

MILFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT

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**SAU – 40 Milford Public Schools
Office of the Superintendent
Entry Plan**

To: SAU 40 Community

From: Dr. Jessica L. Huizenga, Interim Superintendent

Date: July 5, 2018

Re: Interim Superintendent Entry Plan

Dear Members of the Milford School Community:

I hope everyone is having a wonderful start to their summer vacation, and enjoyed the July 4th holiday with family and friends. My name is Dr. Jessica Huizenga, and I will be serving as your Interim-Superintendent for the 2018-19 School Year. I wanted to take this opportunity to express my genuine excitement at joining the SAU 40 community. Everything I have learned about Milford in the last couple of weeks demonstrates a strong commitment to excellence, innovation, and collaboration in support of the children and families of Milford. These are values that are dear to me. Without a doubt, all the components are here in this community to be the best school district in New Hampshire, and be a model nation-wide in authentic, personalized, and integrated learning.

We have a tremendously dedicated staff in Milford who works tirelessly each and every day to ensure ALL of our children are provided the best opportunity to graduate college and career ready, with an inherent desire to be contributors and competitors in a globalized world. I am very excited to be working with this team. I've also learned in just a few short visits to Milford, that inherent to the success of our schools is the tremendous support of our community leaders, and partners in town. It takes everyone to ensure an excellent school system, and I look forward to strengthening these relationships and throughout the year.

My goal in the coming months, most specifically the next 100 days, is to learn as much as possible about our school district and community. I will be looking to surface through a variety of activities, the strengths, weakness, and possibly new opportunities by which to build and grow a world class educational system for all; across all aspects of the district. My hope is that this information will help us define a strategy and strategic plan to guide our work in providing each student in SAU 40 an exceptional 21st Century Education.

To this end, I have established a formal entry plan, which will allow me to obtain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Milford community. As this plan progresses, my hope is that all of you will learn more about me. When I am not doing what I am most passionate about, which is providing students with the best educational opportunities, I am the wife of a teacher, and mom of three. My oldest girl is a junior in college, this past Monday, I dropped my son off as a new cadet at West Point Military Academy, and my youngest daughter will be starting middle school this year.

I am looking forward to starting this entry process because it is a purposeful way for a new leader to integrate into a community with the goal of building trust and relationships right from the start. This will be foundational to moving our district forward in our efforts towards continuous improvement and excellence. I have attached a detailed explanation of my entry plan below. Please feel free to review my draft and provide me with suggestions for improvement.

As I enter my 21st year in Public Education, I have given much thought to those years back when I graduated college and became a first year teacher full of enthusiasm, but with no experience. I have changed in many ways over those years, however, the core values, which drive everything I do, have not.

These include:

- Kids First: Our number one priority are Children
- Teaching and Learning is the core of our work
- Respect for differences and honesty is always the best policy
- All students deserve Excellence and Equity
- High Expectations are essential to success
- We can't accomplish what we don't try
- The whole is greater than the sum of its parts - TEAM
- Collaboration and Community is the KEY to Success

I appreciate your time in helping me achieve the purpose and goals outlined in the entry plan you will find below.

Sincerely,

Jessica Huizenga, Ed.D

Entry Plan Process

The purpose of this Entry Plan will assist me in:

1. Learning about the key events, issues, and concerns organizationally in the Milford Public Schools
2. Learning about the values, norms, expectations, and goals of the community
3. Providing an avenue for the collective examination of this information that result in defining our priorities for improving our children's education
4. Defining a strategy for the district which will result in achieving the vision and mission of Milford, and establishing a strategic plan for the district

This entry plan will be sequenced in three activities that build upon one another to arrive at a shared set of goals and plans to achieve them. My goal is to present a report of my findings to the Leadership Team in January of 2019. The three activities include the following:

1. Personal/Focus Group Interviews, and an online survey, followed by
2. Data Review and Compilation
3. Presentation to the Leadership Team, School Committee, and Community

Please join me making the first 4 months of the school year a period of learning and examination that results in a shared understanding of our strengths and weaknesses, as well as our opportunities and goals for continuous improvement. My objective during this time is to listen, observe, and ask questions. This process will center around three key questions:

- Where are the strengths of the Milford Public Schools? What are you most proud of?
- What are areas you believe need improvement?
- Where do we need to go? What would your ideal School District look like, sound like, feel like?
- How do you think we can get there?

Specific Objectives:

- To understand key issues and perspectives from various groups, which will inform the office of the Superintendent and priorities for the School Board in the coming year and beyond
- To develop and sustain working relationships with all stakeholders which enhances confidence and trust through open, honest communication
- Ensure a coherent and equitable approach to educating our students
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of every member of the district team, and strengthen the team by determining how individuals can best be supported

Methodology:

Below are some of the activity steps I will be engaging in as part of my entry plan. Embedded in these steps is a process of collaborative inquiry:

In my first 100 days, I will...

1.	Hold structured, confidential meetings with key individuals and focus groups during the period from July through December, where our exchange is guided by a set of questions
2.	Visit every Milford school to meet with students, principals, teachers, support staff, and students
3.	Meet individually with Union Leadership, each Central Office Staff member, and each School Board Member to better understand the needs of each district
4.	Hold multiple parent meet and greets, or coffee's– to speak with parents/care givers and other community members to listen and learn about the district from their perspective
5.	Hold meetings with the faith community, non-profit, higher education, and business communities
6.	Conduct "Community Chats" – Opportunities to meet with members of the community out in the community
7.	Meet with the Town Administrator, Police, and Fire Chiefs, and Selectmen
8.	Meet with local representatives
9.	Launch "MPS Direct" – a weekly communication directly from me to the public Launch "MPS BOARD Connect" – a weekly update to the Board of Education
10.	Launch Advisory Teams– 1 each for high school students, parents/caregivers, teachers, and principals
11.	Hold a Twitter Town Hall – Follow us on #WeAreSAU40, and a Facebook Live Event
12.	Launch a strategic planning process for a new 5-year MPS vision for Educational Excellence
13.	Conduct Informal observations of all schools, classrooms, and some meetings
14.	Review Documents (i.e. District Goals, Technology Plans, Budget Documents, Curriculum and Assessments, Professional Development Calendar, School Improvement Plans, NH SAS and district Benchmark Data, Handbooks, Annual Town and School Reports, NEASC Reports, Any Program Evaluations, School Committee Goals and Policies, other)
15.	Online Surveys (Anonymous survey for staff, parents, and the community) An age-appropriate student survey for students.

16.	Compile all of the gathered Data
17.	Report to Community: Once the data is compiled, I will report the findings to the School Committee and Leadership Team for review and discussion.

Finally, in an effort to build the relationships and trust necessary to move forward, I want to encourage all of you to reach out with feedback throughout the year. You will find me to be receptive, and my door is always open to stop in and discuss any concerns you have. My gratitude goes out to all of you in assisting me in this transition process, and I look forward to working with you all.

Thank you again,

Dr. Jessica Huizenga