



Superintendent Terry L. Connor

Transition Plan

DEAR SARASOTA COMMUNITY,

I am truly honored to have the opportunity to serve as your Superintendent to advance the goals of the community and the Board of Sarasota County Schools. My family and I are overjoyed to join the Sarasota County community and become an instrumental part of collectively improving the lives of students.

As a lifelong resident and career educator in Florida, I understand the importance of providing our children with a high-quality education. My passion for education stems from my belief that all children deserve an opportunity to succeed. It is my aim to expand the opportunities for our students to excel academically and reach their full potential.

Humbled by the Board's belief in my ability to lead our schools into the future, I will work daily to make Sarasota County Schools a destination of excellence. I am grateful for the support of this community and look forward to working with everyone in our district as we implement a plan that will propel our district to become the best in the nation.

The goal of an improved educational experience will require involvement from all—students, staff, families, caregivers, business leaders, and community partners. To ensure we build on our strengths strategically, I have a structured 100-Day Transition Plan in four phases: Listen, Explore, Analyze, and Deliver. I am excited to share the details of this plan with you in the following pages.

This is our time to learn, grow and develop together. Join us on this journey and be a part of our inevitable success. I want to thank all of you for the exciting opportunity.

Yours in Education,



Terry Connor
Superintendent





CORE VALUES

Integrity

Ensure we remain ethical and professional in personal conduct, relationships with others, decision-making, and stewardship of the district's resources.

Collaboration

Sustain a professional culture of collaboration and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives if we are going to be successful.

Accountability

Accept responsibility for each student's academic success and well-being.

Perseverance

Never give up.



CORE BELIEFS

Achievement

Every student deserves high-quality learning experiences that challenge them to think creatively, collaborate with peers, and solve complex problems.

Empowerment

Empowering and motivating students, teachers, and staff to the highest levels of professional practice leads to sustainable improvement.

Continuous Improvement

Create responsibility and ownership as we seek to regularly improve our practice. Always strive to attain excellence.

Systems & Structures

Effective leadership supports the development of strong systems and structures related to improvement priorities and student achievement.

TRANSITION PLAN GOALS & OUTCOMES

The expected outcome of my transition plan is to learn about the District and gain stakeholders' perspective on our strengths, areas for improvement, and next step opportunities. Overarchingly, the goals outlined below will guide our work together as we work tirelessly for our students.



Build trust and lasting relationships with all of our stakeholders.



Execute an efficient and successful transition into the role of Sarasota County Superintendent.



Gain a thorough understanding of the Sarasota community by learning its history, norms, traditions, and expectations.



Assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges affecting the District to design a plan to align our resources to meet the needs of all stakeholders.



Create excitement and enthusiasm about the district's vision, mission, and future.

BOARD GOVERNANCE

A collaborative relationship between the School Board and the Superintendent is paramount for the District's success. We will work together to create a safe environment based on mutual respect and trust. This foundation is essential for effective communication, transparency, and for shaping our working relationship into something positive and team-oriented.

To cultivate strong, productive, professional, and child-centric relationships with each School Board Member and as a whole, the following action steps will be taken to produce positive outcomes for our district.



Key Activities

- Meet with Board members individually to gain their perspective and recommendations for next steps.
- Host an initial retreat to discuss the transition plan and expected outcomes.
- Finalize transition plan in partnership with the School Board.
- Meet with Board members to discuss communication structures with Superintendent and senior staff.
- Meet with Board members to define the Board's and Superintendent's roles, responsibilities, communication protocols, committee appointments, and legislative priorities.
- Schedule meetings to define clear governance norms and identify desired initiatives, projects, and targets.
- Schedule meetings to establish expectations for Superintendent, evaluation rubric, board meeting protocols, board workshop expectations, and board meeting agenda structure.
- Provide Board with monthly progress updates on the transition plan activities.

AREAS OF FOCUS

During the first 100 days, I will focus on four primary areas with the goal of becoming a premier educational institution. These four areas are described in detail below:



Academic Excellence

Consistent and sustainable success derives from a strong culture of teaching and learning. We must create a learning environment that is engaging for students. When students authentically engage in the learning environment, they participate confidently and take charge of their learning. As a district, we must adopt policies and engage in practices that support all learners' success with rigorous expectations.



Supportive Environment

A positive school climate helps students develop and learn to be responsible members of society. In a supportive environment, schools push students to excel academically and receive personal attention from teachers; staff give strong guidance and supports—and our students feel safe, welcome, and affirmed. They are given the opportunity to learn from their peers and teachers; they have high expectations of each other's work and hold themselves accountable for their learning.



Stakeholder Engagement

We understand that all students can succeed if we work together. We must partner with teachers, support staff, and families. Building relationships with stakeholders is critical to the future of our organization. We must create a culture where all voices are heard and valued. We must also be committed to building strong relationships with our students and their families and ensuring they are at the center of all decisions.



Operational Effectiveness

We must establish operational structures that support schools in our mission to have students reach their highest potential. It is critical to develop a diverse, highly skilled workforce and create organizational structures that are lean and efficient in our stewardship of taxpayers' resources. We must align our resources to the district's strategic plan and seek to maximize time, people, and finances to improve student achievement.

TRANSITION PLAN OVERVIEW

The transition plan consists of four interdependent and overlapping phases: Listen, Explore, Analyze, and Deliver. Each phase will focus on the aspects of Academic Excellence, Stakeholder Engagement, a Supportive Environment, and Operational Effectiveness.



Listen

PHASE I: 30-45 DAYS

The LISTEN phase consists of several opportunities to hear from all stakeholders and establish trust and collaborative relationships.



Explore

PHASE II: 45-70 DAYS

In the EXPLORE phase, we will gain an understanding of the organizational infrastructure, policies, procedures, protocols, oversight, and systems.



Analyze

PHASE III: 70-90 DAYS

During the ANALYZE phase, we will synthesize all aspects of the feedback and information gathered to determine what works well and how we can improve the areas of opportunity.



Deliver

PHASE IV: 90-100 DAYS

During the DELIVER phase, we will begin the process of developing strategic initiatives to address the findings revealed throughout the transition.

PRE-TRANSITION ACTIVITIES

During the pre-transition phase, I will collect information to assist with an effective transition. The information will include relevant documents, data, and the perspectives of specific stakeholders.



Academic Excellence

- Complete transition days with the outgoing Superintendent to understand current initiatives and potential challenges.
- Review the strategic plan and performance trends based on historical data to determine areas of success and opportunity.
- Examine the effectiveness of the current data management systems.
- Review current program offerings and district initiatives.
- Review any available instructional evaluations and audits to determine strengths, areas of opportunity, and next steps.
- Evaluate the current structure to capture principal supervisors, principals, and assistant principals' observations from classroom walkthroughs.
- Review school choice offerings, magnet programs, and offerings for accelerated coursework to determine the level of access and performance by demographic subgroups.



Supportive Environment

- Meet and establish relationships with district staff members.
- Review student code of conduct for policy alignment.
- Analyze the organizational structure for mental health, safety, and security supports.
- Schedule a meeting with Board members to discuss district health and wellness initiatives.
- Review the district's mental health plan and budget allocation.
- Review the district safety and security plan and budget allocation.
- Review trend data from climate surveys to determine strengths and areas of opportunity.



Stakeholder Engagement

- Evaluate the existing informational and communication gaps between teachers, school-based leaders, support professionals, and the district office.
- Review the communication department initiatives and marketing plans.
- Identify and meet with key civic leaders, legislators, educational advocates, faith-based partners, and business organizations to determine community perception of the district.
- Meet with each collective bargaining association to determine priorities.
- Meet with civic organizations representatives to gain insights regarding the district.
- Review metrics and customer service goals for each department, along with measures of success.
- Schedule introductory meetings with local media outlets to discuss the transition plan.



Operational Effectiveness

- Review succession planning and leadership development strategies.
- Analyze key performance indicators for climate, finances, and operations.
- Review the roles, responsibilities, and functions of senior staff and district leadership team members.
- Review the current financial status and district budget (enrollment, FTE, general fund, federal funds, referenda, and grants).
- Review the collective bargaining agreements.
- Review all current technology initiatives and projects.
- Review the five-year facilities plan.
- Review all available audit reports.



SUPERINTENDENT CONNOR: TRANSITION PLAN



Phase I Objectives:

- Understand the diverse communities that enrich Sarasota County Schools, along with their strengths, challenges, areas of opportunities, and differences.
- Establish strong collaborative relationships with each professional association.
- Foster professional relationships with district leaders and school-based leaders.
- Engage with teachers and support staff and make certain they are supported and feel valued as professionals.
- Build meaningful relationships with the community to include parent organizations, businesses, higher education, philanthropic, faith-based, and local leaders to create enthusiasm and garner trust.



PHASE I



Academic Excellence

- Meet with interim Superintendent to understand the district's successes and challenges regarding teaching and learning.
- Conduct a review of the current curriculum, assessment resources, and any available internal/external curriculum evaluations to ensure standards alignment.
- Meet with district and school-based staff to determine individual and organizational beliefs and expectations for all students' academic success.
- Engage in learning walks with the leadership team across the district to observe instructional practices with a focus on rigor and alignment to grade-level expectations.
- Host community town halls, in person and through social media, to gather input and initiate a dialogue regarding student achievement and school improvement.
- Conduct needs assessment for professional learning opportunities for teachers and district staff.

PHASE I



Supportive Environment

- Conduct roundtables with safety team, discipline leads, family and community engagement teams.
- Gain insights on current climate and culture from students, teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, caregivers, business partners, community partners and faith based community.
- Meet with district personnel to discuss mental health plans and priorities to enhance student and staff well-being, discipline, and housing insecurities.
- Meet with local law enforcement and the district's safety and security department to determine level of readiness.
- Review current data, policies, and trends impacting the learning environment.
- Review survey feedback from staff, students and families.

LEAD



PHASE I



Stakeholder Engagement

- Visit schools and district offices to engage with teachers, support staff, and students.
- Host open forums with all stakeholders —students, teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, caregivers, business partners, community partners, and the faith-based community.
- Meet with union leadership to understand their current needs and concerns and establish regular meetings.
- Establish open dialogue with philanthropic foundations, chambers of commerce, PTA, higher education officials, business partners, and educational advocates.
- Meet with leaders of local media outlets, editorial boards, and education reporters.
- Meet with local elected officials and delegations to understand their perspectives and advocate for the Board's legislative priorities.

PHASE I



Operational Effectiveness

- Visit schools to engage with school leaders and assess how district operation support is manifested at the school level.
- Review budget, finance, and procurement protocols.
- Review student and work calendars, employee handbooks, policy manual, and employee evaluation manuals to understand the district's current priorities.
- Review the onboarding process for new employees to ensure the experience is positive to impact recruitment and retention.
- Review the transportation, student nutrition, and other facilities-related plans.
- Meet with the district attorney to review any current or pending litigations and to provide a briefing on current legislation likely to impact the district.

LEAD



SUPERINTENDENT CONNOR: TRANSITION PLAN



Phase II Objectives:

- Determine the current state of district supports and services for addressing academic needs, mental health, and well-being.
- Evaluate the conditions of schools as it relates to culture and climate to develop a plan to ensure safe and supportive school environments for all learners.
- Ensure the organization is safeguarded from risks.
- Review the utilization of CARES funding for COVID recovery and addressing student learning loss.

PHASE II



Academic Excellence

- Assess district and school procedures and processes that ensure student preparation and access to accelerated courses and programming at each school.
- Conduct a review of data systems to understand what information we have and what we need to know where we need to target intensive support.
- Meet with district administrators to discuss each school's academic performance, culture, and climate to determine immediate support for continuous improvement.
- Meet with district staff overseeing CTE, Library Media, Art, Physical Education, Health, Music, STEM, Technology, and World Language to discuss programming and instructional priorities.
- Review current evaluations for district personnel, principals, assistant principals, and teachers to determine if they are effectively developed to improve student performance.
- Review programming for special populations, including gifted students with disabilities, ELLs, etc.

PHASE II



Supportive Environment

- Engage in discussions with staff regarding evaluation systems to determine any adjustments needed.
- Meet with district personnel to determine what professional development is available to school and district personnel related to mental health services and interventions.
- Meet with district personnel to discuss the coordination of internal and external mental health resources for students and families to identify effectiveness and eliminate duplicated services.
- Meet with external mental health partners to identify how to improve coordinated efforts to support students effectively.
- Meet with school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and ESE specialists to understand the effectiveness of services and supports accessible and utilized.
- Review MTSS/RTI implementation plan for tiered instructional services and supports.



LEAD

PHASE II



Stakeholder Engagement

- Connect with key stakeholders and establish routine meetings and communication protocols, focusing on increasing student achievement and continuous improvement.
- Meet with district staff to determine internal communication systems used throughout the district to connect with staff, schools, Board members, and community members.
- Visit every school in the district to meet with students, teachers, support staff, and administrators.
- Meet with the communications department director to review the current organizational chart and personnel roles and responsibilities.
- Review structures for family and community engagement and develop a plan to enhance the partnership between school, home, and community to improve student success.
- Review the scope of work for the Family & Community Engagement team and assess the support provided to students, families, and schools.

PHASE II



Operational Effectiveness

- Conduct one-on-one interviews and review state of division analysis with all direct reports and senior leadership.
- Meet with the Chief Financial Officer to review all budgets and determine if any duplication may exist.
- Meet with the district's Operations, Human Resources, Finance, and Facilities department to better understand priorities, goals, and key performance indicators.
- Request briefing meetings to review all studies, surveys, reports, and audits by outside agencies.
- Review hiring practices to ensure diversity.



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SUPERINTENDENT CONNOR: TRANSITION PLAN



Phase III Objectives:

- Analyze patterns in student achievement data and student achievement gaps to determine an appropriate course of action to improve teaching, learning, and student outcomes.
- Evaluate the current state of district departments to articulate a vision for strategic planning and continuous improvement.
- Analyze operational processes and ensure these departments are positioned to be a high-quality service and support to school success.
- Ensure our district effectively allocates its time, money, people, facilities, and resources in ways that align with the goal of achievement for all students.



PHASE III



Academic Excellence

- Assess the current professional development plan for capacity in training principals, teachers, and support staff.
- Conduct data meetings with principals to articulate barriers to success and immediately problem-solve to overcome all identified obstacles.
- Review student data for all student subgroups and identify initial strategies to address areas of opportunity.
- Review the assignment of instructional specialists/coaches, interventionists, and other support staff positions to determine how students receive district and school support.
- Review the current instructional materials adoption cycle and budget to develop a plan to select high-quality instructional materials.

PHASE III



Supportive Environment

- Assess current norms and metrics for communication regarding districtwide climate and culture.
- Conduct a review of our special education budget and services to develop a plan to provide excellent and inclusive services to our students.
- Determine organizational structure for mental health, safety, and security supports.
- Meet with the director of safety and security to review budgets and expenditures related to school hardening, communication protocols, and safety and security plans.
- Meet with the director of safety and security to review the district implementation plan for meeting all statutory requirements.
- Review aggregated discipline data to determine the number of violations, SESIR incidents, and disproportionate infractions by subgroups.

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PHASE III



Stakeholder Engagement

- Collect data on business partnerships and services to assess alignment to strategic plan initiatives and adjust as needed.
- Meet with the district staff to discuss the current marketing strategies to enhance the district's image.
- Review and assess the quality of current structures and processes on how district information is communicated to external and internal stakeholders.
- Review social media outreach, impressions, metrics and analytics.

PHASE III



Operational Effectiveness

- Assess all safety and security measures and protocols established by the district.
- Complete a comprehensive review of every school to determine the capacity of technology infrastructure.
- Conduct department reviews to ensure alignment and coherence within the current organizational structure.
- Determine implications for short-term budgeting and long-term strategic planning.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the technological tools and digital resources available to teachers and students.
- Review professional services/procurement processes and available audits.
- Evaluate utilization of federal funds, such as ESSER and Title I allocation to schools.
- Monitor efficiency of maintenance and transportation response times.

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SUPERINTENDENT CONNOR: TRANSITION PLAN



Phase IV Objectives:

- Improve and strengthen relationships, communication, trust, and integrity by ensuring parent, student, and community voice is represented in district planning.
- Establish strong organizational systems and structures to ensure operational excellence.
- Improve district communication.
- Establish organizational unity and coherence, where employees know what's expected of them and feel a part of the team.



Academic Excellence

- Collaborate with collective bargaining leaders to determine how to incentivize great teachers to work in our most fragile schools.
- Conduct an instructional evaluation encompassing student performance, services, and programs and make immediate adjustments to misaligned resources.
- Convene a teacher advisory council to advise district leadership on instructional priorities and necessary supports that will accelerate the academic achievement of all students.
- Develop a comprehensive professional development plan for teachers that prioritizes student learning and well-being.
- Establish a curriculum workgroup that will develop recommendations to create deep, rigorous learning for all students across the district.
- Establish a protocol for frequent data reviews with the leadership team.



Supportive Environment

- Administer an instructional culture survey to all educators to assess the perceptions of the district and use the results to inform improvement efforts.
- Celebrate exemplary practices by establishing student, educator, and support staff of the month campaigns highlighting excellence across the district.
- Empower all staff to participate in the process of the district's vision and strategic priorities.
- Launch a task force to develop recommendations for embedding positive behavior support interventions and restorative practices in all schools.
- Promote a culture of health and wellness by offering increased opportunities for students and staff to engage in healthy activities.



LEAD

PHASE IV



Stakeholder Engagement

- Convene advisory groups for students, families, and educators that meet regularly to advise the superintendent on key issues.
- Develop a communication plan for information dissemination from the district office.
- Establish a protocol for handling constituent inquiries and develop a system, so Board members are apprised of resolutions.
- Establish relationships with neighboring district leadership and state education organizations.
- Foster key celebrations to acknowledge volunteers and partners exhibiting above-and-beyond commitment.
- Launch a method for educators and families to highlight excellent customer service from support staff.
- Launch philanthropic efforts to raise resources to support strategic initiatives.
- Promote broad recognition of success in district publications and public meetings.
- Utilize feedback from engagement sessions and needs assessment to determine immediate next steps.

PHASE IV



Operational Effectiveness

- Collaboratively develop/revise goals and targets for existing and new initiatives with each division.
- Develop any necessary amendments for the use of ESSER funding to improve student achievement.
- Establish a working group to review and develop a comprehensive, equitable budget, and staffing model.
- Establish regularly scheduled meetings with senior staff and set a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, expectations, systems for mutual accountability, and communication protocols.



PHASE IV

Deliver

LEAD

Thank You!

It is an honor to serve as your Superintendent, and I am eager to begin this exciting journey. Over the next 100 days, we will document our progress and learnings gathered through the implementation of this transition plan. I will report to the community about my first 100 days and use that information to build a stronger future for our students. It is an exciting time to be in Sarasota County, and I am thankful for this opportunity to lead our team toward future excellence!





Superintendent Terry L. Connor
Transition Plan