Medford Public Schools

Transition/Entry Findings & Next Steps

Building Belonging, Excellence, and Opportunity Across Medford Public Schools

Agenda Item VI.4
October 20, 2025

Introduction

When I began my tenure as Interim Superintendent eight months ago, I did so with deep gratitude and a strong sense of purpose. As someone who grew up in Medford and is proud to have been educated through its public schools, serving this community has been both a personal honor and a professional privilege.



Over these past months, I have had the opportunity to view the district through a new lens as I listened closely, engaged with stakeholders, and learned from the diverse perspectives that define our school communities. Through this process, I gained a deeper understanding of our district's many strengths, as well as the areas where continued focus and alignment are needed.

This ***Report of Entry Findings*** captures that learning and reflection. It represents not only what I have come to understand about the Medford Public Schools during this period, but also how these insights will inform our collective work ahead in the development of a cohesive District Strategic Plan designed to advance belonging, equity, and excellence across all schools.

Medford Public Schools

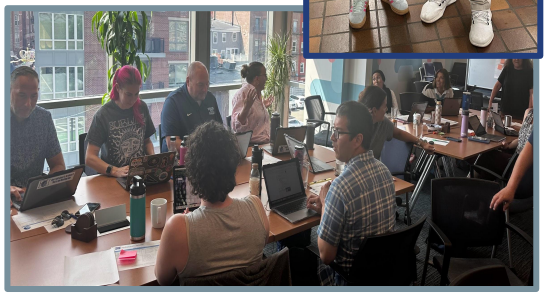
Transition/Entry Plan Purpose

As detailed in the Transition/Entry Plan presented on January 27, 2025, the purpose was to:

- Ensure a thoughtful and seamless transition in leadership from the previous Superintendent to the Interim Superintendent.
- Provide consistency and stability for the district throughout the transition.
- Inform the school community about transition activities and maintain open communication.
- Strengthen relationships with staff, students, families, and community partners.
- Identify district strengths and areas for growth.
- Share key learnings gathered from staff, caregivers, and community engagement.
- Outline next steps grounded in belonging, equity, and student achievement.







Dr. Suzanne B Galusi's Transition & Entry Plan

Transition/Entry Plan Process







Gather Stakeholder Voice & Input

Facilitated over 30 Listening Sessions

Attended/ Participated in District and Community Events, Districtwide School and Leadership Meetings

Reviewed survey data

Observe Schools in Action

Conducted over 200 classroom visits/observations to date

Reviewed data with Senior and District Leadership Teams

Enhance Understanding of District Operations

Held meetings with Finance, Facilities, IT, Athletics, Community Schools

Reviewed overall functioning and current structures

Hired key personnel in these areas to support needs, structure, and growth

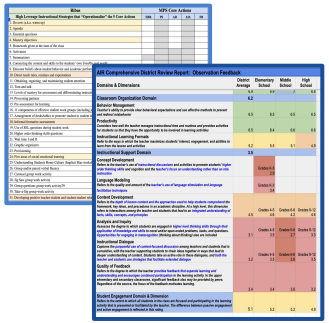
Advance/Establish Shared Understanding, Alignment & Next Steps

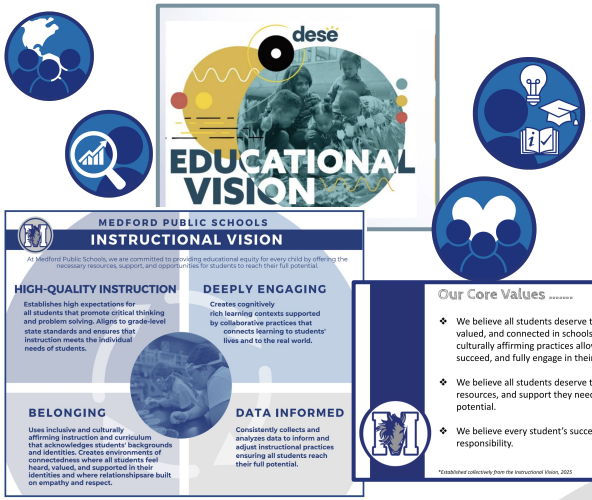
Establish/Enhance district organization, systems and structures

Continue instructional alignment work already in progress

Inform the upcoming Strategic Plan

Road to MPS Educational Equity & Excellence to date...







LYNCH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

UnboundEd



Instructional Alignment

- Observational findings *(DESE AIR, SpringPoint , UnBoundEd, LLA)*
- Evaluation Alignment
- DESE Instructional Leadership Institute

MPS Instructional Vision

- Aligned to DESE's vision
- Included Equity Statement
- Creation of Core Values

Access & Opportunity for ALL

- Staff PD, *Creating Opportunity for All,* grounded in The New Teacher Project (TNTP)'s "The Opportunity Myth"
- Sustained coaching through UnBoundEd, LLA, HILL for Literacy
- Aligned walkthrough schedule and tool
- GLEAM planning & instruction

To continue the work of establishing and advancing Educational Equity & Excellence for all, the following findings will be grounded in TNTP's national framework of *Belonging, Consistency, and Coherence*, which will ensure our work in Medford Public Schools aligns with current research on what makes schools truly transformative.



- **Belonging:**
  - Every student feels known, safe, and valued.
- **Consistency:**
  - Every student experiences high-quality, grade-level learning in a safe, well-maintained environment.
- **Coherence:**
  - Every system, from instruction to communication to facilities, works together to support learning.

Overall MPS Strengths & Areas for Growth



Strengths

- Engaged & supportive stakeholders
  - Educators, Staff, Students, Caregivers & Community Members
- Students represent diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and talents
- Deep community commitment to students' success and well-being
- Shared value for inclusion, equity, safety, and excellence



Areas for Growth

- Maintenance of facilities & security upgrades
- Alignment & coherence of communication
  - School-to-School, Classroom, Athletics, Communication Chain
- Capacity and expansion of Afterschool Program
- Diversify educator staffing
- Creating more visible and supportive opportunities for neurodivergent and LGBTQ+ students

Belonging: Knowing, Supporting, and Growing Every Student

Strengths:

- Strong relationships among educators, students, and families
- Shared value for inclusion and equity
- Deep community connection and pride



Belonging is not just something we feel. It is something we build. When schools design systems, environments, and routines that are safe, inclusive, and well cared for, they send a powerful message that everyone matters here. Through these structural commitments, everyone is supported to grow, achieve, and believe in their own success.





Belonging: Knowing, Supporting, and Growing Every Student

Focus Area	Action Items
Expand student voice and opportunities for leadership	❖ Current implementation of MPS Instructional Vision ❖ Continue aligned professional development ❖ Fidelity to SEL practices (Responsive Classroom, Restorative Practices) ❖ Mustang Moment
Build structures that help every student, staff, and caregiver feel seen, head, valued, and supported	❖ Collective charge of belonging this year ❖ Review engagement strategies across school communities ➢ Continued support for LGBTQ+ student groups/ increase visibility initiatives ➢ Review instructional supports/enrichment for neurodivergent students, especially at the elementary level ❖ Continuing professional development ➢ Instructional Vision/ GLEAM ➢ Culturally responsive/equity-centered/trauma-informed approaches ➢ Safe Schools ❖ Fidelity to Responsive Classroom and Restorative Practices ❖ Equitable access to programs and supports ❖ Policies that affirm and protect every student's identity
Update/Modernize facilities and security	❖ Ensure security measures in place and followed ❖ Safe, well-maintained facilities ❖ Consistent communication and family engagement

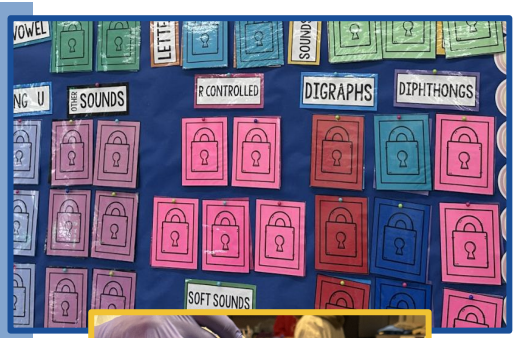




Consistency: Ensuring Equitable Access to High-Quality Learning

Strengths:

- Dedicated, skilled educators committed to growth and improvement
- Collaborative culture among instructional teams
- Students are invested and ready for learning
- Engaged caregivers and community members in advancing instructional excellence









Consistency builds trust and ensures that every student, in every school, experiences the same high standard of excellence. It extends beyond instruction to include the environments, resources, and communication systems that sustain learning. True consistency means a student's opportunity to succeed never depends on which school they attend or which classroom they enter.

Consistency: Ensuring Equitable Access to High-Quality Learning

Accountability Ratings by Student Group (2024–2025)

Student Group	2024 Rating (%)	2025 Rating (%)	Change (2025 - 2024)
All Students	50	45	-5
High Needs	40	29	-11
English Learners (EL)	35	30	-5
Low Income	29	25	-4
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	49	28	-21
Asian	55	56	1
Black/African American	47	45	-2
Hispanic/Latino	32	19	-13
Multi-Race	41	59	18
White	46	43	-3

DESE uses the Accountability System to measure how well schools and districts are supporting student learning and growth. Accountability ratings are based on multiple indicators: student achievement and growth on MCAS, progress toward English language proficiency, chronic absenteeism, graduation and dropout rates, and advanced coursework completion at the high school level.

These results highlight the need for consistent instructional quality, data-informed and inclusive supports, and targeted interventions to promote equitable progress for all learners, particularly Hispanic/Latino, Students with Disabilities, and High-Needs subgroups.

Consistency: Ensuring Equitable Access to High-Quality Learning

Focus Area	Action Items
Strengthen vertical alignment and instructional coaching across levels	❖ Conduct Humanities curriculum review and alignment, ensuring inclusive curriculum, representation, and HQIM ❖ Increased time on learning and updated school schedule have provided increased access and opportunity for students ❖ District Walkthrough Schedules and tools aligned to the Instructional Vision now implemented ❖ Continued partnership/coaching from UnboundEd, Lynch Leadership Academy, HILL for Literacy
Review of current student services and supports	❖ Review of current practices and materials ongoing ❖ Develop and distribute updated caregiver resources for academic and college prep and support ❖ Professional development in effective co-teaching practices
Increase rigor and student voice in learning	❖ Implementation of MPS Instructional Vision ❖ GLEAM planning and instruction ❖ Alignment of student tasks with grade-level state standards
Instructional Technology (IT)	❖ Review screen time policies and find balance between technology and offline learning ❖ Review and enhance monitoring systems for technology usage both at school and remotely
Continue to diversify educator staffing	❖ City Year, Student Teachers ❖ Audit recruitment efforts/procedures

"...collect and analyze student data to design and implement differentiated structures of support, coaching, and professional development to build the capacity of staff (Principals, Dept leads, teachers) to deliver and support culturally responsive instruction."





"Hire an Assistant Superintendent for Academics & Instruction with K-12 expertise, data fluency, and an equity focus."

Coherence: Aligning Systems, Priorities & Partnerships

Strengths:

- Shared vision for student success and community partnerships
- Strong sense of purpose and collaboration



Superintendent's Friday Message

October 17, 2025

Opening Message From Dr. Galusi

Dear Families & Caregivers,

One of the most gratifying aspects of this school year so far has been the spirit from our student's embracing their theme of **Belonging.** In my walkthroughs around the district I've seen students welcoming new ideas, learning in small groups, and challenging themselves to meet new people.

Late last Friday, students at Medford High School felt a sense of belonging thanks to a visit from the Tufts University Society of Wor





Coherence ensures that every part of the district (operations, instruction, and communication) works in sync toward a shared purpose. When systems are aligned and information is clear, families understand expectations, staff can focus on instruction, and students experience stability and trust.
In a coherent system, messages, maintenance, and mission move together to support learning and belonging for all.

Medford Public Schools

Coherence: Aligning Systems, Priorities & Partnerships

Focus Area	Action Items
Improve communication alignment districtwide	❖ Review current systems in place ❖ Streamline processes and communication chains across schools and departments ❖ Establish annual community forums to inform practice, honor stakeholder input, and strengthen community belonging
Continue facilities maintenance and safety upgrades	❖ Facilities Condition report complete and aligning to capital planning work ❖ Creation of Chief Operations Officer position overseeing Facilities, IT, Security ❖ Security camera, keyless entry and vape detector upgrades to be completed by end of 2025 ❖ Establishing District Safety Committee
Academic coherence and alignment	❖ Promote rigor, equity, and belonging across all schools and departments ❖ High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) PreK-12+ ❖ Instructional Vision to Strategic Planning
Expand afterschool program capacity for access and equity	❖ Task Force established and meeting ❖ 68 seats were added for school year 25-26 ❖ BASEC audit and training of MPS programming ❖ Staffing structure upgrade ❖ Continue to improve capacity







Building Our Future Together

Medford's greatest strength is its people, caring educators, families, and students committed to one another. Our next chapter is about focus and alignment as we build systems that match our heart with our practice so that every student learns, thrives, and belongs.



- **Engage stakeholders in defining priorities for the vision, mission, and leadership of Medford Public Schools**
  - Diverse community voices need to be captured
  - Varied meeting format to meet community needs

- **Use all findings to inform the upcoming District Strategic Plan**
  - The strategic plan will provide a coherent roadmap for systematic improvement and student achievement, detailing the actions and benchmarks required to achieve sustained success.



Building Belonging, Excellence, and Opportunity Across Medford Public Schools







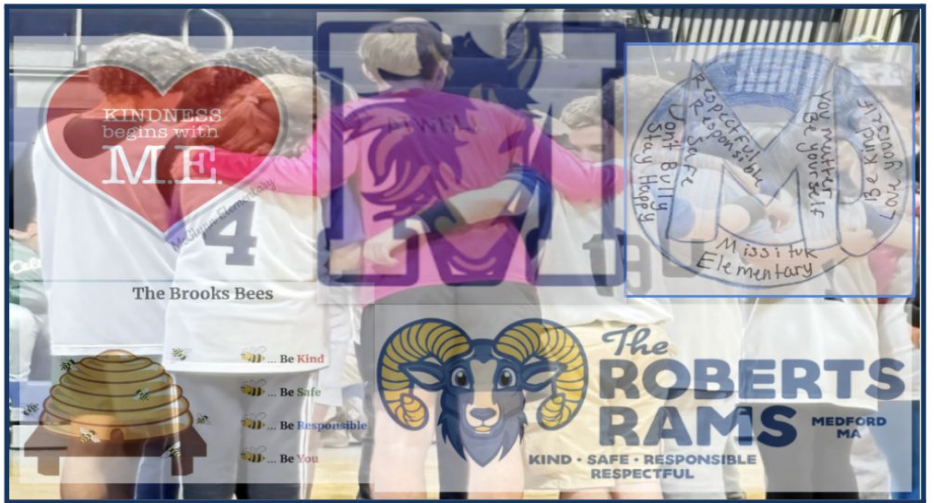












Our Core Values .....

- We believe all students deserve to feel seen, heard, valued, and connected in schools where inclusive, culturally affirming practices allow them to grow, succeed, and fully engage in their learning.

- We believe all students deserve the opportunities, resources, and support they need to reach their full potential.

- We believe every student's success is our shared responsibility.

**Established collectively from the Instructional Vision, 2025*

MEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INSTRUCTIONAL VISION

At Medford Public Schools, we are committed to providing educational equity for every child by offering the necessary resources, support, and opportunities for students to reach their full potential.

HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTION

Establishes high expectations for all students that promote critical thinking and problem solving. Aligns to grade-level state standards and ensures that instruction meets the individual needs of students.

DEEPLY ENGAGING

Creates cognitively rich learning contexts supported by collaborative practices that connects learning to students' lives and to the real world.



BELONGING

Uses inclusive and culturally affirming instruction and curriculum that acknowledges students' backgrounds and identities. Creates environments of connectedness where all students feel heard, valued, and supported in their identities and where relationshipsare built on empathy and respect.

DATA INFORMED

Consistently collects and analyzes data to inform and adjust instructional practices ensuring all students reach their full potential.