ENTRY PLAN (overview)

The First 100 Days


Dr. Marion Smith, Jr.
Finalist Candidate
Superintendent of Schools

Study | Support | Serve
Board of Trustees

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District Vision
We will provide all students access to best educational services. Effective teaching and learning requires cooperation and teamwork among parents, school district employees and students to achieve maximum potential. Learning occurs at different speeds and can be measured in various ways. Safety, character, achievement and potential are important factors to consider when designing and delivering instruction.

District Beliefs
All people have inherently equal worth.
All people can learn.
Each individual has unique talents and abilities to be discovered, encouraged, and developed.
Learning occurs throughout life in different settings, ways and times.
People are responsible for the choices they make.
High expectations, coupled with motivation, inspire people to higher levels of performance.
Personal effort is essential to achieve full potential.
A community thrives when individuals contribute to the well-being of others.
Integrity, respect, and cooperation are essential in building trusting relationships.
Embracing diversity strengthens and enriches our community.
A nurturing, supportive family is uniquely important to the healthy development of the individual.

District Mission
“EVERYONE ALWAYS LEARNING”
INTRODUCTION

The Board of Trustees has charged me, as incoming superintendent, with improving academic achievement for all students and making the district’s systems and processes more effective. As your superintendent, I am committed to working with you to ensure that all students in Churchill County School District (Churchill CSD) are prepared for 21st century success in college and the workforce, and that achievement and opportunity gaps are eliminated.

To turn our mission, vision and beliefs into reality, all of us must come together on behalf of our students to create the positive conditions to keep the focus of the district on meeting the needs of students while building momentum for positive and transformative change.

To this end, I have developed this document, an Entry Plan. This Entry Plan is a starting place for me to learn more about the people and organizations in our community so that I may best serve our students, staff and families. It includes a summary of listening, learning and leadership strategies to be implemented during the first 100 days as superintendent to accomplish the following:

Entry Plan Goal Areas:

**Goal 1:**
Define and establish an effective district governance team by building a trusting, productive, collaborative relationship with the Churchill CSD Board of Trustees.

**Goal 2:**
Develop an understanding of the organizational capacity and efforts in ensuring students are academically, emotionally and socially successful: ready for post-secondary pursuits.

**Goal 3:**
Strengthen internal (staff) and external (family and community) engagement and enhance communication.

**Goal 4:**
Promote and ensure a positive, collaborative, and constructive culture focused on strengthening student educational outcomes.

**Goal 5:**
Identify and analyze critical issues in Churchill CSD that represent both barriers and opportunities for accelerating the performance of all students.

This plan is meant to be flexible, while identifying specific goals, strategies and results to be achieved. As this process unfolds, the intended results of this plan may be revised, deleted, or expanded upon as further information is obtained and disseminated. Furthermore, this information will be shared on a regular basis with the Board and the school community to keep them informed of my findings. In the spirit of transparency and accountability, the Entry Plan will be posted on the district website.

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1 Entry Plan strategies have been adapted from information gleaned from entry plans written in other educational settings and information synthesized from two text resources: So Now You’re The Superintendent by John Eller and Howard C. Carlson and The Superintendent’s Fieldbook: A Guide for Leaders of Learning (2nd Edition)
The Entry Plan has four phases:

Pre Entry

Planning

Transition

Entry

The Pre-Entry work is to create an intentional and inclusive process for my transition into Churchill CSD. The process is designed to create ideas to build upon the great work happening in the district AND strengthening Churchill CSD as we look to the future with improved structures and leadership. The Pre-Entry activities will be utilized as a frame to develop a deep understanding of what Churchill CSD is doing well, what areas Churchill CSD may improve, and how the community (both internal and external) can advise me in both of these areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Entry Strategies (prior to my official start date)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Draft goal areas for entry activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review critical documents such as student achievement data, survey results, contracts, organization charts, Board minutes, policies and procedures, operating budgets, results from audits for finance, special education, other grants, etc.</td>
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<td>Draft full Entry Plan and share with Board of Directors for the purpose of feedback</td>
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<td>Meet with Board President and individual Board members to deepen relationships and broaden perspectives</td>
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<td>Create a transition plan with current superintendent and get a list of all upcoming hiring for central office and building administrators, budget for SY 18-19, and a plan for ongoing communication</td>
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<td>Meet 1:1 with every school administrator and central office administrator</td>
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<td>Reach out and meet with former Churchill CSD superintendents (as/if applicable) to gain a historical perspective of the district and region</td>
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<td>Request job briefs from department heads (major responsibilities, projects, upcoming and long-term work, accomplishments, names and roles for direct reports)</td>
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<td>Identify dates for orientation to Churchill CSD</td>
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<td>Send a system email to administrators, principals and all staff introducing myself</td>
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<td>Strategically attend meetings (Board meetings, interviews, etc.)</td>
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The Transition will begin when the Churchill CSD Board of Trustees names me as the new superintendent. The focus of activities during this phase will continue to be gathering information about Churchill CSD and its unique challenges and opportunities. The Transition phase will provide opportunities to review data related to the instructional and operational components of the school district. The focus at this stage is on making initial contacts and reviewing reports.

This phase will also include a short electronic survey with key questions to be distributed throughout the school district. Survey results will be shared with the Board and will consist of the following queries:

- What are you most proud of about our school district? (What do we do well?)
- What do you foresee as the three top challenges facing our school district over the next 3-5 years?
- What traditions and values must we preserve as we move forward? Why are these important?
- What is one thing you would like to change or improve so that we can provide a first-class education for all students?
- What skills and qualities do you feel our students need to thrive in the future?
- How would you describe the culture and climate of our school district (For example: open, welcome, resistant to change)?
- What is one issue that, if we dealt with it, would improve the effectiveness of our school district?
- What does support look like to you from a superintendent of schools focused on learning and teaching?

The Entry Phase, which begins roughly after the first 30 days on the job, and continues through day 60 of service, includes strategies for continued development of the superintendent/board relationship. Efforts to gain clarity about opportunities and challenges within the district and forge relationships with internal and external stakeholders expand to include initial meetings with key stakeholder groups and individual meetings with school and department leaders. A culminating activity for the entry phase includes a Board update.

My work during this phase may be classified in the following ways:

**Listen**—Spend time with students, teachers, parents, principals, district administrators and other Churchill CSD 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. Receive issue and policy briefings from Churchill CSD employees and education organizations.

**Share**—Get to know the community better by sharing my leadership story and my educational philosophies and core values. I will strive to establish a positive tone and an urgent pace.

**Involve**—Establish strong working relationships and build rapport with the Board of Trustees, Churchill CSD leadership and employees, and community, state and local leaders.

**Plan**—Review the current strategic plan with specific action steps to guide the work of Churchill CSD and the Board of Trustees.

The Planning Phase includes days 60-100 after starting work in the district. This phase focuses on laying the foundation for the development and/or revision of the district learning and teaching plans looking ahead to beginning the process of developing a new 3 to 5 Year Strategic Plan, based on Entry Plan initial feedback and Board goals.

This plan will define the goal and strategies critical to operationalize our mission. To that end, I envision bold and ambitious goals for our school system, such as aspiring to have 100% of the kindergarten students who enter our schools next fall performing above grade level in reading, math and science by the end of third grade.
Initial Outreach Strategies

Highlights of outreach to students, teachers, principals, and staff:

- **“Smith in Schools”** - I will be in schools to learn firsthand the progress we are making in our classrooms and discover ways we may more intentionally and effectively study, support, and serve students, teachers, staff and principals. While in schools, I will visit classrooms; I’ll meet 1:1 with principals and other staff in small groups to gather input and provide feedback. I will be in schools 1x a week from 9-1, unless my schedule requires me to choose a different time frame.

- **Snacks with the Supt** - I will meet informally over the lunch hour each month with teachers and staff at a school to hear from them their suggestions, concerns, and celebrations. I will provide snacks for us to enjoy during these conversations provided by district Nutrition Services.

- **“Monthly with Marion”** - I will meet monthly, after school hours, with school leaders and school staff to learn how we may deepen learning-focused partnerships between schools and central office staff.

- **“Brown Bag with the Boss”** - I will invite teams from each of our central office departments to meet with me for monthly brown-bag-lunch conversations, where we can discuss how we may continue to improve our supports and services to schools.

- **Student Advisory Council** - I will host quarterly student advisory council meetings for students to share their perspectives with me.

Highlight of outreach to labor/union partners:

- Hold monthly meetings with the education association, teamsters, and principals’ association leaders to work through contract implementation and address challenges we face, all with a focus on improving and strengthening student educational outcomes

Highlights of outreach to families and community partners:

- **Office Visits** - I will host rotating 15-minute office visits in my office at least once per month. The purpose of these is for me to hear directly from you—community members and families—about your concerns, questions, and suggestions for how we may partner to improve our schools.

- **“Tea Time”** - The purpose of these informal gatherings is to provide an opportunity for families, community members and other stakeholders to provide input, ideas and their perspective about our schools. These will be scheduled once a month in various locations around the district.

- **Ask the Superintendent Call in Show** - I will participate in two live television “Call-In” shows to enable people who might have been unable to attend other outreach sessions. I will alternate between answering questions via telephone calls, twitter, and email.

- **Faith Leaders** - I will convene our community’s faith leaders to learn about the partnerships we have already established and to explore new ways we can work together to support our children and families.
• **Business Leaders**- I will visit our local Rotary clubs and reach out to the Chamber of Commerce and other business leaders to get their perspective and garner their support for our schools.

• **Government Leaders**- I will meet with city and state leaders and convene meetings with them periodically with an emphasis on collaborating with the mayor to co-facilitate joint community meetings.

• **Superintendent's Book Club**- I will facilitate two book clubs over the course of the school year. Books selected will inform the community of my educational philosophy and further participants understanding of my approach to learning and leading. The clubs will be conducted at various school sites and live via webinar to allow people to participate from their own locations, as their schedules permit.

**CONCLUSION**

As I make this transition to Churchill County School District, I am aware of the anticipation and eagerness that accompanies new leadership. I know that change may provoke both excitement and anxiety. With this understanding, I plan to spend my first initial months getting to know each of you, so that I may better understand what drives the successes of the Churchill CSD families, staff, and students, then leverage this as we collaborate to lead the school district into the next phase of our journey. I anticipate learning about the collective vision and hopes for our district. What is important to you? How do you envision me supporting you? What do we need to work on? How do we best serve our children?

Again, I am honored to have been selected to serve the Churchill County School District community as superintendent. It is my hope that through my ferocious work ethic, collaboration, humility, dedication, and thoughtful leadership, I will gain your trust and respect as Churchill’s new superintendent. I look forward to working and learning with the dedicated Board, staff and families to provide the best possible education for our scholars.

Here’s to the start of an exciting, learning-focused and transformative partnership!

Your partner in education,

Dr. Marion Smith, Jr. | Finalist Candidate
Superintendent of Schools, Churchill County School District