



“Through Quality Education Our Students Will Achieve Personal Success”

Building trust and relationships through listening, learning and reflection in service
to the students and community of Telluride

100-Day Entry Plan

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Introduction

More than anything else effective leadership, particularly educational leadership, is about building relationships. Relationships allow a leader to deeply understand the needs of the system, and relationships allow a leader to move a system in the direction it needs to go by maximizing the most critical resource, human capital.

This entry plan is much less about moving the Telluride School District than understanding its needs. If the system needs to move, that will come after my first 100 days and that will be a collaborative effort of me as the new Superintendent, the school board, the administration, the faculty and staff, the students and parents, and the greater community. For that collaborative effort to happen, relationships must be formed so that trust can be developed at the level required to foster and sustain meaningful change.

I believe that the Telluride School District (and Search Committee) showed they understand this based on one of the questions included in the application for the Superintendent position. I include that question below, along with my response:

“Given the broad socio-economic diversity of our community, what actions would you take to form effective relationships with staff, community and other stakeholders in order to collaborate, build trust and create a unity of vision?”

“The key to successful leadership entry into a new community is the ability and willingness to meet people where they are. Over the course of my career I have demonstrated the ability to fit in by understanding and appreciating what every person brings to the table. Early in a relationship especially, listening and observing is more important than speaking. I would, with the help and guidance of the board and the administration, seek out events important to the various stakeholders to simply attend and show my presence and my respect for that group. This would include attending student clubs, assemblies, plays, concerts, and athletic events. I would also visit student classrooms and lunchrooms and provide special invitations for students to meet with me in a round table or forum setting. I would visit teachers in classrooms to see the great things they are doing, and to understand their beliefs, needs and wants. Meeting staff individually and as groups is very important. I would develop a relationship with the Telluride Education Association, as well as the support staff in the district. I would attend parent-teacher group meetings. I would host Coffee with the Superintendent and Pizza with the Superintendent as well as other forums to provide venues for parents, staff, and the community. I would attend service group to develop ties with various business and cultural segments of the community. I would collaboratively plan an administrative retreat, and hope to participate in a retreat of the board as well.”

While the response above was brief, it forms the basis for this entry plan, and it helps to paint a picture of my leadership philosophy. Certainly it takes more than relationships to successfully run a school district, so I also explain how building those relationships will help me to know and understand TSD in the four key focus areas I have identified so that beyond my first 100 days I am well prepared to achieve my longer term goal of helping to make the Telluride School District not only the best district in Colorado but the best school district in the United States.

Goals, Focus Areas, and Guiding Principles

Goals

The primary goal of this entry plan is to allow for the successful transition of leadership for the Telluride School District, so that the district's progress on its path toward *providing quality education for students to achieve personal success* continues uninterrupted.

To achieve this goal, this entry plan will allow me as the new Superintendent to begin to develop critical relationships with stakeholders, learn the culture of the schools and the community, begin a deep dive into understanding the current state of academics and instructional leadership, and study the operational aspects of the district.

In parallel, the schools and greater community will begin to know and understand me as an educational leader and human being, to understand and appreciate what I bring to the role, to be confident that they made the right decision in hiring me, and to join me in setting a goal to make Telluride the best school district in the country.

Focus Areas

1. Relationships: As the Superintendent, I will develop strong relationships with all stakeholders of the Telluride School District and community.
2. Culture: As the Superintendent, I will learn and understand the culture of the Telluride School District and community.
3. Academics: As the Superintendent, I will become familiar with the breadth and depth of curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, and the systems of support available to all students in the Telluride School District.
4. Operations: As the Superintendent, I will study the operations of the Telluride School District, including the governance structure, the physical infrastructure of facilities, and the organizational structure and capacity of the workforce.

Guiding Principles

- I will listen and learn by displaying enthusiastic inquisitiveness
- I will engage with as many stakeholders as possible in order to gain the widest variety of perspectives
- I will structure purposeful interactions to gain understanding efficiently and effectively
- I will seek to understand current realities as well as the desired ideal state
- I will meet people where they are, and respect all positions presented
- I will listen reflectively to feedback received about my own interactions and immersion into the school and community culture
- I will share openly what I hear and perceive with the board and the administrative team
- I will keep student achievement and well-being at the center of everything I do

Phases and Activities

Phase 1 – July & Early August 2020: Listening, Learning and Observing through Engagement with...

- School Board
 - This includes meeting with the school board president regularly for question & answer, processing and reflection
- Administration
 - Meet with each building principal and district director weekly (as available) for question & answer, processing and reflection
- Year-Round Staff
 - Introductory group meetings, as well as individual (30 minute) meetings with each staff member, plus regularly scheduled meetings
 - This includes significant interface time with the Assistant to the Superintendent, who plays a critical role in the successful operation of the district as well as in the success of this entry plan
- Community Partners – Introductory meetings to learn about the current relationships that exist and to understand what our community partners need to sustain and build on those relationships, with...
 - One to One Telluride
 - Telluride Institute
 - Wilkinson Public Library
 - Telluride Academy
 - Telski
 - TSSC
 - Pinhead Institute
 - And other identified community partners
- Community Leaders
 - Meet with the Mayor and Town Council formally (on their agenda) as well as informally
 - Meet with the Telluride Chief Marshal, San Miguel County Sheriff, the Mountain Village Police Chief, and the Telluride Fire Chief to review established practices and protocols and to establish regular periodic meetings
 - Meet with the Colorado House District 58 Representative
 - Meet with Colorado District 6 Senator
- Service Groups, Business & Cultural Organizations
 - Meet with the Telluride Region Chamber of Commerce
 - Meet with the Telluride Rotary
 - And other identified organizations
- Local Media
 - Meet with the Telluride Daily Planet to learn how the newspaper and school district interface, and explore new possibilities such as a regular column and student highlight section

- Meet with Telluride TV to learn how the station and school district interface and explore new possibilities
- Regional and Statewide Education Leaders
 - Meet (virtually or in person) with the Executive Director of the Colorado Association of School Executives
 - Meet with the Executive Director of the Uncompahgre BOCES
 - Meet with the Superintendents of the neighboring school districts in our region
- District Infrastructure
 - Review the TSD website in detail
 - Review TSD performance and achievement data, behavior data, and attendance data (aggregated and disaggregated) in detail
 - Review recent TSD financial audits in detail
 - Tour TSD building facilities and physical plants in detail and review the multi-year facilities plan in whatever form it exists
 - Review TSD policies in detail
 - Review TSD's use of social media (Schoology, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Plan for the school year
 - Prepare for Teacher Collaborative Work Days
 - Prepare for opening day/week/month of student school year
 - Review student and staff handbooks
 - Review academic and behavior expectations
 - Review school schedules, staffing assignments, intervention & enrichment schedules, etc.
- Set up school and classroom visit schedule, meeting schedule, etc.

Phase 2 – August & September 2020: Listening, Learning and Observing through Engagement with...

- Continuation with all stakeholders in the manner described above
- Students
 - Meet every student during the first week of school
 - Ride each school bus route
 - *Lunch with the Superintendent* one time per week in each school cafeteria
 - Meet with student organizations (student council, etc.)
- Parents & Parent Organizations
 - Meet with the Telluride Foundation
 - Set up tables in school lobbies at Open House and Back to School Night
 - Hold first *Coffee with the Superintendent* and *Pizza with the Superintendent*
- School Leadership Teams
 - Meet with the leadership teams in each building
- Faculty
 - Attend first full faculty meeting in each building
 - Begin classroom visit rotation (with school administrators, as well as without)
 - Begin introductory (30 minute) meetings with each faculty member, to be completed by December
 - Hold first *Coffee with the Superintendent* and/or *Pizza with the Superintendent*
- School Year Support Staff
 - Begin introductory (30 minute) meetings with each support staff member, to be completed by December
 - Hold first *Coffee with the Superintendent* and/or *Pizza with the Superintendent*
- Telluride Education Association
 - Meet with Association Leadership and set up regular monthly meetings
- Opening Inservice
 - Share information about myself and this entry plan
 - Review TSD's Board Vision & Strategic Plan

Phase 3 – October 2020 and beyond: Transition beyond the first 100 days by...

- Continuation of all engagement activities with stakeholders above
- Summative analysis of data gathered
 - What have I observed as strengths of TSD
 - What have I observed as possible areas of focus or improvement for TSD
 - What evidence I see to support TSD meeting the stated objectives in its Vision and Strategic Plan
- 90-day survey seeking feedback on my performance from all stakeholders
 - Have I been accessible?
 - Have I fostered trust?
 - Have I met the goals of my entry plan?
 - Have I been a good listener?
 - What is one thing I have done well?
 - What can I improve on?
 - What is the most important thing I need to do next?
- 100-day evaluation of my performance by the board
 - Utilizing data from my feedback survey as well as other sources

Questions for introductory meetings with stakeholders

- What do you most love or what are you most proud of about the Telluride School District?
- What is the most positive aspect or attribute of the Telluride School District?
- What are the three things that most need to happen to make the Telluride School District even better?
- What can you or what are *you* willing to do to help make those three things happen?
- What can *I* do for you as the Superintendent of the Telluride School District?

Framing questions for stakeholders to consider in answering the above questions

- Are students at the center of what we do?
- Do we use our resources effectively?
- Do we use data effectively?
- Do we use technology effectively?

Conclusion

While this entry plan is only a start, it provides me, as the new Superintendent, the opportunity to begin to understand the Telluride School District and community, and it provides the district and greater community the opportunity to begin to know and understand who I am. This will lay the foundation for our collaborative work together as we determine the next steps toward making the Telluride School District the best school district in the United States. I am excited and honored to have the opportunity to be a catalyst for this extremely important work.