

BETHLEHEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dr. Thomas J. Douglas
Superintendent of Schools

Entry Plan

“Taking

Flight

and

Soaring

with

Eagles”



BETHLEHEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MISSION STATEMENT

CHILDREN AND LEARNING ARE THE HEART OF BETHLEHEM CENTRAL. WE CHERISH OUR STUDENTS AND CHALLENGE THEM SO THEY DEVELOP THE FOUNDATION TO BECOME THOUGHTFUL, RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUALS. THROUGH LEADERSHIP AND INTEGRITY, WE PLEDGE TO PROVIDE THIS EDUCATION, ENCOURAGING ALL STUDENTS TO REACH THEIR POTENTIAL.

DISTRICT GOALS

THE BETHLEHEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT WILL USE THE FOLLOWING GOALS TO GUIDE OUR WORK:

- **KNOWLEDGE:** *TO IMPROVE LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS.*
- **CHARACTER:** *TO FOSTER A POSITIVE AND SAFE SCHOOL CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT.*
- **VALUE:** *TO MANAGE AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY, COST-EFFECTIVENESS, AND EFFICIENCY OF THE DISTRICT'S CURRENT AND FUTURE OPERATIONS.*

Introduction:

The Bethlehem Central School District has a strong tradition of excellence in academics, arts, and athletics programs. Bethlehem Central students have consistently scored among the top schools in the capital region and across New York State. There is a distinct desire to continue this reputation for excellence and challenge even more students to advance their education to even higher levels. In order for Bethlehem Central to achieve this desired outcome, the superintendent must learn from the organization during his transition and craft a set of strategic plans with his leadership team that creatively support students in being highly engaged and successful learners, performers, and athletes while meeting the financial challenges of the state. To that end, the superintendent must listen, learn and facilitate the development, discussion, implementation, and ownership of a shared vision of learning and leadership that is supported by the Bethlehem community. During the first six months in office, the superintendent will work with the Board of Education and all constituency groups to promote a transition focused on a commitment to excellence.

Purpose:

The purpose of this entry plan is to assist the new superintendent in his acclimation during a mid-year transition of leadership in the Bethlehem Central School District. The entry plan activities will aid in accelerating the leadership changeover by quickly gathering critical information about past, present, and future needs of the Board of Education, administration, staff, students, and community. The implementation of the entry plan will allow the new superintendent to establish a strong community presence early on, while assessing the district's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for advancement. The entry plan is also flexible due to the unique nature of a mid-year transition and can be subject to modification as needed. This plan will also assist in identifying critical issues facing the district while building a network of personal contacts and/or resources. Overall, the entry process will assist the superintendent in developing a strong knowledge base of the character and values of the Bethlehem Central School District.

Duration:

The entry plan will be implemented from the time of Board of Education appointment until the end of the 2011-2012 school year. This plan will occur simultaneously with the full responsibilities of operating the school district. Overall, four phases will be utilized to complete the entry plan. The phases are:

Phase 1:	Pre-Entry	(September through December)
Phase 2:	Entry	(January through March)
Phase 3:	3 to 6 Months	(April through June)
Phase 4:	Summary Evaluation	(Summer, 2012)

Entry Plan Goals:

1. To ensure a smooth and orderly mid-year transition of leadership while becoming a new member of the district and community.
2. To implement a structure for open dialogue and communication with all constituencies in order to build trust, listen broadly, and learn comprehensively about the Bethlehem Central School District so that all are heard and valued.
3. To begin the process of developing a cohesive leadership team and building strong relationships with the Board of Education, district administration, union leaderships, staff, students, and various key people/organizations within the district and community.
4. To review, in depth, the organization's climate, curriculum, finance, infrastructure, policies, practices, technology, and other key initiatives of the district in order to ensure alignment of resources, efficiency, and effectiveness in meeting the educational needs of all students.
5. To develop a comprehensive district scan for future planning that best supports and creates instructional advancement and student achievement while maintaining strong fiscal management.

Entry Plan Objective:

The overall objective of the entry plan is to *Listen, Learn, and Lead*.

***“Seek first to understand,
then to be understood”***

Dr. Stephen Covey

Listening and learning sessions will be prominent throughout the pre-entry and entry phases and transition towards listening, learning, and leadership during the final phases as the entry plan draws to a close. Regular updates will be provided to the Board of Education throughout the transition phases. A comprehensive district scan will be completed and presented to the Board of Education and community in August.

Resources that will be used and/or reviewed *(but not limited to)*:

Bethlehem Central School District Website
Bethlehem Board of Education Minutes
Bethlehem Central School District's 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 School Budgets
Bethlehem Central School District Collective Bargaining Contract
Bethlehem Newsletters
New York State Education Department Website
New York State Report Card Data
Local News Archives

Phase 1

Pre-Entry

(September through December)

Upon appointment, appropriate notice will be extended to the superintendent's former district. The pre-entry phase will allow the superintendent and his family time to establish a presence in Bethlehem in advance of assuming my duties as the next Superintendent of Schools. This phase will preliminarily address goals 1, 3, 4 of the plan with greater follow-up in Phases 2 and 3.

To initiate certain aspects of this phase, the superintendent will dedicate time to visit the district during evenings and on weekends. The superintendent will also coordinate opportunities for visitations during normal hours to assist with key individuals' schedules in order to gain a greater understanding of current district operations. Additionally, the luxury of having three months of transition time will allow the superintendent to accomplish the following:

- A. Meet with the Board of Education President and Vice President to review parameters for Pre-Entry and, if possible, make arrangements to attend Board of Education meetings during this time, as practical, to observe procedures and protocol
- B. Meet with the retiring Superintendent throughout the transition process to:
 1. Establish a visitation schedule for the months of September through December that will respect the immediate operations and leadership of the district, while nurturing the transition
 2. Review current topics of interest. A few specific topics would be the status of any upcoming contract negotiations, annual professional performance review negotiations, building condition surveys, legal issues, and/or current financial planning for the 2012–2013 school budget
 3. Attend a meeting of the Capital Region BOCES Superintendents with the outgoing superintendent, if possible, to establish initial contacts and begin to develop collegial resources
- C. Meet with Assistant Superintendent, Chief Business and Financial Officer, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, etc. for general introductions and collegiality
- D. Meet with Communication Specialist
 1. General introductions and discussions
 2. Develop written press release of appointment as Superintendent
 3. Develop initial contacts with local media outlets
 4. Discuss website and publication updates for January transition
- E. Secure a place to live within the district in order that the superintendent and his family may have immediate visibility in the district and community.

- F. Learn about the communications and technology utilized in the district in order to have a communication plan and appointment scheduling available immediately for use upon arrival
- G. Meet with current superintendent's assistant to discuss coordination of activities during the pre-entry phase
 - 1. Develop communication plan
 - 2. Develop appointment calendar
 - a. To secure invitations to speak at service organizations in the community and/or district
 - b. Establish meetings with association leadership during January
 - 3. Develop mail and resource development (as needed)
- H. Meet with other district administrative staff as appropriate and as time permits to familiarize names, locations, and positions while gathering needed resources
- I. Meet with association presidents as appropriate and as time permits to familiarize names, locations, and positions while gathering needed resources
- J. Attend a few extracurricular, sport, and/or community events as appropriate and as time permits
- K. Conduct a review of key documents prior to entering the district (including but not limited to):

1. BOE policy manual	11. State assessment data
2. Board minutes	12. Regional state assessment data
3. Job descriptions	13. District calendar
4. Bargaining unit contracts	14. Extracurricular calendar
5. District curriculum documents	15. Emergency response plan
6. Staff and student handbooks	16. Professional Development Plan
7. Auditor's reports	17. Academic Intervention Services Plan
8. ST-3 report	18. Response to Intervention Plan
9. District grants	19. Race to the Top Plan
10. Current budget documents	20. Annual Professional Performance Review Plan

Phase 2

Entry

(January through March)

The entry phase will be about the superintendent as a *listener and learner* within the district. A high degree of visibility will be utilized throughout the district and community in an effort to reach out to all constituencies during a mid-year transition. Emphasis will initially be focused on making introductions, listening, and being seen by all staff, students, and community members.

During the first 90 days, the superintendent will conduct a **“Listening Tour”** of the district. This will allow the superintendent to meet with a variety of individual stakeholders and large/small groups including, but not limited to, board members, administrators, association leaderships, faculty, support staff, students, parents, community members, civic officials, elected officials, and media representatives. The primary purpose of the “Listening Tour” is to hear individual and large/small groups’ perspectives, experiences, and opinions related to the Bethlehem Central School District. I will keep my individual thoughts and beliefs to myself at this time, so individuals feel free to share their concepts, suggestions, and/or opinions. This phase will assist in addressing goals 1, 2, 3, 4 of the plan.

First Day

- A. Start the day by touring the district, as appropriate, and visiting a school
- B. Hold first Executive Council lunch meeting with Assistant Superintendent, Chief Business and Financial Officer, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, etc.
 1. Share entry plan
 2. Review district’s current issues
 3. Review district’s current finances
 4. Review district’s current needs
 5. Develop our future meeting schedule and operating procedures
- C. Meet with Superintendent’s assistant to establish procedures and scheduling tasks
 1. Procedures
 - a. Communication, mail, calendar, and signature
 - b. Board of Education weekly update
 2. Scheduling
 - a. Time to attend a faculty meeting at each school
 - b. A meeting with all administrators and supervisors
 - c. A meeting with the officers of the Student Government Association
 1. Seek invitation and time to eat with the students in their cafeterias
 2. Seek invitation and time to ride some buses with students
 3. Seek invitation and time to attend a class or two with the students
- D. Attend any extracurricular, sport, and/or community events to establish presence

First Week

- A. Continue touring the district and visiting all schools and/or building departments throughout the week
- B. Publicly share entry plan via website
- C. Kickoff district **“Listening Tour”**
 - 1. Individual meeting with the Assistant Superintendent
 - 2. Individual meeting with the Chief Business and Financial Officer
 - 3. Individual meeting with the Director of Pupil Personnel Services
- D. Contact school attorney, auditors, and fiscal advisors for introductions
- E. Conduct general district business, meetings, and/or operations
- F. Continue to attend extracurricular, sport, and/or community events to establish presence
- G. Contact each Board of Education member personally to review first week
- H. Send “Letter of Introduction” to the district’s faculty and staff

First Month

- A. Work with Board President and Vice-President to review:
 - 1. Agendas
 - 2. Procedures
 - 3. Communications
 - 4. Budget development schedule
 - 5. Expectations
- B. Continue to hold weekly Executive Council meetings
- C. Continue **“Listening Tour”**
 - 1. First month
 - a. Individual meetings with each Board of Education member
 - b. Individual meetings with each administrator and/or supervisor
 - c. Individual meetings with each association president
 - d. Group meetings (evenings)
 - 1. Building PTAs and PTA officers
 - 2. Open parent and/or community forums
 - 2. Schedule future meetings (2nd and 3rd month)
 - a. Faculty gatherings
 - b. Association executive committees
 - c. Booster organizations
 - d. Local leaders and elected officials
 - e. Business leaders and community
 - f. Service organizations
- D. Attend faculty and staff meetings for introductions
- E. Visit with custodians, food service, maintenance, and transportation staffs both during the day and after hours

First Month (continued)

- F. Conduct a district-wide administrative and supervisory meeting
 - 1. Focus on team approach
 - 2. Clarifying roles and communications
 - 3. Review current administrative and supervisory meeting schedules
- G. Start review of personnel file of all active employees over the next year
- H. Meet with the BOCES District Superintendent to review services available to districts and, specifically, to new superintendents
- I. Conduct general district business and/or operations
- J. Continue to attend extracurricular, sport, and/or community events

Second and Third Months

- A. Monitor and adjust entry plan as needed
- B. Continuously make regular visits to all schools and/or buildings
- C. Continue district-wide administrative and supervisory meetings
- D. Continue regular meetings with association presidents
- E. Continue regular contact with Board members via phone calls and weekly updates
- F. Continue **“Listening Tour”**
 - 1. Second month
 - a. Individual meetings with local leaders and elected officials
 - 1. State government leaders and county officials
 - 2. Town and village leadership (chamber, rec. dept., etc.)
 - b. Individual meetings with local media contacts
 - c. Group Meeting (during day)
 - 1. Student Government Association
 - 2. Building faculties and staff
 - d. Group meetings (evenings)
 - 1. Booster organizations
 - 2. Association executive committees
 - 3. Business leaders, clergy, realty & community
 - 2. Third month
 - a. Individual meetings with town supervisors
 - b. Group meetings with various service organizations
- G. Conduct general district business, meetings, and/or operations
 - 1. Intent focus on budgetary communications and overall development efforts
 - 2. Curriculum review
 - 3. Assessment data review
 - 4. Infrastructure review
 - a. Facility review
 - b. Transportation review
 - c. Technology review
- H. Continue to attend extracurricular, sport, and/or community events

Phase 3

3 to 6 Months

(April through June)

The 3 to 6 month phase will be about continuous learning, while also managing the budget and district elections for the coming school year. Time will also be utilized to adjust the schedule of the entry plan and “**Listening Tour,**” as a mid-year transition is often hampered by the daily needs and emergencies that occur throughout the district. Emphasis for Phase 3 will focus on the development of a cohesive leadership team, formalizing routines, and planning for the next school year as well as compiling and analyzing the findings of the ‘Listening Tour.’” This compilation and qualitative study of the district will assist in the formation of an action plan for advancement. This phase will assist in finalizing goals 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the entry plan.

- A. Continue regular weekly visits to schools and/or departments
 - 1. To model continuous learning
 - 2. To initiate scheduled classroom visits
 - a. To interact with staff and students
 - b. To watch the instructional and learning process
 - 3. To attend meetings with departments, grade levels, etc., as practical
- B. Commence regular meeting schedule as determined via pre-entry and entry phases
 - 1. Executive council meetings
 - 2. District-wide administrative/supervisory meetings
 - 3. Association executive committees
 - 4. Student organizations
 - 5. PTA organizations
 - 6. Booster organization
 - 7. Service and town organizations
 - 8. Chamber of Commerce
- C. Complete district “**Listening Tour**”
 - 1. Finalize any remaining individual interviews
 - 2. Finalize any remaining group interviews
- D. Continue to meet, develop, and nurture relationships with all constituency groups
- E. *Listen, Listen, Listen*
- F. Continue regular contact with Board of Education members
 - 1. Utilize communication systems collaboratively developed with the BOE
 - 2. Work with Board President and Vice-President to:
 - a. Facilitate and plan a summer Board retreat
 - b. Develop future goals and expectations
 - c. Review operating procedures and principles
- G. Conduct administrative evaluation review and goal setting

3 to 6 Months (continued)

- H. Develop summer administrative retreat to focus on:
 - 1. Professional development activity
 - 2. Team building activities
- I. Continue developing a complete knowledge of the district with executive administration and/or supervisors as appropriate:
 - 1. Curriculum and assessment
 - a. Review current APPR system
 - b. Identify and review all student achievement improvement initiatives
 - c. Review of professional development plan
 - 2. District's financial positions
 - a. Budget and expenditures
 - 1. Long range forecast
 - 2. Grant funding
 - 3. Cash flow
 - 4. Fund balance
 - 5. Reserves
 - b. Negotiations
 - 1. Labor relations counsel
 - 2. Background knowledge
 - 3. Past strategy for working in a positive, productive manner
 - 3. Personnel procedures
 - a. Recruiting
 - b. Hiring
 - c. Certification
 - d. Tenure
 - e. Seniority
 - f. Needs
 - 4. Pupil Personnel Services
 - a. Assessment review
 - b. Programmatic review
 - c. Staffing Review
- J. Conduct general district business, meetings, and/or operations
- K. Address urgent issues that arise as part of the listening, learning, and leading process
(always taking care to allow the issues to be resolved as close to the source as possible)
- L. Start review of interview protocols, observations, and notes for phase 5 qualitative study
- M. Continue to attend a wide variety of extracurricular, sport, and/or community events
- N. Decide on service organizations to join for personal and district benefit

Phase 4

Summary Evaluation

(Summer, 2012)

The summary evaluation phase is a culminating report to the Board of Education on the feedback collected during the **“Listening Tour.”** The perspectives, experiences, and opinions collected during each phase via interview protocols, observations, and/or notes will be analyzed in order to qualitatively develop key themes within the district. Upon presentation of these themes, a proposed action plan will be developed to lead the district into the future and advance student excellence in academics, athletics, and the arts.

The summary report will be presented to the Board of Education during the second Board meeting in the summer of 2012. The report will also be published on the district website for district and community review.

The completion of the summary evaluation report will conclude the entry plan and its goals. This phase will develop and finalize goal 5 of the entry plan.



Knowledge

Character

Value

Individual and Group Protocols

The following pages are protocols which consist of proposed questions to be asked of constituents during the “Listening Tour”

School Board Members Protocol

1. Please give a brief autobiographical sketch of yourself.
 - a. Why did you join the Bethlehem Board?
 - b. How long have you served on the Bethlehem Board; do you have any future plans for continued service?
 - c. How do you perceive the Bethlehem Board functions as a governing body?

2. What are your impressions of the Bethlehem CSD as well as the following areas:

Administration

Staff

Students

Community

Facilities

3. Have any of your perceptions changed since you joined the Board?

a. What are you most proud of and why?

b. What are the top three issues you feel Bethlehem must confront or is facing?

1.

2.

3.

1. Why is each important?

2. Which issues need immediate attention?

4. Describe a very difficult decision you had to make while on the Bethlehem Board.

a. What was the issue and why was it important?

b. How did you reach your decision?

c. In retrospect, what would you do differently?

5. Please share information that you feel is important for me to know.

Administrative and Supervisory Staff Protocol

1. Please give a brief autobiographical sketch of yourself.
 - a. Why education?
 - b. Why administration?
 - c. Why this school district?

2. What administrative tasks are yours alone?
 - a. What tasks do you share with other administrators?
 - b. Are there areas where role responsibilities are unclear?
 - c. What are the key issues you are currently working on?
 1. Why?
 2. How did this come to be an issue (history)?
 3. What are you doing and who are you involving to resolve this issue?

3. What do you wish to stop, start, and continue in Bethlehem?

Stop	Start	Continue
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4. What are the top three issues you feel that Bethlehem must confront or is facing?

1.

2.

3.

a. Why are these issues important?

b. What should I know and remember about these issues?

5. Describe the kind of leadership that was in Bethlehem and what kind of leadership you wish to see in the future.

6. How do you think the administrative team functions as a group and how would you like to see it improve?

7. What areas do you feel you can grow as an administrator?

a. Where do you see yourself in five years?

b. How can I assist you in your growth?

8. What advice would you like to give to me as your new Superintendent?

Association Leadership Protocol

1. Please give me a brief autobiographical sketch of yourself.
 - a. How long have you been employed at Bethlehem?
 - b. Why did you seek a leadership position here?
2. Why did you become active in your association?
3. What are your general impressions of Bethlehem?
4. What are the top three issues you feel that Bethlehem must confront or is facing?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - a. Why are these issues important?
 - b. What should I know and remember about these issues?

Parents and Community Members Protocol

1. Please give me a brief autobiographical sketch of yourself.
 - a. How long have you lived in the Bethlehem Central School District?
 - b. Do you have children or grandchildren attending our schools?
 - c. Is there any information about you and/or your family that you would like to share?
2. What are your general impressions about Bethlehem?
3. What are the greatest strengths and/or assets of Bethlehem?
4. What are the greatest concerns and/or liabilities of Bethlehem?
5. What do you want to preserve in our schools?
 - a. What do you want to change?
 - b. Why?

6. What are the top three issues you feel that Bethlehem must confront or is facing?

1.

2.

3.

a. Why are these issues important?

b. What should I know and remember about these issues?

7. Describe the kind of leadership that was in Bethlehem and what kind of leadership you wish to see in the future.

8. Do you believe the education is a good value and of good quality for the money spent?

a. If yes, why?

b. If no, why not?

9. What do you expect from the Superintendent?

Student Protocol

1. Please tell me about yourself.
 - a. How long have you been a student in Bethlehem?
 - b. What do you enjoy doing?
2. If you were talking to a new student to Bethlehem, what would you tell that person?
3. What programs do you and/or your friends find helpful, interesting, and/or important?
4. On a typical day of school, what are your highlights?
5. What are the strengths of our school district?

Local Business and Elected Leaders Protocol

1. Please give a brief autobiographical sketch of yourself.
 - a. How long have you lived in Bethlehem?
 - b. How long have you been in business (office) in this area?
2. What led you to have a business (seek office) in this community?
3. How do you think we are doing as a school district in this community?
4. How can the school district benefit the goals of your business (office)?
5. How can you in your business (office) benefit our schools?

6. What are the top three issues you feel are facing the Bethlehem community?

1.

2.

3.

a. What are you doing to resolve these issues?

b. How does the school fit into these issues?

c. What should I know and remember about these issues?

7. How did the past administration partner with you and what would you like to see in the future?

8. What partnerships would you like to create between the schools and the community (Chamber of Commerce, recreation, etc.)?

9. What advice would you like to give to me as the new Superintendent?

General Large Group Protocol

Constituent Group: _____

1. What is the best thing about the Bethlehem Central School District?

2. What is the biggest challenge for Bethlehem Central School District?

3. What do you wish to stop, start, and/or continue in the Bethlehem Central School District?

Stop

Start

Continue

4. What are the top three issues you feel that Bethlehem must confront or is facing?

1.

2.

3.

1. Why are these issues important?

2. What should I know and remember about these issues?

5. If you were the superintendent, what would be the first initiatives you would implement?

6. What advice would you like to give to me as your new Superintendent?

7. Please provide any additional questions and/or comments.