



# Entry Plan

For the

Stewart County School District

*“Passion Will Fuel Our Journey”*

Prepared by:

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July 14, 2022

## **Purpose**

Developing an Entry Plan is a recognized tool for systematically beginning any new leadership position. It is a process that incorporates the design of a specific set of activities that include "...introductions, briefing, interviews, site visits, feedback meetings, priority setting, action plan/agenda setting" (Jentz & Murphy, 2005). An entry plan approach assumes that leadership into a new position is a change process. Because of many factors, particularly school district climate and cultural factors, an "outside" superintendent must be careful when they step into a leadership position.

This Entry Plan has been developed to ensure a smooth transition of administrative leadership in the Stewart County School District. Based on the need to access the district's culture, climate, and history. An Entry Plan is the best approach to access critical information in a short time. I am new to the system and community, and I have a great deal to learn in a short period. There may be modifications to this plan as further information may be discovered. However, what is presented here is the basic framework for implementation. To this end, this plan will cover the period of July 11 through October 11, 2022).

## **The Plan**

There are three (3) key elements to this :

- ***Element I*** - To get to know the people and programs in the school district and community as fully and quickly as possible.
- ***Element II*** - To examine the critical issues outlined by the members of the Board of Education; examine the human and financial resources needed to implement several essential programs for FY23; determine if they can be operationalized by the start of the school year, and/or recommend when implementation will occur; develop a plan that will ensure the outcome of recommendations.
- ***Element III*** - To identify any other immediate and longer-term tasks/programs that need to be addressed,1 to work with the School Board to agree on goals and determine how and by whom these tasks will be accomplished.

In addition, these elements would include the initial goals I developed for the school district. Those goals are to:

1. Get to know the Members of the Board of Education/Stewart County Schools community.
2. Build a working relationship with staff.
3. Focus on student achievement and accountability
4. Align human and financial resources with instructional goals
5. Establish mechanisms for facilitating communications and community mobilization

## **District Tour**

Purpose – To understand the district's geographic size and survey distances

- Arrange a driving tour of the school district's boundaries
- Visit various regions with the individual school board members representing that particular district area.
- Arrange to meet the Mayors and members of the City Council, Police Chief, Fire Chief
- Arrange community opportunities for introduction and to meet the broader Stewart County community
- Ride a school bus route
- Do a ride along with the Police Chief/Sherriff
- Attend district and community receptions, all opportunities to meet and greet.

## **Focus Group/Interviews with the District and Community**

Purpose: to collect random but specific data about the school district and community. (I have a short list of questions that I usually use). I would talk and listen to administrators, teachers, parents, students, community leaders, clergy (faith community), and support staff. I would survey all these groups to ascertain what they think is needed to make the district all it needs to be. For example –

## **Community Leadership** –

Purpose: to meet leaders of community and parent organizations, generate goodwill, build support, and establish communication channels

- Ask each school board member to suggest 3 names of community organization leaders; arrange the meetings within the first two months.
- Attend community meetings and share my vision to improve student achievement for Stewart County students – and *listen* to them
- Establish relationships with
  - Faith community
  - Principals
  - Business
  - Community Agencies

## **Political Leadership**

Purpose: to meet local and state political leaders and establish means for consistent communication

- Meet with local legislative delegation
- Gain an understanding of their issues and potential impact on the school district.

### **District Leadership Staff**

- Establish strong professional relationships with key personnel inside the school district; celebrate accomplishments and identify challenges
- Request a one-page briefing paper on critical issues from each department in the district
- Hold department briefings with each department in the district
- Meet with principals; attend instructional level principal meetings
- Create a database of birthdays for the central office and principals and celebrate

### **School Board**

Purpose: to establish working relationships with individual board members and the Board.

- Schedule a one-on-one meeting with each board member to discuss the district's communication, strengths, weaknesses, and goals.
- Work with the board chair to determine how we will work together (internal communication, public engagement, board agendas).
- Determine a schedule for regular off-site planning sessions with the Board (at least three in the first year).
- Hold a board retreat within two weeks of hire to discuss communication processes, policy governance goals, etc.
- Establish a weekly communication tool – i.e., Friday Newsletter
- Determine other needs of the Board
- Be a good listener.

### **Focus Groups -Sharing**

Purpose: Provide an opportunity for small group response to what I have learned.

After I get the feedback and survey results meet with key groups to discuss it and share what I have learned with the school board, administrators, teachers, students, parents, community leaders, etc.

- Create a review team of central administrators and building administrators to review current standard operational procedures, e.g., school day, complaints, emergency communication with parents, crisis planning, athletic rules, curriculum articulation and alignment, professional development activities, student assessment at the state level and in-district benchmark tests, teacher evaluation, administrative evaluation, responding to parental complaints, legal services, and procedures, etc.
- Purpose – My objective is not to start changing anything but to acquire understanding and knowledge. If necessary, changes will come after I genuinely understand what is happening and will always involve others in the planning.

- Set aside a full day of review and study of the district's financial situation. Meet with the Finance Director and others to present the budget and related issues with me. What is the biggest financial concern? How do the assets compare with the liabilities? What is the operation balance? What is the bond of indebtedness?
- Set aside a day to have the directors and supervisors of food service, facilities, planning, etc., meet and share with me in the same manner the central office administrators communicated.
- Plan a two-day school board retreat to review board issues. Survey the Board for issues that need discussion. Identify selected staff to attend. This is an opportunity for the Board to share with me and to get to know me. What is the Board's vision for the district?
- After the Board Retreat, plan a full-day retreat for all district administrators to set my expectations, work, and vision.
- Conduct a 90-day assessment of my findings, views, and recommendations and report them to the Board, central administrative staff, and building administrators.
- Identify a community sponsor and have an appreciation celebration for clerical and administrative support staff. First, however, I will review invitational practices and share my first impressions of the district with them.

**Other key questions –**

- Of what can this district be most proud? (Name 3-5 accomplishments)
- What issues or challenges need to be addressed?
- What do you see to be the role of community residents?
- What evidence would you need to engage in a serious discussion about the future direction of the district
- What evidence or documentation would you need to see in one year to decide if the superintendent was on the right journey?