

# SAU 6 Superintendent Entry Plan

## Michael C. Tempesta

### **Introduction:**

The purpose of this entry plan is to assist me in developing a comprehensive picture of SAU 6, including the students, staff and community stakeholders, that will help me to better understand the SAU (school system) and will lead to the creation of a report and specific recommendations. My plan will consist of interviews with various individuals and groups, as well as a review of plans and documents, in an effort to develop a sense of the SAU and provide a basis for future goals, objectives and activities. I plan to present a report to include findings and recommendations to the SAU 6 School Board and the community by February, 2020. I would also like to thank Dr. Bill Lupini, Superintendent of SAU 21, for his consultation and guidance and for allowing me to adapt and use his format and questions for use for all SAU 6 Boards, Stakeholders, and CBA groups.

### **General Goals:**

- To better understand the SAU and School Districts and the people as fully as possible in a brief period of time, outside the daily context of crisis and problem solving;
- To examine key issues in the SAU's past, in order to make sense of how such issues are handled and to identify the norms which affect how the organization may function in the future;
- To identify the tasks which need to be done and to rank them in order of priority; and
- To establish how these tasks should be accomplished.

### **Specific Objectives:**

- To examine the ground rules and procedures which have governed how the School Boards have conducted business in the past.
- To develop with the School Boards a set of norms and procedures that will govern how we operate in the future.
- To determine the issues where Board members believe we should focus our efforts in the next year and ask the Boards to prioritize these potential initiatives.
- To develop charts of the predictable tasks where Central Administration and the School Boards will work in the next year. The charts will include what has to be done and describe how it will be accomplished.
- To determine the issues which Central Administration and School leadership face in their work over the next year.
- To determine the norms, procedures, and processes which govern how each of the tasks of the Central Administration and School leadership is accomplished.
- To develop work plans for the predictable tasks which Central Administration and School leadership will undertake next year. The work plan will describe not only what has to be done, but how (the steps in the process, the time frame, and the roles/responsibilities).
- To determine key issues at the building level.
- To clarify the role and responsibilities of Principals and how they coordinate with Central Administration, as well as how the work of building leaders can best be supported.
- To determine what the key issues are for other stakeholders, as well as how these ideas might become part of our overall planning efforts.

### **Interviews, Data Collection, and Feedback:**

Interviews are intended to be a two-way exchange about the SAU's values, norms, and goals. These conversations should enable us to identify and understand key issues in the SAU, as well as the expectations of various groups for the schools. Structured interviews, using the same set of questions, ensure some degree of comparability from one interview to the next. I will compile the data from members of various groups (including Boards, Central Administration, Principals,

Other Building Leadership, Teacher and Paraprofessional Associations, Staff Forums, and Parent Forums) and use the data to compile a profile of system goals, obstacles to achieving them, and actions needed to overcome the obstructions. In addition, I will analyze a variety of documents to provide context to information gathered in my interviews. Clearly, an open exchange with those being interviewed is critical to the success of this effort. Openness requires trust. One of many ways to build trust is through confidentiality, which will be a key tenet of each of the interviews that I conduct as part of this process.

### **Organization:**

This entry plan is divided into sections regarding the School Board, Central Administration, Principals, Other Building Leadership, the Teacher and Paraprofessional Associations, parents, teachers and various community groups (PTOs, booster groups, town officials/committees, etc.). Each of these sections is in turn essentially organized in the following categories: *Objectives*, *Entry Activities*, and *Interview Questions*.

### **School Boards:**

#### ***Objectives***

1. To review and agree upon procedures and norms for meetings and Board/Superintendent relationships.
2. To review and confirm the entry plan approach to arriving at recommendations for SAU goals and action plans, to be presented at a December meeting.
3. To understand the Board calendar for the school year listing all recurring business, dates for discussions, and actions related to goals.

#### ***Entry Activities***

1. Conduct individual interviews with each Board member.
2. Conduct a separate meeting with the Joint Board Chairperson and individual Board Chairpersons to:
  - Define the working relationship between Board members, between the Board and Superintendent, and between Board members, the Superintendent, and the community;
  - Review and/or establish procedures for the Board to evaluate the performance of the Superintendent; and
  - Understand the calendar of Board meetings with tasks identified and dates established for discussion.
3. Ask each Board member to complete both the "School Boards Questionnaire (Procedures & Ground Rules)" and "NHSBA School Board Self-Assessment Tool."

#### ***Interview Questions***

1. Please provide me with a brief biographical information about yourself.
2. When did you first join the School Board? What are your general impressions of the schools? Have your perceptions changed since you joined the Board?
3. What are the key issues that you think the SAU must face? Why is each important? Which issues need immediate attention?
4. What are the key issues that you think your School District must face? Why is each important? What issues need immediate attention?
5. How do you assess the effectiveness of school personnel?
6. What groups or individuals have major influences on the schools? How is that influence achieved?
7. Describe a very difficult decision you had to make. What was the issue? How did you reach a decision? What did others think? Would you do anything differently now?
8. What do you see as the two or three most important SAU needs to be addressed by the Boards? By the administration and/or staff?
9. What are our SAU and School District goals? Are they on target? How do you know? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome these obstacles?

10. What is most important to preserve in our schools? What is most important to change?
11. What are your expectations of me as Superintendent and what advice would give me as I start out in SAU 6?

### **Central Administration:**

#### ***Objectives***

1. To understand the key issues and tasks each member of the Central Administration team will work on this year.
2. To develop strategies and timelines for accomplishing tasks in each administrative area.
3. To understand the norms, values, and procedures that govern the workings of the central office and, as necessary, make adjustments in the relationship between the central office and the Superintendent, Principals, and community.

#### ***Entry Activities***

1. Conduct individual interviews and briefing sessions with each member of the Central Administration team.
2. Conduct a separate meeting with the Central Administration team to:
  - Define procedures and norms for the working relationships between the central office and Superintendent, schools, and community; and
  - Define strategies and timelines for accomplishing SAU tasks in each central office area.
3. Meet with individual administrators to do necessary detail work in each area.

#### ***Interviews and Briefings***

Interviews and briefings serve two different purposes. Interviews will help me to understand those things that are important to individuals (things you value, things you would like to see changed, issues you would like to see addressed). Briefings are intended to focus on issues and tasks that are most pressing and timely.

#### ***Interview Questions***

1. Please provide me with a brief biographical sketch of yourself.
2. What would you most like to accomplish in your position?
3. What are the key issues that you think the SAU must face? Why is each important? Which issues need immediate attention?
4. What are the key issues that you think each School District must face? Why is each important? Which issues need immediate attention?
5. What groups or individuals have major influences on the schools? How is that influence achieved?
6. Describe a very difficult decision you had to make. What was the issue? How did you reach a decision? What did others think? Would you do anything differently now?
7. What do you see as the key issues in program, personnel, and school-community relationships?
8. What are our SAU goals? Are they on target? How do you know? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome these obstacles?
9. What is most important to preserve in our schools? What is most important to change?
10. What is the key issue for this SAU in the next year? What should I know about this issue? How might it be resolved?
11. What has been or is most difficult for you in your position?
12. What changes, if any, in working relationships or job structure do you see as necessary?
13. What are your expectations of me as Superintendent?

#### ***Briefings***

1. Please describe your job in terms of scope of responsibility.
2. What are your most pressing short-term tasks?
3. What are your most pressing long-term tasks?
4. Please describe recurring tasks in your area.

5. What special projects are you undertaking?
6. What tasks must be completed prior to the opening of school?

### **Principals:**

#### ***Objectives***

1. To identify key issues at the building level.
2. To define or redefine relationships between Principals and Superintendent, central administration, and community.
3. To coordinate work on system-wide tasks.

#### ***Entry Activities***

1. Conduct individual interviews with each building Principal.
2. Conduct a separate meeting with the Principal group to:
  - Define expectations, procedures and norms for the working relationships between the Principals and Superintendent, central office, and community; and
  - Review central office strategies and timelines for accomplishing key, system-wide task and identify needed adjustments to take building-level issues into account.
3. Hold meetings with individuals, as necessary, to plan for the year's tasks; and
4. Spend a full day in each school with each visit scheduled by the Principal to maximize my opportunity to observe teaching and learning, as well as to talk with teachers about their work.

#### ***Interview Questions***

1. Please provide me with a brief biographical sketch of yourself.
2. What are the accomplishments you look upon with pride as a Principal?
3. What goal would you most like to achieve in your building and what makes achieving it difficult?
4. What is the current state of the working relationships between Superintendent/Principals, Principal/Principal, Central Administration/Principals, and SAU/community?
5. Please assess your building in terms of program and personnel.
6. What are our SAU and School District goals? Are they on target? How do you know? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome the obstacles?
7. What individuals or groups influence the system? How is that influence achieved?
8. What would you most like to see preserved in your building? In the SAU (school system)?
9. What would you most like to see changed in your building? In the SAU (school system)?
10. What responsibilities are the Principal's alone? What responsibilities are shared with other Principals or SAU Administrators?
11. Are there areas of decision-making that are unclear? This discussion could include, but not be limited to, the Principal's role in curriculum, staffing, budgeting, maintenance, student services, etc.
12. What are your expectations of me as Superintendent?

### **Other Building Leadership:**

#### ***Objectives***

1. To identify key issues at the building level.
2. To define or redefine relationships between other building leadership roles (e.g., Assistant Principals, Student Services Coordinators, Curriculum Coordinators, School Nutrition Director, and Facilities Director) and Superintendent, central administration, and community.

#### ***Entry Activities***

1. Conduct a group interview with the Elementary and Middle School Assistant Principal group.
2. Conduct a group interview with the pk-12 Student Services Coordinators group.
3. Conduct a group interview with the pk-12 Curriculum Coordinators and Vertical Team Leaders.

4. Conduct a group interview with the pk-12 technologists.
5. Conduct individual meetings with the Principal and the Facilities Director at each school, including a facilities tour of each building.
6. Conduct a group interview with the Stevens High School Assistant Principals and Director of Guidance Services.
7. Conduct an individual interview with the Stevens High School Athletic Director.
8. Conduct an individual interview with the SAU 6 Technology Director.
9. Conduct an individual interview with the Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center Director.

***Interview Questions***

1. Please provide me with a brief biographical sketch of yourself.
2. What goal would you most like to achieve in your building and what makes achieving it difficult?
3. What is the current state of the working relationships between Central Administration and the schools?
4. What are our SAU and School District goals? Are they on target? How do you know? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome the obstacles?
5. What individuals or groups influence the system? How is that influence achieved?
6. What would you most like to see preserved in your building? In the SAU (school system)?
7. What would you most like to see changed in your building? In the SAU (school system)?
8. Are there areas of decision-making that are unclear? This discussion could include, but not be limited to curriculum, staffing, budgeting, maintenance, student services, etc.
9. What are your expectations of me as Superintendent?

**Sugar River Education Association (SREA):**

***Objectives***

1. To learn about the accomplishments and concerns of the SREA.
2. To agree upon a format for SREA/Superintendent communications and cooperation.

***Entry Activities***

1. Conduct interview(s) with officers of the SREA.
2. Schedule regular meetings with the SREA leadership.

***Interview Questions***

1. Please provide me with a brief biographical sketch of yourself.
2. What do you see as the most satisfying aspect of teaching in your current assignment? About teaching in this SAU? What do you see as most constraining in your current assignment?
3. What is your assessment of the overall program of the schools and the SAU?
4. What should I know about the history and current nature of the relationship between the SREA and school administration?
5. Describe what you would consider to be a good relationship between the SREA and the Superintendent. How do you think this could be achieved? What ground rules (norms) need to be in place?
6. What is most important to preserve in the schools? What is most important to change in the schools?
7. What are your expectations of me as Superintendent?

**Unity Education Association (UEA):**

***Objectives***

1. To learn about the accomplishments and concerns of the UEA.
2. To agree upon a format for UEA /Superintendent communications and cooperation.

**Entry Activities**

1. Conduct interview(s) with officers of the UEA.
2. Schedule regular meetings with the UEA leadership.

**Interview Questions**

1. Please provide me with a brief biographical sketch of yourself.
2. What do you see as the most satisfying aspect of teaching in your current assignment? About teaching in this SAU? What do you see as most constraining in your current assignment?
3. What is your assessment of the overall program of the schools and the SAU?
4. What should I know about the history and current nature of the relationship between the SREA and school administration?
5. Describe what you would consider to be a good relationship between the SREA and the Superintendent. How do you think this could be achieved? What ground rules (norms) need to be in place?
6. What is most important to preserve in the schools? What is most important to change in the schools?
7. What are your expectations of me as Superintendent?

**Claremont Association of Secretaries (CAS):****Objectives**

1. To learn about the accomplishments and concerns of the CAS.
2. To agree upon a format for CAS /Superintendent communications and cooperation.

**Entry Activities**

1. Conduct interview(s) with officers of the CAS.
2. Schedule regular meetings with the CAS leadership.

**Interview Questions**

1. Please provide me with a brief biographical sketch of yourself.
2. What do you see as the most satisfying aspect of working in your current assignment? About working in this SAU? What do you see as most constraining in your current assignment?
3. What is your assessment of the overall program of the schools and the SAU?
4. What are our system goals? Are they on target? How do you know? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome these obstacles?
5. What should I know about the history and current nature of the relationship between the CAS and school administration?
6. Describe what you would consider to be a good relationship between the CAS and the Superintendent. How do you think this could be achieved? What ground rules (norms) need to be in place?
7. What is most important to preserve in the schools? What is most important to change in the schools?
8. What are your expectations of me as Superintendent?

**Claremont Association of Paraprofessionals (CAP):****Objectives**

1. To learn about the accomplishments and concerns of the CAP.
2. To agree upon a format for CAP /Superintendent communications and cooperation.

**Entry Activities**

1. Conduct interview(s) with officers of the CAP.
2. Schedule regular meetings with the CAP leadership.

**Interview Questions**

1. Please provide me with a brief biographical sketch of yourself.
2. What do you see as the most satisfying aspect of working in your current assignment?  
About working in this SAU? What do you see as most constraining in your current assignment?
3. What is your assessment of the overall program of the schools and the SAU?
4. What are our system goals? Are they on target? How do you know? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome these obstacles?
5. What should I know about the history and current nature of the relationship between the CAP and school administration?
6. Describe what you would consider to be a good relationship between the CAP and the Superintendent. How do you think this could be achieved? What ground rules (norms) need to be in place?
7. What is most important to preserve in the schools? What is most important to change in the schools?
8. What are your expectations of me as Superintendent?

**Claremont Association of Maintenance and Transportation Employees (CAMATE):**

***Objectives***

1. To learn about the accomplishments and concerns of the CAMATE.
2. To agree upon a format for CAMATE /Superintendent communications and cooperation.

***Entry Activities***

1. Conduct interview(s) with officers of the CAMATE.
2. Schedule regular meetings with the CAMATE leadership.

***Interview Questions***

1. Please provide me with a brief biographical sketch of yourselves.
2. What do you see as the most satisfying aspect of working in your current assignments?  
About working in this SAU? What do you see as most constraining in your current assignment?
3. What is your assessment of the overall program of the schools and the SAU?
4. What are our system goals? Are they on target? How do you know? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome these obstacles?
5. What should I know about the history and current nature of the relationship between the CAMATE and school administration?
6. Describe what you would consider to be a good relationship between the CAMATE and the Superintendent. How do you think this could be achieved? What ground rules (norms) need to be in place?
7. What is most important to preserve in the schools? What is most important to change in the schools?
8. What are your expectations of me as Superintendent?

**The Claremont Administrators Association (CAA):**

***Objectives***

1. To learn about the accomplishments and concerns of the CAA.
2. To agree upon a format for CAA /Superintendent communications and cooperation.

***Entry Activities***

1. Conduct interview(s) with officers of the CAA.
2. Schedule regular meetings with the CAA leadership.

***Interview Questions***

1. Please provide me with a brief biographical sketch of yourselves.

2. What do you see as the most satisfying aspect of working in your current assignment? About working in this SAU? What do you see as most constraining in your current assignment?
3. What is your assessment of the overall program of the schools and the SAU?
4. What are our system goals? Are they on target? How do you know? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome these obstacles?
5. What should I know about the history and current nature of the relationship between the CAA and school administration?
6. Describe what you would consider to be a good relationship between the CAA and the Superintendent. How do you think this could be achieved? What ground rules (norms) need to be in place?
7. What is most important to preserve in the schools? What is most important to change in the schools?
8. What are your expectations of me as Superintendent?

### **Staff Forums:**

#### ***Objectives***

1. To understand the key issues for staff in each of our schools.
2. To begin to establish relationships with school-based employees.

#### ***Entry Activities***

1. Hold a group forum interview meeting at each school.
2. Spend at least one day in each school building (two at the high school) visiting classes, as well as meeting teachers, students, parents, and other employees.

#### ***Interview Questions***

1. What do you see as the most satisfying aspect of teaching in our current assignment? About teaching in this SAU and/or School District? What do you see as most constraining in your current assignment?
2. What is your assessment of the overall program of the schools and the SAU? What do we do well? What could we do better?
3. What are our system goals? Are they on target? How do you know? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome these obstacles?
8. What should I know about the history and current nature of this school? This community? The SAU?
9. What is most important to preserve in the schools? What is most important to change in the schools?
10. What are your expectations of me as Superintendent?

### **Parent Forums:**

#### ***Objectives***

1. To understand the key issues for parents in each of our schools.
2. To begin to establish relationships with our parent community.

#### ***Entry Activities***

1. Hold a group forum interview meeting at each school.
2. Spend at least one day in each school building (two at the high school) visiting classes, as well as meeting teachers, students, parents, and other employees.

#### ***Interview Questions***

1. What is your assessment of the overall program of the schools and the SAU? What do we do well? What could we do better?
2. What are our system goals? Are they on target? How do you know? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome these obstacles?

3. What should I know about the history and current nature of this school? This community? The SAU?
4. What is most important to preserve in the schools? What is most important to change in the schools?
5. What are your expectations of me as Superintendent?

**Other Groups and Individuals:**

***Entry Activities***

1. Attend at least one PTO (or other parent involvement group) meeting at each school. In addition, attend various PTO functions and student activities at each school.
2. Meet with representatives of the SAU 6 Special Education Parents Association
3. Meet with members of the local press and representatives of other media (if any) to discuss and establish a working relationship.
4. Interview key municipal officials, including budget committees and Boards of Selectmen, and leaders of civic groups.
5. Interview SAU and School District legal counsel (including collective bargaining, special education, etc.).

**Document Review:**

The following documents will be part of the materials review:

1. Strategic Plans
2. Collective Bargaining Agreements and Grievances
3. Budget Documents (FY19 and FY20)
4. Recent Financial Audits
5. Policy Manuals
6. Administrator Job Descriptions and Evaluations
7. Curriculum Guides
8. School Improvement Plans
9. Handbooks and Promotional Brochures
10. Annual Town and/or School Reports
11. NEASC Accreditation Reports
12. School Board Meeting Minutes and Agendas
13. Program Evaluations and Forms
14. Pending Litigation
15. Special Education Appeals, Hearings and Decisions
16. Organization Charts
17. Teacher Evaluation Process and Products
18. School Board Goals
19. Town Financial Plans
20. Capital Improvement Plan and Policies
21. Special Education Task Force Reports

**School Visitations:**

The entry plan process will include a one-day visit to each of the schools in SAU 6. Each Principal will be asked to plan my visitation to his/her school, with the goal of providing me with a "sense of the school," as well as an opportunity to conduct an interview with the staff.

**Resources:**

**Jentz, Barry and Wofford, Joan. *The Entry Plan Approach (Education Edition)*. Leadership and Learning Inc. (2008).**

**Jentz, Barry. *Entry: The Hiring, Start-Up & Supervision of Administrators*. McGraw-Hill (1982).**

**Lupini, William Ed.D. *Consultation and Adaptations from SAU 21 Entry Plan*. (2018)**

**SCHOOL BOARDS  
QUESTIONNAIRE: PROCEDURES & GROUND RULES**

***Agenda Setting and Timing***

- In general, how do agendas for Board meetings get set? How do you as a Board member get an item of concern to you on the agenda for a particular meeting?
- Are the items that appear on the agenda the appropriate issues?
- Are there too many items or too few items on the agenda?
- Generally, how far in advance of a meeting do you receive the packet? In what ways are the background materials you receive adequate or inadequate in preparing you for discussion?

***Board Efficiency***

- On a scale of one (1) to five (5), with 1 as high and 5 as low, how efficient do you think the Board is in:

Following up on issues raised in discussion	1	2	3	4	5
Length of meetings	1	2	3	4	5
Frequency of meetings	1	2	3	4	5
Apportioning its time among agenda items	1	2	3	4	5

***Board Confidentiality***

- On a scale of one (1) to five (5), with 1 as high and 5 as low, how successful has the Committee been in maintaining the confidentiality of discussions in Executive Session (Non-Public)?

1      2      3      4      5

Comments:

**Role of the Chairperson**

- Rate the importance of each of the following tasks in the Chairperson’s role:

Inform members on issues prior to meetings	1	2	3	4	5
Conferring regularly with the Superintendent	1	2	3	4	5
Handling public relations	1	2	3	4	5
Running the meetings	1	2	3	4	5
Explaining the background of an issue	1	2	3	4	5
Clarifying the issue	1	2	3	4	5
Insuring that everyone gets heard	1	2	3	4	5
summarizing discussion	1	2	3	4	5
Closing off discussion	1	2	3	4	5
Handling the public	1	2	3	4	5

**Procedures and Norms**

- Are you as a School Board member aware of established procedures for obtaining or exchanging information with:

The Superintendent	Yes	No
The SAU Leadership Team	Yes	No
Principals	Yes	No
Teachers and other Staff	Yes	No

If you answer “Yes”, please explain.

- You hear from your child (or neighbor) that a school bus had an accident on the way home. What do you do? Whom do you call?
- At a cocktail party, you are informed by an angry parent that a fourth-grade teacher publicly embarrasses children by talking about their academic failures in front of the entire class. What do you do? Whom do you call?
- You feel that you need information on the mathematics test scores on 8<sup>th</sup> grade students going to the High School. What do you do? Whom do you call?
- List your three (3) most important aspects of the relationship between the School Committee and the Superintendent.



## School Board Self-Assessment Tool

<i>Policy</i>	Fully Achieved	Mostly Achieved	Partially Achieved	Don't know/unsure
The Board has established a process for regular and routine policy review.				
The Board has in place all policies required by law.				
The Board policies relate to the Board/District mission and vision statements.				
<i>Strategic Planning</i>				
The Board has an active strategic plan, which is being implemented.				
The Board is meeting goals established under the strategic plan.				
The strategic plan aims to enhance or improve student academic outcomes.				
<i>Relationship with Superintendent</i>				
The Board annually sets goals and evaluates the superintendent.				
The Board provides the superintendent with clear expectations of performance				
The Board trusts the superintendent to make proper decisions relative to student matters, staff oversight, and academic achievement.				
<i>Communication with the Public</i>				
The Board ensures a continuous planned program of public information.				
The Board fosters cooperation with news media for the dissemination of information about the district.				
The Board encourages citizen participation in an advisory capacity.				
The Board seeks input from all stakeholder and constituency groups.				
<i>Effective Board Meetings</i>				
Board meetings are productive; the board regularly addresses all agenda items.				
Agenda items relate to matters within the board's roles and responsibilities				
Dialogue among board members is respectful and considerate.				
All board members come prepared to discuss all the agenda items.				
Board members have been given sufficient info/data to make informed decisions.				

*Please note that this Board Self-Assessment tool is not intended to be all-encompassing or a full school board self-evaluation. NHSBA provides this Board Self-Assessment tool as a starting point for boards to engage in discussion relative to school board accountability as it relates to these specific topics, but more importantly, school board accountability as it relates to student achievement and student academic outcomes.*