



Entry Plan

Mountain View Whisman School District

Ayindé N.A. Rudolph, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

“The Mountain View Phenomenon: The First 100 Days”

Introduction

The Mountain View Whisman School District has established a clear mission for the lives of all who reside within the district: demonstrate on a daily basis a relentless commitment to the success of every child. With clear priorities grounded in “academic excellence, strong community, and a broad worldview.” Essentially, a belief that we should “prepare all children for the world ahead by challenging, inspiring, and supporting our students to thrive in a world of constant change.” How close is the District to achieving this goal? What systems and structures can Mountain View leverage to execute this vision? What challenges must we address in order for the District, schools and community to realize these goals? As the incoming Superintendent, I must investigate, address and initiate an appropriate strategy that assures that the Mountain View Whisman School District continues on the path of providing a well-rounded and robust education for all students.

This document shall serve as my entry plan—a blueprint that will not only function as the vehicle for me to understand the contextual underpinnings of the neighborhood, schools and residents, but also an outline of activities that I will engage in throughout my first 100 days. A written report will be provided to the Board of Education at the end of the 100 days outlining my findings and ideas about establishing a strategic plan that will help align our work in a cohesive and efficient manner.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Mountain View Whisman School District is to, “Demonstrate, daily, a relentless commitment to the success of every child.” While serving a diverse Silicon Valley community with a rich heritage, MVWSD will ensure that every student acquires the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to succeed at each educational level and in life. Building on a culture of collaboration and innovation, highly trained and caring staff will know, engage, and challenge each student.

Core Values

The core values of the Mountain View Whisman School District are “academic excellence, strong community, and a broad worldview.” The district prepares all children for the world ahead by challenging, inspiring, and supporting students to thrive in a world of constant change.

What’s great about Mountain View Whisman District Schools?

- Top-performing Elementary School District in the State of California
- Crittenden and Graham Middle Schools were selected as 2015 Gold Ribbon Schools.
- The District’s new elementary Math curriculum roll out will assist students in mastering the skills necessary for students to become proficient and to be college and career ready
- 1:1 Chromebook program, at every school, in grades 3 – 8.
- Classroom upgrades that incorporate more technology and encourage more student collaboration
- Healthy school lunch initiative
- Partnership with the City of Mountain View to provide state of the art athletic fields
- Strong passage and community support for Measure G which will generate up to \$198 million to repair, upgrade and expand our local schools
- Partnerships with local leaders

Goals

This entry plan is designed to address the following goals:

1. Develop a strong, collaborative relationship with the Board of Trustees and to determine the goals, expectations, and foundation for Mountain View Whisman's Strategic Plan 2020.
2. To ensure an effective, efficient, and orderly transition of leadership, keeping the focus on increased student achievement for all children.
3. To create opportunities for the new superintendent to listen broadly and deeply to a multitude of stakeholders and gain a comprehensive understanding of MVWSD.
4. To proactively ensure that all voices, not just those who traditionally avail themselves to collaboration with the school system, are heard and engaged in the process of continuous improvement.
5. To identify and execute activities that must happen immediately to ensure an outstanding beginning to the school year.
6. To build excitement and momentum for MVWSD's vision, mission, and future strategic plan, while also establishing the commitment to engage in needed improvement.

Outcomes

Expected results of this entry plan include:

1. A comprehensive summary of the findings and observations collected from the various activities outlined within this plan.
2. A process for the Superintendent, and my designees, to building upon the high levels of civic, parent, business and community engagement through clear and transparent communication
3. Establishing the foundation of a 5-year strategic plan and possible short-term improvement plans for urgent matters, and to establish how the Board of Education and the new superintendent will address the "big question" about how to engage in systemic reform that ensures we're raising the bar while eliminating achievement gap.
4. An energized district and community about the focus and direction of the MVWSD.

Structure

This Entry Plan encompasses 100 days to engage key stakeholders of which will represent a wide range of constituents that include but not limited to: students, parents, teachers, principals, senior staff, Board of Trustee Members, business community, advocacy groups, civic leaders and organizations, and governmental agencies – (the list will expand as Board of Trustee Members add other key constituencies).

I. Governance Team: Board of Trustees Mountain View Whisman School District

In order to ensure that the district has an intense focus on meeting the needs of all children, the Board and superintendent must develop a trusting, positive, collaborative, team-oriented relationship. These relationships must be established with each individual Board member and the Board as a whole. During this Plan of Entry, the superintendent will work with the Board to discuss issues and matters of governance, management, core values and beliefs, structures of their working relationship, and to consider issues reform and our approach to the work.

Activities

- Conduct one-on-one meetings with all Board members to continue to build positive, productive relationships.
- Meet with all employee association leaders.
- Hold a Board retreat to discuss communication protocols, roles and responsibilities, norms of behavior and interaction, expectations for first year, Superintendent goals and agenda setting.
- Meet with the Board president and Board committee chairs to determine how they work in partnership with the superintendent and senior staff.
- Collaborate on a performance evaluation process and format with indicators of success to evaluate the superintendent for year one.
- Determine the schedule and proposed agendas for Board meetings.
- Collaborate on the next Board retreat to focus on shared values, initiate reflections on organizational structure and areas of improvement.
- Establish a Board Management Oversight Process.
- Establish regular meeting times with the Board president for reviewing and constructing agendas (what's working and what the Board would like to improve).

II. Organizational Capacity and Alignment: Executive Staff

It is imperative that I gain an understanding of how the organization is currently operating – what’s working well and where there are opportunities for growth. The executive team’s primary role is to support the key functions of the district. It is my responsibility that we operate as a highly effective cross-functional team, dedicated to a positive, professional culture - and that our focus remains on meeting the needs of all students.

Activities

- Determine how communication and decision-making occurs with the executive team – how it might need to improve. Establish meeting norms and protocols designed to focus on increased efficiency and alignment.
- Conduct one-on-one interviews with all unit heads in District Office, focusing on alignment and execution of key strategies.
- Conduct an “Organizational Audit” using expert practitioners to review alignment, coherence, and efficiency of the current organizational structure.
- Initiate plans to establish key metrics and customer service goals for each functional unit to ensure the performance of central office can be determined and measured with alignment to core function and support for student achievement.
- Meet with staff to assess current data and performance of all schools under their supervision and determine quality of actions designed for continuous improvement.
- Review student achievement data – understand how students are performing and what strategies are in place for those students who are not meeting expectations – are they receiving appropriate and targeted interventions.
- Examine how much autonomy and authority principals have in the current organizational structure and determine how much access and opportunity they have to play key roles in decision-making.
- Conduct a retreat with the executive team to review department strategic plans, improvement plans, most recent achievement data, school report cards or metric documents, review current or anticipated vacancies in central office or principalships, and discuss leadership team structures and practice.
- Ensure all necessary plans and preparations are in place for an outstanding opening of school, establish protocols for assessing effectiveness of the opening of schools (scheduling, transportation, facility preparedness, etc.).

III. Quality of Learning And Teaching:

The ultimate goal for the Mountain View Whisman is to assure that every student has the skillset to choose an appropriate path to succeed in High School and life in general. More importantly, the charge of every employee within the Mountain View Whisman School District is to assure that no door is closed to a student because of a substandard education. To ensure that instruction is occurring at high levels, teachers must be equipped with a rigorous curriculum, have access to and possess the necessary competencies to monitor student performance, and be provided with opportunities to enhance their instructional “toolboxes.” Additionally, we must ensure all decisions are made using the barometer of “Is it good for children, is it research based, and is it fiscally sound?”

Activities

- Analyze patterns in student achievement data and achievement gaps in order to begin to assess current state of teaching and learning.
- Meet with district’s instructional leadership team to review disaggregated achievement data, instructional program alignment, and current goals and priority action areas for the district.
- Conduct a root cause analysis for underperforming schools and sub groups to determine why students are not succeeding; determine a course of corrective action.
- Determine the degree of rigor embedded in the current MVWSD curriculum.
- Conduct an analysis of curriculum and programs, especially with student populations currently not meeting with success such as English language learners and special education students
- Assess current professional development efforts 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; do a “deep dive” in determining how much of the budget is devoted to professional development and how and if it is being assessed.
- Evaluate MVWSD efforts towards increasing student achievement for all students with special focus on Special Education, Latino, and children living in poverty.
- Determine what monitoring is used in MVWSD to ensure all students are performing at grade level or are receiving appropriate, targeted interventions.

IV. Community and Public Relations

MVWSD is initiating program improvements in order to continue to provide a sound education to all students. It is critical that I understand the culture, history, and expectations of the community. Working with staff I will be proactive and deliberate in reaching out to all stakeholders, particularly those who are traditionally underrepresented in public engagement, to ensure their voices are included and valued. To build support, it is imperative for me to be proactive in my approach to reaching all stakeholders. There will be a focus on establishing openness and transparency in all communication systems and protocols used to communicate both internally and externally. Key questions for all stakeholders may include:

- ✓ What are the strengths of MVWSD?
- ✓ What opportunities exist to improve MVWSD?
- ✓ As the budget remains a challenge for so many districts across California - what are the priorities of the district?
- ✓ What would we like MVWSD to look like in 5 years – what does “world class” mean as a standard in MVWSD?

Activities:

Reach out to a multitude of critical stakeholders and establish routine meetings, communication protocols, and reciprocal dialogues, focusing on increasing 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:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Meet with key leaders in consultation with Board of Education members | ✓ Parent organizations and local PTAs |
| ✓ Elected officials | ✓ University officials |
| ✓ Area legislators and or representatives -- state and national | ✓ Key business leaders |
| ✓ Education Committee, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Governor’s point person on education | ✓ Educational or Community Advocacy groups |
| ✓ Chamber of Commerce officials | ✓ Civic leaders |
| ✓ Heads of teacher, administrator, and other employee associations | ✓ Non-profit groups |
| | ✓ Faith-based leaders |
| | ✓ Local Superintendents |

School Visits

- ✓ The superintendent will visit all 9 schools. During these visits I will interact with principals, teachers, support staff, and parent volunteers inquiring about where we are as a district, and where we need to be to meet the needs of all children.

Community Forums

- ✓ The superintendent, Trustee Members, and senior staff will host multiple “town hall” meetings using the Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis model (or other protocols) 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.

V. Operations and Finance

In order to meet the needs of all students in MVWSD, it is critical that Operations and Finance are “world class” as well. Understanding the current strengths, strategies, and opportunities for improvement in light of current budget challenges will be a critical focus. Each division will be reviewed to determine how they maximize support and services to schools using the continuous improvement model.

Activities

- Review key district financial materials, budget, most recent audit, and grants.
- Conduct one-on-one meetings with direct reports on budget, operations, curriculum, instruction and human resources.
- Request briefing papers from all office heads providing an overview of their current area of responsibility, major initiatives under way with projected time lines, and a review of significant or potential problems in each area of responsibility.
- Conduct one-on-one meetings with all office heads, ensuring each division has fidelity to its core function and has a student-focused agenda.
- Review district’s financial projections, resource allocation and budgeting processes; assess how district’s budget and budgeting process is aligned to support student achievement.
- Determine what should be centralized and what should be decentralized within the current organizational structure to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and support to schools.
- Conduct one-on-one meetings with lawyers 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.
- Review district’s safety, and crisis communication plan.
- Conduct a review of the district’s ability to provide the public with information; review the history, services, and outreach to entire community.
- Assess the degree to which all offices are cross-functional and begin to establish key metrics and customer service goals to ensure peak efficiency and support for student achievement.

- Examine the effectiveness of MVWSD information-data management system, especially around student achievement, budget, and human resources.
- Evaluate what type of technological tools and digital resources are available to teachers and students.

The Superintendent's First Day and First Day of School

My first day in the office will be July 1, 2015.

On that day I will begin to gain an understanding of MVWSD. I will continue to meet with all the leaders from the unions, Board of Trustee Members, and other key community members. The rest of the summer will be spent connecting to a variety of stakeholders.

On the first two days of school, I want to visit all nine schools. I will meet with senior staff to evaluate the quality of opening day/week activities, making any needed adjustments and improvements.

100 days from my start will be January 20th, 2016.

Post 100 Days

Once the 100 day listening and learning period has ended the findings will be presented to the Board of Trustees to garner further feedback and or validation. These findings will be shared at a Board workshop or retreat. Once the areas of focus have been identified staff and the superintendent will begin creating the strategies and initiatives designed to improve the identified areas. Working together throughout this entire process as a Governance team (the Board of Trustees and Superintendent) will ensure shared ownership of the work and results. A strategic planning process that includes all stakeholders also ensures the MVWSD strengthens its commitment to a positive, productive culture, which is focused on great results for all students.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the

The Parents, Students and Community members who support our schools

The dedicated Employees of Mountain View Whisman School District

The Board of Trustees

The Mentors and Colleagues who have guided me over the course of my career