

# Robert A. McGarry, Ed.D.

## Superintendent Transition Plan

### Holmdel Township Schools



The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for fulfilling all aspects of the educational mission of the school district, which in Holmdel includes providing students and their families with “a comprehensive and caring educational environment” in order to “develop the potential of every student,” while ensuring that “all students meet and exceed the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards” and graduate ready to take their place as “responsible and resourceful citizens and lifelong learners.”

Joseph Antonakakis, a 2014 graduate of Holmdel High School told his peers during a National Honor Society Induction Ceremony, “In Holmdel, excellence is not a suggestion, it’s an expectation.” I believe that the Superintendent of the Holmdel Township Schools must serve as the district’s steward of excellence and cultivate a district-wide commitment to excellence in innovation while also promoting the excellence of the district to the larger community as well as to the nation’s leading colleges and universities and the workforce. Positioning the district as a model of educational excellence is critical to the future success of our students and the health of our community.

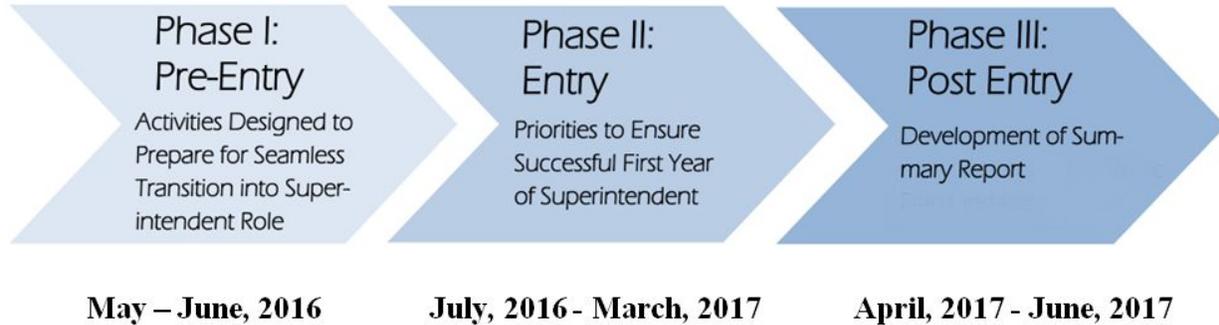
The Superintendent provides essential leadership to: educate every child; attract, secure and develop a high quality staff; secure and manage funds to provide state-of-the-art facilities; strengthen all academic, athletic and arts programming; and encourage and maintain communication between the school district, its parents and the public. The purpose of this plan is to provide a clear structure for the steps needed to ensure consistent district advancement well into the future.

With the experience of serving as Holmdel’s Assistant Superintendent for the past two years, I will be able to immediately build upon the district’s considerable success through well established relationships. I have truly enjoyed interacting with our students, staff, parents, community members and the members of the Board of Education and have quickly come to think of Holmdel as a second home. This plan serves as an opportunity to view all district efforts and functions with a new lens and provide transparency around planned directions for the coming school years.

The actions in this plan are designed to accelerate a smooth transition by using student, staff, parent, and community data to guide next steps. Priorities will include building upon the already strong school and community presence I have established and developing and implementing collaborative plans that build on the strengths and the opportunities that exist for the district.

## Timeline

The transition plan is broken into three distinct phases:



## Transition Goals

1. Develop, in collaboration with the Board of Education, a set of clear expectations for assuming the role of Superintendent.
2. Participate in all relevant Superintendent responsibilities, meetings, and activities prior to the departure of the current Superintendent.
3. Ensure a wide-variety of perspectives and voices are heard through the transition process and continue to promote strong relationships with all internal and external stakeholder groups.
4. Build on the already strong ties developed as the district's Assistant Superintendent to all four schools, the community, state agencies and government.
5. Engage in bi-weekly transition sessions with the departing Superintendent and Board Leadership with written agendas specific to current and emerging district issues and initiatives.
6. Consider student health, safety, engagement, academic improvement, innovation and future success as the ultimate priority of every conversation and effort in this process.
7. Use existing data and feedback reviewed to set short and long-term goals.
8. Other goals as determined through collaborative dialogue with the Board/Board Leadership.

## Outcomes (the expected results of implementing this plan):

1. A seamless transition into the role of Superintendent based on Phase I activities.
2. A complete understanding of work priorities from every segment of the district's population as possible.
3. A summary report of observations, key findings, and recommendations based on results of Phase I and Phase II of the transition plan. This will include a review all aspects of the functioning of the district with a lens towards maximizing efficiencies, maintaining accountability, and building an administrative structure and teacher support system to promote innovation at all levels.

## Phase I: Pre-Entry

Activities Designed to  
Prepare for Seamless  
Transition into Super-  
intendent Role

1. Continue to perform all duties inherent in the assistant superintendent position I currently hold, including administration, teaching, student learning, curriculum, assessment, professional development, school and program support, community activities, and maintaining compliance with state mandates.
2. Continue to attend academic, athletic, and arts activities and events.
3. Establish a Superintendent's Transition Advisory Team (STAT) to advise and function as a "sounding board" as I implement the second phase of this plan.
4. Continue to participate in all job-related functions of the departing Superintendent.
5. Schedule and participate in individual meetings with Superintendents from neighboring districts.
6. Participate in professional development through the state association and the Monmouth County Superintendents' Roundtable.
7. Engage in bi-weekly transition sessions with Board Leadership and departing Superintendent.
8. Continue to audit all aspects of the academic program through the district's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning goal while advancing efforts in identified areas (STEM, Athletics).
9. Attend all key meetings, including all Board committee meetings.
10. Meet with attorneys and other professionals who represent the district.
11. Complete classroom walk-throughs at all schools.
12. Attend community events, including HFEE Foundation Gala, Community Day, and Township Council meetings.
13. Engage in meetings with community services, including law enforcement, fire department and community organizations such as HYAA.

## Phase II: Entry

Priorities to Ensure  
Successful First Year  
of Superintendent

1. Engage in a focused effort to build upon existing relationships, experience, and knowledge, while advancing learning by involving a wider audience of stakeholders.
2. Conduct monthly meetings of the Superintendent's Transition Advisory Team (STAT).
3. Continue to cultivate a positive and productive Superintendent-Board relationship.
4. Collaborate with Board Leadership to assess the the development of Board meeting agendas and effectiveness of communication with the Board regarding Superintendent recommendations.
5. Analyze the following data to help determine next steps to ensure that all students are successful:

- a. District, State, and National Test Score Comparisons.
  - b. Student Data: Attendance, Schedules, Grades, Discipline, Demographics, College Acceptance and Entry Rates.
  - c. Student Enrollment data and trends.
  - d. Staff Evaluation Data (with an emphasis on administrative staff/direct reports).
6. Review the following documentation:
    - a. Board of Education Bylaws.
    - b. Policy Manual (specific to Superintendent role and code requirements).
    - c. Collective Bargaining Agreements.
    - d. Budget Documents and Financial Audits.
    - e. NJQSAC Documents and other State Reports and Required Plans.
    - f. Board of Education Meeting Minutes and Agendas.
    - g. Status of all Special Education Appeals, Hearings and Decisions.
    - h. Organizational Chart and Job Descriptions.
    - i. Board of Education Goals.
    - j. Facilities Plans.
  7. Conduct school visits and meetings with all staff.
  8. Hold meetings, interviews, and listening/ dialogue sessions with stakeholders, including parents, students, and the leadership of both associations (HTEA and HTAA).
  9. Meet with all direct reports to focus and align goals, objectives and work plans.



Summary Report: this entry plan and process will culminate with the development and presentation of a summary report in May 2017, outlining the Superintendent’s findings, observations, and next steps. The summary report will be published online for all.

The report and findings will serve as another resource to help inform the Holmdel Township Board of Education establish goals and objectives and develop logic models and administrative work plans for the 2017-2018 school year and beyond.

This Plan of Transition/Entry will afford the new Superintendent the opportunity to listen, observe, and learn from a variety of community members while deepening the substantial understanding of the school system and community that I already possess. The plan will serve as a communication vehicle and catalyst to formulate ideas and strategies to advance our school system so we can continue to enhance every student’s educational experience and move the district from “Good to Great” and make sure it is “Built to Last” (Collins, 2005, 1995).

