

SUPERINTENDENT'S
PLAN OF ENTRY

LISTENING
LEARNING
LEADING



Renaë McMurray, District Administrator
2022-2023



INTRODUCTION

“EDUCATION IS NOT THE FILLING OF A PAIL,
BUT THE LIGHTING OF A FIRE.”

-W.B. Yeats

It is of utmost importance that a new district administrator develops an understanding of the district in order to serve the community. This plan is meant to be a dynamic, iterative strategy for Mrs. McMurray’s entrance into the Mercer School District. Feedback will be gathered from the Board of Directors, staff, parents, students, and community members to further enhance the plan’s effectiveness. The goal of this plan is to create a smooth and successful transition of leadership, allowing the District to progress forward in as seamless a manner as possible. Readers of the plan are encouraged to contact Mrs. McMurray (715) 476-2154 with suggestions they feel would contribute to the design and implementation of the plan.

All activities in this plan will be conducted while the Mercer School District is engaged in ongoing operations. Consequently, the district administrator shall be enacting this plan while simultaneously conducting all expected responsibilities of leading and operating the District.

DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

We the staff, students, and community of Mercer believe that all students can become lifelong learners and productive citizens in a global society. Our mission is to inspire, challenge, and provide every student with the opportunity to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to reach their potential.

PHASES OF WORK

PHASE I: ENTRY

July 1 –September 30 2022

During this phase of the plan, Mrs. McMurray will be actively seeking multiple perspectives on the District. Additionally, she will become familiar with the operating processes of the District. She will be developing a deep understanding of the historical and current context of the Mercer School District's strengths, hopes and challenges. Additionally, she will share her core values and beliefs. This combination of listening and sharing is designed to build trust, develop relationships, and identify the strengths and challenges of the District. The plan will set the tone for a collaborative leadership environment in which multiple perspectives and voices are sought.

She will utilize four guiding questions to inform her work in this process:

- What is going well in the Mercer School District?
- What are the key issues facing our school system which need attention?
- What are your hopes for the Mercer School District into the future?
- How can I be most helpful in my role as district administrator?

During Phase I, Mrs. McMurray will employ the following action steps:

- Meet with members of the Board of Directors as individuals and as a group to develop positive working relationships and to identify community groups to engage in dialogue
- Meet individually with staff members to develop an understanding of their goals and challenges
- Attend and participate in community events
- Attend and support school events and activities
- Facilitate ongoing forums to foster open communications
- Meet with recent graduates
- Review and develop an understanding of the District's:
 - Contracts
 - Student and employee handbooks
 - Policies and procedures



- Annual meeting of electors
- School improvement plans
- Past Board of Director agendas and minutes
- Grants
- Budgets
- Student achievement metrics
- Strategic plan
- Internal and external communications opportunities
- Attend meetings or events of local civic groups and community partners including: the Mercer Schools Foundation, Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, Mercer library, PTSA, Boosters, senior citizens groups, faith-based partners, Mercer Area Sno-Goers, Mercer Loons Motorcycle Club, VFW, and others as identified by stakeholders to learn more about the community and build partnerships to support the success of students
- Observe each classroom with a lens on how to support a positive culture for student learning and achievement
- Meet local and regional elected officials and develop communication channels with them
- Meet with higher education officials including those from University of Wisconsin, Nicolet College, and Gogebic Community College to build partnerships and develop and understanding of success skills needed for Mercer graduates planning to attend post-secondary education opportunities
- Attend Town of Mercer Supervisor's Meetings
- Meet with ESD 112 Administrator, Dominick Madison, in order to become familiar with the protocols and services of the region
- Join and actively participate in professional organizations
 - WASDA Annual Legal Conference
 - WASDA First Year Superintendent's Academy
 - WASDA Fall Superintendent's Conference
 - AASA: The School Superintendent's Association
 - CESA12 Superintendents Group

During this process, Mrs. McMurray will seek to hear many perspectives and listen for understanding to ensure that she is honoring the experiences of community members.

PHASE II: DATA ANALYSIS

October 2022

During this phase, Mrs. McMurray will analyze data and synthesize it into themes. She will develop a written report to include a summary of her findings, as well as the analysis and synthesis of the information gleaned from the work.

PHASE III: DISSEMINATION OF THE REPORT

November 2022

During this phase, Mrs. McMurray will share the report she has completed with the Board of Directors, staff, parents, student representatives, and the community. The purpose of this sharing will be to use the data to collaboratively move forward to build upon the successes of the Mercer School District, leverage its strengths, and develop a path for the future which addresses identified challenges. By sharing the work with the Board, school staff, parents, student representatives, and the community, we can work together to use the information to guide and shape strategic District priorities, school improvement plans and resource allocation.

GOAL AREAS



GOAL 1: LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Develop schools which are safe and conducive to learning, inspire community pride and use resources cost-effectively

- Complete a thorough financial review
- Monitor and tour district facilities with an eye for current conditions and any needed improvements
- Participate in the Buildings and Grounds Committee meetings
- Review safety protocols

GOAL 2: EXCELLENT STAFF

Attract and retain a high-quality staff by offering regionally-competitive compensation, good working conditions, and recognizing excellence in performance

- Review staff assignments
- Complete hiring for open positions
- Guide and support the continued development of a new-teacher mentoring program
- Develop a staff recruitment plan to include:
 - Hiring strategies
 - Timely recruitment

GOAL 3: ACHIEVEMENT FOR EVERY STUDENT

Ensure all students have high levels of academic achievement with a focus on literacy and mathematics. Increase student learning through improved leadership, instruction, supports and a culture of continuous improvement.

- Guide and support continued curriculum development to improving student achievement, close the gap between all student populations, and align with state standards
- Guide a multiple stake-holder process to gather input, develop and recommend a new Strategic Plan, beginning in school year 2023-24

- Create a district-wide accountability framework, to include:
 - Levels of accountability (student, teacher, administrator, school)
 - Measures and performance targets for elementary, middle and high schools.
 - Differentiated levels of support, assistance, and flexibility based on need
 - Appropriate recognition of achievement
 - Alignment with state accountability systems
 - Multiple measures of achievement used to gauge success
- Guide High School improvement work to include:
 - A review of structural and instructional practices
 - A review of graduation requirements and course taking patterns and offerings
 - A review of College, Career and Technical readiness
- Monitor next steps around system-wide literacy and math work including professional development for teachers and acceleration and intervention opportunities for students

GOAL 4: RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Align resources to maximize student achievement while maintaining the financial stability of the district

- Allocate sufficient resources to attract and retain high-quality teachers and staff
- Guide public budget forums throughout the school year, which provide transparency and accountability to the public while developing fiscal priorities for student achievement
- Guide public hearing on 2022-23 budget in October
- Acquire additional resources (philanthropic/local and state grants) to support the strategic work
- Maintain fiscal solvency over time, while still meeting staffing and achievement goals

GOAL 5: NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engage the community through transparent communication and a network of community partnerships.

Conduct a listening, relationship-building, and sharing the vision campaign with the following:

- Political Leadership
 - Town Board
 - State Legislators
 - State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Underly and key DPI staff
- Parent and Community Leadership
 - Mercer Schools Foundation
 - PTSA
 - Boosters
 - Lions Club
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Faith Based Groups
 - Library Board
 - Sno-Goers Association
 - VFW
 - Discovery Center
 - ICOR
 - Mecca Trails
- Higher Education Leadership
 - Nicolet
- Media Relationships – Develop positive relationships with media and articulate the district mission and vision
- Advisory Groups
 - Create a District Administrator student-advisory group
- Offer an open forum of communication by hosting “Community Coffee with Renae”
- Communications
 - Weekly staff email: “Message from Renae”
 - Monitor district-wide communication tools and protocols for effectiveness

*Many of the ideas from this plan come from others, in particular: “Highline Public Schools Superintendent’s Ninety-Day Plan,” by John P. Welch; “Shoreline Superintendent’s plan of Entry: Hitting the Ground Listening and Learning,” by Rebecca L. Miner.