



DURHAM
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Superintendent's **Entry Plan**

Listening, learning, and leading with
equity, trust, and collaboration.

Superintendent
Anthony Lewis, Ph. D



From Our Superintendent

Dear Students, Families, and Staff of Durham Public Schools,

It is my distinct honor to join the Durham Public Schools community as your next Superintendent, leading our more than 31,000 outstanding students and 5,000 dedicated educators and staff. I am eager and excited to embark on this journey with each of you as we collectively foster an environment where every student develops a love of learning, cultivates intellectual curiosity, and dreams of a future full of limitless potential.

Durham Public Schools is rooted in equity, shared responsibility, high expectations, and a child-centered approach. These core values resonate deeply with my personal and professional values. As a passionate instructional leader committed to student success, I am confident that together we can build bright futures for each of our scholars.

I am pleased to present my entry plan, focused on listening, learning, and leading within Durham Public Schools. During my first 100 days, I will immerse myself in our vibrant and diverse community, meeting with educators, administrators, staff, students, families, community partners, and the many others who bring our mission of embracing, educating, and empowering every student to innovate, serve, and lead to life. I look forward to your feedback and insight as I deepen my knowledge of the district and assess our strengths and opportunities while forging critical connections and relationships.

There is important work to be done to ensure our students receive the education they deserve and staff have the resources they need. I invite you to join me as we chart a new course for Durham Public Schools. With the support of the Board of Education and our community, we will build upon the forward trajectory of our district and elevate Durham Public Schools to even greater heights.

Thank you and I look forward to connecting with you and partnering with you in the days and weeks ahead as we bring about positive change in Durham Public Schools.

Anthony S. Lewis, Ph.D.
Superintendent

DPS Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs

■ Mission

Durham Public Schools embraces, educates, and empowers every student to innovate, serve, and lead.

■ Vision

Durham Public Schools: Igniting Limitless Potential



■ Core Beliefs

Equity

Our students and schools deserve equitable access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed. Durham Public Schools and the community must distribute those resources in a manner that eliminates inequities.

High Expectations

Durham Public Schools will challenge every stakeholder, especially our students and educators, to embrace a growth mindset: the belief that every child can be academically successful. It is our expectation that all of our students will excel globally and reach their highest potential.

Shared Responsibility

Schools can't do this work alone. Durham Public Schools must be intentional in acting collaboratively and involving all stakeholders, ensuring that our community utilizes its collective resources to support every child. The Durham community shares responsibility with DPS for the success of our children.

A Child-centered Approach

Our students deserve an education that is caring, is culturally responsive and embraces the whole child. Durham Public Schools will address the social, emotional, and academic needs of each student.

Superintendent's Guiding Core Principles

These principles help articulate our vision, mission, and core beliefs, bringing our work to life.

These set a clear tone and direction for stakeholders.



Commitment to Achievement

We push our students to exceed their own expectations, striving for excellence in every aspect of education. We demand the best from our leaders, teachers, support staff, and students, ensuring that all achieve success in school and beyond.



Passion for Learning

We foster a love of learning and intellectual curiosity, driving creativity and analytical thinking.



Integrity & Accountability

As educators, we are accountable to students, parents, the community, and each other. We model integrity, work ethic, and character, maintaining transparent communication and holding ourselves to high standards.



Respect for Self and Others

We teach and practice respect and inclusivity, valuing the diverse characteristics that make each person unique. Respect begins with a proper appreciation of oneself.



Educational Equity

We advocate for every student's right to a quality education in a caring environment, regardless of background or abilities. We support each student's physical, emotional, and intellectual needs to help them focus on their education.



Community Partnerships

Our community partnerships strengthen us and are integral to our identity. We prepare students to be socially responsible, compassionate leaders, contributing to society and reflecting our collective success.



Entry Plan Goals

- 1.** Establish a transparent, collaborative, and trusting relationship with the Durham Public Schools Board of Education.
- 2.** Focus on instructional programming to close access and opportunity gaps in the lowest-performing schools while addressing the academic and social-emotional needs of all students.
- 3.** Enhance organizational effectiveness and efficiency by providing robust support and services to schools, students, families, and the school community.
- 4.** Identify and analyze critical issues to remove barriers and seize opportunities for accelerating student performance.
- 5.** Create opportunities to listen to and engage a wide range of stakeholders, ensuring all voices are heard to build trust, understand the district comprehensively, and reignite excitement for the district's mission, vision, and strategic plan.

Progress Key



Goal One:

Establish a transparent, collaborative, and trusting relationship with the Durham Public Schools Board of Education.

A strong relationship between the Board of Education and the Superintendent is foundational for achieving the district's mission, vision, and strategic goals, ultimately benefiting all students and the broader school community. We have an obligation to the students and families of Durham that begins with close collaboration that fosters trust, effective decision-making, and a shared vision for the district and its students.



Actions

- **Share Entry Plan with Board of Education for feedback, suggestions, and guidance.**
- **Conduct one-on-one meetings with Board members to understand critical issues and key perspectives.**
- **Collaborate with the Board on Superintendent performance evaluation inclusive of goals, objectives, and success indicators.**
- **Hold retreat to align Board and Superintendent on core values and beliefs, communications protocols, roles and responsibilities, expectations, governance matters, and other important organizational items.**

Goal Two:

Focus on instructional programming to close access and opportunity gaps in the lowest-performing schools while addressing the academic and social-emotional needs of all students.



It's all about student success. That's why Durham Public Schools prioritizes whole child development. High-quality teaching paired with critical wrap-around supports are the tools our students need to thrive. While the district has made strides, gaps in student achievement remain.

Actions

- Analyze current student achievement data, including academic performance, subgroup achievement, AP enrollment and pass rates, dual enrollment, college and career readiness, attendance, graduation, and disciplinary rates.
- Meet with the Deputy Superintendent and district leaders to assess curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the literacy and numeracy plan, and understand schools' progress towards goals.
- Evaluate efforts to improve instruction and graduation rates, with a focus on literacy, numeracy, post-graduation preparedness, socio-economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities.
- Engage with students to understand their perspectives on relationships and access to academic rigor.
- Meet with staff, students, and families to identify the emotional, social, and cultural supports needed for academic success.

Goal Three:

Enhance organizational effectiveness and efficiency by providing robust support and services to schools, students, families, and the school community.

The work of our central services teams should be aligned with the strategic plan and support the work of our schools that contributes to student achievement. Reviewing the organizational structure is necessary and will ensure that the district can fulfill its promise to every student.



Actions

- Meet with district leadership, including the Deputy Superintendent, Chiefs, Assistant Superintendents, Executive Directors, Directors, Principals, the Durham Association of Educators, and classified staff, to assess the climate and culture and determine the level of central office support needed for school improvement.
- Review division and department briefing documents detailing responsibilities, major initiatives, challenges, and time-sensitive decisions.
- Conduct a district SWOT analysis.
- Meet with principals and teachers to gauge their perceptions of student achievement data, quality and accessibility to data, and central services support.

Goal Three (cont.)

Enhance organizational effectiveness and efficiency by providing robust support and services to schools, students, families, and the school community.

- Review and evaluate efforts in leadership development and succession planning for school and district leadership.
- Review critical documents such as policy and procedure manuals, Board meeting minutes, student achievement data, enrollment and financial projections, budget processes, legal proceedings, facility reports, accountability plans, project management protocols, and safety and emergency plans.
- Assess the current schedule and format of district leadership meetings to ensure they benefit principals and align with district goals.
- Evaluate the district's performance management system to ensure effective and efficient operations across departments, with established key metrics and goals.



Goal Four:

Identify and analyze critical issues to remove barriers and seize opportunities for accelerating student performance.

A student's academic journey within Durham Public Schools should be filled with limitless possibilities and not roadblocks to realizing their full potential. We must enhance our work to ensure opportunities are within reach and all students leave the district college and career ready.



Actions

- Evaluate the process for setting departmental goals to ensure alignment with the strategic plan and district and Board goals.
- Analyze data from recent surveys, focus groups, and community meetings to identify barriers and opportunities.
- Meet with the Executive Director of Research and Accountability to review ABC data (attendance, behavior, core academics) and discuss accountability measures.
- Visit all departments and schools to listen and learn from students, families, administrators, educators, and staff.

Goal Five:

Create opportunities to listen to and engage a wide range of stakeholders, ensuring all voices are heard to build trust, understand the district comprehensively, and reignite excitement for the district's mission, vision, and strategic plan.



The voices of our stakeholders are invaluable as we work together to make Durham Public Schools the premier school district in the country. The Superintendent's Listening, Learning, and Leading Series will create space for all voices to be heard and authentically engage in outcomes for our district and students.

Key Questions for Stakeholders

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What are the strengths of Durham Public Schools?

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What areas need improvement?

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What should be the district's priorities to address enrollment challenges?

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How can we raise academic success for all students and eliminate access and opportunity gaps?

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What will it take to make Durham Public Schools the premier school district in the country?

Actions

- **Schedule meetings with parent organizations and district advisory groups for initial listening sessions and discuss critical issues while fostering authentic engagement.**
- **Attend school and community events to connect with stakeholders.**
- **Meet with City of Durham, Durham County, and local elected leaders to understand concerns, opportunities, and the political landscape, and adjust communication protocols to advocate for DPS students.**
- **Establish regular meetings with key Durham city and county leaders. Meet with charter school partners, state educational leaders, and legislators to discuss district and state issues and establish communication protocols.**
- **Launch the Listening, Learning, and Leading Series with community leaders and organizations, including business leaders, higher education partners, nonprofits, philanthropies, professional organizations, civic groups, and faith-based organizations.**
- **Host a roundtable with local media partners, meet with editorial boards, and establish a framework for collaboration.**





Concluding the Entry Plan



By the end of the first 100 days, I will have gained valuable insights about Durham and Durham Public Schools through extensive stakeholder engagement. Updates on the transition will be provided monthly to the public and weekly to the Board of Education.

Implementing the action items in this entry plan aims to establish transparency and trust. Stakeholders have emphasized the need for improved transparency, trust, and open communication from the school system. Goals three and five of the plan specifically address these concerns. My goal is to enhance communication as we work to close gaps and improve outcomes for all students.

Upon full execution of the entry plan, findings will be presented at a Board of Education retreat. We will collaborate on strategies to improve equity, student achievement, and organizational effectiveness.

Partnership is key to advancing our district. This starts with the close collaboration between the Board and the Superintendent to foster a positive, productive culture focused on improving student achievement through the district's continuous improvement model. Proposed plans and agendas will be communicated to the school community to promote understanding, commitment, excitement, and support, with the ultimate goal of making Durham Public Schools the best district in the nation.



Board of Education

The Durham Public Schools Board of Education consists of seven non-partisan members. One member is elected at-large, four are elected from specific districts, and two are elected from consolidated districts. Board members serve four-year staggered terms.



Chair
Millicent Rogers
Consolidated District B



Vice Chair
Jessica Carda-Auten
District 3



Natalie Beyer
District 4



Emily Chávez
District 1



Joy Harrell Goff
At Large



Wendell Tabb
Consolidated District A



Bettina Umstead
District 2

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Durham Public Schools does not to discriminate on the basis of race, ethnic origin, gender, or disability in its educational programs, activities, or employment policies as required by Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Durham Public Schools Board of Education is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, disability or national origin. The school system is committed to providing a workplace which reflects the racial, gender and cultural diversity of our county and the children we serve. We are dedicated to equality of opportunity. The school system will make reasonable accommodations upon request to enable any employee with a disability to perform essential job functions.



DURHAM
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CENTRAL SERVICES

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