



HENRY
COUNTY SCHOOLS

90-Day

Pursuit to

Exceptional

Superintendent's Entry Plan

SEPTEMBER 2024

HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS
i³
Initiate **Opportunity**
Integrate **Access**
Illustrate **Outcomes**

i³ = The HCS Formula for Exceptional



Dear Henry County Schools Community,

I am humbled, honored, and excited to join Henry County Schools as your Superintendent. This opportunity to lead and guide the phenomenal students, teachers, and staff is a work of joy that I look forward to every day.

Assisting students with finding self-fulfillment and purpose, along with opening doors of possibilities through the journey of education, have continued to be my motivation as an educator. Henry County Schools' mission "to empower all students with exceptional opportunities and access that lead to success in a global society" aligns with my values and beliefs in education. These cornerstones will be the foundation for decisions and actions taken on behalf of our students, employees, families, and community in our "Pursuit of Exceptional."

Implementing my 90-day entry plan to ***initiate Opportunities, integrate Access, illustrate Outcomes*** is paramount to ensuring a smooth transition and will guide my focus as the new Superintendent.

This plan begins with *initiating opportunities* to learn, collaborate, and communicate while building cohesion and confidence with our community. It includes listening and communicating with students, employees, families, community members, and board members to gain a deep understanding of the district. It continues with *integrating access* through school visits, allowing for a firsthand experience and a heightened level of engagement while learning and communicating with school leaders, teachers, staff, and students. Along with school visits, events such as Community Cluster Conversations or School Leadership Council meetings, provide increased opportunities to connect and collaborate with parents and families. Finally, *illustrating outcomes* paints the path forward in our shared pursuit. I will present a comprehensive report summarizing the discoveries and next steps toward meeting goals within the strategic plan and beyond. This will provide insight into what is working well, opportunities for growth/improvement, and the steps we need to take to secure the vision and mission of Henry County Schools.

I look forward to us taking this journey of expectations and purpose. As we make Henry County Schools "Without exception, just Exceptional," our commitment to our core beliefs must be steadfast, and ongoing collaboration connected to our Priority Student Outcomes will be key. Our vision becomes a reality when we leverage reliable data, strategy, instruction, and support systems and help students realize expectations and purpose.

All our community's hopes and dreams for our students and staff are possible when we work together. I am enthusiastic about meaningful collaborations "to ensure a high-quality, world-class education for every student" in Henry County Schools. Thank you in advance, and I look forward to partnering with you in the coming weeks and beyond.

Dr. John Pace, III
Superintendent, Henry County Schools

Henry County Schools Board of Education - September 2024



At-A-Glance



Priority Outcomes

3,433 graduates across **11** commencement ceremonies in May 2024

\$64.3 million scholarship dollars earned by Class of 2024

86.8% graduation rate, **59%** of graduates are pathway completers

Advancing Opportunities

43,299 students projected across **53** schools for 2024-2025 school year

49 Career, Technical & Agricultural Education (CTAE) Pathways

3,268 college credits earned through dual enrollment

2,889 students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses

100+ Class of 2024 student-athletes signed letters of intent; **23** received Division I scholarships

Ensuring Access

8th-largest district in Georgia, **124th**-largest district in the nation

19,177 families served at the Henry County Schools Welcome Center since 2021

317 buses in service totaling **1,864,906** miles driven during the 2023-2024 school year

1:1 access to digital student learning devices

7,015 student-athletes competing across **28** middle and high school sports programs

414 events hosted at **2** Performing Arts Centers for a total of **108,858** patrons

1,546 acres maintained, including **88** acres of natural sports turf, **22.5** acres of artificial sports turf

Responsible Stewardship

\$561.4 million budget: **50%** from local taxpayers, **49.7%** from state funding, and **0.3%** federal funding

97% of funds aligned to teaching, learning environment maintenance, and direct student services

\$46 million invested in the 2021-2026 Community-Inspired Strategic Plan (non-personnel)

Exceptional Workforce

5,189 full-time employees: **3,347** certified employees and **1,842** classified staff

1,926 certified employees hold advanced degrees

Unified Governance

Henry County BOE is reigning Georgia School Board Association (GSBA) Large System Governance Team of the Year with **51** years of collective experience as a Board



PURPOSE

The purpose of the i3 Plan is to ensure the Vision of HCS is on the path to realization and the Mission is visible, understood, and valued through our actions and processes. The Strategic Plan will serve as the roadmap that will guide the exploration and discovery process leading to next steps that will warrant consideration once the plan is complete.

Implementing a plan that embeds smoothly into the daily operations of HCS is paramount to creating the synergy that can be expected moving forward in the “Pursuit of Exceptional.” All aspects of the plan encompass 90 days to engage and collaborate with a wide range of key stakeholders, including, but not limited to, students, parents, teachers, principals, district staff, school board members, community partners, business partners, as well as inter-governmental local and state partners. The i3 plan will unfold in three phases:

PHASE ONE

- **Initiate Opportunities** to Learn and Communicate, Creating Cohesion and Confidence in Henry County Schools: the Action Steps/Initiatives in this phase will occur during the first 15-25 days of the plan.

PHASE TWO

- **Integrate Access** to Assess Student Learning Aligned to the Strategic Plan: the Action Steps/Initiatives in this phase will occur between days 16-75 of the plan.

PHASE THREE

- **Illustrate Outcomes** toward Exceptional in HCS through Process: this final phase will provide findings and recommend next steps, painting and visualizing the pathway forward in “Pursuit of Exceptional” during the final 65-90 days of the plan.

GOALS

The goals of the i3 Plan are as follows:

1. **Ensure an effective, efficient, and orderly transition of leadership**, with emphasis on increased student learning and achievement within safe and secure school environments.
2. **Build a cohesive and professional relationship** with the Board of Education.

3. **Create opportunities to listen broadly and deeply** to stakeholders across Henry County Schools and gain a comprehensive understanding of all key aspects, including the district's culture and climate, inclusive of student, employee, parent, and community morale.
4. **Amplify and connect the framework for success** to all stakeholders regarding HCS' Vision, Mission, and the Strategic Plan and its action steps while building on the commitment to continuous improvement.

Initiate Opportunities to Learn and Communicate, Creating Cohesion and Confidence

3 **PHASE ONE**



Phase 1 - *Initiate Opportunities*: This component places great emphasis on learning through communication with the Board of Education and Executive Cabinet regarding the way of work in Henry County Schools and meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan. A deep dive into district data with Executive Cabinet occurs during this phase as a medium to communicate, learn, and facilitate cohesion. This orientation phase provides opportunity for coherence-making, establishing confidence for stakeholders.

GOVERNANCE TEAM

To ensure HCS has a priority focus on meeting the needs of all children, the Board of Education and Superintendent must develop a positive, responsive, and collaborative relationship, both individually and collectively. During this phase, the Superintendent will work with the Board on matters of governance, core values and beliefs, management, communication styles/protocols, and structures.

Partnering with the Board to determine the most effective initiatives to support every child in the district will involve several steps. To achieve desired outcomes, the Superintendent will provide a forum for collaboration on shared values and norms, communication protocols, roles, and responsibilities.

The Superintendent will strengthen relationships with the Board and obtain a broader perspective on district matters through strategic meetings designed to obtain input and insight regarding the i3 Plan. Through these sessions, it will be determined how the Board Chair, Vice Chair, and board members work in partnership with the Superintendent and Executive Cabinet to meet the district's objectives. Additionally, establishing regular meetings with the Board Chair will ensure goal alignment and synergy in continuing the work as a unified governance team.

ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT AND OPERATIONS OF CABINET/SENIOR STAFF

Under the direction of the Superintendent, the Executive Cabinet will support the key functions of the school district. It is the responsibility of the Superintendent that we operate as a highly effective team,

Alignment & Operations - Continued

dedicated to a positive, professional culture focused on service and improving morale, with the ultimate goal of meeting the needs of all students.

To further ensure cohesiveness across all levels of leadership, the Superintendent will facilitate discussions about leadership team structures, protocols, norms, and practices. The forums include the Superintendent's Executive Cabinet retreat, which will convene to review department initiatives in alignment with the Strategic Plan, including School Improvement Plans, the most recent CCRPI and Georgia Milestone achievement data, and current or anticipated vacancies in the district office or school leadership.

Further collaboration with the cabinet team will focus on aligning and executing key strategies and ensuring each division is dedicated to its core function and has a student-focused agenda. The Superintendent will conduct department reviews to ensure alignment and coherence within the current organizational structure and initiate plans to review the monitoring of key metrics and customer service goals for each department. These steps will ensure district office performance can be measured in alignment with the Strategic Plan. The Superintendent will also review succession planning and ongoing leadership development plans.

STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

In advancing student learning and achievement, the Superintendent will review Continuous School Improvement Plans for CSI and ATSI schools as well as 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 baseline data aligned with Georgia State Standards PK-12 and triangulate with CCRPI and Georgia Milestone Data.

Additionally, the Superintendent will review and evaluate formative assessments aligned with state standards, intervention programs (Tier 2 and 3), and the MTSS process. Ensuring alignment with student achievement data and the Strategic Plan will also include appraisals of teacher and school leader professional learning plans.

SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Action steps geared toward understanding student and staff support structures are defined within several approaches addressing student behavior. The Superintendent will examine practices in place for Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, Proactive Discipline Strategies, Conflict Resolution, or other techniques. The evaluation will incorporate an assessment of discipline infractions and out-of-school suspension data compared to the state and other large school districts for 2023-2024 aligned with the previous Code of Conduct. An analysis of data trends for out-of-school suspension and discipline infractions over a three-year period will focus on factors such as gender, grade level, race, and disability.

The Superintendent will assess staff professional learning pertaining to student behavior and discipline, the impact of Student Services, Counselors, Mental Health and Wellness Facilitators, and outsourced services. Meetings with the Henry County Police Chief and Commander of the School Resource Officer Unit are intended to provide insight regarding the safety and security partnership between the district and county police. The assessment will also include response protocol and practices for the district's "Safe Henry" plan in conjunction with School Resource Officers and the School Safety and Security Department.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Superintendent will communicate with HCS employees, parents, and students via email, phone calls, text messages, and the district website and social media platforms and encourage engagement through these platforms. Additionally, the Superintendent will meet with representatives from influential educational organizations and arrange introductions with local media as needed to ensure effective communication and representation.

OPERATIONAL CULTURE

Assessing operational culture will include meetings with the Chief Financial Officer to review the FY24 and FY25 budgets and pursuing opportunities to learn about the impact of recently passed legislation on the FY25 budget.

The Superintendent will also meet with the Chief Operations Officer to learn about the district's facilities and portfolio.

In addition to reviewing the five-year Capital Plan, the Superintendent will learn about and discuss the impact of new legislation, including Senate Bill 233 (the Georgia Promise Scholarship Act), House Bill 874 Emergency Action Plans, Emergency Response Teams, Practice Drills, Senate Bill 395 Opioid Antagonist, Senate Bill 169 Discipline Hearing and Instructional Materials, and Senate Bill 351 Acceptable Use Policy for Internet, Social Media, and Bullying/Cyberbullying.

School Climate and Culture Visits (C&C)

Conduct Climate and Culture (C&C) Visits to gain a snapshot of each school. C&C Visits are brief school encounters that provide valuable insights regarding "look-fors" in follow-up visits and digging deeper into current data that support student achievement and effective school leaders and teachers. C&C Visits may include members of the Board of Education, Executive Cabinet, and Cabinet to "walk and talk," allowing the Superintendent to better understand their role in alignment with the school visit. Most importantly, the visits serve as the Superintendent's first connection with the school principal and internal stakeholders.



3 PHASE TWO

Integrate Access to Assess Student Learning and Achievement



Phase 2 - *Integrate Access*: This component focuses on student learning and achievement in alignment with the Strategic Plan and incorporates an “Instructional Leadership Tour,” visiting and observing the Strategic Plan in action at all school sites. This phase focuses on getting to know students and employees, particularly school leadership, and also provides a panoramic view of climate and culture. The Superintendent, Executive Cabinet, and Cabinet will participate in engagement opportunities throughout the community with parents, students, and partners.

GOVERNANCE TEAM

Provide a “Rhythm of Communication” with the Board of Education on the progress of the i3 Plan. By utilizing the methods currently in place, the Board remains up-to-date and in sync with the execution of the plan. If any adjustments are needed, these would be checkpoints to notify.

The Superintendent will communicate regularly with the Board by providing updates at Agenda Review meetings and Study Sessions. Strategic Plan Quarterly updates will highlight how the i3 Plan aligns with district goals. The Superintendent will schedule meetings with individual board members as needed.

ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT AND OPERATIONS OF CABINET/SENIOR STAFF

The Superintendent will seek to identify chronically underperforming schools and conduct a root-cause analysis to understand gaps in meeting the needs of students. These assessments will also include Superintendent reviews of evaluation systems for all employee groups within the district and school sites. The Superintendent will also assess how departments align and work toward student achievement

Developing a comprehensive perspective will include evaluating how all departments’ Key Performance Indicators align with Priority Student Outcomes and the Strategic Plan. Finally, the Superintendent will assess the current professional development efforts and capacity for meeting the training needs of principals, teachers, and district staff.

STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

It is the responsibility of every employee to ensure all students graduate from HCS college-, career-, and life-ready. To ensure instruction is occurring at high levels, teachers must have a rigorous K-12 instructional curriculum, pacing guides/unit plans designed to facilitate optimal learning opportunities. It is important to equip educators with tools to monitor student progress and ensure they are using those tools, as well as to have research-based interventions to deploy when the students are not yet performing on grade level. Most importantly, we must ensure all decisions are made based on Priority Student Outcomes. ***HCS will advance opportunities, access, and outcomes for every student in literacy proficiency at every grade***

level, readiness to learn at every grade level, and college-, career-, and life-ready skills post-graduation.

In keeping with the district's vision to ensure a high-quality, world-class education for every student, the Superintendent will evaluate the current assessment system with the curriculum and instructional staff and review the infrastructure that manages assessment demands. The Superintendent will review disaggregated CCRPI data, instructional program alignment, current goals, and priority action areas through meetings with the district's instructional leadership team.

To enhance student learning and achievement, high on the list of priorities for the Superintendent is determining the process HCS uses to ensure all students are performing at grade level or receiving appropriate, targeted interventions (MTSS).

These objectives will encompass determining how comprehensive and research-based the current curriculum is, to what degree it is aligned among schools, and assessing the fidelity with which the curriculum is used throughout the district.

This will also entail a review of curriculum and programs, particularly of student subgroups currently not demonstrating expected target goals.

Understanding strategies around promoting advanced coursework, such as Honors and Advanced Placement programs, will be instrumental to increasing access and equity. Related to these efforts, the Superintendent will review the methods or initiatives implemented to increase SAT and ACT scores, the number of National Merit Scholars, and AP/STEM schools.

To further meet the needs of every child in the district, the Superintendent will assess how students are identified as Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities (SWD), English Language Learners, and Gifted, and evaluate strategies implemented to improve outcomes for these students.

Determining principals' autonomy and authority based on the organizational structure and opportunities to contribute to decision-making at the district office is a key action step within the Superintendent's Plan, ensuring principals, as a vital leadership lever, are empowered to facilitate student success.

SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

In evaluating the district's support structures to advance health and wellness, the Superintendent will review student discipline infractions and Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies/Practices. This phase will also include assessing schoolwide and districtwide professional development efforts for all school staff aligned with discipline infractions, particularly those related to harm to others, as denoted by the Georgia Department of Education.

The Superintendent will also observe and discuss the role of Student Services, Counselors, and Mental Health and Wellness Facilitators, ISS in secondary schools, and the new role of ISS in elementary schools.

Additionally, the Superintendent will review student attendance data and practices to minimize absences and evaluate employee school and non-school site visits that indirectly impact school sites.

Instructional Walks

Conduct visits to schools in implementing the Instructional Walks with principals, teachers, support staff, and Executive Cabinet to discuss where we are as a district and where we need to be to meet the needs of all children. These walks will focus on student engagement, school leader and teacher effectiveness, safety, and security across HCS. This is where we will see how the five Strategic Actions are being implemented in schools to achieve the Priority Student Outcomes set forth in the Strategic Plan.

P.O.W.E.R Forum

*During the first and second semesters, the district will host a **Priority Outcomes Wielding Exceptional Results Forum (P.O.W.E.R. Forum)** with all principals. These forums will provide growth and professional development opportunities for instructional leaders to learn and share strategies that work across HCS. They will also provide opportunities for the Superintendent to support schools with issues that need to be resolved and ensure student achievement while elevating accountability for all leaders, starting with Executive Cabinet and Cabinet, to support and assist school leaders in finding solutions for issues that may impede student learning and achievement goals. This will be the most collaborative forum to positively impact the goal of developing effective school leaders and teachers.*



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Public schools require a commitment from the entire community to be successful. It is critical to understand the culture, history, and expectations of Henry County. The Superintendent and staff must be proactive and deliberate in reaching out to stakeholders, particularly those who may be underrepresented in public engagement, to ensure an equitable voice.

There will be a focus on establishing openness and transparency in all internal and external communication systems and protocols. Most importantly, the leverage school principals wield in creating an environment for engagement is crucial, making collaboration a priority.

With a commitment to deepening stakeholder engagement, the Superintendent will attend Community Cluster Conversations, meet with the Student & Parent Advisory to gain insight and feedback on how HCS can achieve its Strategic Plan goals, and meet with current Community Leadership Academy members. Meetings with HCS Teachers of the Year, Educational Support Personnel of the Year, and other honored staff members will provide further insight regarding Strategic Plan priorities.

Supporting these objectives and strengthening community partnerships will also include observing and discussing the implementation of the HCS mentorship program, visiting the Welcome Center, and reviewing and/or developing capacity-building and leadership development plans.

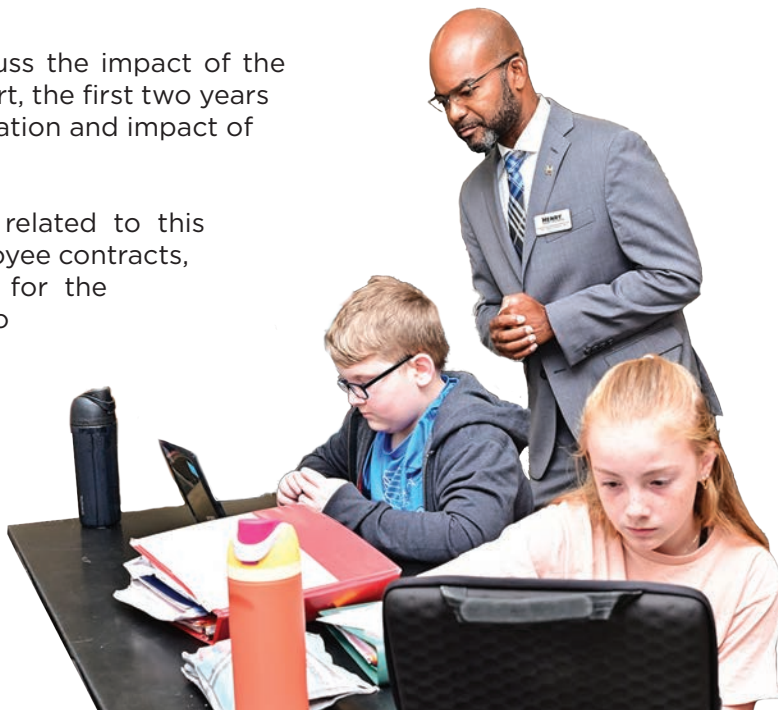
OPERATIONAL CULTURE

The Superintendent will employ various strategies in embracing the Board's Strategic Action goal to advance a high-performing operational culture. These include observing and discussing cybersecurity updates based on school site visits.

The Superintendent will also observe and discuss the impact of the deployment of facilities and maintenance support, the first two years of the five-year Capital Plan, and the implementation and impact of new legislation.

To accomplish the community-inspired goals related to this Phase, the Superintendent will also review employee contracts, salary schedules, and benefits in preparation for the FY26 budget. Activities in this phase will also extend to reviewing all non-school site employee evaluation systems and resource allocation to ensure the district's budget is aligned to support student achievement.

The Superintendent will observe and discuss the degree to which all offices monitor metrics to meet the needs of internal and external stakeholders to ensure efficiency and support for student achievement.



3 PHASE THREE

illustrate **Outcomes** Toward an Exceptional Future in HCS



Phase 3 – Illustrate Outcomes: This component establishes next steps on a continued pathway toward accomplishing goals of the Strategic Plan. This illustration should advise if the Strategic Plan is being implemented from the view of each school and the district.

GOVERNANCE TEAM

To ensure progress toward an exceptional future for the school district, the Superintendent will provide a summary report to close out the i3 Plan, receive feedback, and communicate next steps. Once the focus areas have been finalized, the Superintendent and staff will begin devising strategies and initiatives based on findings.

Working as a united governance team, the Board of Education and Superintendent will ensure shared ownership of the outcomes. The Superintendent will lead the development of systems and processes that give every student access to a high-quality, world-class education.

ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT AND OPERATIONS OF CABINET/SENIOR STAFF

The Superintendent will host a second retreat with the Executive Cabinet to review the findings of the district's initiatives in alignment with the Strategic Plan and divisional Operational Management Plans after completing Phase II of the i3 Plan. The Superintendent will provide insight regarding progress and any need for modifications.

Additionally, the Superintendent will reassess communication and decision-making with the Executive Cabinet and identify areas for improvement. In promoting a culture of continuous improvement, the Superintendent will also review and consider adjustments, as necessary, to focus on increased efficiency and alignment that prioritizes safety, security, and student engagement and achievement.

STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

After conducting school visits and meeting with school leaders, student achievement data should be available from the Georgia Department of Education for the previous school year. At this point, we should be able to compare ongoing progress monitoring data for the 2024-2025 school year to see if we are on track to meet goals established at the beginning of the school year based on divisional Operational Management Plans, Continuous School Improvement Plans, and Priority Student Outcomes. This will allow us to confirm the strategies in place for student achievement and/or adjust mid-year to meet student learning needs using data-driven decision-making and instruction.

Student Learning & Achievement - Continued

Additional resources that may be required to assist schools in meeting student and teaching learning needs can be made in alignment with the Strategic Plan, including beyond the core initiatives that are an equal companion to the core curriculum for most students.



SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Understanding how the school and classroom learning environment foster the physical, academic, emotional, and social health of students will confirm our Priority Student Outcomes and/or provide next steps for improvement. We should be able to describe the inputs and strategies witnessed during school site visits that ensure a safe and secure environment. This should be demonstrated by strategies that incentivize positive behaviors, extrinsically and intrinsically, for students and employees.

We should also be able to demonstrate understanding by parent and student stakeholders regarding expected student behaviors. Employee health and wellness should have a visible impact that can be felt, seen, quantified, and qualified through feedback and retention. Lastly, HCS should be in the process, or taking the next steps, to become a model for a supportive, safe, and secure environment through increased focus on personal safety, personal health, and well-being for students and employees at the conclusion of this plan.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Superintendent will assess connectivity with all stakeholders, providing clear examples and modifications based on stakeholder actions and responses, including evaluating the mentorship program and Welcome Center's impact on students and families. The Superintendent will also champion the district's mandate to provide resources and support for families connected to HCS students through initiatives such as adult learning or upskilling opportunities that impact the household positively and ultimately connect to student achievement. The goal of the i3 Plan is to foster a culture in which stakeholders feel welcome and valued.

OPERATIONAL CULTURE

The Superintendent will ensure that the support mechanisms provided by Human Resource Services, Business and Financial Services, Information Services, and Facilities and Maintenance are aligned with the objectives of the Strategic Plan. The Superintendent will evaluate how the alignment of human capital, budget, compensation, working environments, and resource availability impact employee retention and, subsequently, Priority Student Outcomes and the overall Strategic Plan.

The Superintendent will seek to understand the interconnectivity of the Human Resource Services, Business and Financial Services, Information Services, and Facilities and Maintenance divisions and how making the best decision has a short- and long-term impact critical to student achievement. Insights gained from the last phase of the plan will provide insight and guide the next steps.

CONCLUSION

Once the i3 Plan has concluded, the findings will be presented to the Board of Education to garner feedback for next steps. From the results and feedback, the Superintendent and staff will implement modifications, as needed, with the strategies and initiatives designed to improve Priority Student Outcomes. The team will also consider new developments or issues that may have arisen during this time.

Remaining connected throughout this entire process as a governance team, the Board of Education will provide direction, and the Superintendent will ensure our constituents are engaged in the process with the outcome being "Exceptional Support, Exceptional Access, and an Exceptional Future." **Continuing the "Pursuit of Exceptional" by embracing the process of continuous improvement will ultimately bring to fruition the vision and mission for all students in Henry County Schools.**