



Dr. Joe Gothard

Superintendent Entry Framework



PEOPLE at the CENTER





Dear Members of the Madison Metropolitan School District Community,

I am honored and excited to return to Madison as Superintendent of the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD). Having attended elementary through high school in MMSD, served in various capacities within the district from classroom teacher to Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools, and been a parent to former MMSD students, I am deeply invested in the success and well-being of our students and the entire school community.

I firmly believe that people are at the center of everything we do. By focusing on people, we can realize our collective vision, shaped by the community and supported by the Board of Education: to make every school a thriving school that prepares every student to graduate ready for college, career, and community. As such, I am committed to working collaboratively with stakeholders, leading with transparent communication, and ensuring our decisions are grounded in what is best for our students.

I understand the importance of fostering partnerships with the Board of Education, families, students, and staff to create a supportive and inclusive environment. My first 100 days in the district will help to begin and guide our work together. I am eager to engage with district stakeholders to listen, learn, and study the district's current state, to shape the work we will do collectively. The "Superintendent Strategic Framework" will help guide our work and set goals and timelines to develop key priorities within MMSD.

I want to emphasize that I cannot accomplish our goals alone. Together, we must prioritize the well-being and success of every individual in our district. Together, we can build a more robust and equitable educational system for our students — one that prioritizes how they learn so we can best support their educational needs to help improve achievement and educational outcomes. Together, we can positively impact our students' lives and build a brighter future for them and MMSD.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our students and community.

Sincerely,
Dr. Joe Gothard



CORE VALUES:

The foundational pillars of this framework are Madison's **people, purpose, and pride.**



PEOPLE

Engaging with MMSD stakeholders about the school district's operations and outcomes must remain a priority. Proposed changes must be viewed as collaborative efforts with the MMSD community.



PURPOSE

Substantial data have been collected to highlight the most urgent needs in MMSD. To guide and impact priorities, qualitative data gathered as part of this entry phase will be carefully analyzed alongside a comprehensive review of programs, departments, and key performance indicators established in the Strategic Framework.



PRIDE

MMSD has a rich and proud history. My leadership transition provides a unique window of time to regroup, learn, understand, and reestablish expectations for Madison students, staff, and families.

EQUITY COMMITMENT

The greatest challenges in public education are centered around the policies and practices that have led to historically persistent, disparate outcomes and opportunity gaps for students. I am dedicated to addressing the underlying impacts of factors such as race, social class, English language support, special education, and exceptional needs. My commitment is unwavering in focusing efforts on dismantling barriers that hinder student success. This involves developing and implementing targeted strategies that urgently and comprehensively address students' unique needs to help achieve equitable outcomes and opportunities throughout their educational journey.



This framework is organized in three phases: **Listen, Learn, and Act**. The phases are interdependent and will overlap. The board and community will be informed of each phase's progress and learnings.



PHASES:



Pre-Entry (April-June)

The Pre-Entry phase is a time for us to establish relationships collaboratively. As appropriate, I will schedule meetings with administrators, teachers, staff, Board members, and key community members. I will also spend time understanding the role of our Strategic Framework and how it is being implemented, as well as district policies and relevant information to inform my knowledge of MMSD before my contract officially begins.



Listen (Pre-entry–Sept.)

This phase entails a great degree of personal visibility, as it will include my introduction to stakeholders. I will spend time with students, teachers, staff, families, administrators, community partners, business members, elected officials, and others to better understand what is working well and areas of growth. I will gain a comprehensive view of the district by incorporating diverse perspectives, building on my existing knowledge of the Madison community.



Learn (July–Nov.)

The Learn phase explores the district's structures. I will evaluate MMSD's current systems, analyze and study student performance data, and review district policies, programs, and financial reports. This phase will also entail staff and Board briefings about topics that require immediate attention.



Act (Sept.–Jan.)

Data collected during the Listen and Learn phases will shape my future work and provide a comprehensive framework for the Madison community. The plan will outline district priorities and include a timeline for specific actions. This phase will also enable me to enhance relationships and foster trust among MMSD stakeholders.



GOALS

Goal 1

Establish guiding principles and priorities for an effective relationship between the Board of Education and Superintendent.

ACTIONS:

1. Schedule meetings with Board of Education members to discuss the superintendent transition plan.
2. Review Board Operating Procedures with the Board President and Vice President.
3. Discuss the expectations for Board communication with district staff.
4. Establish a process for developing agendas with Board officers.
5. Schedule meetings with individual Board members.
6. Establish communication expectations to include written messages, phone calls, and meetings.
7. Review the Strategic Framework priority metrics with each Board member to ensure a shared understanding.
8. Review the Superintendent evaluation tool and timeline.

Goal 2

Conduct a review of achievement and equity in MMSD in support of providing a meaningful and relevant educational experience for all students; effective and culturally relevant instruction; racial equity; and college and career readiness.

ACTIONS:

1. Schedule meetings with district and community stakeholders.
2. Review previous equity work, highlight progress, and determine continued areas for improvement.
3. Develop a data profile for the district and each school that will be frequently updated as the district's Comprehensive Improvement Process is implemented.
4. Review academic expectations to include grade level/age level resources regarding academic and social expectations and strategies.
5. Meet with school leaders, teachers, and staff to learn about high-leverage strategies that are working successfully and aligned with instructional expectations and models.
6. Develop an ongoing dialogue with students regarding their learning experiences and college and career aspirations.
7. Conduct a full review of school culture and climate efforts, including Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS), restorative practices, discipline practices, and safety and security.
8. Learn the role of academic pathways, advanced placement, international baccalaureate, bilingual and dual language immersion, certifications (industry, micro-credentials, and post-secondary degrees), magnets, and charter schools.
9. Host a series of teacher Promising Practice seminars.
10. Review Title IX, harassment reporting, and investigation structures.
11. Review racial harm protocol.



Goal 3

Strengthen public support by committing to frequent communication, open and honest dialogue, and developing partnerships that support the district's students, staff, and families.

ACTIONS:

1. Review the district's list of community partners, corporations, key businesses, foundations, chambers, elected officials, city and county leadership, non-profits, public safety, and college and university leaders. Hold listening sessions. Establish regular communication with these groups.
2. Meet with key Out of School Time (OST) providers. Hold listening sessions and learn about after-school and summer programming.
3. Conduct a full assessment of communication systems in place with various groups.
4. Develop relationships and memberships with key community service groups. Host a district listening session for community service clubs/organizations.
5. Schedule introductory media briefings and make myself available to editorial boards and local media.
6. Commit to regular communications and interactions with Parent Advisory Councils (PACs).
7. Review list of upcoming school events to determine participation opportunities.
8. Schedule attendance area school visits to include student forums, staff meetings, and evening parent meetings.
9. Schedule meetings with each employee association's leadership groups (e.g., unions).
10. Establish and develop regular and ongoing communication through media, social media, public events, and meetings to share my vision, plans for improvement, accountability, and data presentations.
11. Schedule regular meetings with teachers/teacher groups to learn about district programming and professional development.
12. Seek opportunities to write guest columns and appear on broadcast media to spread positive messages about MMSD staff, students, and families, and share district news and updates.
13. Write district staff a monthly communication.
14. Establish community visit days (schools, principals, students, parents).
15. Understand key legislative priorities and platforms for advocacy for local, statewide, and national education reform.



Goal 4

Review the overall organization and determine how to enhance effectiveness.

ACTIONS:

1. Develop a community transition team to provide regular feedback guiding this entry plan.
2. Identify all positions to be hired for the executive and senior administrative staff.
3. Review/establish standards of practice, roles, and responsibilities for the executive and senior staff.
4. Review Central Office FTE by division and meet with division heads to discuss.
5. Determine meeting structures with senior leadership (Executive Leadership, Teaching & Learning, Operations, etc.).
6. Design intentional strategies to increase MMSD staff morale.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Ensure an effective transition as the Superintendent of Schools.

Produce a summary of findings, observations, and information from the Listen and Learn phases that will inform the creation of observable action steps.

Identify the most urgent areas in need of support and create steps for improvement.

Determine opportunities to provide regular progress updates, and then share with the community.

Demonstrate a unified relationship between the Board and Superintendent regarding MMSD staff and the Madison community.

