



MANCHESTER ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Heather Leonard
Director of Curriculum and Instructional
Technology

July 13, 2023

Dear Manchester Essex Families,

I am honored to be a new member of the MERSD community and I'm excited for the upcoming 2023-24 school year as I begin my role as Director of Curriculum and Instructional Technology. The interview and transition process allowed me to meet many staff, parents, and community members and it is clear that MERSD is a supportive, passionate, and engaged learning community.

The district Strategic Plan, Mission, and Vision will drive the role of Director of Curriculum: *"The Mission of the Manchester Essex Regional School District (MERSD) is to provide a high quality, comprehensive, student-centered educational experience that prepares them for a post-secondary educational or service experience, a career, and life as an engaged member of society."* To guide my work supporting a strong student-centered culture, fostering rich educational experiences, and continued academic success, I will be implementing an Entry Plan to gather valuable information and perspectives from all members of the MERSD community.

The Entry Plan process will take place between July and January, which will allow me to listen to the many voices in the Manchester Essex school district, learn from all of you, and allow time for the community to get to know me as well. I will be offering a number of ways for students, families, staff, and community members to share their perspectives and ask questions. I will collect information through interviews, observations, and surveys. I will then share the data with the entire learning community in January. We will then work together to build the path for continued success in Manchester Essex schools.

I encourage you to attend one of the "coffee and conversation" meetings in the coming months (dates and times will be shared in September). I also look forward to attending School Council and PTO meetings. During the Fall I also plan to meet with student representatives and visit classrooms and learning spaces.

This summer, I would love to hear your perspective about curriculum, instruction, and technology through the drop-in sessions noted below and/or this survey: <https://forms.gle/W2sn2miBqVVHaWNB8>.

- **Monday, July 31, 10-11 a.m.**, in the MERSD Central Office Conference Room
- **Thursday, August 3, 8:30-9:30 a.m.**, Manchester Essex Regional High School drop-in with MERHS Principal Julie Sgroi and Curriculum Director Heather Leonard, in MERHS Learning Common

Although change can be unsettling, particularly when it involves a new leader, it is also an opportunity to pause and gain a perspective about ourselves as a community and learning organization. Elena Aguilar writes, *"Bridging the gap between where we are and where we want - or need - to be requires us to learn together and talk to each other."*

I'm new to this role, as well as new to the Manchester Essex community, so I warmly invite your support and dialogue through this transition. I know how important open, trusting relationships are to the success of a school district. I will ensure that your personal reflections are kept in confidence and only themes and trends from the data will be shared. If you see any omissions from my Entry Plan or have suggestions for the plan itself, I welcome your feedback.

Thank you for your participation in this process. I look forward to working with you in our focus on teaching, learning, and sustaining the positive and rigorous educational culture of MERSD.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Leonard".

Heather Leonard

Aguilar, E. (2020) *Coaching for Equity*

Heather Leonard Entry Plan Manchester Essex Regional School District

Objective

The transition of leadership is critical and requires both short- and long-term planning. The purpose of this entry plan is to provide a framework and a structure that will guide my transition as Director of Curriculum and Instructional Technology and will enable me to; one, gather information about the community and the district; two, establish a strong community presence; three, assess the district’s strengths and areas for growth; four, identify critical issues; and, five, create a network of contacts and resources that will assist me as Director of Curriculum and Instructional Technology.

Additionally, the information gathered during this process will allow me to:

- Ensure a smooth and orderly transition of leadership
- Develop a structure to listen broadly and learn comprehensively about the Manchester Essex Regional School District
- Ensure that multiple perspectives and voices are heard
- Build collaborative working relationships with various stakeholders and the MERSD community
- Create the foundation for a vision of the future and for the strategic planning process
- Support the teaching and learning process
- Ensure the alignment of resources to efficiently and effectively meet the educational, social, and emotional needs of all students

The Essential Questions

- Who are we as an organization?
- Where are we in our development?
- Where do we want to be three years from now?

Organization Questions

- What works well in MERSD?
- Where are the areas of potential growth/improvement?
- What does the organization need from a leader?

Entry Plan Overview

Phase I - Getting to Know MERSD: <i>Collecting Data</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Design entry plan; provide written justification for the development ➤ Share draft entry plan publicly and introductory letter for opportunities to engage with MERSD community ➤ Outreach: Meet with and/or conduct interviews of stakeholder groups ➤ Document Review: Review District Strategic Plans, Policy Manuals, Contracts, Budget, Internal curriculum documents, School Improvement Plans, District Improvement Plans, School Handbooks, High School Program of Studies, NEASC reports, MCAS results over time, internal data review ➤ Generate and share an informational survey for various stakeholder groups 	June– September
Phase II - Developing a Deeper Understanding: <i>Synthesizing and Analyzing Information</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review information, data, and feedback ➤ Refine additional questions or stakeholder groups for any needed additional information ➤ Conduct follow-up meetings or research based on interviews and document review ➤ Create and share draft of findings ➤ Solicit feedback 	October – November
Phase III - Charting the Course: <i>Formulating the Plan</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create an action plan that identifies goals, objectives and measurements ➤ Present Action Plan 	Late November – December
Phase IV – Putting Ideas Into Action: <i>Executing the Plan</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement Action Plan: Action plan will include checkpoints with expected outcomes, public reporting, and benchmarks for measurable progress towards identified steps 	January-Ongoing

Heather Leonard Entry Plan Manchester Essex Regional School District

**PHASE I
Interview Schedule**

Category	Who's Involved	When	Type of Session
Administrative Council	Building Principals, Assistant Principals, Directors	Individually Scheduled	Interview
School Committee	Small Groups	July	Interview
Teachers' Association	META President/Executive Board	TBD	Interview
Family/Parent Community	Open Invitation	Fall: Dates TBD	Coffee / Drop-In Sessions (<i>General Intro & Discussion</i>)
Teacher Leadership	Department Chairs; Curriculum Specialists; Mentors	Fall	Group Interview(s) - Discussion(s)
Teachers - MERHS Group	Academic; SPED and Exploratory Teachers	drop in: TBD (<i>Summer & early fall</i>)	Group Interview - Discussion Summer office hours
Teachers – MERMS Group	Academic; SPED and Exploratory Teachers	drop in: 5/11 AM (& <i>early fall</i>)	Group Interview - Discussion Summer office hours
Teachers – EES Group	Academic; SPED and Specialist Teachers	drop in: 5/11 PM (& <i>early fall</i>)	Group Interview - Discussion Summer office hours
Teachers – MES Group	Academic; SPED and Specialist Teachers	drop in: 5/12 AM (& <i>early fall</i>)	Group Interview - Discussion Summer office hours
MERHS Students Group	Arranged with Principal	Fall	General Introduction & Discussion
MERMS Students Group	Arranged with Principal	Fall	General Introduction & Discussion
Family & School-based Groups	PTA; School Council;	Fall	Attend Scheduled Meetings
Family & Community	Open Invitation	<i>Summer: Survey</i> September & October	Survey Drop-In Sessions (<i>General Intro & Discussion</i>)

Potential Interview Questions (staff)

1. Tell me about yourself and your role in MERSD.
2. Tell me about the culture of MERSD.
3. Who inspires you here?
4. What practices do we need to preserve to ensure our effectiveness with children? What do we need to change?
5. What is important to know about curriculum and instruction in MERSD?
6. What do you see as the most positive aspects of MERSD?
7. What are the three key issues that we need to work on?
8. What are the unwritten “rules”, practices, traditions that are important to know?
9. What do you look for in a leader?
10. What didn't I ask about that you would like to share?

Potential Interview Questions (families/community)

1. Tell me about yourself and your family in MERSD.
2. Tell me about the culture of MERSD.
3. What practices do we need to preserve to ensure our effectiveness with children? What do we need to change?
4. What is important to know about learning experiences in MERSD?
5. What do you see as the most positive aspects of MERSD?
6. What are the top areas we can grow/develop?
7. What do you look for in a leader? What do you hope for from district administrators?
8. What didn't I ask about that you would like to share?