

Transition Audit Team Report

Presentation to the Holmes County Consolidated School District Board and Superintendent Henderson



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*Connecting for Success.
Every Child. Every Classroom.
Every Day.*

Victory is in the Classroom

“Making good teaching happen for every child, every day, in every classroom, is the single most important means by which public schools can deliver on their promise to enable all children to learn and achieve at high levels.”

(Peterkin, Jewell-Sherman, Kelley, Boozer, 2011)

Charge to the Transition Audit Team

- ▶ Assist HCCSD in crafting an “equity and excellence” agenda appropriate for the district’s goal: “every student to graduate college and career ready.”
- ▶ Focus on four primary areas:
 - ▶ Academic Achievement
 - ▶ Student Support Services
 - ▶ Human Resources
 - ▶ Finance and Operations

Methodology

“Transition Audit”

- ▶ Overview of Data Collection Activities:
 - ▶ On-site visits to all schools/Classroom Observations (end of September through November 2018)
 - ▶ Interviews- District and School Leaders/Staff
 - ▶ Student Focus Group (9-12)
 - ▶ Parent Focus Group
 - ▶ Teaching and Learning/Student Support Team Focus Group
 - ▶ Observation of Teacher Meetings (K-8 and 9-12)
 - ▶ Document Review
- ▶ Limitation:
 - ▶ Time Period- “Snapshot in Time”

An Operational Imperative: Five Core Themes

- ▶ Provide for an effective board-superintendent governance structure;
- ▶ Establish the district's vision, mission, core values, and strategic intent;
- ▶ Create a culture of urgency and shared responsibility;
- ▶ Cultivate an exemplary cadre of instructional school leaders; and
- ▶ Establish a system of metrics, clear expectations for performance, and transparent accountability for all employees.

Theme 1: Board-Superintendent Governance Team

- ▶ Superintendent hired to be a transformational leader- academic prowess, servant leadership, commitment to his "home" community.
- ▶ Presently balancing his time between establishing academic standards and managing operational problems.
- ▶ Build the leadership capacity of the governance team of the Superintendent and the School Board to drive student improvement and institute and sustain successful "change."
- ▶ Leverage resources, technical assistance, and support from the Mississippi School Boards Association (MSBA).

Theme 2: Coherent Framework

Vision, Mission, Core Values, Strategic Intent

- ▶ **Mission** - Why do we exist?
- ▶ **Core Values** - What do we believe?
- ▶ **Vision** - What do we desire to be as an organization?
- ▶ **Strategic Intent** - What is our overall direction and “theory of action” to achieve?

Theme 3: Urgency and Shared Responsibility

- ▶ Lack of urgency on a range of areas that the team considered essential to effective and efficient school operations that support student success.
- ▶ Required/mandated reports were not submitted to the Mississippi Department of Education; compliance issues.
- ▶ Insufficient evaluation of programs, initiatives and resource expenditures, which will inhibit the new direction of the system.
- ▶ Need to develop a sense of immediacy, specific to the instructional core work.

Theme 4: Focus on Instructional Leadership

- ▶ There are only two groups of employees in a school district — “teachers and those who support teachers.”
- ▶ The highest leverage for educational improvement resides in the instructional core, or the intersection of the *teacher*, *rigorous content*, and an *engaged student*.
- ▶ To improve the instructional core, teachers must have administrative support, adequate facilities, and equitable resources.
- ▶ Principals need to understand, support the instructional vision for the district, and hold the school community *accountable* for student results.

Theme 5: Expectations and Accountability

- ▶ The school district is not aligned nor organized maximally for student success, and therefore had little cohesive impact on system priorities or goals.
- ▶ Incoherence resulted in student underperformance, inefficient processes, and lack of ownership of and non-performance on critical accountability milestones.

Academic Achievement

- ▶ Develop a shared instructional vision for teaching and learning in the district.

Short-Term:

- ▶ School Board should formally adopt the vision.
 - ▶ Hold a series of superintendent/board retreats for creation of a shared vision.
 - ▶ Board of education engages in self-assessment and develops work plan to improve governance performance to more effectively support achievement of district vision and priorities.
 - ▶ Fill vacant leadership positions to support the superintendent as he implements the new vision.
 - ▶ Determine how all positions support the work of schools.
 - ▶ Establish agreement on roles and responsibilities for superintendent/board for human resources (appointments, etc.).

Academic Achievement

- ▶ Develop a shared instructional vision for teaching and learning in the district.

Long-Term:

- ▶ Plan and implement a system for compliance with board policies, district goals and objectives, operational and organizational effectiveness, state and federal requirements, and other areas as defined by superintendent and board.
- ▶ Invite long-term partnerships with colleges to graduate and support existing teachers to create college-ready students.

Academic Achievement

- ▶ Develop a state-aligned instructional system.

Short-Term:

- ▶ During the remainder of this school year, develop, implement, and monitor a professional development framework to support the implementation of the Mississippi College and Career-Ready Standards and related assessments, focused on the instructional core.
- ▶ Initiate planning for a comprehensive instructional system for 2019-20 to include resources; and participation of coaches/instructional team, teachers, principals, and central office staff.

Long-Term:

- ▶ Implement systematic monitoring and reporting systems to inform the HCCSD community of progress toward goals, objectives, and operational efficiency, specific to school improvement.

Academic Achievement

- ▶ Cultivate instructional leadership at the school and district level.

Short-Term:

- ▶ Develop a shared understanding of and level of expertise in instructional leadership and what it looks like at the school and district level.
 - The evaluation of this leadership will be discussed under Performance Management/Human Resources.

Long-Term:

- ▶ Enable central office staff to support principals; develop programs that respond to the instructional needs of students and hold leaders accountable for student progress.
- ▶ Provide joint training for central office staff, instructional staff, and principals for “one voice” on instructional improvement.

Student Support Services Special Education Students

- ▶ Develop and implement coherent processes to address identification of special education students.

Short-Term:

- ▶ Audit the identification processes currently utilized to identify special education students to ensure consistency and compliance with federal and state guidelines.
- ▶ Implement recommendations to comply with the State Performance Plan Annual Performance Report(SPP/Annual Performance Report(APR))
- ▶ Update the website to include the range of placement and programming options available.

Student Support Services Special Education Students

- ▶ Develop and implement coherent processes to address identification of special education students.

Long-Term:

- ▶ Regularly monitor and review IDEA compliance data and implement strategies to address issues as they arise.
- ▶ Review the Code of Discipline for any violations or consequences that place special education students needlessly at risk of suspension. Review for any subjective criteria which may lead to disproportionate suspensions.

Student Support Services

Special Populations- English Learners (EL)

- ▶ Develop a comprehensive plan to address the needs of EL students.

Short-Term:

- ▶ Audit the identification processes currently utilized to identify EL students to ensure consistency and compliance with federal and state guidelines.

Long-Term:

- ▶ Develop a district EL plan for identifying, providing services and monitoring ELs that meets state and federal requirements and is consistent with district policy.

Student Support Services Special Populations- Homeless Students

- ▶ Review, monitor, and assess the district's McKinney-Vento plan.

Short-Term:

- ▶ Conduct an audit of McKinney-Vento to ensure compliance.
- ▶ Review the federal budget to ensure that homeless students are receiving services.
- ▶ Implement a clear plan with timelines to begin the process to apply for McKinney-Vento grant dollars for the 2019-20 SY.

Long-Term:

- ▶ Establish a system/structure to continuously monitor and evaluate the implementation of the district's plan to achieve the desired outcomes and ensure effectiveness.

Student Support Services

“Struggling Students”

- ▶ Provide a coherent, comprehensive plan to address social/emotional/behavioral and academic supports for struggling students.

Short-Term:

- ▶ Shift the “culture of expectations” so *All* students have the opportunity and support to achieve their potential.
- ▶ Implement, monitor, and evaluate the system of social/emotional/ behavioral supports and interventions.
- ▶ Provide an integrated system of interventions with appropriately trained personnel to address social-emotional learning.
- ▶ Provide the necessary professional development to build the capacity of teachers to deliver high-quality instructional support to minimize classroom disruptions.

Student Support Services “Struggling Students”

- ▶ Provide a coherent, comprehensive plan to address social/emotional/behavioral and academic supports for struggling students.

Long-Term:

- ▶ Develop a structure to ensure accountability and results in meeting the needs of struggling students, include reliable data, a timeline, person(s) responsible, measurable goals, and progress monitoring tools.

Family and Community Engagement

- ▶ Cultivate a meaningful, intentional, results-driven family and community engagement partnership.

Short-Term:

- ▶ Create a family engagement framework with a clear communication protocol and corresponding professional learning opportunities for parents and the community.
- ▶ Review the federal budget to ensure that parent involvement policies and practices are in compliance.

Long-Term:

- ▶ Establish a system/structure to continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of family engagement activities and the participation aligned with a needs assessment.
- ▶ Present quarterly reports to the superintendent and school board on the parent engagement initiative.

Human Resources Overarching Areas

- ▶ Performance Management – metrics, expectations, and accountability
- ▶ HCCSD does not have a performance management system that holds all employees accountable for student success.
 - ▶ Staff expressed uncertainty about how their roles interconnected to improve student achievement.
 - ▶ Performance management systems have four components:
 - ▶ A clear vision narrative for the future.
 - ▶ A strategic plan to define priorities and how to address them.
 - ▶ Metrics and milestones to measure the organization's progress.
 - ▶ Employee compacts to clearly define roles, responsibilities, and how each employee will be held accountable for student progress.

Human Resources

- ▶ Develop the framework for *accountability*.

Short-Term:

- ▶ Create a vision narrative to provide a vivid example of its meaning to all employees.
- ▶ Create the new strategic plan:
 - ▶ Organize a strategic planning committee of internal and external stakeholders to develop the evidence of success document to reflect the new strategic plan.
 - ▶ Facilitate the monitoring and review process of the “dashboard” through the collection of data to assess the effectiveness of the strategic plan.

Human Resources

- ▶ Develop the framework for *accountability*.

Long-Term:

- ▶ Create a systematic approach for collecting data to monitor the progress of the strategic plan and the overall effectiveness of the mission-critical work.
- ▶ Develop a strategy for district-wide, shared accountability for the strategic plan and how to communicate an integrated strategy to employees, aligned with the district's "theory of action" for performance management and accountability.

Human Resources

- ▶ Develop a system of support for schools and professionals.

Short-Term:

- ▶ Create and pilot a school quality document and process, delineating district expectations for school performance.
- ▶ Adopt and pilot a shared approach to instructional and leadership coaching. The additional requirements demanded of employees through the new strategic plan, and Mississippi Department of Education requirements demand that the district give newly accountable employees the professional development to meet, and hopefully exceed, the new demands of their positions.

Human Resources

- ▶ Develop a system of support for schools and professionals.

Long-Term:

- ▶ Develop a school improvement system that incorporates and aligns the school quality review, the school improvement plan, and central office support.
- ▶ Align instructional and leadership coaching to the MDE Professional Growth Rubric to ensure that there is a rigorous district-wide evaluation system with substantive feedback and support.
- ▶ Develop and implement a robust plan to recruit, retain, and support talented professionals.

Finance and Operations

- ▶ Develop and implement systems and processes necessary to ensure that the district operates from a fiscally prudent framework for long-term financial health.

Short-Term

- ▶ Conduct internal audits to test compliance with the newly written policy and procedural manual.
- ▶ Look to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for additional guidance relative to the budget process.
- ▶ Ensure consistent processes and documents for contracts and financial instruments and assess effectiveness.

Finance and Operations

- ▶ Develop and implement systems and processes necessary to ensure the district operates from a fiscally prudent framework.

Short-Term

- ▶ Conduct an audit of the payroll register to reconcile employees listed in the register and those employees receiving a check.
- ▶ Analyze and assess the feasibility of the construction of a new, state-of-the-art high school facility.
- ▶ Use Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to evaluate/benchmark the district's financial performance relative to other similarly situated school districts.
- ▶ Implement a corrective action plan for all audit findings.

Finance and Operations

- ▶ Develop and implement systems and processes necessary to ensure the district operates from a fiscally prudent framework.

Long-Term

- ▶ Implement a strategic planning process with a “balanced scorecard” approach.
- ▶ Maintain an “audit-ready” operating principle.
- ▶ Develop a budget philosophy and district-wide planning process based on the principles of mission-critical budgeting, cost effectiveness, and return on investment (5-year forecast).

Conclusion

- ▶ We offer this report to assist the superintendent and the school board with another lens through which to examine their analysis of the current condition of HCCSD and its potential to fulfill the promise of improved student outcomes, as the school system strives to: “*Connect for Success: Every Child, Every Classroom, Every Day.*”
- ▶ Thank you for the opportunity to serve the students of HCCSD.