

Groton-Dunstable Regional School District

**Entry Plan
2005-2006**

**Dr. Alan D. Genovese
Superintendent**

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To: The Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee
From: Alan D. Genovese, Superintendent
Date: November 16, 2005
RE: Entry Plan

I would like to thank the school committee for selecting me to serve as Groton-Dunstable superintendent. I look forward to the many challenges that will present themselves during my service to the district. There is much work to be done.

We all face the challenge of interpreting and implementing NCLB with limited financial resources. MCAS results and other accountability systems demand a thoughtful and measured response. The development and refinement of the curriculum continues to be a work in progress as it becomes vertically aligned pre-k through 12. Continuity among the District's goals, School Improvement Plans, District Professional Development Plan, Individual Professional Growth Plans, Strategic Plan, Technology Plan and so on are essential to ensure a unified effort to improve the system and promote student achievement.

The agenda in public education has shifted from universal access to universal proficiency. We all share the responsibility of having all our students reach their full potential. The goal is to have each student reach proficiency competency level in all academic content areas. Additionally, students must be engaged and challenged with related art activities, must be emotionally supported, must be provided with multiple opportunities to develop their social skills and participate in a wide range of activities that not only promote the development of individual talents and skills, but also promote team spirit and cooperation. The committee and the superintendent must lead by example. Our success will be partially determined by our ability to work together as a cohesive unit. Open lines of communication are critical. We must all work together to create a learning environment that will prepare our students for the 21st century.

In an effort for me to address some of the issues mentioned above, acquire a collective focus and provide direction and leadership that represent a collaborative effort, it seemed prudent to develop an entry plan that would give me a better understanding and assess where we are, where we would like to be, and then make some recommendations as to how to get there.

In both informal and formal conversations with individuals and groups I have discovered that there are a variety of interests and ideas relating to the direction of the district. As superintendent, I believe it is my responsibility to bring this all together in a coherent manner. The following entry plan will assist me in identifying the needs of each school community and will acknowledge the critical priorities that individuals have within this framework. It is important that I immediately get to know people and understand their vision of education in the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District.

I am planning to meet with and interview a number of people in the respective towns and schools in the district: teachers, paraprofessionals, principals, community leaders, municipal officials, parents, school council members, Parent Advisory Committee, Administrative Council Members, school committee members, and so on. This qualitative and quantitative data collection process will be conducted from July to March. It is my intention to present my findings and observations to the school committee in April.

I believe this process will enable me to understand more readily the needs of the schools and the district and will influence future decisions. It is very important to include everyone in the planning stages. If we want people to be present on the landing, then we must include them on the take-off! Please review the following plan. I am very interested in your comments.

II. General Goals

1. To acquire an understanding of the educational goals and objectives as they presently exist, outside the daily context of crisis and problem solving;
2. To learn more about the schools, the community and the staff;
3. To identify areas of concern and prioritize tasks that require immediate attention;
4. To examine key issues and how they were handled in the school's during last two years in an effort to understand the dynamics of decisions making and the impact of previous procedures, practices and policies on expediting the accomplishments of tasks undertaken;
5. To open lines of communication and develop a good working relationship with the school committee members, staff, town officials, parents and community at large.
6. To review documents that provide insight on how the district is governed and operates.
7. To develop a realistic schedule of topics that the committee and the superintendent will focus on during the year. When possible, this schedule should not only list what presentations should be given, but also specific areas of interest prior to the development of each presentation.
8. Participate in a workshop with school committee members to review the progress of the goals for the 2004-2005 year and establish goals for the 2005-2006 year.
9. To determine immediate and future issues and concerns which the Committee believes should be addressed.

III. School Committee

Specific Objectives

- 1 To review and examine the rules and procedures that govern how the School Committee has conducted business in the past;
- 2 To develop with the Committee a set of ground rules and procedures which will govern how business will be conducted in the future (this is an opportunity for the committee to step back and consider areas for improvement);
- 3 To determine immediate and future issues and concerns that the Committee believes should be addressed and establish a priorities.

Entry Plan Activities

- A. Review the Policy Manual.
- B. Conduct an interview with each Committee member.
- C. Conduct an interview with the Chairperson to gain an understanding of how the agenda is developed, committee rules and procedures and so on.
- D. Collation, interpretation, and organization of information gleaned from interviews for presentation to School Committee.
- E. Follow up session on how process is working and discuss areas of improvement. Review findings in April.

Interview Questions

1. Please give a brief autobiographical sketch of yourself.
2. How long have you served on the School Committee? What are your general impressions of the school district? Have your perceptions changed since you were elected to the Committee?
3. What do you see as current strengths of the district? Curriculum? Support services? Administrative staff? Teaching and Paraprofessional staff? What areas require more attention?
4. What are key issues which you think the school must face immediately? In the future? Why is each important? Do you have any suggestions for issues that need immediate attention? Can you prioritize these issues?
5. What formal and informal networks of people in the schools or the community have an influence of school issues and perhaps their outcomes?
6. If you are successful in your efforts to influence change, what will the district look like five years from now?
7. What would you like to be remembered for as your most significant contributions to the district?
8. If you are successful in bringing about positive change in the district, describe what the district will look like in three years.
9. Describe a moment when the school was in great conflict. How did the conflict arise? What people played roles in the conflict, and how was the conflict resolved? How did people react under pressure? Do you believe the conflict was handled in a fair manner? What do you think should have been done differently, if anything?
10. Describe a very difficult decision you had to make. What was the issue? Why was it important? How did you reach a decision? What did others think? What would you do differently now?
11. What do you want to preserve in our schools and the district? What do you most want to change in the district? Why?
12. What leadership role has the superintendent assumed in the past? What leadership expectations do you have for me as your new superintendent?
13. As you think about how the Committee operates as a group, what pleases you? What frustrates you?

IV. Central Administration

Specific Objectives

1. To identify and complete the reports, and other correspondence that is required in closing fiscal 2006.
2. To determine the issues that Central Administration staff will face in fiscal 2006? 2007 ?
3. To understand the norms, procedures, and processes which govern how the Central Office operates in conjunction with the towns.
4. To meet with staff to understand the predictable tasks which the Central Administration staff will undertake in fiscal 2006. The scope of understanding will include what has to be done, the steps in the process, the time-frame, and the role responsibility.
5. To establish an organizational management system to efficiently expedite the operation of office procedures.
6. To establish a net-working relationship with area superintendents to address common issues
7. To review all recently passed legislation regarding school reform and contact the department of education on interpretation issues
8. To become knowledgeable about policies, negotiated contracts, past practices, and so on.

Entry Plan Activities

- A. To read: School Committee minutes, policies, and procedures, budgetary procedures and other administrative procedures, personnel contracts, service contracts and other legal documents, such as the regional agreement, and meet with community leaders.

- B. Meet with the Director of Pupil Services to discuss federal grants, pre- school and early childhood obligations, kindergarten programs, screening, placements, the development of individual educational plans, special education obligations, and ascertain her vision of the role of special education in a comprehensive school system.

- C. Meet with principals to discuss management procedures, their respective goals, and vision for the future.

- D. Interview other special education staff.

- E. Meet with SPED PAC representatives and parents to better understand how services are provided, where the district is doing well and identify areas where more attention is required.

- F. Plan, organize and conduct a 3-day summer educational summit with administrative council members to review topics for the coming year and plan together how we will function as a working group.

Interview Questions

1. Please explain as succinctly as possible the areas of your responsibilities. What has been accomplished in preparation for the next school year? What remains to be done? What needs attention in Fiscal 2006? 2007?
2. Please explain as specifically as possible how tasks are accomplished in this area of responsibility? What are the steps in each process?
3. Please give a brief autobiographical sketch of yourself.
4. Which tasks are your responsibility alone? Are there areas where role responsibilities are unclear?
5. What are the key issues you face? Why are they important? Do they require immediate attention? Does your work in the summer differ substantially for the regular school year?
6. What formal and informal network of people in the schools or the community have an influence on school issues? What are common interests of the groups?
7. Describe a moment when the school was in great conflict .How did the conflict arise? What people played roles in it, and how did they react under pressure? Do you believe the conflict was handled fairly? Do you have any suggestions on how future conflicts could be handled?
8. Describe a very difficult decision you had to make. What was the issue? Why was it important? How did you reach a decision? What did others think? What would you do differently now?
9. What do you most want to preserve in the school? What do you most want to change in the school?
10. What leadership roles has the superintendent assumed in the past? What leadership expectations do you have for the new superintendent?

V. Principals

Specific Objectives

1. To determine what the key issues are at the building level.
2. To clarify the perceived responsibilities of the principal and how they coordinate these responsibilities with district goals and the work of the Administrative Council.

Entry Plan Activities

- A. Conduct an interview with each principal.
- B. Collation, interpretation, organization of information from interview for presentation.
- C. Follow up meetings with principals to: present data, reaffirm and/or change role responsibilities, decide on action steps with regards to issues discussed.
- D. Series of meetings with principals to discuss issues at each school to be addressed during the year and to develop work plans for responding to them. Monthly meetings to discuss areas of concern and issues.

Interview Questions for Principals

1. Please explain as succinctly as possible the areas of your responsibilities. What has been accomplished in preparation for the next school year? What remains to be done? What needs attention in Fiscal 2007?
2. Please explain as specifically as possible how tasks are accomplished in this area of responsibility? What are the steps in each process?
3. Please give a brief autobiographical sketch of yourself.
4. What do you see as your primary responsibilities? Are there areas where responsibilities are not clear?
5. What do you spend most of your time doing? Why is it important? How is your work in the summer different from the regular school year?
6. What formal and informal network of people in the schools or the community influence on school issues? What are common interests of the groups?
7. Describe a moment when the school was in great conflict. How did the conflict arise? What people played roles in it, and how did they react under pressure? Do you believe the conflict was handled fairly? Do you have any suggestions on how for future conflicts could be handled?
8. Describe a very difficult decision you had to make. What was the issue? Why was it important? How did you reach a decision? What did other-s think? What would you do differently now?
9. What do you most want to preserve in the school? What do you most want to change in the school?
10. What leadership role has the superintendent assumed in the past? What leadership expectations do you have for the new superintendent?

VI. Collective Bargaining Units

Specific Objectives

1. To gain a better understanding of their relationship in the school and district.
2. To open lines of communication between the superintendent and these units.

Entry Plan Activities

- A. Conduct interviews with leaders of the Association and other bargaining groups.
- B. Collation, interpretation, organization of data.
- C. Establish a meeting schedule to communicate issues and share information.

Interview Questions

1. Please give a brief autobiographical sketch of yourself.
2. How long have you been in the school district? What are your responsibilities? What are your general impressions of the school district?
3. What are the key issues confronting the district? What are the concerns of the staff? Why are they important? Which issues need immediate attention? Can you rank these issues in priority order?
4. Describe the history and relationship between the Unit, the Administration and the School Committee.
5. What conflicts have arisen in your experience? How have they been resolved?
6. What has been the nature of your contact with the superintendent? Would you like to see it change? If so, how? How should it remain the same?
7. What areas in the contract are sensitive and therefore need to be brought to my attention?
8. What has administrative leadership provided to the school in the past? What do you wish it would provide in the future?
9. To what extent has the formal grievance procedure in the contract been used in the past? Why? Or why not?
10. What do you wish to preserve in the schools? What would you like to see changed ?

VII. Other Entry Activities

- Meet with parents
- Review policy procedures
- Read Good to Great
- Review all curriculum documents
- Meet with and interview Curriculum Coordinators
- Review Assessment and Data Collection Methodologies
- Review District Assessment and Financial Data, including MCAS
- Meet with Human Resource coordinator
- Review AC Booklet
- Meet with Subcommittee Chairs
- Research history and review Naming Committee charge
- Become familiar with Eminent Domain case, The Smith House, the Middle School Building Project, the high school assault case, the Laidlaw Bus case, the Dismissal case, and other pending legal matters.
- Hear and resolve five pending grievances
- Becoming familiar with Collective Bargaining issues for teacher negotiations
- Participate in the Dunstable Golf Tournament to meet and greet people
- Participate in the PTYC Tournament to meet and greet people
- Participate in the West Groton Parade
- Meet with Police and Fire Chiefs from each town and discuss building relationships
- Participate in community events, i.e., Groton 350th Celebration
- Visit schools and classrooms
- Develop a uniform evaluation process for administrators
- Interview potential new hires
- Appoint a new Director of Boutwell and a new Athletic Director
- Meet with the chair of the Building Committee and attend Building Committee meetings
- Become familiar with and establish a relationship with each of the district's attorneys
- Attend several Selectmen's meetings.

- Speak to PTA groups
- Speak to Community groups
- Meet with School Councils
- Sit in on school faculty meetings
- Review all legal documents
- Review School Committee minutes

Document Review

- School Committee/Board Policy Manual
- Administrative Regulations
- Table of Organization
- Job Descriptions/Evaluations of Key Staff
- Curriculum Guides
- School Improvement Plans
- Collective Bargaining Agreements/Grievances
- Handbooks and Brochures
- Town/School Reports
- NEASC Accreditation Reports
- School Committee/Board Meeting Minutes/Agendas
- Evaluation Programs/Forms
- Budget Documents
- Massachusetts Education Reform Act
- State Laws and Regulations Related to Education
- Committee/Board Goals/ Setting Process
- Legal File/ Pending Litigation
- Audited Financial Reports
- Special Education Appeals/ Hearings/Decisions
- NESDEC Focus Group Report

Key Informants

- Central Office Administrators
- Central Office Support Staff
- Building Administrators
- Individual School Board/ Committee members
- Union Leaders/ Representatives
- Elected/Appointed Town Officials
- Parent Leaders
- Business/Civic/Religious Leaders
- Student Leaders

Meetings/Groups

- Faculty/Staff
- School Councils
- Parent/Teacher Organizations
- Teachers' Association
- Student Council
- Service Organizations
- Educational Collaboratives
- Charter/Independent/Parochial Schools
- Professional Organizations
- Municipal/Town and Youth Serving Agencies/Councils