; and possible solutions to critical issues that face CCSD today. Establish scheduled cadence for on-going meaningful, two-way communication.
- ☐ Schedule meetings with faith-based leaders in the community to discuss critical areas affecting CCSD. Establish scheduled forum and opportunities for meaningful, two-way communication.



INTERNAL & EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

Listening Sessions - Cont.

- ☐ Schedule meetings with members of the Cherokee County Educational Foundation.
- ☐ Schedule meetings with post-secondary institutions and technical schools that partner with Cherokee County Schools.
- ☐ Schedule meetings with business organization leaders.
- ☐ Schedule neighborhood and community conversations in HOA meetings, gathering spaces, and living rooms.

Working Sessions

- ☐ Schedule interviews and meetings with local outlets.
- ☐ Schedule meetings with the County Manager to develop cadence of meetings.
- ☐ Schedule meetings with the Chamber of Commerce President/CEO to develop a cadence of meetings.

Study & Review

- ☐ Review recommended readings from the Board of Education members and stakeholders.
- ☐ Assess the quality, quantity, format, and effectiveness of current communication with CCSD stakeholders, including: Board of Education, CCSD Staff, Principals, Teachers, Support Staff, Parents, Elected officials, Community leaders, Business leaders, and Faith-based leaders.
- ☐ Review and evaluate the current state of the CCSD brand messaging strategy, and how communications should be delivered and shared with internal and external stakeholders.



Engaging the entire Cherokee County community.



Families of Cherokee County, **you are invited to follow our journey!**

I can't wait to meet you, learn from you, and keep you posted during these first 100 days in the Cherokee County community. Join the journey by following along at www.cherokeeK12.net.

EXPECTED **OUTCOMES** FROM THE FIRST 100 DAYS

1. **A comprehensive summary** of my observations, themes, and key findings.
2. **Carefully analyzed information** for common themes, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks.
3. **Broad-based involvement** for the development of a short-term action plan to continuously improve students' experiences, academic progress, organizational effectiveness, community and family engagement, employee joy and engagement, and effective governance.
4. **A strong foundation** for the development of a long-range strategic plan.

