

The Mission of AGWSR Community Schools is to provide EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION so that each student will discover LIFE-LONG LEARNING and become a self-respecting, contributing adult member of society.

Superintendent's Entry Plan for AGWSR CSD

Marty Jimmerson
Effective July 2014

INTRODUCTION

As your incoming superintendent, I believe in order to effectively lead the AGWSR CSD, I must be systematic and systemic about my entry into the school district and community.

Toward that end, I have spent time reflecting upon and crafting a very deliberate entry plan for the first 100 school days of my tenure as superintendent of the AGWSR CSD. Much of this plan is focused on listening to and learning from the many diverse constituencies in Ackley, Geneva, Wellsburg, and Steamboat Rock in order to build and strengthen the relationships necessary for student success. In essence, I hope to "hit the ground learning."

This formal entry plan will provide me with the time and opportunity to gather critical information quickly about the needs of children, staff, the school system and community. During this process, I will complete a comprehensive review of existing programs, initiatives, services, student performance and fiscal conditions in order to assess the district's strengths, challenges and opportunities for improvement, and identify critical issues while honoring the work already in place. It is important to note that the work of entry occurs simultaneously with the operation of the school district.

Through direct conversation, group discussion, observation, surveys, and document reviews, I will immerse myself in learning about the AGWSR CSD and accelerate my learning curve in order to effectively lead the school district. This effort will also help me make the connections necessary to establish a presence in the community and begin building the critical relationships and networks that will help us continue the advancements our students deserve.

This document outlines the goals, objectives, major activities and timetable for my transition to the role of the AGWSR community schools superintendent. It is a living document, open to revision. As you read it, please consider ways it can be improved and share those with me. Special consideration has been given to include a diversity of stakeholders in this plan and voices that may not be heard through traditional forms of communication. Please note that the goals and activities are not listed in order of importance or chronology.

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TIMETABLE

The entry plan has three phases:

Phase I: Entry (first 100 school days)

July 1, 2014 – November 10, 2014

Phase II: Development of Next Steps

November 2014-May 2015

Listening and learning sessions with individuals, small groups, and larger gatherings will dominate Phase I and Phase II. These sessions will consist of numerous meetings with board members, and key stakeholders including: internal leadership groups, direct reports, principals, staff, employee groups, students, parent groups, community organizations, community members, business partners and faith leaders. Updates and reports about the progress of the entry plan will be provided to the Board of Education, as appropriate.

GOALS

1. Maintain district focus on students and accelerate existing momentum of current initiatives.
2. Build strong, collaborative and trusting relationships with key stakeholders and establish two-way communication channels.
3. Ensure a smooth and orderly transition of leadership.
4. Develop a structure for the Superintendent to listen broadly and learn comprehensively about the AGWSR CSD in order to develop a deeper working knowledge and understanding of the school district, its culture, traditions, history and expectations.
5. Provide avenues for diverse perspectives and voices to be heard and engage all segments of our community in authentic communication that builds mutual trust and understanding.
6. Establish an effective and collegial working relationship with the members of the AGWSR Board of Education and solidify a cohesive board-superintendent leadership team focused on improving the achievement levels of all students.
7. Purposely and carefully structure the transition to best support and create instructional improvement and increases in student achievement.
8. Review organizational structure, climate, budget, key work processes, practices, programs and resources to ensure alignment of resources to efficiently and effectively meet the educational, social and emotional needs of all students.
9. Assess the strengths, needs, improvement opportunities and challenges of the AGWSR CSD.
10. Recognize the service and accomplishments of students, staff, community leaders and leaders and publicly celebrate attainments of benchmarks and goals.

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KEY VALUES

- All decisions and actions must be based on what's best for students.
- Every child deserves an excellent and equitable education.
- Everything rises and falls on leadership.
- Individual differences are to be respected and celebrated.
- Interactions must be conducted with truth, transparency, and collaboration.

CORE COMPONENTS

Throughout my tenure at the AGWSR CSD, I will actively engage in a purposeful effort to listen to the community, learn, discern and develop action plans for the future, in collaboration with all stakeholders. The following activities will be core components of my entry plan. Please note that completion of these activities will occur simultaneously and are of equal importance.

- Cultivation of a strong working relationship with the AGSWR Board of Education while developing board goals.
- Meetings, interviews, community forums and school visits designed to build collaborative and trusting relationships with key stakeholders while gathering their insights on the school district.
- Regular interaction with the public and news media through existing communication channels while exploring new ways of sharing information and receiving feedback.
- Data analysis, information gathering and document review.

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Phase I: Entry

During my first 100 school days as superintendent, my work will revolve around four core activities. Although this will take place in concert with the day to day functioning of the school district, I will balance the daily operations of the district and focus on the entry plan objectives, which will provide a foundation for the future success of our school district. Here are more specifics about how I will approach the core activities in the entry plan.

Core Component: Establish an effective and collegial working relationship with the members of the AGWSR Board of Education and solidify a cohesive board-superintendent leadership team focused on improving the achievement levels of all students. (ISSL #1, #6)

1. Schedule individual meetings with each board member for one-on-one time to discuss expectations, roles and needs.
2. Schedule a meeting with Brian Johnson to discuss a format and agenda for board-superintendent meetings, work sessions, and retreats.
3. Establish individual and district goals that the board can use to evaluate me and agree upon a performance evaluation format.

Core Component: Build and enhance meaningful, positive and authentic relationships with all facets of the AGSWR CSD, which includes students, staff, families, staff, community supporters, business partners, faith leaders, elected officials and media representatives. To be successful, relationships must be built in the spirit of transparency, honesty and collaboration. To be sustainable, effective channels of two-way communication must be mutually agreed upon and utilized regularly. (ISSL #4, #6)

A. Meetings and Interviews

In order to hear from students, staff, families, community supporters, business partners, faith leaders, elected officials and media representatives, I will conduct a series of meetings and key informational interviews centered on the following six topics:

1. Name three things that are going well in the AGWSR CSD that you would like to us continue to focus on.
2. Name three things in the AGWSR CSD that you think we need to revisit.
3. What do you hope I do as Superintendent?
4. What do you hope I do not do as Superintendent?
5. What existing communication channels are most effective and do you have suggestions of other ways we can maintain a two-way dialogue?
6. What other general advice do you have for me?

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The primary goal of these meetings will be to actively listen and gather input from each stakeholder. My hope is that these interactions will be a foundation for authentic relationships and collaborations to benefit students. I need to hear firsthand from our stakeholders to understand the priorities and needs of our community and its schools. Before the close of each meeting, I also hope to have established some routine communication protocols with the different groups and individuals so that the conversation continues beyond our first discussion.

If a district stakeholder group was inadvertently omitted, please call me at 515-520-7633 or email me at mjimmerson@agwsr.org. Additionally, I am committed to meeting with any individual who wants to meet.

B. School and Classroom Visits

Based upon the belief that spending time in schools and classrooms provides the foundation for learning about the district as well as relationship building, I will visit each building weekly through September. Additionally, I will occasionally accompany principals on walk-thrus.

C. Attend School Events and Community Functions

I will regularly attend school and community functions, including student performances, recognition events, athletic contests, co-curricular and extracurricular events.

D. Attend School and Community Meetings

In addition to the individual and focus group meetings outlined above, I will accept as many invitations as possible to speak at school and community gatherings.

At times, I will drop by meetings at school, including faculty meetings, building leadership team meetings, grade level meetings, and teacher planning sessions. During these visits, I will just be there to observe and learn about issues, activities and efforts throughout the district. My intent will not be to evaluate or interject, but simply to listen.

Core Component: Information gathering, document review, and data collection and analysis. (ISSL #2, #3, #5)

A. Review studies, reports, surveys and audits by outside agencies, such as:

- Financial Audits
- Newspaper articles, television news stories, editorials
- Special education audits
- Wellness plan

B. Review critical internal documents, such as:

- Administrative evaluations
- Assessment calendars

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- Budget documents
- CAR
- C-Plan
- Iowa Core Alignment
- District facilities plan
- Dropout and graduation rate data
- Employee contracts
- Employee handbook
- Financial projections and budget
- Job descriptions
- Middle and high school athletic guidelines
- Minutes from SIAC meetings for the past few years
- Professional development plans
- Program evaluations
- Safety and emergency plans
- Salary schedules
- School board meeting minutes
- School Board Policy and Procedures manual
- School Improvement Plans

C. Student assessment results including: Iowa Assessment scores ACT scores, DIBELS data, PLAN scores, Advanced Placement (AP) scores, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data

- Student code of conduct and student handbooks
- Teacher evaluation and supervision process handbooks and manuals
- Technology plan

D. Operational awareness

- Evaluate key programs and major initiatives.
- Review major responsibilities and initiatives in each district division or department.
- Review the operations of departments and divisions in context of how they support academic achievement.

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Phase II: Development of Next Steps

This Entry Plan will afford me the opportunity to listen, observe and learn from a variety of community members while gaining an understanding of the local context of the city and the school system. Through this process I will begin to formulate ideas and frame strategies to improve our school system so that we increase student achievement for all students while simultaneously closing the achievement gap and ensuring success for every child.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, I will share my findings, observations and initial thoughts about next steps with our board of education, employees, students, families and community.

Through my interactions with so many stakeholders, I hope to energize our school district and community about the focus and direction of the AGWSR CSD. We will build upon existing excitement and momentum to identify and execute the priority activities for our school district. Collaboration, honest discourse and a focus on students will guide our work. We will raise expectations for ourselves and our students and ensure the elimination of achievement gaps and higher achievement for all students

Timeline of Events:

Add:

- Dates for reports
- SAI events (new supt, finance, etc...)
- Timeline...
- Standards...