

— SUPERINTENDENT TOM FLANAGAN —

100 DAY ENTRY PLAN



Dear Burlington Community,

I am truly honored to have the opportunity to begin serving as your superintendent and to further the goals of the community and of the Board of School Commissioners. My family and I are thrilled to join and be a part of the Burlington community and I am eager to start our work together.

During my interview and onboarding process, Burlingtonians' commitment to schools was palpable. This spring I was fortunate to have many conversations with staff, students, and community members to listen and learn about the District. Through these conversations, it quickly became clear that great schools are first and foremost in the minds of our community.

I believe that creating and sustaining an excellent school system which provides a top-notch education for **every student** is central to a thriving community and to our democracy. These past months have been challenging as we work together to stay safe during COVID-19 and as we confront the systemic racism that plagues our country. Our work moving forward will require that we think differently about school, that we prioritize social and emotional well-being, that we have trusting relationships, and that we have open conversations about racial inequities. I am committed to fostering a robust learning community that works together to do what is best for the children of Burlington.

In an effort to ensure we build on our strengths strategically, I have framed my early work in the District with a structured 100 Day Entry Plan that begins July 1, 2020 and ends October 9, 2020. **This plan focuses on three areas — equity, engagement, and deep learning.** The activities are designed to set a foundation for our work together by prioritizing building relationships and trust.

I am excited to share the details of this plan with you in the following pages. Due to the uncertainty of the times and the realities of social distancing, we may need to be flexible with the dates, especially as it relates to in-person gatherings. However, I want you to know that listening and learning will be central to my work with you as a community throughout my time at BSD, not only during this 100 Day Entry Plan. There will be many chances for us to connect and I look forward to those encounters.

I want to thank all of you for the opportunity to “Join the Journey” — I can't wait to get started!



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Flanagan".

Tom Flanagan

CORE BELIEFS

The entry plan is developed around my core beliefs for education. These beliefs are explained below.

EQUITY

I believe our core responsibility is to make sure all of the students we serve are valued and challenged, and that we intentionally build on their strengths and assets. Too often we lower the bar for students of color and students living in poverty and this creates further inequities. We have a responsibility to ensure we create learning communities that are conscious of the students we serve. Culturally relevant teaching practices encourage us to embed content that allows students to see themselves in what they study, to follow their interests, to collaborate, critique, and think critically. I believe that by addressing inequities, we improve outcomes for all of our students, staff, and the greater community.

ENGAGEMENT

I believe families, communities, and schools must work together closely. In order to engage our communities we must be intentional about building sustaining relationships. Through building these relationships, we also build empathy, compassion, and trust. Trusting relationships allow us to be vulnerable and to be our best as students, families, educators, and partners. I will be intentional about engaging and about having open lines of communication.

DEEP LEARNING

I believe students, particularly those furthest from opportunity, deserve deep learning experiences that challenge them to think creatively, to collaborate with peers, and to solve complex problems. I believe in empowering educators to learn and grow together so they can foster environments where all students have access to deep, rigorous learning experiences. I also believe social-emotional learning, restorative practices, trauma-informed practices, and healthy eating and living are central to deep learning.



ENTRY PLAN

The focus of my first 100 days is to listen and learn about the District and to hear your perspective on the strengths, the needed improvements, and the opportunities. My goal is to build on a collective plan for how we work together for the students of Burlington.

This spring, I spoke with many District employees and community members in preparation to begin on July 1, 2020. The goal of this outreach was to build relationships and understand the District and the city. I believe great schools are built on relationships — between students and teachers, teachers and families, school leadership and teachers, central office and schools, and between the school system and the communities they serve. I believe listening to and learning about each other is key to building these relationships.

My entry plan consists of three phases:

Phase 1 began and was completed prior to my start. It has focused on engagement, listening, and learning.

Phase 2 builds on this engagement, listening, and learning through broader encounters with our students, families, staff, and community. It also focuses on activities related to Deep Learning and Equity that will set the foundation for a focus on learning environments that promote conceptual and creative thinking, collaboration, and exploration among students.

Phase 3 transitions from the 100 Day Plan activities and focuses on convening teams to review data collected during the first two phases. This data will be used to begin developing a five-year strategic plan in collaboration with the community and Board of School Commissioners that will define our collective goals for the District.

PHASE 1 ACTIVITIES (COMPLETED IN JUNE 2020): Transition focused on relationship building and learning

- One-on-one meetings with central office directors and executive directors.
- One-on-one meetings with all principals and assistant principals.
- One-on-one meetings with all school board commissioners.
- Meet with the BEA President.
- Meet with student groups at BHS, Edmunds MS, and Hunt MS.
- Meetings with the Secretary of Education and his key staff in the Agency of Education.
- Analysis of data, including student achievement data, climate data, and financial data.
- Review all of the collective bargaining agreements.
- Review the District budget.

PHASE 2 ACTIVITIES (JULY 1 – OCTOBER 2020): The first 100 days focused on Equity, Engagement, and Deep Learning

EQUITY

- 1.1 Launch Race and Equity workshop series with central office leaders and principals.
- 1.2 Conduct a review of data systems to understand what information we have and what we need to know to understand the opportunity gap and where we need to target efforts to erase inequity.
- 1.3 Complete school-specific student academic achievement and equity analysis, and conduct goal setting with every school leadership team and the district office to set measurable targets for SY 2020-21.
- 1.4 Conduct a review of our special education budget and services to develop a plan to provide excellent and inclusive services to our students.
- 1.5 Develop a plan to ensure the ongoing implementation of restorative practices in all BSD schools.
- 1.6 Visit key historic sites on the Vermont African-American History Trail with my family and city and state leaders.
- 1.7 Launch a book study with the high school advisory council to discuss issues of equity, race, and power in the United States, Vermont, and Burlington.
- 1.8 Establish a working group to review and develop a comprehensive equitable budget and staffing model for the SY 2021-22.

ENGAGEMENT

- 2.1 Meet individually with each School Board Member to better understand the needs of each district and collaborate with the school board on a retreat to establish shared values, expectations, and targets for SY 2020-21.
- 2.2 Hold two Town Hall meetings to engage families, community members, and others to learn about their priorities for the District.

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Phase 2 Activities: *continued*

- 2.3 Hold four “Living Room Chats” to visit with families and to hear their ideas about the District’s strengths, needed improvements, and promising opportunities.

- 2.4 Initiate a Labor Management Council where BSD and BEA leadership meet regularly to hold collaborative, solutions-oriented conversations.

- 2.5 Convene advisory groups for students, families, and educators that meet regularly to advise the superintendent on key issues.

- 2.6 Meet with the City Council and the Mayor and establish a regular meeting with the Mayor and his staff.

- 2.7 Visit every Burlington school and facility to meet with students, parents and guardians, teachers, and support staff.

DEEP LEARNING

- 3.1 Develop a cross-functional workgroup to safely reopen schools in the Fall of 2020.

- 3.2 Develop a comprehensive professional development plan for teachers for SY 2020-21 that prioritizes student learning and student well-being.

- 3.3 Establish a curriculum workgroup that will develop recommendations to create deep, rigorous learning for all students across the District.

- 3.4 Implement instructional rounds in collaboration with the BEA to determine our areas of focus for instruction and to foster a learning community.

- 3.5 Visit every school to observe classes and student learning with the leadership team.

- 3.6 Spend time engaging with students in hands-on learning, such as the Burlington City & Lake Semester.

PHASE 3 ACTIVITIES (OCTOBER 2020 AND BEYOND): Planning for our ongoing work

- Convene a guiding coalition, which includes school and central office leaders, to analyze the data collected in Phase 2 and to determine a process for using data to make decisions.
- Develop a five-year strategic plan to begin in SY 2021-22.
- Align organizational structure and teaming to strategic priorities and clarify structure, roles, and responsibilities.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for your commitment, patience, and flexibility as we work through this plan. In normal circumstances, this would be an ambitious plan. Given the current moment, with COVID-19 and the health and financial implications of this crisis, we may need to adjust as we prioritize student and staff safety. I believe it is important to be clear and transparent about my plans, but I also believe in community feedback and collective responsibility. If we do make modifications, I will communicate any changes that may arise. We will continue to push through, as our students, parents, staff, and community are depending on us. I look forward to working with all of you!

