

November 18, 2025 Superintendent Entry Plan Report

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Introduction

For the past four months, I have been implementing a Superintendent Entry Plan for the Central Unified School District (CUSD). A positive Superintendent Entry Plan is critical to the success of the new Superintendent and requires extensive short and long-range planning.

This report details my findings from July 1 to October 31, 2025. This document is a culmination of my conversations, data analysis, observation, and survey results.



My entry plan sought to accomplish the following goals

1

Ensure a seamless transition of leadership with Dr. Eimear O' Brien (CSUD Interim Superintendent)

4

Establish a clear working relationship with the Central Unified Board of Trustees

2

Provide a structure to listen and Learn about Central Unified School District.

5

Review the organizational structure, climate, budget, and key work processes to ensure proper alignment of resources, efficiency, and effectiveness in meeting the educational needs of all students.

3

Ensure that multiple stakeholders' perspectives and voices are heard.

6

Create an instructional improvement process that results in increases in student achievement

7

Create the framework for a vision of the future and a strategic planning process

Outcomes/ Deliverables

Expected results:

- The Superintendent will present a report on observations, findings, and recommendations for the future.
- The Superintendent will begin to facilitate an energized CUSD community excited about the focus and new direction for the organization. (In Progress)
- The Superintendent will develop a visitation to all of the District's schools. (Completed)

Preface Statement

Central Unified School District Overview

- Public school system in Fresno County
- Operates 26 school buildings
- Employs approximately 1,700 staff members
- Serves nearly 16,000 students

Achievements & Recognition

- Multiple California Distinguished Schools
- Schools recognized among the Best Schools in California
- Recipient of the National Blue Ribbon Award

Academics & Performance

- State assessment results show continued improvement
- District recently achieved its most decorated performance results in history

Funding & Budget

- Funding sources include:
 - State allocations
 - Local property taxes
 - Federal funds
 - Miscellaneous grants
- District budget exceeds \$300 million, aligned with county and state economies

Community & Partnerships

- Strong support from families, teachers, and staff
- Active stakeholders who champion student success
- Partnerships with the City of Fresno and local businesses



Structure of Entry Plan

I engaged in a deliberate effort to discern, evaluate, listen, learn, and begin to develop plans for the future, in collaboration with the Board of Trustees and the Central community



Comprehensive data analysis and document perusal



Communication with the news media for reporting to the public



Cultivating a positive working relationship with the Central Unified School District Board of Trustees.



Meetings, Interviews, Meet & Greet, school Visits and student activities.



Utilization of outside expertise to analyze gaps.

Structure of Entry Plan

The following stakeholders from the CUSD community were interviewed to gather information:

- Board of Trustees
- Central Office Staff
- Collective bargaining representatives
- Community members/organizations
- Higher education officials
- Local Charities/Foundations
- Mayor, City Council Members, and other elected officials
- Parents
- Students
- Classified and Confidential Employees Groups
- Site Administrators

Board of Trustees

To function effectively, the Board and Superintendent must build a collaborative, positive, and trusting governance team. During the Entry Plan process, the Superintendent met with the Board—both individually and collectively—to align on core values, governance practices, and working relationship expectations.

Entry Plan Activities:

- Dr. Marshall presented his Entry Plan to the Board of Trustees for Feedback.
- Dr. Marshall reviewed the Board of Trustees calendar/bylaws to assess continuity of governance.
- The Board of Trustees Policies and Administrative Regulations were reviewed.
- Dr. Marshall conducted individual meetings with the Board of Trustees to build positive, productive relationships.
- Dr. Marshall coordinated a retreat for the Board of Education to focus on shared values, initiate reflections on organizational structure, areas of improvement, and implementation of a systemic accountability system.



Board of Trustees

Initial Impressions and Observations:

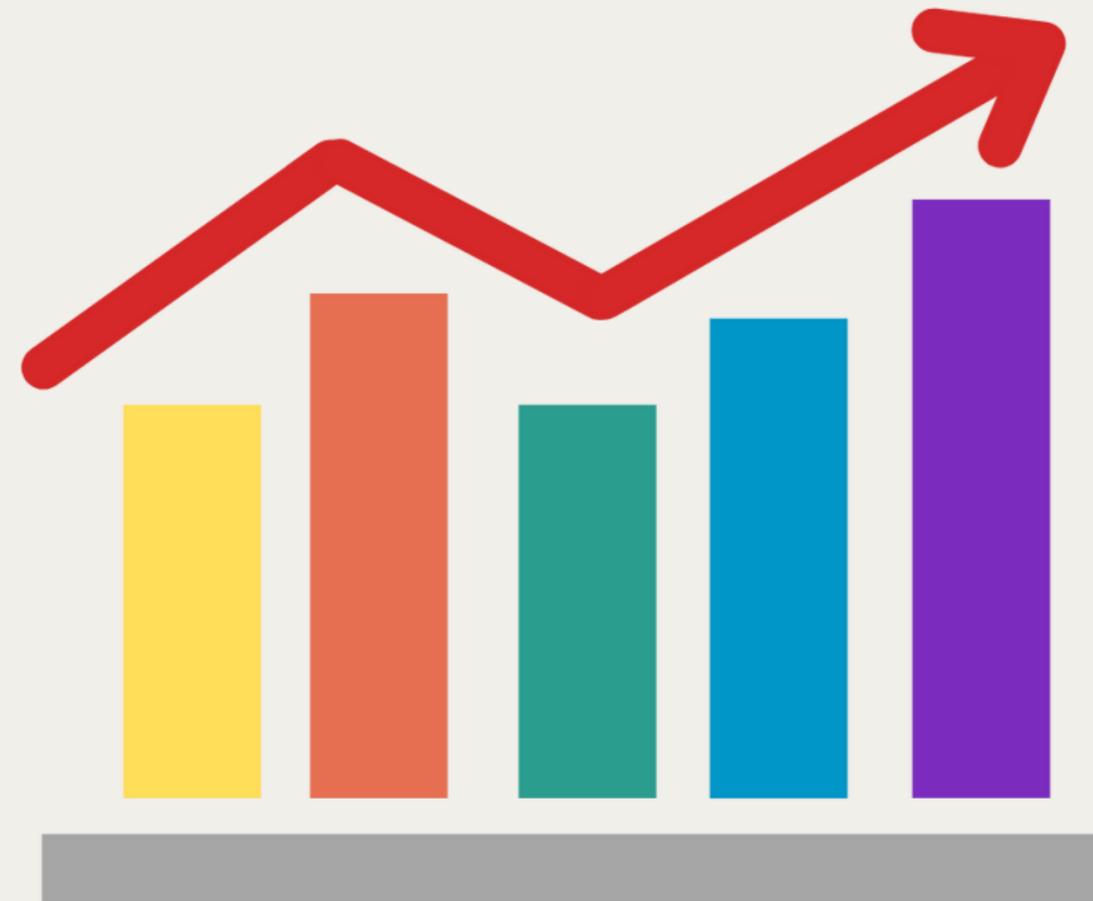
- The CUSD Board of Trustees places the well-being of students as a first priority and is committed to student achievement and eliminating achievement gaps.
- The CUSD Board of Trustees is receptive to quality Professional Development.
- The CUSD Board of Trustees is eager to further the District's successes and address the most pressing opportunities.

Recommendations:

- The CUSD Board of Trustees will continue to make decisions on established District goals and priorities.
- The CUSD Board of Trustees should continue to implement the protocols that were developed at our recent trainings.
- The CUSD Board of Trustees should conduct an annual Governance team retreat to ensure that the organization is moving in a direction that is Board-driven.
- The CUSD Board of Trustees should consider establishing exactly what types of data they will review periodically, throughout the year, and annually.
- The CUSD Board of Trustees subcommittees should be augmented and continue to serve as a conduit to the Board of Trustees and the larger Central community.
- The Board of Trustees should continue its regular procedure for updating its policies.

Data Analysis, Document Review, and Organizational Analysis

A core role of the Superintendent is to review instructional systems and school conditions to improve student outcomes using data. To do this effectively, the Superintendent must understand all major District divisions—Child Nutrition, Educational Services, HR, Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations. Each department was reviewed to determine how well it supports schools through a continuous improvement model.



Entry Plan Activities

- Dr. Marshall ensured that all necessary plans and preparations were in place for a smooth opening of school.
- Dr. Marshall and cabinet members conducted analysis and examined a wide variety of data sources, particularly student achievement data, to discern trends, patterns, areas of accomplishment, and opportunities for improvement.
- Consistent with the protocols set by the California Accountability System, including the District's most recent California Dashboard, student outcomes on standardized tests, value-added data, graduation rates, AP course taking and passing rates, and other relevant indicators were disaggregated by program and ethnicity.
- Dr. Marshall and cabinet members carefully examined suspension and expulsion data/reports.
- The current budget development process, as well as the LCAP process, was assessed, along with the performance of central offices in meeting their key metrics and customer service goals.
- Departmental organization charts, job descriptions, resumes of current key personnel, and the current compensation matrix were also thoroughly examined.
- Written reports and presentations on utilization of CUSD resources, personnel, organization, leadership, and/or academic outcomes were reviewed.
- Dr. Marshall reviewed key District financial materials, budget including the most recent audit.
- Dr. Marshall conducted one-on-one meetings with direct reports on academics, budget, operations, and human resources.
- Dr. Marshall reviewed the District's financial projections, resource allocation and budgeting processes; assessed how the District's budget and budgeting process is aligned to support student achievement.
- Dr. Marshall conducted meetings with legal counsel(s) to review any current legal proceedings or outstanding judgments against the District and to provide a briefing on state education code with particular attention to statutes currently impacting or likely to impact the District.
- Dr. Marshall reviewed employee group contracts and negotiation plans to find out what the role of the superintendent has been in negotiations.
- Dr. Marshall received updates on plans to further apply for federal and state funds.
- Dr. Marshall reviewed the District's safety and crisis communication plan(s).
- Dr. Marshall examined the effectiveness of CUSD's data management system, especially around student achievement, budget, and human resources.
- Dr. Marshall regularly gathered with Superintendents in the area.

Initial Impressions and Observations

- Student achievement growth has remained stable, consistent with the growth in Fresno County school districts. District performance is approaching state performance levels.
- There is a strong program for English Learner Students.
- The Central Unified community is very engaged.
- Similar to county and state trends, the District achievement, suspension, and expulsion gaps have remained constant.
- Principals and site staff have come to expect a certain data set at the beginning of each year
- The data that we have used in community reports masks where there is uneven performance.
- It is not consistent from site to site how data is used to inform instruction or change practice.
- Special Education continues to be a challenge as it relates to programming and local interpretation of the related State/Federal Laws.
- There is a perception from sites that the District office sometimes struggles to recognize individual site needs.
- There are dire facility needs that include inadequate facilities and routine maintenance.
- The District is focused on student achievement.
- The instructional staff is a definite strength.
- There are rich Arts and Athletics programs.
- The AG/FFA Program is a District strength.
- Constant turnover in key leadership areas is a concern.
- Employee associations and the District generally work well together. Contract issues are addressed as applicable.
- A means for providing intervention for students exists.
- The District struggles to meet the needs of underperforming students.
- Overcrowded schools were cited as an area of concern in some instances.

Recommendations

- There is a need for a Comprehensive Strategic Plan that will align the District's activities, local plans, and outcomes.
- The District Organizational chart needs to be revised to better meet the needs of students.
- The District needs to build upon successes realized in the (DELAC) and (ELAC) areas.
- The District Safety Plans need to be evaluated to ensure compliance with current standards.
- There is a need to reevaluate the current organizational structure and evaluation tools currently in place.
- Nearly 85% of the District's budget is spent on people; In light of flat student enrollment, the District should examine its staffing ratios in all areas.
- There is a need for a clear District-wide academic plan (i.e., a curriculum framework) that outlines our course of action. The plan should be inclusive of horizontal and vertical dialogues between the District and the school sites.
- The District should examine the opportunities for increasing the number of class options students have in their day.
- A process for examining curricular strengths and challenges throughout the District needs to be established.
- The District needs to examine the existing organization of its Counseling Department and create better support for assisting with the work they do.
- The District/Board needs to establish a very clear picture of what data the community can expect to see from the District every year.
- The District needs to develop specific strategies to address the areas that we have been identified for Differentiated Assistance.
- More programs should be added that increase student rigor and support more post-secondary options for students, such as AVID, JROTC, Community College Partnerships, and Dual Immersion (Punjabi, Spanish).
- Training in PBIS and Restorative Justice should be supported to reduce suspension and expulsion rates.
- There should be increased professional development around student achievement implemented at the Board, District leadership, and site levels.

Recommendations

- There should be a district-level audit of interim benchmark practices to answer the following questions:
 - A. Are there effective processes for setting and communicating benchmarks?
 - B. What is the quality of the interim assessments used in the District?
 - C. Are interim assessments used to provide feedback on a regular basis to inform instruction?
 - D. How is this formative assessment data disseminated and used at the student, classroom, school, and District levels?
 - E. Are we using the results of our benchmark assessments effectively?
- The District needs to continue to use and present financial data in a transparent manner to illustrate that the District is making fiscally responsible decisions.
- The District needs to communicate clarity regarding how our revenues are slowing while our expenses are growing, and how this trend impacts the sites and the District.
- The District needs to develop a plan for increasing revenues at the local level, inclusive of being more proactive in securing external funds.
- The District needs to develop and implement plans for increasing ADA through targeting methods and creating systems of support and incentives for chronically absent students.
- The District needs to develop a Master Facilities Plan to build new schools and support existing school sites.
- The Human Resources Department should continue its efforts to develop a more “Customer Friendly Approach”
- The Human Resources Department should enhance its efforts with regard to updating policies/ protocols and providing leadership development, including succession planning.
- The District needs to develop a formal recruitment plan for all employee groups.
- A cycle for adopting high-quality instructional materials.
- Intersession and expanded learning opportunities should be enhanced.
- Career technical pathways should be improved with industry partnerships.
- The District needs to regularly evaluate its progress towards the implementation of Ethnic Studies and other state initiatives.
- A Master Plan for the Visual and Performing Arts Department needs to be developed.
- More electives should be offered to enhance student access.
- The District needs to augment its G.A.T.E. program and revise its policies relating to the acceleration of students.
- The District needs a Multi-Tiered System of Supports that is designed to ensure students’ success in the regular classroom.
- Finally, there should be a streamlined system for service learning and community partner integration.

Community Engagement and District Communications

A superintendent builds relationships with the District's stakeholders. This includes parents, the business community, and individuals living in the community without a direct link to the District.

Entry Plan Activities:

- Dr. Marshall made a deliberate effort to reside within the Central Unified School District boundaries.
- Dr. Marshall reached out to meet as many partners as possible to ensure that all voices had the opportunity to be heard.
- Dr. Marshall has participated in many community events in Fresno.
- Dr. Marshall has conducted regular visits to each CUSD school site.
- Dr. Marshall has plans to join the Fresno Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs.

Initial Impressions and Observations:

The repeated strengths from the community meetings:

- The District offers and supports a variety of parent outreach programs.
- The District/community is welcoming.
- The District is increasing its efforts at partnership outreach.
- The District works well with the City of Fresno.

The repeated areas for growth:

- The District needs to improve its communication with educational partners.
- The District needs to continue making more deliberate efforts to play a role in the larger Fresno community as a whole.

Recommendations

- District and sites need to align communication policies and practices.
- There is a need for the District to establish consistent and standardized branding.
- There is a need for the District to utilize community feedback to develop updated branding, site identity, and culture.
- Regular online dialogue opportunities for stakeholder feedback should be available.
- Regular community Cafes (or other listening posts) should be initiated throughout the District.
- The Superintendent should establish Advisory Committees as a mechanism to obtain regular feedback.

Media Relations

For better or worse, the superintendent is the face of the District and should look for opportunities to partner with the media.

Entry Plan Activities:

- The Superintendent engaged the local media outlets to introduce himself to the Fresno Community and deepen his awareness of issues important to the Fresno Stakeholders.
- The Superintendent sought to better understand both the internal and external communications opportunities and environment in the Central area.
- The Superintendent attempted to partner with the news media in the discourse around educational improvement and providing optimal learning environments for students.

Initial Impressions and Observations:

- The Media is receptive towards positive discourse with the District.
- Social Media is an effective method to communicate with our stakeholders.
- There are untapped opportunities in Fresno as it pertains to better telling our story.

Recommendations:

- The District should continue to strive for a positive relationship with the media.
- The District should increase its presence on Social Media to facilitate better branding.
- The District should produce a regular newsletter that highlights our schools' successes.

Technical Experience

Technical assistance consultants/partners provide a wide range of customized supports to help the Districts meet their students' needs.

Entry Plan Activities:

- The superintendent identified external consultants (and related agreements) who have worked with the District in various departments for several years.
- The superintendent has attempted to examine the outcomes of those associations.

Initial Impressions and Observations:

- Much of the consultant work is centered on the business/facilities area.
- Agreements do exist with multiple experts in the area of curriculum and technology.
- There is no defined system to gauge the effectiveness of external consultants/experts.

Recommendations:

- Relationships with consultants in the educational realm should be augmented to maximize their effectiveness.
- An audit of consultant agreements needs to take place to minimize duplication of services.
- A system for regular communication with consultants needs to be established to monitor progress.
- A regular Return on Investment (ROI) should occur.

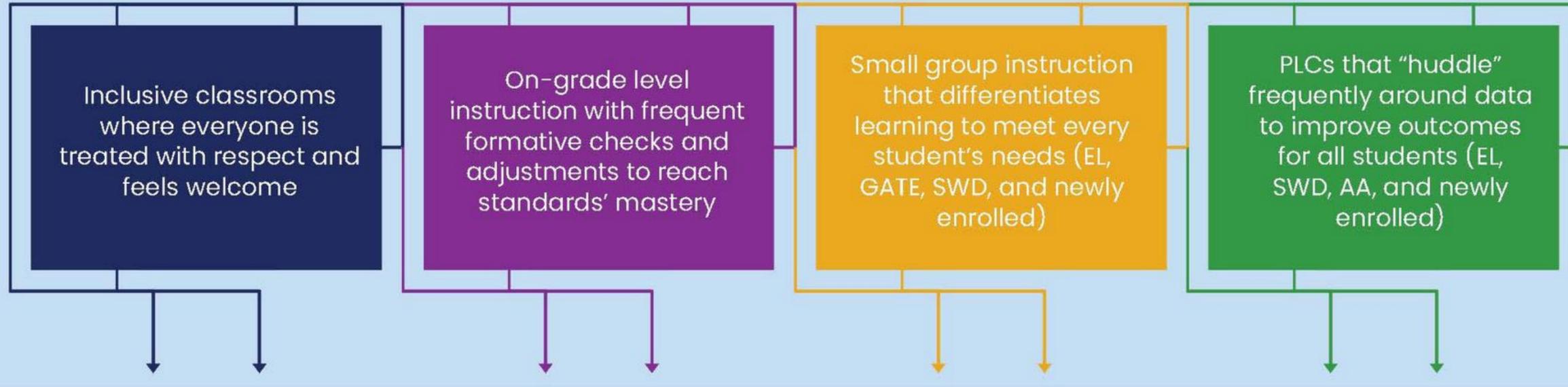
Next Steps

We will begin to chart the direction and vision for the Central Unified School District. A deliberate action plan with identified target outcomes will be created, providing the framework to begin the District's strategic planning process.

- The District will use the collected information to begin the work necessary to plot a future vision and direction for the District
- The District will work with school board members and District stakeholders to begin identifying and creating actionable strategies necessary to understand and realize the vision.
- The District will establish a long-term (5-year) Strategic Plan by July 2026 (estimated). It should include
 - Mission
 - Vision
 - Core Values
 - Strategic Directions - Academic targets, Social Emotions Supports, Communication, Staff Development, Facilities, Community Engagement, Fiscal Stability.
- The District should also develop its Profile of Central Unified Graduate.
- Most of this information can be incorporated into Dr. Marshall's facilitated evaluation process.



Academic Blueprint 4.0



CENTRAL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT GOALS 2025-2030



↑ 95%

By June 2030, the **graduation rate** will increase to at least **95%**, from 89% in June 2024, as measured by the percentage of seniors meeting diploma track graduation criteria annually.



↑ 60%

By June 2030, 60% of **English Learner (EL) students will demonstrate progress** towards the English language proficiency or maintain the highest proficiency level, an increase of 9.6% from 50.4% in 2024, as measured by the English Learner Progress Indicator (ELPI) on the California School Dashboard.



↑ 30 pts

By June 2030, the scale scores on the **CAASPP assessments will reflect an increase** of 30 points as compared to June 2024 results.
Science: from **XX** to **XX**
Math: from -60.6 to -30.6 pts
ELA: from -25 to +5 pts



↑ 15%

By June 2030, the percentage of **2nd grade students reading at or above grade level** will increase from 58% in 2025 to 73%—a gain of 15, as measured by iReady.



↓ 12.1%

By June 2030, **student school connectedness will improve** as measured by a 12.1% decrease in chronic absenteeism, from 22.1% in June 2024, to 10% in June 2030, as reported on the California School Dashboard.

CENTRAL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2025-2026

