

**Blueprint for Student Success:  
Achieving Educational Excellence and Equity for All  
Version 1.0**

This is an exciting day for the Fayette County Public Schools because it represents the next phase of our work. It is so fitting for us to be culminating the 2016-17 school year with the last day of school for our students tomorrow while we're also beginning in earnest this important work that will make a difference for students when they return to school on August 10.

As the incoming Superintendent of the Fayette County Public Schools, I developed my "Listening, Learning and Leading" Entry Plan to guide the first several months of my tenure. In order to identify the challenges and opportunities facing our school district, my entry plan included visiting every school and special program, reviewing documents, analyzing data and gathering stakeholder input through surveys, individual meetings, focus groups and listening sessions.

To augment my personal observations, the Fayette County Board of Education agreed to commission five reviews to be conducted by independent auditors – a first for our school district. Examinations included a review of the overall organization and structure across 10 domains, as well as audits of the district’s career and technical education program, services offered for students who have special needs, are learning English as a second language, or are identified as gifted and talented.

The board initially agreed to invest \$800,000 on the independent reviews, but I am fiscally conservative. Ever mindful that we must be frugal stewards of our taxpayers’ investment, I’m pleased to report that we were able to complete this work for less than \$400,000, leaving more than \$400,000 to invest in the strategies outlined in this report.

This spring, we wrapped up our surveys and community listening sessions. In addition to a communitywide “Entry Plan” survey that drew more than 6,150 responses from students, employees, families and community members, we conducted targeted surveys of principals, district-level staff, business partners and parents of children with special needs that had 1,400 respondents. We also conducted a series of 14 listening sessions that had more than 600 participants.

I am grateful for the willingness of so many constituents to share their honest and candid feedback about both the strengths of our district and the challenges we face. In all, more than 12,750 people have lent their voices to this work, which is the foundation of what am calling the Blueprint for Student Success: Achieving Educational Excellence and Equity for All. Everyone who participated should be able to see a bit of themselves reflected in the report and the plan.

It has been truly incredible to see how the information gleaned from so many different people through audits, surveys, data, and conversations point to the same areas of challenge and opportunity for our school district.

The following themes rose to the top as needs for the Fayette County Public

Schools:

- Access
- Class Size and Teacher Caseloads
- Communication and Engagement
- Guidance Counseling
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Equity
- Global Competitiveness and Rigor
- High-Quality Teachers
- School-Based Decision Making Councils

Based upon the findings, I recommend FCPS improve the education provided to all students by focusing on eight “pillars:”

1. Effective Governance and Leadership
2. Student Success: Educational Excellence and Equity
3. School Management, Improvement, and Innovation
4. Great Staff
5. World-Class Operations
6. Data, Research, and Accountability
7. Student, Family, Community Engagement and Strategic Partnerships
8. Communications and External Affairs

Under each pillar, I have identified specific strategies that will be implemented during the 2016-17 school year. In all, there are exactly 100 strategies that I am placing on the District's "To-Do list."

I won't read them to you, because they are all listed in the copy of the plan we handed out this morning. For the benefit of our viewing audience, they can be accessed on our website at [www.fcps.net/superplan](http://www.fcps.net/superplan).

But I do want to highlight some of the strategies to give everyone an idea of the kinds of change we'll be making:

- We're going to add additional teachers out in our schools specifically to improve the student-teacher ratios for students with special needs, students learning English and students who have been identified as gifted and talented. And will continue to add teachers in those targeted areas over the next four years until we reach best practice teacher caseloads.
- We will be hiring college and career coaches at each of our high schools to support students with guidance, college/career readiness, postsecondary transitions and utilizing the Individual Learning Plan.

- This fall, we will require and pay for all 10th grade students to take the PSAT. This is one of those gateway exams that open a world of scholarships and opportunities like Advanced Placement classes for students.
- Over the next year, we're going to design a staffing model to reduce class size at the primary grades in our schools serving students with the highest needs.
- Next summer, in our Partnership Zone schools we will implement "Summer Bridge" programs for students entering 6th and 9th grades and "Summer Learning and More" programs for all grades to enrich and extend academic opportunities.
- In partnership with representatives from the 16th District PTA and other community leaders, we will redesign the district website to be more family friendly.
- We're also going to launch a Parent and Family University program that will empower families as equal partners in their child's education and develop Family Learning Guides to help explain what students should be learning at every grade level and suggest ways for families to support and monitor their success.
- We will explore the possibility of opening a newcomer center for students whose families are new to our country during the 2017-18 school year.

- We will plan and launch a campaign initiative with United Way and other partners called “Give 10” to increase community volunteers and mentors in our schools.
- We will have student voice teams at each of our high schools and a districtwide student voice team that will meet with me. The first issue the students and I will tackle is school lunch.

Those are just a few of the exciting things that people will see as this work moves forward. There will also be behind the scenes work on developing curriculum and assessments for all schools to use, and providing extensive professional learning for new teachers, principals, teachers who want to earn their National Board Certification and teachers who work with students who have special needs, are learning English, or have been identified as gifted and talented. We will monitor the work happening in our schools, looking at classroom instruction, student engagement, and school climate and culture to ensure that each and every student is being challenged to reach his or her unlimited potential.

We are going rework our data infrastructure and launch a district and school scorecard that will let our entire community track progress and excellence in our schools beyond state test scores, into the metrics that families care about most like student engagement, student progress, safety, and community and family involvement. There will be an emphasis on equity and tracking progress to eliminating achievement disparities.

We will recalibrate our work with School-Based Decision Making councils and provide additional training and outreach so our community understands how important SBDMs are and knows how to get involved in their work.

We will examine our policies through the lens of equity and develop specific operating procedures to ensure better efficiency at the district office. I will propose a district reorganization that adds resources to our core focus of student achievement but is completely cost neutral. We will rewrite job descriptions and align duties and key core work processes. There is a strong focus on equity, increasing the diversity of our staff and expanding our work with women- and minority-owned businesses.

In order to hold ourselves accountable, each strategy has been assigned to a “process owner” – a district administrator who is responsible for implementation, providing a status update, and staying within the budget we will assign to each.

In the spirit of transparency and accountability, this list of strategies will be published on our district website, with the budget figures assigned to each task. As work proceeds, we will track progress by noting whether the strategy is red to indicate no work has been done, yellow to indicate that work is in progress, or green to indicate that the task is complete.

Please note that these pillars and strategies do not capture all the work currently taking place in the district to provide an outstanding education for our children. Every day countless activities are taking place in classrooms, kitchens, central office, and buses to ensure that students receive a high-quality education. Rather, the strategies outlined here represent new work that will be key levers for driving improvement across the system.

Over the summer, we will kick off a strategic planning process to guide continued improvement over the next five years.

This is a comprehensive plan, designed so that strategies build upon each other and scaffold around existing strengths or initiatives to accomplish necessary change.

This is not a menu of options, and it is critical that we not push for some strategies at the exclusion of others. “Cherry picking” will leave us no better as a school system than we are right now. Success requires that we take a comprehensive approach to improvement, which includes implementation and monitoring of all the strategies. It is only through successful implementation of all the strategies outlined here that we can ensure the success of all children in Fayette County, as our community demands.