

TO: Members of the Somerville School Committee
FROM: Mary Skipper
RE: **FINAL Entry plan for discussion**
DATE: September 28, 2015

My goal in writing this memo is to update the School Committee about my activities in our Somerville community from January of 2015 through early Fall of 2015 and to create a blueprint for my 100-day entry plan based on those activities that is clear, collaborative, and cohesive.

This memo contains five topic sections which include:

- **What:** I hope to accomplish through my entry plan;
- **Who and How:** I have and will continue to collect data as well as the types of data I have and will collect
- **When:** The timeline and key milestones for my 100-day plan
- **My observations** thus far from my time in the Somerville community
- **Delineation of work** that needs to begin now or has begun and work that will require additional data and longer range planning

I have appreciated how each member of the Somerville SC has welcomed me and offered to help in any way needed. I would welcome feedback on my draft plan and the opportunity to present the final plan at the September 28th SC meeting. I will then work with my team to develop a format of the plan that can be shared widely and will be accessible to all parts of our amazing Somerville Community.

I. What I hope to accomplish through my entry plan

I will use my entry plan to communicate with the Somerville SC Committee and the broader Somerville community how I will come to learn about the Somerville Public Schools and the broader Somerville community. This past spring and the first official 100 days of my Superintendency have and will represent a critical period for me to learn about the history of Somerville and its schools, and to meet, listen to, and learn from the various stakeholders in the community. I will use my entry plan as a vehicle both to explain my process and to share with the School Committee and broader community how I plan to make sense of what I hear, see, read, and experience in my entry process. My hope is that my entry process and plan will help lay an important foundation with School Committee- a foundation that is informed, collaborative, transparent, and grounds the work we will do over the next several years together to ensure the Somerville Public Schools is a great urban school district and model for the nation.

In order to ensure that my entry process is thorough and helps achieve this outcome, I plan to take the following steps:

- **Explore, meet, and learn** from and about the various communities that make up this incredible city.
- **Immerse myself and make sense of the rich body of data** (qualitative and quantitative) that will help me understand both the strengths and areas of need in our schools. Such data will include but is not limited to surveys, standardized tests, formative assessments, meeting notes, written reports and both observation and interviews with key stakeholders from the school district and the community.

- **Develop meeting structures** with district staff, school staff, city agencies, non-profit groups, parent groups, and community partners that allow me to learn about their respective needs, wants, and experiences.
- **Create opportunities, both formal and informal,** for me to begin to develop relationships with key stakeholders and to find ways to share with them who I am as a leader, what the core values are that drive me, and what my expectations and hopes are in the work ahead.
- **Find vehicles that reach all stakeholders to communicate** clearly what my entry process will look like, why it is important, and how and when I will carry out the plan.

II. Who and How: I have and will continue to collect data as well as the types of data I have and intend to collect

Interviews/Meetings/Discussion: Although I did not formally begin in SPS until July 6th, I began spending time learning about SPS in the months immediately following my appointment (late December). During the Spring, Summer, and early Fall of 2015, I met with the following individuals and groups to help me make sense of SPS and the Somerville community:

- 1) Former Superintendent Pierantozzi (regular communication)
- 2) Mayor Curtatone and his staff
- 3) School Committee: Both individually and collectively
- 4) Central Staff: to review current roles, existing systems, structures, and work flow of academics, Parent Information Center (PIC), technology, English Language Learning (ELL) department, Special Ed department, central administrative support, Early Childhood, Finance, Communications, Student Support, Human Resource, and Data Support.
- 5) School Leaders- multiple times at their school site
- 6) Community partners and non-profit partners
- 7) City agency department heads and personnel
- 8) Academic Department heads who are school-based
- 9) Somerville Teachers Association (STA) Union head, Jackie Lawrence
- 10) Teachers at both formal and informal events
- 11) Parents at both formal and informal events
- 12) Students at both formal and informal events

Meetings/Activities: During the Spring through early fall of 2015, I also attended the following events which have helped me to learn about SPS and the Somerville Community:

SHS Vocational Fair
 Duhamel Pancake Breakfast with School Committee
 School leader Screenings (Brown and Capuano)
 School Committee Meetings
 Summer School site visits
 School visits
 Meeting with Cabinet
 Meeting with City Agency heads
 Meeting with Mayor's Cabinet
 Meeting with all Principals
 Meeting with all school-based admin

Meeting with STA leadership
 Meeting with all teachers and paras
 Meeting with SCALE staff
 Meeting with all food service and lunch staff
 Meeting with community schools staff
 Meeting with STEAM Academy proposer
 Meeting with nurses
 Meeting with secretarial union
 Formal and Informal Parent meetings
 Formal and Informal community partner and non-profit partner meetings
 Library visits

Document/Data Reviews: During the Spring and Summer of 2015, I have spent a great deal of time reviewing reports, documents, and reports and data which include:

- SPS District Review 2012
- Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Civil Rights 2015
- CPR Special Ed 2015
- CPR Voc/CTE 2015
- School Improvement Plans for all schools 2013-2014 and 2014-2015
- Public Consulting Group (PCG) Special Education Report, 2015
- Somerpromise documents
- Special Education department documents
- ELL department documents
- Baseline Edge (Evaluation data 2014-2015)
- School Spring (Personnel Opening data)
- Aspen (Student demographic, attendance, conduct, and assessment data)
- Easy IEP (Special Education data and workflow)
- Elevations (ELL data and workflow)
- Budget documents (2014/2015 and 2015/2016)
- Multi-tier System of Supports (MTSS) and student support protocols
- School Safety plans and protocols
- Past New Teacher Training and Administrative Meeting structure
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEAM) Proposal/DOE feedback
- SHS Building Project Documentation
- Standardized test data (MCAS, DIBELS, STAR) academic years 2013-2015

III. When: The timeline and key milestones for my 100-day plan

Month	Activities
February, 2015- May, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meet and talk with Superintendent Pierantozzi regularly ➤ Meet with Chair and Vice-Chair of SC at least monthly ➤ Gather key documents from a variety of stakeholders ➤ Create personal calendar for June-September meetings/activities for entry plan ➤ Create study guide for all incoming data
June, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify and create calendar for meeting schedule for all stakeholder groups ➤ Schedule 1:1 individual meeting with each SC

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Schedule 1:1 hour meetings with all central office ➤ Schedule 1-1 interviews with all school leaders in their buildings ➤ Schedule 1:1 interviews with school-based admin ➤ Schedule meetings with community and non-profit groups ➤ Attend as many school-based fairs/events as I can handle exiting BPS ➤ Create map to learn City by staggering meeting locations
July, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attend MASS Summer Leadership Institute ➤ Send introductory letter to Somerville School Community ➤ Draft Communication Plan for July-September to ensure I reach all stakeholders ➤ Continue with schedule of established interviews and meetings with key stakeholders ➤ Review data and visit each Summer School Program (SPELL, SEEK, SHIP, Summer School, HS Summer School, Community Schools) multiple times ➤ Review academic and team structures and PD with stakeholders such as Cabinet, Academic Team, School Leaders, etc. and make initial changes ➤ Review preliminary MCAS 2015 data to identify areas of strength and needs with leadership ➤ Review summer school strengths/needs and opening of school systems/structures and make initial changes ➤ Visit and meet with PIC and SFLC to broaden outreach ideas
August, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Institute changes to key leadership structures ➤ Create calendar and systems map for Academic year 2015-2016 ➤ Institute communications plan including social media and digital plan ➤ Add additional meeting requests from external partners and stakeholders into calendar ➤ Contribute and attend New Teacher Orientation, Leadership Institute, and Opening Staff Meeting ➤ Attend key community and parent events that are happening before school begins ➤ Attend SHS Athletic camps
September, 2015- October, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attend Kindergarten welcome sessions and sessions for new families ➤ Meet with STA and building union reps ➤ Send Connect Ed message to all families to welcome them back to a new school year ➤ Tour City and schools with DPW ➤ Use local media to share entry process and to help reach various communities (SCATV, Somerville News, Globe, Somerville High Cable Show, Somerville Wicked, etc.) ➤ Attend Open Houses at each school to meet parents ➤ Visit each school several times and meet as many individual teachers ➤ Meet with STA, SAA, SCALE, Food Service Unit, and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clerical Union ➤ Attend school team meetings like PLCs, SSTs, and ILTs where possible ➤ Organize and meet with student representatives at SHS ➤ Meet with PTA presidents and principals to learn about initiatives and identify issues ➤ Discuss entry plan progress at meetings throughout city to hear feedback ➤ Co-Host “Meet the Superintendent” event for families with SC ➤ Share draft and final entry plan with SC in September
November, 2015- December, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Share initial findings for feedback with Cabinet, School leaders, STA and SSA leadership, and school-based admin ➤ Share trends from Spring to Fall of 2015 from interviews, observations and document review with staff and student representative groups, community partners, non-profit and civic partners ➤ Share initial levers of change (Talent, Teaming, Technology, Time, and Totality (Whole Student) with SC and other stakeholders ➤ Offer 3-5 priorities for strategic planning process and solicit initial feedback ➤ Formulate strategic planning team and strategic sub committees for levers of change areas ➤ Develop initial communication plan for full strategic planning process ➤ Develop and implement process for collaborative strategic planning process January, 2016

IV. My Observations

My intent is that from the Spring of 2015 through the Fall of 2015, I will collect data, past and present, in the form of documents and reports, observations, interviews, group discussions both formal and informal, school visits and city tours, and small and large events, from a diverse and varied group of internal and external stakeholders. One of the key goals of my entry plan in addition to building relationships with the various stakeholders is to develop a deeper understanding of the strengths and needs of our school district and city. An added goal of my entry plan is to provide a structure to share publicly how I make sense of what I see, hear, learn, and experience during this time and to provide further opportunity for others to contribute to my learnings and thinking. If done well, my hope is that the entry process will provide a foundation for me and for my leadership team to join School Committee in the development of new goals and a strategic plan for the district.

I will share what I have learned and how I make sense of the information collected during my entry process in the following ways:

- Formal report to School Committee at December 21, 2015
- Presentations to Cabinet, Principals and All Admin
- Meetings with STA and SAA leadership and union representatives
- Meetings with community groups, non-profit partners, and civic groups that support our schools and community
- Interview opportunities with local media channels
- Meetings with staff, students and parents both formal and informal
- Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and other digital channels

V. Tension of short and long range action items

One of the tensions of developing an entry plan and taking on a Superintendency lies in determining what decisions must be made quickly and strategically and which ones can be reserved for more long range planning. Over the past few months, I have come to learn and appreciate that SPS for the most part has a strong foundation with solid systems and structures in place to support our students and staff. That strong foundation has and will continue to allow me to be more thoughtful in the entry planning process as we move to strategic planning in January. Still, there are a few areas that I have made some changes and will continue to do so in an effort to strengthen the systems and structures that are in place or to address gaps in areas where something is lacking. In particular, administrative structures and PD (both the what and how) are both areas I have made some changes. I have also added systems for our most vulnerable students in both Special Ed and ELL as these are areas I will become deeply involved with and hope to build on the good work that has been done. I will include key strategic changes in all areas in my December final report.

In conclusion, I want to publicly thank the SC for the opportunity to lead this incredible district. Each day I learn more and love more the Somerville Public Schools. With a Mayor, SC, staff, parents, and a community so focused on the well-being of our children and so willing to do whatever it takes to help them reach their potential, I see no limit to what is possible. And for that I am both excited and committed.