



Aurora Public Schools

Superintendent's 90-Day Entry Plan

VISTA

Visionary **I**nstruction **S**haping the **T**ransformation of **A**PS

*Sept. 12 Overview
Working Version*



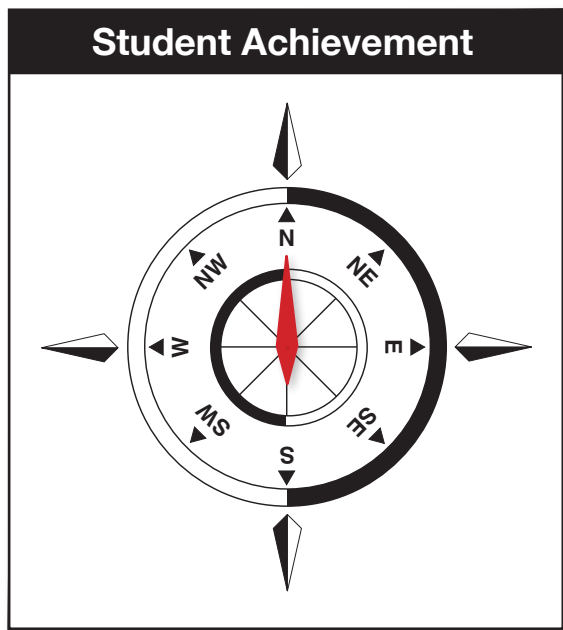
**Aurora
Public Schools**

Every child counts



Table of Contents

- I Superintendent's 90-Day Entry Plan - VISTA - Introduction
- II Goals and Objectives
- III Listening Tour and Timelines



“Ensuring that all we do is best for students – this will always be my compass, my true north. The focus on students will guide everything that we do.”

*Superintendent
John L. Barry*

Overview of Superintendent's 90-Day Entry Plan

Immediate Focus

Aurora Public School District is in the midst of transformation. The new superintendent has an immediate and moral charge to raise student achievement and close the achievement gap among ethnic groups and economically diverse students. To that end, the superintendent must:

- Build on the work to date and impart a sense of urgency for transformation based on a coherent vision and strategic plan for improvement.
- Convey a positive public image of Aurora Public Schools.
- Engage members of the district and community in mutual transformation and accountability.
- Oversee continuing recruitment and hiring of a highly qualified, diverse workforce.
- Serve as the district's most vocal promoter and supporter.

Rationale for VISTA, the 90-day Entry Plan

VISTA serves as the entry plan for Superintendent John L. Barry's first 90 days, including meetings with key leaders and stakeholders. Over the 90 days, the superintendent will revise the plan based on feedback from a listening tour. As a result, VISTA, the coherent vision and strategic plan, will address the district's current challenges and ensure that our focus is on student achievement.

Organization of District Leadership

The superintendent will always focus on accelerating student achievement and will do the following:

- Work with the APS Board of Education on a Theory of Action for APS.
- Identify and clarify roles of the board, superintendent and key district stakeholders.
- In conjunction with the APS Board of Education, review and adjust the building blocks of reform governance, such as board meetings, workshops, committees and administrative support.
- In conjunction with the board, review and adjust policy development and oversight.
- Increase civic involvement and capacity in transitional planning for APS.
- At the end of the 90-day period, deliver the board a revised vision and strategic plan for approval.

**APS SUPERINTENDENT'S ENTRY PLAN
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

GOAL 1:

INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Objectives:

- 1) *Analyze patterns in student achievement data and the gap in achievement between various student populations in order to determine an appropriate course of action for teaching and learning.*
- 2) *Raise expectations for all students to ensure that all staff support and believe that every child can and will learn.*
- 3) *Establish internal and external monitoring and evaluation designs for instructional support and intervention systems.*

GOAL 2:

ENSURE EFFECTIVE DISTRICT GOVERNANCE THROUGH POSITIVE BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONS

Objective:

- 1) *Develop a cohesive leadership team with APS Board of Education and superintendent that has a student-centered agenda and begin to build a positive working relationship with each board member individually.*

GOAL 3:

IMPROVE PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE THROUGH OPEN, HONEST COMMUNICATION AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Objectives:

- 1) *Increase personal knowledge and understanding of the APS community culture, traditions, history, and expectations of the district.*
- 2) *Validate the community and faith-based organizations as viable and valuable supporters and partners in public education.*
- 3) *Establish positive working relationships with key leaders and members of government, business, and service and support agencies in the community.*
- 4) *Increase opportunities to promote the district image and advocate for the district within the community.*
- 5) *Ensure ongoing, open, clear and consistent communication with all stakeholders.*
- 6) *Establish a positive working relationship with the members of the media.*
- 7) *Facilitate understanding and ownership of our vision, mission and purpose as an organization dedicated to providing the best possible education for all children.*

GOAL 4:

INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

Objectives:

- 1) *Determine, “where we are, where we need to go” in terms of each major division within the organization to ensure a student-focused agenda.*
- 2) *Consolidate and streamline similar functions and positions in order to maximize service and support for schools.*

GOAL 5:

ESTABLISH A SUPPORTIVE, POSITIVE DISTRICT CLIMATE AND CULTURE

Objectives:

- 1) *Establish positive relationships with key district leadership and meet all central and school staff to validate each as individuals important to the district’s success.*
- 2) *Communicate with parents and encourage positive partnerships on behalf of students.*
- 3) *Establish a positive, professional and collaborative relationship with union leadership to ensure all decisions are made in the best interest of students.*
- 4) *Connect with the political leadership in the city and state in order to establish clear lines of communication, advocacy and support for the district's students.*
- 5) *Establish an organizational norm for open, clear and consistent communication within the district and with our community.*

***APS SUPERINTENDENT'S ENTRY PLAN
GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES***

GOAL 1:

INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Objective:

1) Analyze patterns in student achievement data and the gap in achievement between various student populations to determine an appropriate course of action for teaching and learning.

Activities:

- Conduct an “Academic Audit” to review instructional program, practices, curriculum and supportive materials for evidence of effectiveness in improving student achievement and closing the gap between all student populations.
- Review student data for all student populations and run cross-tabulations of correlations to student performance with curriculum and resources.

Objective:

2) Raise expectations for all students to ensure that all staff support and believe that every child can and will learn.

Activities:

- Develop a plan to increase the district high school graduation rates.
- Develop a plan to increase enrollment particularly among low-income and minority students in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and participation in AP testing.
- Develop a plan to increase opportunities for identified advanced academic learners to participate in dual credit and dual enrollment, internships and community actions research projects.
- Review district curriculum scope and sequence and assessments for high expectations, alignment to standards and appropriate instructional modifications for students who are English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Objective:

3) Establish internal and external monitoring and evaluation designs for instructional support and intervention systems.

Activities:

- Inventory all technology-based instructional equipment and software.
- Develop data base of a by-student/by-school/by- participation for each technology-based curriculum intervention program.
- Review analysis of student data based on participation.
- Develop monitoring, testing and evaluation systems for effectiveness of each program based on student progress.

GOAL 2:

***ENSURE EFFECTIVE DISTRICT GOVERNANCE THROUGH POSITIVE
BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONS***

Objective:

1) Develop a cohesive leadership team with APS Board of Education and superintendent that has a student-centered agenda and begin to build a positive working relationship with each board member individually.

Activities:

- Schedule meeting with Board President Matt Cook to discuss a framework, format and agenda for a board retreat, preferably prior to official start date.
- Hire a facilitator, schedule and conduct an offsite executive session retreat.
- Establish clear understandings of roles, responsibilities, expectations, and systems for mutual accountability, etc.
- Establish regular meeting time with Board President Cook for reviewing Board agendas, etc.
- Schedule an individual meeting with each board member for some one-on-one time.
- Establish regular communication systems with the Board such as weekly letters, etc.
- Design a plan and timeline for developing a district vision, mission, beliefs, and performance management plan.

GOAL 3:

IMPROVE PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE THROUGH OPEN, HONEST COMMUNICATION AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Objectives:

- 1) Increase personal knowledge and understanding of APS community, its culture, traditions, history, and its expectations of the district.
- 2) Validate community and faith-based organizations as viable and valuable supporters and partners in public education.
- 3) Establish positive working relationships with key leaders and members of government, business, and service and support agencies in the community.

Activities:

- Identify community's largest taxpayers, key business leaders, foundation leaders, fire and police chiefs, and college/university presidents and their professional organizations and affiliations, such as the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.
 - Identify community's largest churches, key religious leaders, and their professional organizations and affiliations, such as Father Burt of St. Therese and Pastor Lewis Brown of New Beginnings Cathedral of Worship.
 - Schedule meetings with critical individual leaders, including government leaders.
 - Attend meetings of key organizations such as the Aurora Community of Faith, Business Roundtable, Aurora Chamber of Commerce Public Issues Committee, and the Denver Black and Hispanic Chambers of Commerce as appropriate.
 - Establish bi-annual meetings with key community leaders and/or their organizations, such as:
 - Aurora Chamber of Commerce Board
 - Glenda Wells-Evans of Citizens Concerned about Minorities in Aurora
 - Aurora Asian Pacific Partnership
 - Attend meetings of key organizations such as:
 - Key Community Response Team
 - Aurora Association of Realtors
- 4) Increase opportunities to promote the district image and advocate for the district within the community.
 - 5) Ensure ongoing, open, clear and consistent communication with all stakeholders.
 - 6) Establish a positive working relationship with the members of the media.
 - 7) Facilitate understanding and ownership of our vision, mission and purpose as an organization dedicated to providing the best possible education for all children.

Activities:

- Assess all existing forms of communication to various stakeholders:
 - Board
 - Teachers
 - Administrative and Classified Staff
 - Parents
 - Policy Makers
 - Community Leaders/Partners
 - Community Members
 - Business Leaders
- Establish formats and review process for all forms of communication with all staff.
- Write letters/articles to various critical stakeholders expressing hopes for our future, share the vision and action plan and provide consistent updates.
- Schedule meetings with the local newspaper editorial board, including the Aurora Sentinel.
- Host an informal get-to-know-you with local media representatives to the district:
 - assigned newspaper reporters
 - TV reporters or anchors
 - radio, etc.
- Assure media that they are welcome and that mutual open and honest communication and reporting will be encouraged and appreciated.
- Invite media to all key significant events.

GOAL 4:

INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY:

Objective:

1) Determine, “where we are, where we need to go” in terms of each major division within the organization to ensure a student-focused agenda.

Activities:

- Review all critical documents: organizational chart, employee handbooks, policy and procedures manuals, strategic plan, student achievement data by school.
- Review all commissioned studies by outside agencies, assemble work teams and begin to address deficiencies and make recommendations.
- Set up a schedule to meet with key central staff, and principals. Notify of intent to meet, time, and location.
- Conduct meetings and organizational analysis:
 - What do we need to start, stop, and continue doing?
 - How can each be supportive?
 - What support is needed for each to be successful?
- Prior to entry request an assessment of current status of each major division’s goals, an analysis of the critical issues and work priorities for the upcoming year, and the proposed plan of action to address each.
- Meet with each district senior-level administrator to assess district and departmental capacity for effectiveness and efficiency of services:
 - Instruction
 - Finance
 - Support Services
 - Assessment
 - Human Resources
 - School Services
 - Communication
- Establish time lines for developing a district comprehensive strategic plan; facilities plan and long-range technology plan by working with the Citizens Bond Oversight Committee, Long Range Facilities Committee and instruction and technology staff.

2) Consolidate and streamline similar functions and positions in order to maximize service and support for schools.

Activities:

- Review, assess and reorganize the central organizational structure to enhance work flow, and redirect service delivery at the school site.
- Develop organizational models that enhance effectiveness and maximize support for schools.
- Review funding streams supporting each area of district operations and redirect as appropriate to the school site.
- Establish accountability measures and determine data to be collected, reviewed and analyzed each quarter.

GOAL 5:

ESTABLISH A SUPPORTIVE, POSITIVE DISTRICT CLIMATE AND CULTURE

Objective:

1) Establish positive relationships with key district leadership and meet all central and school staff to validate each as individuals important to the district's success.

Activities:

- Identify a key central administrator to assist with the transition within the organization.
- Walk through the central office by department/division and meet each individual.
- Establish regularly scheduled meetings with staff:
 - Cabinet
 - Senior staff members
 - Principals, etc.
- Schedule a visit to every school.
- Schedule after school "Teacher Coffees" to be held at various school sites on a monthly basis.

Objective:

2) Communicate with parents and encourage positive partnerships on behalf of students.

Activities:

- Schedule a coffee for all PTO/PTA presidents.
- Establish a format and regular forums for ongoing communication.
- Determine priorities for district parents and collaborate on a plan to move forward together on behalf of students.
- Meet with the District Accountability Advisory Committee.

Objective:

3) Establish a positive, professional and collaborative relationship with union leadership to ensure all decisions are made in the best interest of students.

Activities:

- Meet with Aurora Education Association President Brenna Isaacs to discuss common goals, ways of working, etc.
- Establish monthly meetings to facilitate ongoing communication that is proactive on behalf of students and staff.
- Schedule a mini retreat with union executive board and senior district staff. Establish clear understandings of roles, responsibilities, expectations, systems for mutual accountability, etc.

Objective:

4) Connect with the political leadership in the city and state in order to establish clear lines of communication, advocacy and support for the districts' students.

Activities:

- Meet Mayor Tauer and City Council members.
- Establish regular meetings with Mayor Tauer and City Council members
- Call and schedule a meeting with Colorado Department of Education Commissioner William J. Moloney.
- Meet with Karen Middleton, Aurora representative to the Colorado State Board of Education.
- Join the local and state superintendents' organization and contact the leadership of each to introduce self.
- Request a meeting of the district's legislative delegation to the state. Meet and request a regularly scheduled meeting with the leadership and an acceptable format for ongoing communication re: district needs.
- Schedule a meeting with district Congressional representatives and senators. Discuss an acceptable format for ongoing communication re: district needs.

Objective:

5) Establish an organizational norm for open, clear and consistent communication within the district and with our community.

Activities:

- Set the expectation for this norm districtwide.
- Model this norm.
- Create feedback opportunities to ensure that we are meeting the norm.

APS SUPERINTENDENT'S ENTRY PLAN
Listening Tour General Overview

Board of Education

Purpose: Establish working relationships with individual board members and the board as a whole. Some of the activities include:

- Facilitate and co-plan a board retreat.
- Invite BOE members to join the superintendent at key events.
- Interview each board member.
- Draft an initial action plan to address any issues regarding the operation of the board.
- Meet regularly with BOE President Matt Cook

District Administrative Staff

Purpose: Establish strong professional relationships with key personnel inside the district. Some of the activities include:

- Meet with senior staff members.
- Meet with superintendent office staff to establish office procedures/communication.
- “Meet and Greet” tour of the administration buildings, to be introduced to staff, including directors, secretaries and custodians. Schedule an informal reception for additional communication opportunities.
- Schedule a "Meet and Greet" event at a public venue for staff and community members.
- Conduct follow-up sessions within a month of the briefing sessions with leadership team, cabinet and administrators/support staff (individually or in small groups) to review information gathered from briefings and interviews. Establish six-month work plan for predictable tasks.

District Tour/School Leadership

Purpose: Be a visible presence to the staff in the district. Some of the activities include:

- Attend New Teacher Orientation.
- Attend principal meetings.
- Ride a bus to some of the district's schools, greet and talk to parents and kids as they get on, ride the bus to school, visit their schools.
- Schedule sessions with all key district stakeholders (parents, teachers, staff,) to outline goals for the first 90 days.
- Arrange meetings with principals by grade level (elementary, middle school and high school) to obtain knowledge of issues relevant at each level.

Aurora Education Association Leadership

Purpose: Establish relationships with the district's labor union and professional associations. Some of the activities include:

- Meet with appropriate Human Resources staff and legal counsel to get background on union/ management relationships. Develop a strategy for working with each group.
- Meet individually with the leadership of each employee group within the first 30 days. Meet with the heads of the teacher unions. Establish a regular communication pattern with union leaders.

Community Leadership

Purpose: To meet leaders of community and parent organizations, generate good will, build support and establish critical communication channels. Some of the activities include:

- Organize a VISTA Community Transition Committee that will meet once a month for the first year that includes representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, Buckley Air Force Base, Community College of Aurora and other community leaders.
- Arrange a series of speaking engagements with business organizations such as the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, rotary clubs, realtors, homeowners' associations and others.
- Attend community, PTA/PTO and general parent meetings to obtain input.
- Meet with major community organizations to review the status of their relationship with the district, such as city NAACP, Citizens Concerned about Minorities in Aurora, Hispanic support groups, religious group representatives and others.
- Meet with the representatives from the social service agencies, such as Tri-County Health, COMITIS Crisis Center and Aurora Mental Health that provide services to the families in the district. Begin an assessment of the effectiveness of the collaborations between these agencies and the district.
- Develop a strategic plan for maximizing the district's connections to the community groups.

Political Leadership

Purpose: Meet political leaders and establish regular communication. Some of the activities include:

- Meet with the district's legal counsel and legislative liaison to review the district's lobbying efforts at the local, state and national levels.
- Meet with Mayor Tauer and the city council members to gain their support for the goals of the district.
- Begin developing a work plan that will address gaps in the current efforts, and provide focus to the next legislative sessions.
- Meet with the governor and Colorado Department of Education Commissioner.
- Meet with congressional representatives and senators that represent APS.

Media

Purpose: Clearly articulate the vision of the district so that the public, press and education community know what to expect. Some of the activities include:

- Provide media interviews during the first few weeks on the job
- Invite media to ride bus and visit schools on the first day of class
- Organize a news conference for all media organizations within the first week on the job.
- Meet with all local newspaper editorial boards, making sure to include ethnic and business press.

For more information about the VISTA, contact Georgia Durán at 303-344-8060 ext. 28015.

National Leadership

Purpose: Take the story of the Aurora Strategic Plan to key political, foundation and education leaders in the city, the state and across the country. Some of the activities include:

- Invite national foundation presidents to visit once the district is ready to ask for philanthropic resources to assist with its strategic priorities.
- Tap into network of education organization leaders to assist with district's strategic priorities and to bring fresh talent and expertise to any district that has traditionally been very parochial in its outreach efforts.
- Consider taking advantage of the Broad Foundation's "Strategic Support Teams" initiative (spend a closed door, working weekend with highly regarded urban superintendents from across the country.)