

THE FIRST 100 DAYS:
PREPARING FOR OUR FUTURE
JUNE 6, 2021 – MARCH 12, 2022
PREPARED BY
DR. ERIC SAHAKIAN-
AADUSD SUPERINTENDENT

INTRODUCTION

The Acton-Agua Dulce USD School Board has charged me, as their new superintendent, with continuing the legacy of high achievement, ensuring that ALL learners' needs are met and preparing the school district for increased growth.

During the selection process, the AADUSD School Board communicated its priorities for leadership qualities sought in a superintendent. Those qualities included:

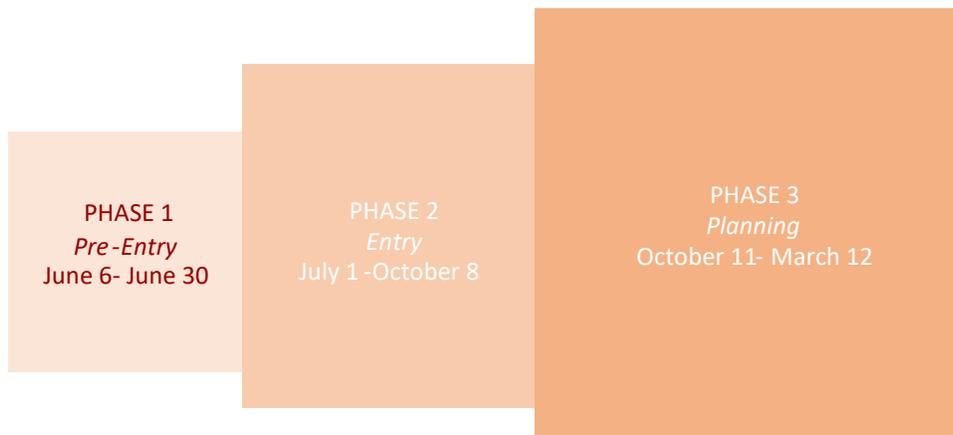
- Has been a classroom teacher, principal and district level leader
- A proven track record of growing academic achievement for all students
- Demonstrated the ability to work collaboratively with the Board of Education, teachers, staff, parents, students and the community
- Knowledgeable of charter school operations and their impact and relationship with the district
- Has a good understanding of K-12 budgets and state finances
- Has successful experience building the capacity of all staff
- Will hold self and others accountable
- Is able to recruit and retain top talent

AADUSD is committed to pursuing and maintaining educational excellence in order to achieve academic distinction at all campuses. We are committed to a vision of developing our youth into productive and creative individuals that can achieve their highest degree of potential and who will responsibly shape our future.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the entry plan is to establish a set of intentional and inclusive activities that will guide the transition of the new superintendent into AADUSD. This process is designed to enable the new superintendent to gather information quickly about the community and the district; to establish a strong community presence early on; to create ideas for sustaining (building on the current work) and strengthening AADUSD's distinguished record of success (short-term/long-term visioning and strategic planning); to identify critical issues; and to create a network of contacts and resources. This plan outlines the specific strategies that new superintendent, Eric Sahakian will utilize to develop a deep understanding of what AADUSD is doing well, what areas AADUSD can improve and how the community (both internal and external) can advise the superintendent in both of these areas.

THE ENTRY PLAN HAS THREE PHASES:



There is no greater threat to progress than the phrase, 'That's impossible.'--Kameron Hurley

STRUCTURES

To effectively ascertain what is working well in the district and where there might be opportunities for growth, transition activities are designed for active listening and authentic engagement. The following are core components of the plan:

Phase I and II- Listening and learning will dominate Phase I and the early stages of Phase II. This includes numerous one-on-one and group meetings with various constituencies. Updates will be provided to the AADUSD School Board along the way for feedback. A report will be given at the end of each phase of the entry process either in the way of a Friday communiqué or a formal presentation.

Phase II and Phase III- Leading will dominate the second half of Phase II and Phase III of the Entry Plan, culminating with the development and presentation to the AADUSD School Board. This includes building and sustaining of both internal and external relationships.

Note: The work of entry occurs simultaneously with operating the school district.

Pre-Entry and Entry Activities

- Develop and share the entry plan with the AADUSD School Board and Cabinet for feedback, suggestions and guidance
- Gather important information from key district employees about the district and their work
- School visits
- Data analysis and document review
- Meetings (group and one-to-one) with AADUSD School Board

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- Meetings (group and one-to-one) with key stakeholders: principals, district leadership, community leadership, union leadership, elected officials, and other identified stakeholders
- Community meetings with parents, students, educators, and other community members

Goals

This entry plan sets five broad goals that are addressed in both the pre-entry and entry activities outlined further in the document. The five goals are:

1. **Governance**: Continue to develop the AADUSD School Board and Superintendent relationship.
 - In order to continue the District's focus on meeting the needs of **ALL** students, the AADUSD School Board and I must establish a trusting, positive, collaborative and team-oriented relationship. I will work with the AADUSD School Board to discuss issues and matters of governance, management, core values and beliefs.
2. **Organizational Capacity and Alignment**: Increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency and ensure high performance and support to schools.
 - It is critical that I understand how the organization is currently operating--what's working well and where there are opportunities for improvement. The Cabinet's primary role is to support the key functions of the District. It is my responsibility that we operate as a highly effective, cross-functional team, dedicated to a positive, professional culture focused on service and improving morale, so that the focus remains on meeting the needs of **ALL** students.
3. **Students**: Focus organizational efforts and align resources to ensure that all students are academically, socially and emotionally successful and are ready for college and/or a career.
 - To ensure that instruction is occurring at high levels, teachers must have appropriate curriculum, systems, tools and supports to facilitate optimal learning opportunities. I will ensure that all decisions are made using a three-pronged approach:
 - i. Is it good for **ALL** children?
 - ii. Is it researched and/or evidenced based?
 - iii. Is it fiscally sound and responsible?
4. **Engagement and Communications**: Build public trust capital and confidence through open, honest communication and positive relationships.

- It is critical that I understand the culture, history and expectations of the entire community. Working with staff, I will be proactive and deliberate in engaging all stakeholders while ensuring that all voices are heard.

- 5. **Culture and Climate**: Promote and ensure a positive, collaborative and constructive climate focused on a student-centered culture of positive outcomes and achievement.

To reach these goals, I will do the following:

- **Listen**- Spend time with students, teachers, parents, principals, school district administrators, all AADUSD employees, and community members to hear about their proudest accomplishments and greatest challenges.
- **Learn**- Analyze and study performance data and other student data. Read and review existing district policies and implementation of initiatives. Receive briefings from school and department leaders and local education organizations.
- **Share**- Spend time in the community engaging students, parents/families, and community leaders by sharing my leadership story, educational philosophy and core values. I will strive to develop a positive tone and sense of urgency for our schools and students.
- **Build**- Establish strong working relationships and build rapport with the AADUSD School Board, AADUSD leadership and employees, and community, state and local leaders. I will take intentional steps to be present in the community and institute an open door policy.
- **Plan**- Establish agreed upon action items and deliverables based on Entry Plan findings.

These activities are meant to yield three key outcomes:

1. A comprehensive summary of my findings, observations and information gained from listening and learning.
2. An outline of the process that I will use to develop my strategic plan in collaboration with the AADUSD School Board.
3. A district and community who are excited and energized about the direction of AADUSD and a desire and readiness to work collaboratively.

GOAL 1: Governance

Continue to develop the AADUSD School Board and Superintendent relationship.

Pre-Entry Activities

June 6 – June 30, 2021

Progress Key:

- Not Initiated
- ➔ In Progress
- ✔ Complete

Draft goal areas for entry activities	✔
Review critical documents such as student achievement data, budgets, contracts, School Board minutes, special education, grants, achievement data, curriculum documents, policies, etc.	➔

Entry Activities

July 1 - October 8, 2021

Draft entry plan and share with the AADUSD School Board for the purpose of feedback	➔
Meet with individual AADUSD board members to deepen relationships and broaden perspectives	➔
Start developing regular communication systems	➔
Establish regular meeting times with the AADUSD Board for reviewing and constructing agendas	➔
Examine the current protocols and processes for addressing constituent services	■
Initiate a meeting with VHS PTSO, Booster, and ML PTO President to establish a working relationship and broaden perspectives.	➔
Hold a retreat with the AADUSD Board for the purpose of discussing communication protocols, norms of behavior and interaction, expectations for the first year and agenda setting, and possible sub-committees.	■

Collaborate on the Superintendent's performance evaluation process with AADUSD Board



GOAL 2: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND ALIGNMENT

Increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency and ensure high performance and support to schools.

Pre-Entry Activities

June 6 – June 30, 2021

Discussion with out-going superintendent to lend itself to a smooth transition.	
Send email to administrators and all staff introducing myself.	
Review key district financial materials, budgets and most recent audits, grants, if accessible via posted AADUSD Board meeting agendas.	
Review of documents: employee handbooks, policy/procedure manuals, alignment of standards-curriculum-assessments and professional development, student achievement data by school, if accessible.	

Entry Activities

July 1- October 8, 2021

Meet one-on-one with every principal and central office administrator.	
Strategically attend key meetings.	

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Plan and facilitate collaborative meetings with leadership/school site administrative teams to develop trust by outlining norms, role clarity, responsibilities, expectations, Theory of Action, and systems for mutual accountability.	
Site visits at all schools and programs to obtain perspectives on the district's/school's strengths and opportunity for growth.	
Determine how communication and decision making will occur with Cabinet establishing meeting protocols and systems designed to focus on increased student achievement and continuous improvement.	
Review processes and systems that guide the distribution of resources and ensure that the allocation of resources aligns with students' needs.	
Review district's enrollment and financial projections, resource allocation and the process for building the annual operating budget; analyze how it is aligned to support the needs of all students.	
Review the district's safety and crisis communication plan and make any changes or adjustments needed.	
Review all School Plans for Student Achievement- SPSA	
Host school based listening and learning forums/focus groups	
Conduct focus groups with all educator groups, including support staff to listen and learn.	
Strategically attend key meetings including community held meetings	
A formal demographics study to assess enrollment projections via Davis Demographics	
Initiate contact with education partners- LACOE, College of the Canyons, Antelope Valley College to support and develop: MTSS, CTE Pathways, Wellness Center, Dual Language Immersion Program, Dual Enrollment, etc. Enhance offerings and ultimately market signature programs to local community and neighboring communities.	

Ensure necessary plans and preparations are in place to ensure an outstanding opening of schools; establish protocols for assessing the effectiveness of the opening of schools.



GOAL 3: STUDENTS

Focus organizational efforts and align resources to ensure that all students are academically, socially and emotionally successfully and are ready for college and/or a career.

Pre-Entry Activities

June 6 – June 30, 2021

Analyze patterns in student achievement data.



Assess the district's expectations for ALL students' academic success and commitment to meeting the needs of all of its diverse learners.



Entry Activities

July 1 – October 8, 2021

Meet with the AADUSD Instructional leadership team (Assistant Superintendent of Education Services, Principals, Teacher Leads, etc.) to discuss and share achievement data; instructional program alignment; capacity of short and long-term professional development plans to meet the training needs of principals, teachers, support staff, and central office staff; current goals, and priority action areas for the district.



Explore how AADUSD utilizes data to ensure that all students are performing at or above grade level and the implementation of the Academic Response to Intervention framework (as part of MTSS) addresses the needs of students performing below grade level.



Meet with the AADUSD instructional technology team to assess the level of instructional technology integration and its impact of learning outcomes.



Review and/or evaluate the current curriculum, assessments, and instructional programs with the curriculum and instructional staff.



Evaluate what processes are in place to provide the following services: Guidance Counseling, Mental Health, and Social Services.



Review and/or evaluate the current AADUSD enrichment activities, such as after-school programs, athletics, etc.	
Initiate a review of current state and federal grant opportunities with a grant evaluator.	

GOAL 4: ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Build public trust capital, confidence, and awareness through open, honest and timely communication and positive relationships.

Pre-Entry Activities

June 6 – June 30, 2021

Contact key stakeholders in the town and introduce myself and begin establishing a working relationship.	
Send a letter/email communication for posting to all teachers, staff and families.	

Entry Activities

July 1 – October 8, 2021

Assess the quality, quantity, and effectiveness of all existing forms of communication with various stakeholders: Parents, Teachers, Support Staff, Administrative Staff, Policy Makers, Community Leaders, and Business Leaders.	
Hold periodic and ongoing media briefings and establish routine communication protocols and meeting protocols.	
Host open forums/town hall meetings with teachers, students, parents, and leaders as a routine activity for personal communication about critical issues facing our organization.	
Attend pre-existing meeting structures to engage the community (School Councils, PTSO Meetings, Etc.).	

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Outreach to Sheriff responding to safety needs of AADUSD.	
Establish an educator, student and parent/family advisory groups to begin ongoing dialogue about our continuous improvement efforts between the superintendent, educators, students, and families.	
Initiate a Crisis Communication Guide for use by Principals in communication with District Office.	
Initiate discussion of an annual AADUSD Parent/Student Handbook to enhance communication of protocols and policies for each respective school site and district office.	
Branding/Marketing of AADUSD and School Site Signature Programs	
Initiate a systemic process in gauging new student registration percentages, deliberate upgrades of content to our website to broaden interest to neighboring communities, heightening customer service at the school sites and district office, and timely customer service surveys.	

GOAL 5: CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Promote and ensure a positive, collaborative and constructive climate focused on a student-centered culture of positive outcomes and achievement.

Pre-Entry Activities

June 6 – June 30, 2021

Begin establishing a working relationship with AADUSD School Board members	
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“If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself” – Henry Ford

Entry Activities

July 1 – October 8, 2021

Broadly communicate my personal and professional commitment to: Be a good listener, nurture a culture of feedback and honest communication.	
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Review of CalSCHLS/CHKS surveys- parents, students, and staff	
Schedule a visit to every school and build relationships with principals, teachers, students, and staff.	
Schedule before and after school superintendent coffees to be held at each school site on a monthly basis to hear ideas, concerns and suggestions.	
Develop a monthly Superintendent's Newsletter	
Superintendent's Student Advisory focus group meetings for VHS students and Superintendent's Virtual Drop-In (for all stakeholders).	
Develop a system for showcasing school, staff, and student successes (newsletter, website, local press, etc.).	

INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

During the entry activities, I will conduct one-on-one and focus group interviews with various stakeholders to listen and learn about AADUSD. The following individuals and groups will be engaged during the entry process. This is not an exhaustive list.

- District Office Administrators and Support Staff
- School Principals
- Teachers (Preschool-Grade 12; Department and Special areas)
- Related Services Staff
- Nursing/Health Services
- Transportation, Operations, Maintenance, Custodial and Food Service staff

MY FIRST DAY AND THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

My first day in the office was Thursday, July 1, 2021. During my first full week, I continued individual and group meetings with key stakeholders. I have reached out to community stakeholders, parent groups, AV Superintendents, local community college Presidents, local press, and Town Councils.

On the first day of school- August 24th, I will visit all three schools in the district. This will be an important day to meet faculty, staff, students, families and volunteers. I will meet with the

principals, administrative teams, and cabinet to evaluate the quality of opening day/week, making any needed adjustments and improvements.

CONCLUSION

Near the end of Phase II, I would have learned a great deal about AADUSD and will be ready to report my findings. In order to ensure transparency throughout the entry process, I anticipate a link on the district's website to update the community on my progress towards completing the entry activities. After the formal report to the AADUSD School Board, I will be embarking on an intentional, thoughtful and collaborative strategic planning process by utilizing the data, information and findings from the entry process.

Phase III ensures that AADUSD continues its legacy of high performance and strengthens our commitment to equity, positive school and district culture, and growth.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful for having supportive colleagues who guided the development of my entry plan.

- AADUSD School Board
- AADUSD Administrative Cabinet
- AADUSD District Office Staff
- School Leadership
- Acton-Agua Dulce Community Stakeholders

REFERENCE

Jentz, B. with Wofford, J. (2012), *The entryplan approach*. Newton, MA: Leadership and Learning, Inc.