Superintendent's Entry Plan Findings

Fran Roy, Superintendent
Westport Community Schools
1/7/2025

Today’s Goal

- Share what I have learned about the Westport Community Schools from a diverse group of stakeholders in terms of **strengths** and **concerns** (areas of growth).
- Outline immediate and next steps.

METHODOLOGY

1. **Data Collection (Superintendent-Led)**
   - 13 listening sessions with families, PTOs, staff, and students
   - Online survey with 49 respondents from multiple stakeholder groups
   - 11 community partner meetings
   - 13 school visits and classroom observations
   - 8 individual interviews with elected officials
   - Document review (MCAS, Accountability, NEASC, Suspension, Attendance data)
   - Total: 46 distinct data sources

2. **Theme Development (Superintendent-Led)**
   - Superintendent reviewed all qualitative data and identified preliminary themes
   - Drew upon direct classroom observations and professional expertise
   - Noted recurring patterns across diverse stakeholder groups
   - Developed initial framework of emerging themes

3. **Validation & Synthesis (AI-Assisted Cross-Check)**
   - Claude AI independently reviewed all 46 data sources
   - Systematically verified themes appearing across 3+ sources
   - Organized supporting evidence and stakeholder quotes
   - Confirmed 16 emerging themes

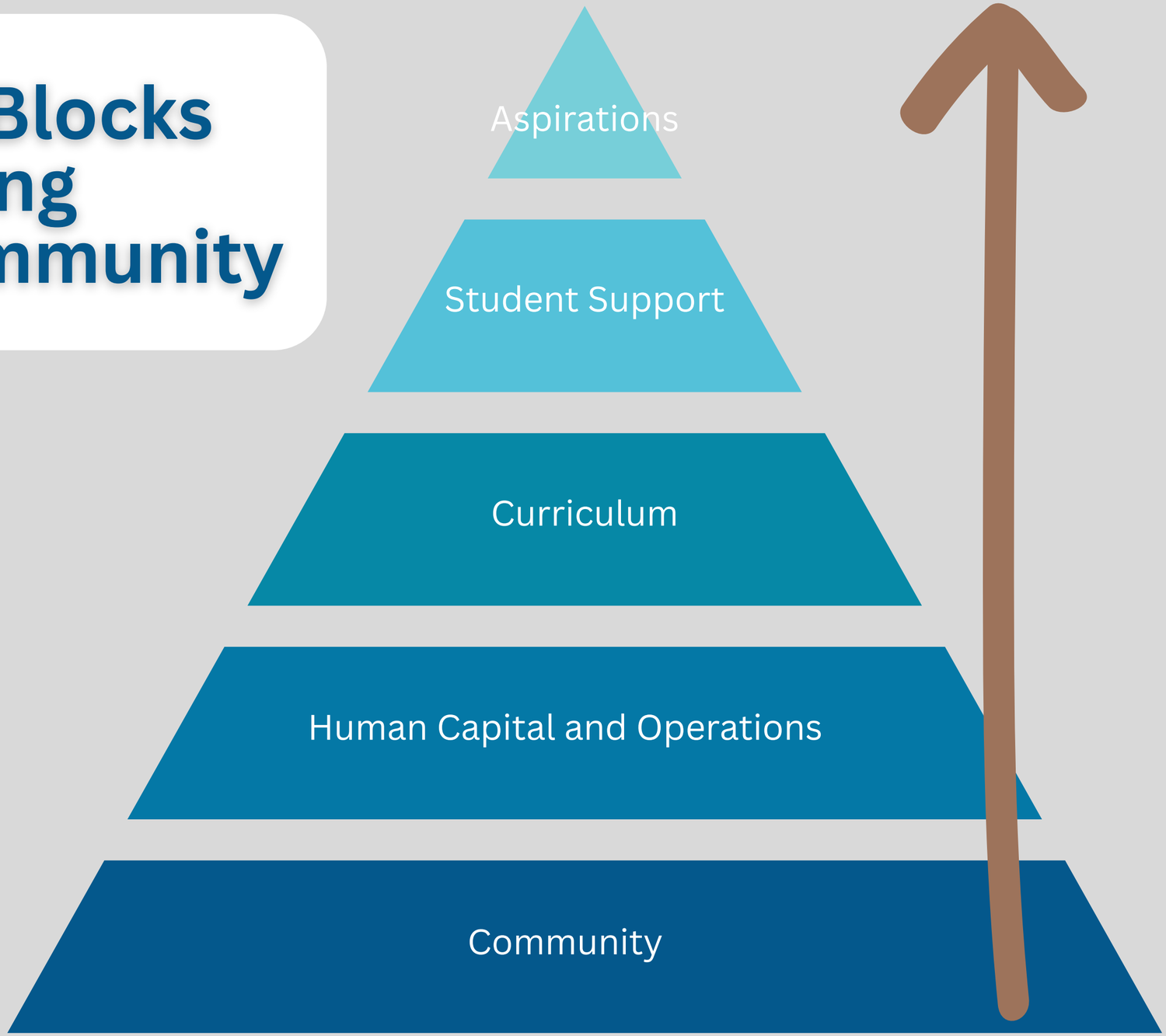
4. **Strategic Organization (Superintendent-Led)**
   - Merged 16 themes into 5 overarching pillars aligned with MA DESE Superintendent Evaluation Standards
   - Refined themes based on district context, capacity, and feasibility
   - Prioritized based on strategic importance and community needs
   - Result: 5 strategic priority areas with actionable recommendations

Transparency Note: Superintendent developed themes from direct analysis; AI provided independent validation to ensure comprehensive review of all stakeholder input.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What do you value about the Westport Community Schools (WCS)?
2. What are the strengths of the WCS?
3. What challenges are WCS currently facing?
4. What are the unmet needs of the children of Westport?
5. What are your aspirations for the children of Westport and the larger community?

5 Building Blocks for a Thriving School Community



I. Community: Relationships, trust, and shared identity.		
Theme	Strengths	Concerns
A. Community Pride and Communication	• Stakeholders consistently highlighted the strong sense of community, personal relationships, and generational connections as its greatest strength. • Stakeholders valued being part of a small and tight-knit community with shared goals.	• Out-of-state, private, and vocational schools reduce school pride and enrollment. • Families are looking for a more streamlined and consistent means of communication, citing too many different platforms.
B. Community Partnerships	• Various community partners (e.g., Watershed Alliance, Westport Federal Credit Union, and Westport Food Pantry) are involved and eager to enhance their support for the schools. • PTOs, SePAC, Boosters, and WEF are strong advocates of the schools, providing many resources to students and staff, as well as hosting community wide events. • Town funded SROs are embedded into the everyday fabric of school life.	• Partners expressed the need for coordination of events, to reduce the number of overlapping activities • Stakeholders expressed the desire for increasing outreach to the public about positive happenings and events.



Veterans Day Celebration
Macomber School, November 10 2025

II. Human Capital and Operations: Staff quality, facilities, and resource management.		
Theme	Strengths	Concerns
A. Dedicated and Resourceful Staff	• Teachers were described as amazing, creative, and supportive, forming genuine connections with students. • Special Education teachers received high praise for their support. • WCS has a committed, hardworking, and resourceful district staff (e.g., HR, Business, and Facilities and Maintenance) that do more with less.	• There is a need to streamline more labor intensive operations (e.g., HR and Information Management Systems).
B. Investment in Facilities/Technology	• Facility upgrades (new air conditioning, sinks, bathrooms, and remodeling) were recognized as a positive. • Additional cameras ensure a higher level of safety. • Chromebook replacement policy has allowed for more efficient technology use.	• Some advanced maintenance needs (e.g., cybersecurity and network, building management software, and athletic fields) comes with additional costs, including outsourcing of services. • Teachers commented on the frustration with outdated technology at the MHS (e.g., SMART Boards).



WES Bathroom Project
Summer 2025

III. Curriculum: Academic programs, pathways, and enrichment.		
Theme	Strengths	Concerns
A. High Quality Programming	• Music programming (pep band and drama club), sports clubs, and after school offerings are noted as strengths across a variety of stakeholders. • Advanced Placement classes and the Leap program were also noted as areas of strength.	• Students require more hands-on training and career readiness programs that link education to real-world applications. • Innovation career pathways is still in its infancy; more programming is needed that leads to industry credentials.
B. High Quality Curriculum	• Classroom observations indicate that foundational literacy skills (learning to read) is a consistent priority across the MAC and the WES. • STEM teachers have developed an innovative and hands on curriculum across the WES and WMHS. • Seeds of experiential learning exist (Watershed Alliance Partnership; Farm to School; SPED Life Skills) • Grades 3 - 8 (MCAS) Science percentile has trended above the 50th percentile for the past 4 years.	• There is no agreed upon instructional vision guiding the choice or development of curriculum across core content areas. • Lack of common planning and vertical alignment adds to inconsistent curriculum implementation. • Teachers are requesting Professional Development that is more relevant to their content areas. • Common Assessments are not consistently used across grade levels and content areas. • Grades 3 - 8 MCAS achievement percentile for Math and ELA are generally declining and currently well below the 50th percentile mark. • Students from low-income backgrounds are 50% less likely to meet or exceed expectations on MCAS compared to non-low income peers.



The Cast of the Little Mermaid, December 2025
Source: Westport Music Boosters

IV. Student Support: Specialized instruction, interventions, and wraparound supports

Theme	Strengths	Concerns
A. Special Education, Inclusion, and 504 Plans	• Stakeholders noted that the district demonstrates commitment to special education with teachers at each grade level, responsive resources, and improving inclusion practices. • Stakeholders suggested that the SAC/Guidance team can connect with both IEP and non-IEP students, bringing creativity and thoughtful intervention. • The Unified Sports programs at the middle and high school levels benefit all students, promoting an inclusive culture.	• There are various reports of 504 processes and supports not being followed or minimally implemented. • Some stakeholders reported that students at WMHS could benefit from more therapeutic supports (e.g., therapeutic classroom).
B. Academic Intervention	• WES is well staffed to support intervention. • Early literacy interventions are becoming data driven.	• The district needs stronger tiered systems of support for struggling learners **for students not receiving special education services**, especially in mathematics. • Related Services should be provided proactively rather than waiting for students to qualify. • Teachers report that students are entering each year weaker academically and with less grit.
C. Non-Academic Needs	• The district's small size enables personalized attention and deep knowledge of students. • The small community feel is particularly beneficial for students with anxiety or special needs, ensuring they receive individualized support and are not overlooked.	• Stakeholders reported calls for more outdoor/recess time and less screen time. • Recreational opportunities for some teens are limited due to transportation issues and lack of youth facilities. • Some students struggle in school due to complex social and emotional needs.



WCS Unified Basketball Team Wins
Source: Westport Community Schools, October 28 2025

V. Aspirations: Hopes and Dreams for the Future	
Theme	**Strengths**
A.Post-Secondary Readiness and Life Pathways	• Stakeholders want students to graduate with a clear vision and multiple pathways to success, including a plan for the future, not just a diploma. • Stakeholders identified a goal of increasing pathways and opportunities beyond traditional college pathways.
B. Build Confident, Engaged and Service Oriented Learners	• Stakeholders envisioned students who are excited about learning, confident in their abilities, and curious about the world. • Stakeholders also highlighted helping students understand their unique gifts, and developing voice and agency. • Stakeholders hope students develop lifelong connections to Westport, give back to the community, and foster a sense of community pride.



Photo by Richard W. Dionne Jr., The Shorelines
"Training for Life in Westport" by Ted Hayes, December 16 2025

Immediate Action Steps (SY 25 - 26)

I. COMMUNITY

- Expanded community partnerships (e.g., WFCU, Watershed Alliance, and Food Pantry.

II. HUMAN CAPITAL AND OPERATIONS

- Revised hiring procedures to ensure more checks and balances
- Streamlined HR functions with additional platforms (e.g., Linix and Frontline)

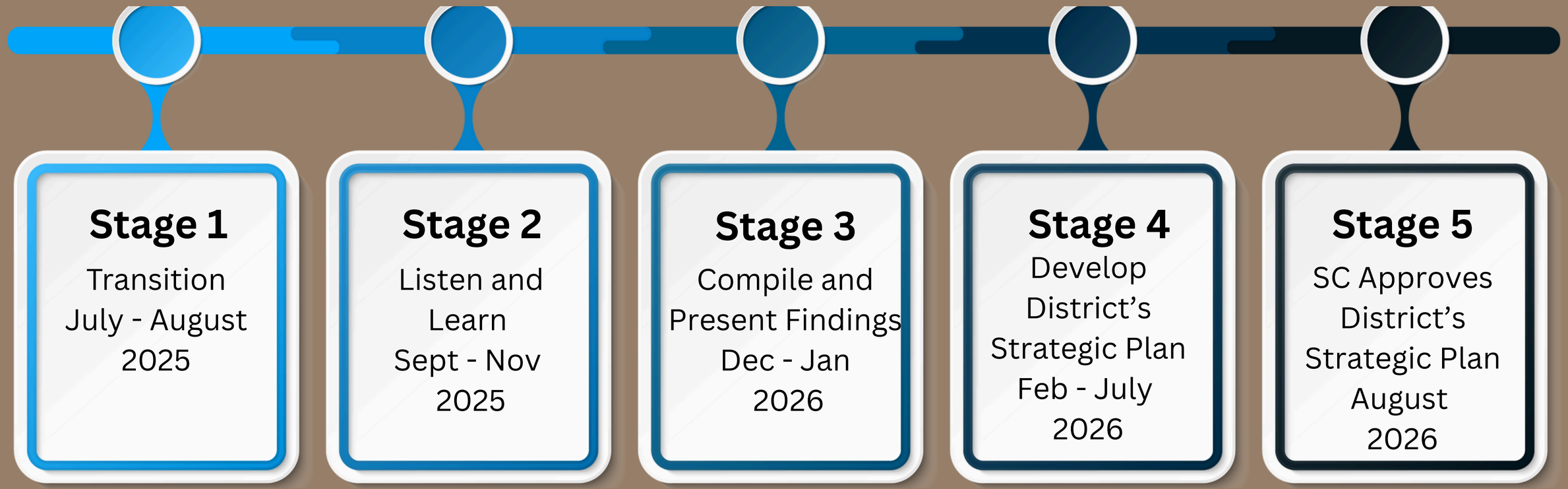
III CURRICULUM

- Launch district-wide curriculum teams (Math and ELA)
- Phase II of the Innovation Career Pathway
- Common Planning Pilot at WES
- IDEAL consulting supporting data driven early literacy instruction

IV STUDENT SUPPORT

- Anonymous Reporting System (ARS)
- Revised Child Support Team (CST) at WES

Timeline


Stage 1
Transition
July - August
2025
Stage 2
Listen and
Learn
Sept - Nov
2025
Stage 3
Compile and
Present Findings
Dec - Jan
2026
Stage 4
Develop
District's
Strategic Plan
Feb - July
2026
Stage 5
SC Approves
District's
Strategic Plan
August
2026

Present Strategic Plan to SC in August of 2026

Begin Strategic Plan Committee Meetings

Gather more data on student experience

Establish Process for Strategic Plan by end of February