



An Active Listening and Learning Tour of Salem

Introduction and Purpose

It is a privilege to serve the Salem community as the new superintendent of schools. It is apparent that I have joined invested and child-centered community. It is inspiring to see the pride that parents, teachers, community leaders, partner organizations and above all, students have for their schools. I have developed this entry document to provide a clear and transparent plan for listening to and learning from all of you in the first few months of my tenure in the Salem Public Schools. The activities detailed in this plan are intended to:

- Accelerate my transition to the district by allowing me to quickly learn about the current strategic efforts in SPS (2017-2022, strategic plan);
- Assist me in establishing a strong community presence;
- Provide me with a comprehensive understanding of the district's strengths, challenges and opportunities for continuous improvement.

Considerable time has been spent to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders is included in this plan and that there is ample opportunity for students, parents, staff and community members to share their voice. **If you believe that an individual or organization was inadvertently omitted from this plan, please contact the superintendent's office (978) 740-1212.**

This entry process extends from July through December. Based on the findings from my tour, I will share a preliminary list of goals and priorities with the School Committee, district staff and larger community in December. Ultimately, this will help to inform the future strategic direction as a school system.

Stephen Zrike, Ed.D.
Salem Superintendent of Schools

Entry Plan

I. School and Classroom Visits

As the lead instructional leader in the district, it is imperative that I spend considerable time in schools learning from and with students, teachers, principals and parents. By the end of October, it is my goal to visit every classroom in the district (in person or virtually) so that I have a thorough understanding of teaching and learning in the Salem Public Schools.

II. Meetings and Interviews

I will conduct a series of one-on-one, focus group and/or informational meetings with various constituents of the Salem Public Schools. Some or all of the following questions will guide our discussions:

- Ø *What should I know about the Salem community?*
- Ø *What is working well in the Salem schools?*
- Ø *What are areas of growth for our schools?*
- Ø *What advice do you have for me as superintendent?*

Educational Stakeholders

Students

- Recent graduates (with a variety of post high school experiences)
- Student leadership classes
- High/Middle school student councils across all schools
- Student Advisory Group to the School Committee
- Student representative on School Committee
- Students during classroom visits

Parents

- Parent Teacher Organization leadership and individual meetings at all school PTOs
- English Learner Parent Advisory Committee
- Special Education Parent Advisory Council
- Special Education Out of District families
- Private schools and home school connections
- School councils

Staff

I plan to meet with the following staff across SPS:

- Teachers
- Paraprofessionals
- Clerical and secretarial staff
- Custodial and maintenance staff
- Food service staff
- Leadership from collective bargaining/labor management groups
- Central office staff
- School principals, assistant principals and education team leaders

During meetings/interviews with SPS staff, I will pose a version of the following questions for organizational analysis:

- Ø What are you most proud about with regards to your work, your school and the Salem Public Schools?
- Ø What should district leadership *continue doing, stop doing and/or begin doing* to better support student learning?
- Ø What type of leadership do you want from me as the new superintendent?

Partners

- Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School
- Salem Educational Foundation (SEF)
- Salem Academy Charter School
- Pathways
- Northshore Educational Consortium
- Boys and Girls Club
- YMCA
- LEAP for Education
- Campfire
- Plummer Youth Promise
- North Shore Alliance of GLBTQ+ Youth (NaFLY)
- Peabody Essex Museum
- Salem Public Library
- Salem State University
- North Shore Community College
- Root
- House of Seven Gables
- Salem High School Alumni Association
- Booster organizations
- Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth
- Essex Heritage
- Local private schools and early childhood centers
- Regional superintendent organizations
- Surrounding school districts

Community Stakeholders

City Governance

- Mayor
- City Directors/Departments- Department of Public Works, IT, Health, Employee Benefits, Planning, Recreation
- City Council
- Finance Committee
- Board of Health
- Cultural Council
- No Place for Hate Committee
- Council on Aging
- Board of Library trustees
- Public library director
- Youth Commission
- Commission on Disabilities
- Veterans Housing Authority
- Historical Commission
- Chiefs of public safety organizations and local emergency response leaders
- State Legislative contacts

Business

- Chamber of Commerce
- Rotary
- Salem Main Streets
- Creative Collective
- Salem Partnership
- Latino Business Alliance

Additional Community Leaders/Partners

- Latino Leadership Coalition
- By All Means
- Norman H. Reed Charitable Trust
- Essex Community Foundation
- Salem Children's Charity
- North Shore Community Development Coalition (North Shore CDC)
- Community Life Center
- Religious leaders
- The Salem Pantry
- Race and Equity Task Force
- Salem Access Television (SAT)
- Salem Sound Crosswatch
- United Way
- Democratic and Republican Committees
- Northshore Medical Center
- Salem Hospital
- Members of the press and media- *Salem News, Salem Gazette, Salem Patch, Rainbow Times, Boston Globe North*
- Former superintendents, school committee members and town officials

III. Superintendent Online Meet and Greets and Office Hours

- Given the predominately virtual environment that we currently find ourselves in, I will be hosting online meet and greet sessions with interested community members. Community members will have the opportunity to share their perspective on the schools. Ultimately, I hope to move these meet and greets to in-person sessions.
- I will host office hours during the entry period on Friday mornings from 8-10 am. These one-on-one meetings can be scheduled with my executive assistant, Mindy Marino, at (978) 740-1212.

IV. Data Analysis and Document Review

As part of my entry, I will carefully examine academic and operational data, policies, procedures and guidance documents. Specifically, I will review:

Academic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> 2017-2022 Strategic Plan<input type="checkbox"/> Student performance, behavior and program data (disaggregated by subgroups): MCAS, SAT, graduation/dropout rates, advanced coursework, attendance, enrollment, discipline, arrests and grades<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision and evaluation system documents<input type="checkbox"/> School improvement plans<input type="checkbox"/> Policy manuals<input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum scope and sequence review in all content areas (Atlas Curriculum Maps)<input type="checkbox"/> Program evaluation reports<input type="checkbox"/> Early childhood policies and practices<input type="checkbox"/> Student, Staff and community surveys<input type="checkbox"/> Special education reports and policies<input type="checkbox"/> Arts and enrichment curriculum<input type="checkbox"/> Athletics and extracurricular programs<input type="checkbox"/> Career Technical Education (CTE) programs<input type="checkbox"/> Accreditation reports<input type="checkbox"/> DESE district reviews

Operational and Financial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> 2017-2022 Strategic Plan<input type="checkbox"/> District financial reports, budgets and audits<input type="checkbox"/> Facilities reports<input type="checkbox"/> Preventive and deferred maintenance reports<input type="checkbox"/> Collective Bargaining Agreements<input type="checkbox"/> School Committee and sub-committee minutes<input type="checkbox"/> Capital improvement plans and policies<input type="checkbox"/> Human Capital reports and processes<input type="checkbox"/> Technology infrastructure and usage<input type="checkbox"/> Other task force reports

V. School Committee

I will meet individually with all School Committee members to learn more about their goals and interests related to the Salem Public Schools. Additionally, I will meet with the Committee in a retreat format for the purposes of professional development, establishing priorities and planning for the upcoming school year.

VI. Conclusion

This *Tour* will afford me the opportunity to hear from a variety of stakeholders and to truly understand the local context of the community and school system. The entry plan will conclude with a report to the School Committee, district staff and stakeholders in December where I will share findings, observations and next steps for our schools. Thank you in advance for your insights and ideas as we partner together to best serve our students.