



SUPERINTENDENT ENTRY PLAN

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Establishing Canton Public Schools as one of the top districts in Mississippi.



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Introduction:

The Canton Board of Education has charged me as incoming superintendent with improving student achievement for all children and making collaboration with all stakeholders more effective.

The Board's mission statement clearly states the overall goal: The Mission of the Canton Public School District is to enable students to become analytical thinkers, self-directed lifelong learners and effective communicators who are prepared to continue their education.

As the incoming superintendent, I have the duty to ask the following questions. How close is the district to accomplishing its mission and vision? What challenges exist that must be addressed? What are the needs and concerns of each school and its community? I have the very serious duty to address each and every concern and respond with a clear vision and inspire every student and staff person to succeed beyond immeasurable potential. This will place the Canton School District on a path to becoming one of the top districts in the state of Mississippi.

This document is my entry plan. It will provide the framework for all of my activities through the end of 2014. The entry plan will cover the first 90 plus days as the superintendent of Canton Public Schools. This plan and my work

as superintendent will be guided by the work of Stephen Covey in the 7 Habits of highly Effective people. He opines that leaders must "first seek to understand, then to be understood." All of the transition activities outlined in this plan are designed to enable me to very quickly and effectively listen to and learn from as many people as possible associated in one way or another with Canton Public Schools.

Canton Schools are viewed across Mississippi as a district that while ripe with community resources such as the Nissan plant, is still underperforming academically and facing significant challenges in the area of school safety. It has also become quite clear to me during the interview process and since that there are far too many divisions and cliques in the Canton school district community. The lack of or perceived lack of effective communication has led many to distrust the school district and overlook many of the real accomplishments from recent years. I will address these issues by listening to **ALL** stakeholders and equally as important ensure that everyone involved with the district is respected, welcomed and treated with dignity no matter their last name. As an experienced superintendent, I also understand that in order to truly transform this district it will take not only a reenergized community but employees and staff that feel valued, respected and part of a team.

The Board of Trustees and I share a sense of urgency about this work. The current D status of the district underscores the need for change and improvement. So I will make decisions quickly were appropriate as I am listening and learning. To help in this process I will name a transition committee to review the strategic plan, organizational structure, state of teaching and learning and the organizational culture and communication.



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Goals:

This entry plan sets five broad goals and addresses pre- entry and entry activities for each one. The five goals are:

1. To focus organizational efforts and align resources to ensure all students are college- and career-ready.
2. To establish and promote highly effective district governance by building a trusting, productive, collaborative relationship with the Canton Board of Education.
3. To increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency and ensure high performance and support to schools
4. To establish a respectful, positive district culture centered on teaching and learning
5. To build public trust and confidence through open, honest communication and positive relationships

Listen — Spend time with students, teachers, parents, principals, school district administrators and other Canton School District employees, community and business members, and state and local leaders, to hear about their proudest accomplishments and greatest challenges.

Learn — Analyze and study performance data and other student achievement data. Read and review existing district policies and implementation of reforms to those policies.

Share — Get to know the community better by sharing my leadership story and my educational philosophies on a 30 visit in 30 day campaign across Madison County. I will strive to establish a positive tone and an urgent pace.

Build — Establish strong working relationships and build rapport with the Board of Education, Canton school district leadership and employees, and community, state and local leaders.

Plan — Review the current strategic plan with specific action steps to guide the work of CPSD and the Board of Education and to prepare for the 2014-2015 budget and legislative agenda.



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Goals and Pre-Entry / Entry Actions

1. Student Achievement:

**To focus
organizational efforts
and align resources
to ensure all students
are college- and
career-ready.**

Ensuring all students not only graduate from CPSD but also receive diplomas that truly demonstrate college- and work-readiness is the ultimate goal and responsibility of all employees. To ensure instruction is occurring at high levels, teachers must have a rigorous K-12 instructional curriculum, processes and tools to monitor student progress as well as opportunities and resources to provide necessary interventions. We will focus on teaching and learning and put the needs of students first in every decision.

Pre-Entry Actions:

- Review any instructional audits
- Analyze patterns in student achievement data and achievement gaps to evaluate the current state of teaching and learning
- Assess district's expectations for all students' academic success and commitment to meeting the needs of all of its diverse learners
- Identify chronically underperforming schools and initiate root-cause analysis of why they're not meeting the needs of students; and evaluate school safety levels at every campus

Entry Actions:

- Meet with CPSD instructional-leadership team to discuss achievement data, instructional program alignment, current goals and priority action areas for the district
 - Determine the scope and depth of CPSD curriculum
 - Determine the degree of rigor embedded in the current curriculum
 - Determine how well current curriculum aligns with the Common Core State Standards
- Establish a protocol to review the instructional program, practices, curriculum and support materials for evidence of effectiveness in improving student achievement and closing the gap between all student populations
- Assess CPSD professional development and capacity for meeting the training needs of principals, teachers and central-office staff; determine the degree to which it is Job-embedded, differentiated and student-achievement directed; analyze budget to determine how much is devoted to professional development and how it is being assessed
- Evaluate district efforts to improve graduation rates for all students.
- Explore how CPSD monitors data to ensure all students are performing at or above grade level and/or are receiving appropriate, targeted interventions
- Evaluate the use and effectiveness of current formative assessments, their alignment with the instructional program and how accurately they measure student growth and progress; assess curriculum maps, pacing guides and monitoring rubrics



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- Inventory all technology-based instructional equipment and software and determine readiness for 21st-century learning
- Meet with each principal to review performance results of their school, assess progress and determine proactive actions for continuous support and improvement

2. Governance Team/Board of Education: To establish and promote highly effective district governance by building a productive and collaborative relationship with the Board of Education

In order to ensure an intense focus on meeting the needs of all children, the Board and superintendent must develop a trusting, positive, collaborative and team-oriented relationship. Relationships must be established with each Board member and the Board as a whole. I will work with the Board on issues of governance, management, core values and belief.

A strong relationship between the Board and the superintendent is essential for district progress, and we will work together to build an agenda that places children first in all decisions. We will also engage the community in this agenda.

Pre-Entry Actions:

- Share entry plan for feedback, suggestions and guidance
- Engage in one-on-one meetings with Board members to deepen relationships and broaden perspectives
- Hold first Board retreat to discuss communication protocols, roles and responsibilities, norms of behavior and interaction, expectations for first year and agenda setting
- Examine the current protocols and processes for addressing constituent concerns or complaints

Entry Actions:

- Develop and begin using appropriate communication protocols between the Board and superintendent
- Conduct one-on-one breakfast/lunch/dinner meetings with all Board members to continue to build positive, productive relationships
- Meet with the Board chairperson and committee chairs to determine how they work in partnership with the superintendent and executive staff
- Collaborate on the next set of Board retreats to focus on shared values, reflections



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Suggest a book study around *What School Boards Can Do* by Donald McAdams or a similarly appropriate text.

- Develop a process, structure and timeline to measure success of current strategic plan, system improvement plan and budget for the district
 - Using Board of Education policy, collaborate on a performance evaluation format with objectives and indicators of success to be used to evaluate the superintendent and Board
 - Establish regular meeting times with the Board chair and vice chair for reviewing and constructing agendas, agenda review processes and yearly calendar
 - Visit various community organizations and functions with Board members
 - Conduct school visits with Board members

3. Organizational capacity and alignment/district executive staff: To increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency and support to schools

- To make sure executive staff operates as a highly functional team dedicated to a positive, professional culture, CPSD must make sure the right people are on the bus in the right seats, in the words of author Jim Collins. “Good to Great” author
- All central-office functions must be effective and efficient. I believe central office must provide outstanding service to schools and commit to a continuous-improvement model. I will analyze the current strengths, strategies and opportunities for improvement in light of current budget challenges.

- Identify key staff to assist with the transition within the organization
- Identify and hire critical new team members to join executive staff
- Review standards of practice for executive staff
- Establish regularly scheduled meetings with executive staff, and principals, and set clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, expectations and systems for mutual accountability
- Review the current central-office structure to determine focus on student achievement and maximizing operational efficiency
- Request briefing papers from all division managers providing an overview of their current areas of responsibility, major initiatives under way with projected timelines, a review of significant or potential problems in each area of responsibility and major decisions needing to be made in one month, three months and six months
- Conduct one-on-one interviews and review Resumes of all directors.
- Review all critical documents, including the organizational chart, employee handbooks, policy and procedures manuals, the strategic plan and student achievement data by school
- Conduct a retreat with executive staff to review district’s strategic plan, improvement plan, recent achievement data, current or anticipated vacancies in central office or principalships and discuss leadership team structures

Pre-Entry Actions:



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- Review key district financial materials, budget, most recent audits and grants
 - Initiate a review of resources and information available on the Internet and develop an intranet for CPSD if not already developed
 - Assess current accountability measures and determine data to be collected, examined and analyzed at quarter, mid-year and end of year reviews; also examine quality control measures about the release of data
 - Review all functions around finding the best teachers, principals and other employees and initiate an audit of the human resources department
 - Plan a second retreat with executive staff to review accountability plans for all units, clarify process and progress toward improvement with strategic plan and district improvement plan, review current and future budget issues and current organizational structure
 - Review processes and systems in business office that guide the distribution of resources and ensure that the allocation of resources aligns with student needs and CPSD strategic plan
- Entry Actions:**
- Determine how communication and decision making will occur with executive team, establishing meeting protocols and systems designed to focus on increased student achievement and continuous improvement
 - Conduct one-on-one interviews with all department heads in central services, focusing on alignment and execution of key strategies
 - Conduct an organizational audit using expert practitioners to review alignment, and efficiency of the current organizational structure
 - Initiate plans to establish or review key performance benchmarks and service goals for each functional unit to ensure the performance of central office will support student achievement



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- Review district's financial projections, resource allocation and the process for building the annual operating budget; assess how it is aligned to support achievement by all students
- Conduct one-on-one meetings with legal counsel to review any current legal proceedings or outstanding judgments against the district
- Review district's safety and crisis communication plan and make any changes or adjustments needed
- Examine the effectiveness of CPSD' information- data management system, especially around student achievement, budget and human resources
- Ensure all necessary plans and preparations are in place for an outstanding opening of schools; establish protocols for assessing effectiveness of the opening of schools

4. **Organization Culture: To establish a respectful, positive district culture centered on teaching and learning**

Schools and offices will only reach high levels of performance if all district employees work in collaboration, establishing a culture of trust and commitment to professional learning communities. The challenging work of teaching and learning can only be successful if we promote an organization built on valuing each employee's vital role in helping CPSD reach its vision and mission. Simply put, every employee and job is important.

Pre-Entry Actions:

- Establish positive relationships with key district leadership and meet with all central-operations departments
- Assess the quality, quantity and effectiveness of all existing forms of internal communication with various stakeholders, including Board members, teachers, administrative staff, support staff, and student leaders
- Establish an organizational norm for open, effective and consistent communication throughout the district and within our community.



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Entry Actions:

- Schedule meetings with principal and teacher organizations and committees, and a superintendent council and establish routine meetings and communications with these organizations
- Hold open forums regularly with teachers, staff, district leaders, parents and students for personal communication about critical issues after establishing a district superintendent council
- Frequently visit schools to build relationships with principals, teachers and staff
- Work with human resources staff, review existing surveys and identify areas or schools with low morale or negative culture
- Create a district-wide employee-engagement survey to gain a comprehensive picture of district culture and morale

5. Community and Public Relations: To build public-trust capital and confidence through open, honest communication and positive relationships

I believe that in order for CPSD to become the top school district in Mississippi the entire city and community must work together. It's going to take all of us working together. As Superintendent, I will focus on engaging and mobilizing parents and community leaders by communicating openly and transparently. I will reach out to all stakeholders in the Canton area even those who have not recently been involved.

I will work to build strong relationships with key leaders and members of business, faith-based and political organizations. I intend to build a coalition of the willing to help serve the students of CPSD.

*“It’s
going to
take all of
us
working
together.”*

- Ike Haynes



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*Everybody
can be great
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*– Dr. Martin Luther
King, Jr.*

I will ask community leaders to share their views on increasing academic achievement, district strengths, areas of needed improvement, budget issues and top priorities, and what it will take to make CPSD the best district in America. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said that “Everybody can be great because anybody can serve.” CPSD is fortunate to have a community that is deeply concerned about public education, with many individuals and organizations willing to serve schools.

My message is clear to the Canton/Madison community: Public education is about teaching **ALL** children so that **every** child has the opportunity to succeed.

Pre-Entry Actions:

- Call and visit key community leaders to introduce myself and build relationships
- Meet with a wide range of citizens and groups involved in public education during my 30 for 30 visits before the start of school. Including retired teachers, Federated clubs and community groups and churches

Entry Actions:

- Conduct a review of the district’s public information office and programs; review the history, services and outreach to entire community. Review current Mass call system
- Conduct a communication audit to determine levels of effectiveness with building public-trust capital and proactive community outreach
- Reach out to critical stakeholders to establish routine meetings, communication protocols and reciprocal dialogues, focusing on increased student achievement and continuous improvement; initiate open, honest and transparent dialogues with the goal of strengthening and improving strategic partnerships. This would include, but not be limited to, parents, teachers, school staff, local, state and national elected officials, state education leaders, Chamber of Commerce officials, business leaders and heads of organizations.



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- Schedule meetings with the established parent organizations for initial listening and learning sessions. Establish routine meetings and communications with these organizations.
- Schedule meetings with the established student leadership organizations for initial listening and learning sessions. Establish routine meetings and communications with these organizations.
- With the Board and executive staff, host multiple Canton zone meetings to gather community input and initiate continuous dialogues about student achievement and improvement. These meetings will occur throughout all areas of the school district. There will be proactive efforts to meet with stakeholders who have traditionally not attended such forums, as well as with individuals and groups who have been active on public education issues. The goal is to build new partnerships and strengthen existing ones.
- Meet with leaders of local media outlets, radio stations, editorial boards and education reporters, to establish a framework for collaboration that is open, honest, transparent and accurate. Hold regular media briefings to share district information.
- Visit Headstart. schools and establish relationships with leaders
- Attend services at churches to build relationships with the community and hear their concerns and ideas so that they can be addressed as we make decisions.
- Increase opportunities to promote Canton Schools' image within the community and to develop advocacy for what is effective and working well



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The Superintendent's First Day and First Day of School

On July 1, my first official day, I want to meet all Central Office employees and walkthrough every school. I also want to arrange to meet with students who did not graduate to discuss what could have been done to keep them in school. I will also meet with students who struggled but successfully finished school, as well as students who finished school with relative ease. During the month of July, I will also visit with maintenance staff and even assist in preparations for the start of school.

On the first day of school, I will visit every school in the district. After the first day of school, I will meet with principals and department heads to review and receive enrollment reports. I will also meet with the local media and have a community meeting at one of the schools.

Near the end of the first 90 days, I will have learned a great deal about CPSD and be ready to report out on those findings. Through multiple meetings with key stakeholders, some initial ideas will have been developed regarding new directions for the future. To ensure transparency and inclusion throughout the process, there will be a link on the CPSD website with updates on the progress of my plan, calendar, people with whom I've met, and public events and forums.

Around this time, in collaboration with the School Board a board retreat will be scheduled to announce findings, propose plans and collaborate with the Board on a planning system to drive improvements in student achievement and organizational efficiency. Proposed plans and agendas will also be communicated to the school community to promote understanding, commitment and support for the goals and purpose of making Canton Public Schools the best school district in the Mississippi.

I believe that CPSD has all the ingredients to be a great district; and as superintendent, I will work to make that vision a reality by putting children first each and every day.

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In compliance with federal law, Canton Public Schools administers all education programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination against any person on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, national origin, age or disability.