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ENTRY PLAN



Dr. Benjamin Henry

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Introduction

I genuinely believe in the power of listening and asking insightful questions to truly understand the narrative before embarking on any journey. This plan will allow me to assess the organization's strengths and identify growth opportunities. I will identify areas where quick progress can be made and those that demand substantial attention. By leveraging this energy, I aim to establish a strong network of connections and resources within the Harrisburg School District and motivate the community to recommit to the vision of becoming the nation's premier school district.



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Dear Staff and Community,

This opportunity is a way to use my educational background and passion for public education to impact many students' lives positively. Growing up with parents who instilled the values of hard work and commitment, I've carried those principles throughout my educational journey. My goal is to ensure that each student has the chance to reach their full potential. I've dedicated myself to preparing all students in our system for life after high school, whether entering the workforce, joining the military, or pursuing higher education. My own life proves what children from underprivileged communities can achieve with the support of caring adults. It is my unwavering belief that every student, without exception, deserves quality opportunities to thrive.

As the educational leader in the Harrisburg School District, I am honored and inspired. I aim to introduce innovative experiences that enhance student performance and open doors to boundless possibilities for all learners. I plan to build upon the strong foundation set by my predecessor through my entry plan, EXCEL Harrisburg. Listening, learning, problem-solving, and taking action will be the cornerstones of my approach. I am deeply committed to engaging with all stakeholders, including community members, students, educators, support staff, business partners, faith-based partners, civic leaders, and school board members. Understanding the district's strengths, challenges, and immediate opportunities from diverse perspectives is crucial to our success.

My vision is for the Harrisburg School District to become a nationally recognized model for educational excellence. By elevating academic standards, fostering a collaborative atmosphere, leading with transparency, and always prioritizing the needs of our students, I aim to create a forward-thinking and world-class school district. I will use data-driven insights gathered during the entry plan process, to comprehensively understand every aspect of our organization and guide the district toward excellence.

Dr. Benjamin Henry
Superintendent of Harrisburg School District

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OUR MISSION:

The Harrisburg School District is committed to providing a rigorous and relevant education to ALL students in a learning environment that fosters high expectations and data driven and standards aligned instruction provided by committed, highly qualified teachers. We endeavor to provide a culturally responsive, safe, and positive school environment to enhance, empower, and promote the value of lifelong learning for our students. Families and the Harrisburg community are active partners in the educational process

OUR VISION:

In pursuit of educational excellence, our District aims to empower ALL students to become high academic achievers and lifelong learners who understand the need for a rigorous and diversified education and who are motivated and prepared to compete and succeed beyond high school graduation in 21st Century global markets.



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THE DESTINATION: Empowered Futures

A public-school system's primary purpose is to meet its community's needs. In the United States, every child should have an equal opportunity to receive an education that prepares them to contribute responsibly to their communities, states, and country. This belief has been ingrained in our society since the establishment of the first public school, which occurred approximately 150 years before drafting the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. It is a goal we all share and work towards together.

For a school system to fulfill its intended role, it must be designed to guide the community it serves toward the right educational objectives. This responsibility falls on the Board, whose task is to help determine the optimal educational goals for students at the end of their public schooling. This principle applies to Harrisburg School District and all other school systems. Every decision made within the District should originate from input provided by the public, then channeled through their representatives, the administration, and ultimately, the Superintendent of Schools.

Consequently, the success of the district hinges on effective governance, and a Student Outcomes Focused Governance framework can facilitate this. This is why, during my first 100 days as Superintendent, my key focus will be establishing a cohesive school district governance by fostering a transparent, trustworthy, and collaborative relationship with the Harrisburg School District. My objectives include forming a unified leadership and governance team, enhancing communication, and ensuring a seamless transition. By achieving these objectives, we can ensure that our path and destination are well-defined, setting us on course for success.



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GOALS

1. Foster a transparent, collaborative, trusting, and productive relationship with the Harrisburg School District Court Appointed Receiver and elected Board of School Directors.
2. Concentrate intensely on educational programming to address and bridge the gaps in access and opportunities in the lowest-performing schools while also identifying all students' academic, social, and emotional needs.
3. Deliver high-quality support and service to schools, students, parents, and the school community to enhance the organization's effectiveness and efficiency.
4. Identify and analyze the critical issues in the district that act as both barriers and opportunities for improving student performance.
5. Generate chances to actively listen to a wide range of stakeholders and ensure that all voices are heard and involved to foster trust and confidence, achieve a thorough understanding of the District, and reignite enthusiasm and momentum for the District's vision, mission, and comprehensive plan.



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GOAL 1

Foster a transparent, collaborative, trusting, and productive relationship with the Harrisburg School District Court Appointed Receiver and elected Board of School Directors.

Objectives:

1. Share the Entry Plan with the Receiver and School Board for feedback, suggestions, and guidance.

Status	Pending	Initiated	X Completed
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2. Engage in one-on-one meetings with the Receiver and individual Board members to build relationships and broaden perspectives on the district's strengths and needs.

Status	Pending	X Initiated	Completed
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3. Hold first Board retreat to discuss matters of governance, core values and beliefs, communication protocols, roles, responsibilities, norms, expectations, goal/agenda setting, types and amount of information needed, and through what channels to help the Board make quality governance decisions, and regular professional development training for the Board and Superintendent.

Status	Pending	Initiated	X Completed
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4. Collaborate on a performance evaluation format with objectives and indicators of success that can be used to evaluate the Superintendent in year one of tenure.

Status	Pending	X Initiated	Completed
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GOAL 2

Concentrate intensely on educational programming to address and bridge the gaps in access and opportunities in the lowest-performing schools while also identifying all students' academic, social, and emotional needs.

Objectives:

1. Analyze current student achievement data to include the following variables: academic achievement, subgroup achievement, AP enrollment and exam pass rates, dual enrollment, college and career readiness, attendance rates, graduation rates, and disciplinary rates.

Status	Pending	X Initiated	Completed
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2. Meet with the Superintendent's Cabinet to discuss curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the literacy and numeracy plan to determine the current state of teaching and learning and gain an understanding of how schools are progressing toward meeting their goals.

Status	Pending	X Initiated	Completed
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GOAL 2 (cont.)

Concentrate intensely on educational programming to address and bridge the gaps in access and opportunities in the lowest-performing schools while also identifying all students' academic, social, and emotional needs.

Objectives:

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| 3. | Evaluate the system's efforts to improve instruction and graduation rates for all students, with a special focus on literacy, numeracy, post-graduation preparedness, students from poverty, and students with disabilities. | | | |
| Status | Pending | X Initiated | | Completed |
| 4. | Meet with students to listen and learn their perceptions of the quality of relationships and access to academic rigor and extra-curricular activities in their schools and the district. | | | |
| Status | Pending | X Initiated | | Completed |
| 5. | Meet with staff, students, and parents to determine the emotional, social, and cultural support needed to succeed academically. | | | |
| Status | Pending | X Initiated | | Completed |

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GOAL 3

Deliver high-quality support and service to schools, students, parents, and the school community to enhance the organization's effectiveness and efficiency.

Objectives

1. Meet with Act 93, the Harrisburg Education Association(HEA), and AFSCME to discuss school culture and climate and determine the level of central office support needed to ensure continuous improvement at each school.
Status X Pending Initiated Completed
2. Review briefing documents from each division/department. The documents will include areas of major responsibility, major initiatives underway with projected timelines, significant/potential problems, and major decisions that need to be made. Using these documents will allow for a quick understanding of the district's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to progress.
Status Pending X Initiated Completed
3. Meet with school principals and teachers to determine their perceptions of the quality and accessibility of student achievement data and the level of support offered by the district office staff.
Status Pending X Initiated Completed
4. Review and evaluate the district's efforts in leadership development and succession planning for school and district leadership.
Status Pending X Initiated Completed

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GOAL 4

Identify and analyze the critical issues in the district that act as both barriers and opportunities for improving student performance.

Objectives

1. Review and assess the current process for establishing departmental goals to ensure alignment with the District and Board's goals.
Status Pending X Initiated Completed
2. Review data from recent surveys, focus groups, and community meetings to identify barriers and opportunities.
Status Pending X Initiated Completed
3. Meet with the Assistant Superintendent to review ABC data (Attendance, Behavior, Core academics) and discuss reporting and accountability measures.
Status Pending X Initiated Completed
4. Visit all schools to listen and learn from students, families, principals, faculty, and staff.
Status Pending X Initiated Completed

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GOAL 5

Generate opportunities to actively listen to a wide range of stakeholders and ensure that all voices are heard and involved to foster trust and confidence, achieve a thorough understanding of the District, and reignite enthusiasm and momentum for the District's vision, mission, and comprehensive plan.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS WILL INCLUDE:

1. What are the strengths of The Harrisburg School District?
2. What areas need improvement?
3. As competition with cyber charter schools increases, what should the District's priorities be?
4. How can we raise the bar of academic success for all students and eliminate access and opportunity gaps?
5. What will it take to make Harrisburg School District the premier school district in the country?

Objectives:

1. Schedule meetings with various school parent organizations and district advisory groups for initial listening and learning sessions and discuss critical issues facing the system while creating opportunities for rich, honest, authentic engagement.

Status Pending X Initiated Completed

2. Schedule formal and informal meet-and-greet opportunities for community members by attending school and community events.

Status Pending X Initiated Completed

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GOAL 5 (cont.)

Generate chances to actively listen to a wide range of stakeholders and ensure that all voices are heard and involved to foster trust and confidence, achieve a thorough understanding of the District, and reignite enthusiasm and momentum for the District's vision, mission, and comprehensive plan.

Objectives:

3. Meet with city, county, and locally elected officials to listen and learn about areas of concern, the political landscape, opportunities for growth, and solutions to challenges facing the system. Determine and adjust current protocols to routinely communicate with these groups while advocating for the district's children.

Status	Pending	X Initiated	Completed
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4. Establish an initial and concurrent meeting with the Mayor of Harrisburg, City Council President, Police Chief, Fire Chief, and other County/City Officials.

Status	Pending	X Initiated	Completed
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5. Meet with charter school partners, state education leaders, and lawmakers for an initial listening and learning session to discuss critical issues facing the district and state and solicit their support. Establish/understand a routine communication protocol with this group.

Status	Pending	X Initiated	Completed
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GOAL (cont.)

Generate chances to actively listen to a wide range of stakeholders and ensure that all voices are heard and involved to foster trust and confidence, achieve a thorough understanding of the District, and reignite enthusiasm and momentum for the District's vision, mission, and comprehensive plan.

Objectives:

6. Schedule introductory meetings with local media and review/establish protocols for communication with these outlets via the district's Public Relations Coordinator. Offer to meet with the editorial boards. The objective is to establish an open, honest, transparent, and accurate framework for collaboration.

Status	Pending	X Initiated	Completed
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7. Set up initial listening, learning, and leading sessions with key community leaders and organizations to hear concerns and hopes for the school system, discuss critical issues, and solicit support in moving the system forward. These organizations should include but not be limited to:

- ▶ Key leadership across the business community, universities, civic, non-profit, philanthropic, military, public safety, and other organizations and their professional organizations and affiliations.
- ▶ Community faith-based organizations, family groups, key religious leaders, and their professional organizations and affiliations.
- ▶ Key organizations include the Harrisburg Regional Chamber of Commerce, Harrisburg Public Schools Foundation, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA, NAACP, Rotary, and others.

Status	Pending	X Initiated	Completed
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ENTRY PLAN COMPLETION

As we approach the end of the first 100 days, I will have learned much about Harrisburg School District through multiple meetings with key stakeholders. Updates regarding the transition will be shared with the internal and external public every month, with the Board of Education receiving a weekly update. The entry plan will also be made available on our website at www.hbgd.us/EntryPlan.

Implementing the action items in this entry plan will establish a new level of transparency and trust. The board, staff, school families and community members have desired improved openness, confidence, and open communication from the school system. Goals three and five will be thoroughly addressed to meet these concerns. I intend to continue opening the lines of communication as we strive to close gaps and improve student outcomes.

Upon the completion of the entry plan, we will come together for another Board of Education retreat. This will be a collaborative effort where we will announce findings, propose plans, and work together on a planning system to drive improvements in equity, student achievement, and organizational efficiency. Your input and participation in this process are crucial.

The Board-Superintendent team will work together to ensure that the District strengthens its commitment to a positive, productive culture with a laser-like focus on improving student achievement using its continuous improvement model. Proposed plans and agendas will be communicated to the school community to promote understanding, commitment, excitement, and support for our shared goal of making Harrisburg School District the best school district in the country. Let's inspire each other to reach new heights.

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Education and work are the levers to uplift a people. Work alone will not do it unless inspired by the right ideals and guided by intelligence. Education must not simply teach work—it must teach Life.

W.E.B. DuBois



“Empowering Academic Achievers and Lifelong Learners”