

SUPERINTENDENT'S ENTRY PLAN

GORDON AMERSON, Ed.D.

JULY 2018 - DECEMBER 2018



VISION STATEMENT

21st Century Schools Producing 21st Century Students

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Duarte Unified School District is to provide the knowledge, skills and inspiration for each student to be successful in college, career, and life.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe we are a community of learners.

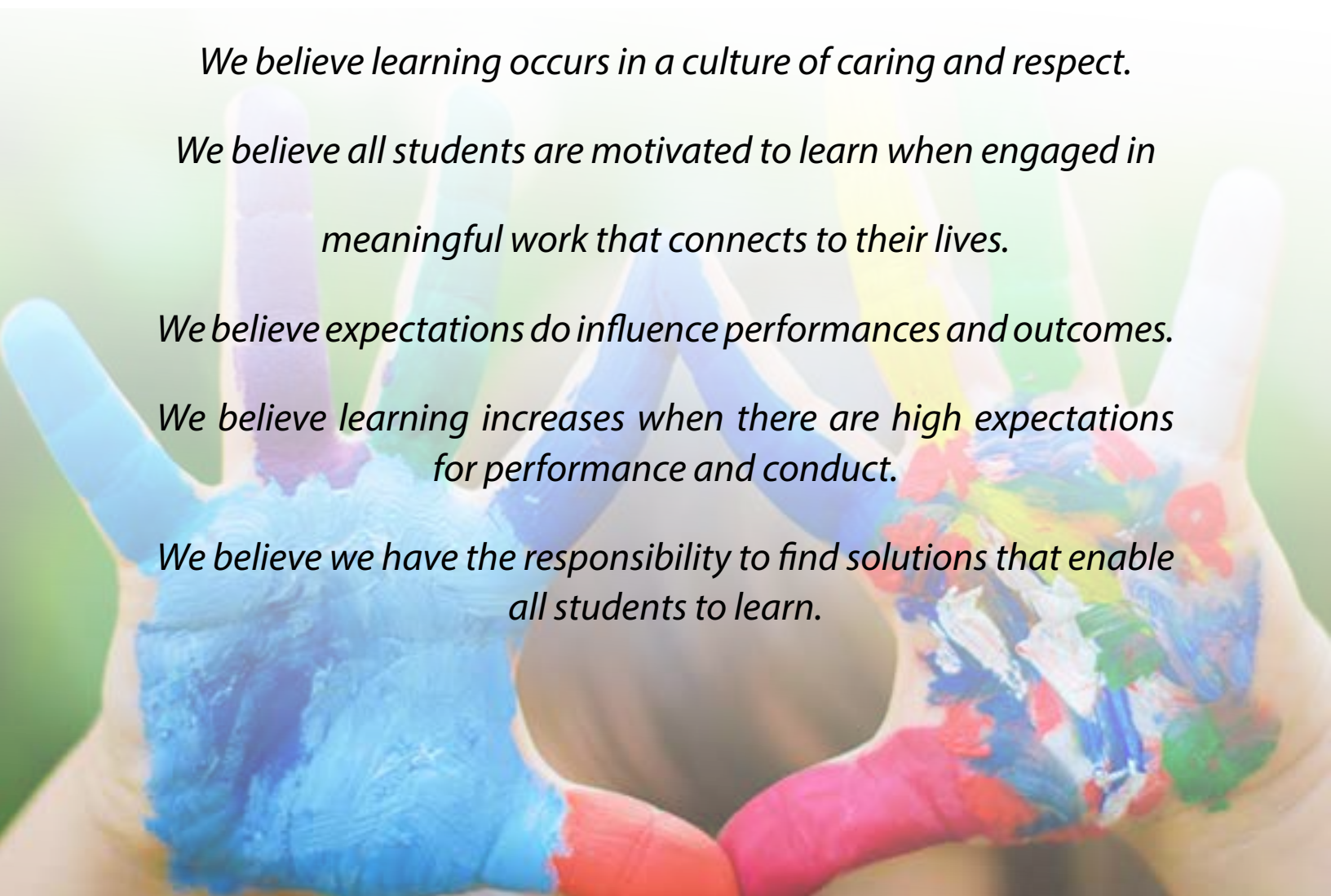
We believe learning occurs in a culture of caring and respect.

We believe all students are motivated to learn when engaged in meaningful work that connects to their lives.

We believe expectations do influence performances and outcomes.

We believe learning increases when there are high expectations for performance and conduct.

We believe we have the responsibility to find solutions that enable all students to learn.



INTRODUCTION



I am humbled and honored to be the new superintendent of the Duarte Unified School District, and to partner with our scholars, educators, families, and the communities we serve to ensure we meet the district's mission - to provide the knowledge, skills and inspiration for each student for success in college, career and life. I am deeply committed to this charge and excited to learn more about how our mission is being implemented in Duarte Unified's schools. This is a great time to be part of our learning community and I fully embrace this opportunity to lead.

As your new superintendent, I am grateful for the comprehensive hiring process our community engaged in this spring. Because of this process, the voices of our community - scholars, parents, teachers, principals, administrators, staff, board members, residents, and civic leaders were able to play a role in my selection. Duarte is in the midst of transforming education in the San Gabriel Valley and has achieved success on many levels. I want to build upon the strong legacy that the school district and community have established for our scholars in Duarte.

As I have begun my work, I recognize there are numerous opportunities that our entire school community is excited to address. To make sure that we build upon our strengths, recognize our challenges, and identify the most powerful strategies to address those challenges, my initial days of service will include the following structured entry plan to guide my work. I want to learn as much as possible about what is working for our scholars and where there are areas for growth. I also want to hear how we can better prepare and support our teachers, administrators, and staff for the critical roles they play in each student's life. Lastly, I want to deeply understand our Competitive Advantage Plan (CAP) and how the transformational work that exists in the plan will become our reality in Duarte Unified School District.

I look forward to this opportunity to listen, learn, and partner with you. Together, we can increase educational opportunities for all Duarte scholars to succeed in school and beyond.

Sincerely,

Gordon D. Amerson, Ed. D.

Superintendent of Schools

Duarte Unified School District

VISION & CORE VALUES

Before I describe the entry plan process, I want to share my vision and some of the core beliefs that drive my leadership. My vision and core beliefs have influenced my career as a teacher, principal, and district leader, and greatly guide my entry plan.

VISION

To use the natural skills and talents of the community to create a culture of achievement and opportunity within the Duarte Unified School District by offering 21st century learning environments in a highly engaged learning community.

EQUITY

I am a champion for the diversity present in our society, community and schools. On a daily basis we must strive to find equitable solutions that provide the necessary resources and supports to ensure each student thrives in a supportive and engaging learning environment.

TEACHING & LEARNING

Classroom instruction and visible learning is the most important work within our school system, and our professional educators need support to meet the needs of each scholar with effective learning opportunities. Our educators have the closest relationship with our scholars. We must acknowledge this fact, build upon it, and provide the necessary support to enhance that relationship.

TEAM

An effective team built on relational trust and strong leadership leads to high-level expectations, accountability and results. Team members must feel valued and be willing to work together to learn and thrive. An environment that encourages honest conversation, innovative problem-solving, effective conflict resolution, and a spirit of collaboration will move the work of the team forward.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Data driven practices lead to reflection and a realization of what is working, what can be done better and different in the areas of improvement, and what we need to do next. Learning from both our successes and challenges is essential to identify and prioritize practices that will produce positive results across our organization.





GOALS

My entry plan focuses on listening and learning as much as possible about our schools and community so that we can build on our collective strengths and strategically build capacity to improve our systems. By listening, learning, and applying what we learn, we will be in a great position to define common goals, align resources, and take continued strategic action on our Competitive Advantage Plan.

GOAL 1

Learn about the history and current direction of the Duarte Unified School District as fully as possible in order to gain insight into its strengths, challenges, and areas of opportunity so we can best serve our scholars.

GOAL 2

Learn how the district's strategic plan initiatives and priorities are being implemented in our schools and community by our dedicated staff.

GOAL 3

Learn about the values, norms, and expectations of our supportive community to best serve our scholars.

GOAL 4

Gain a better appreciation of how the district's initiatives and priorities are publicized and understood in our community.

GOAL 5

Utilize the information gathered to:

- A. Create a transparent and reciprocal process with the schools and community members based on mutual trust and commitment in order to understand and address the district's strengths and challenges.
- B. Further develop a plan of strategic actions or refinement for the school district's Competitive Advantage Plan (CAP).



PHASE 1

Listening to Learn about Duarte

TIMEFRAME

July 2018 - September 2018

This phase of the plan will consist of a series of meetings with key internal and external District stakeholders. The stakeholders will include but not be limited to District staff, school staff, and community members. The intent of the meetings will be to discuss our DUSD goals and initiatives in an effort to learn about the strengths, challenges, and areas of opportunities for Duarte Schools. This is a crucial time to listen and learn from students, teachers, principals, staff, parents, and community members. Through the wide perspectives gained from our stakeholders, we will learn how our administration and community are assessing our progress in meeting our mission and vision. Additionally, I will be working with the leadership team to analyze data from the 2017-2018 school year to monitor the progress of our schools and the District as a whole.

MEETINGS TO BE HELD

One-on-one Meetings with:

School Board Members, Union Presidents, Local Elected Officials, City Manager, Director of Public Safety, DUSD Leadership Team Members, Surrounding Area Superintendents and College Presidents, Duarte Chamber President

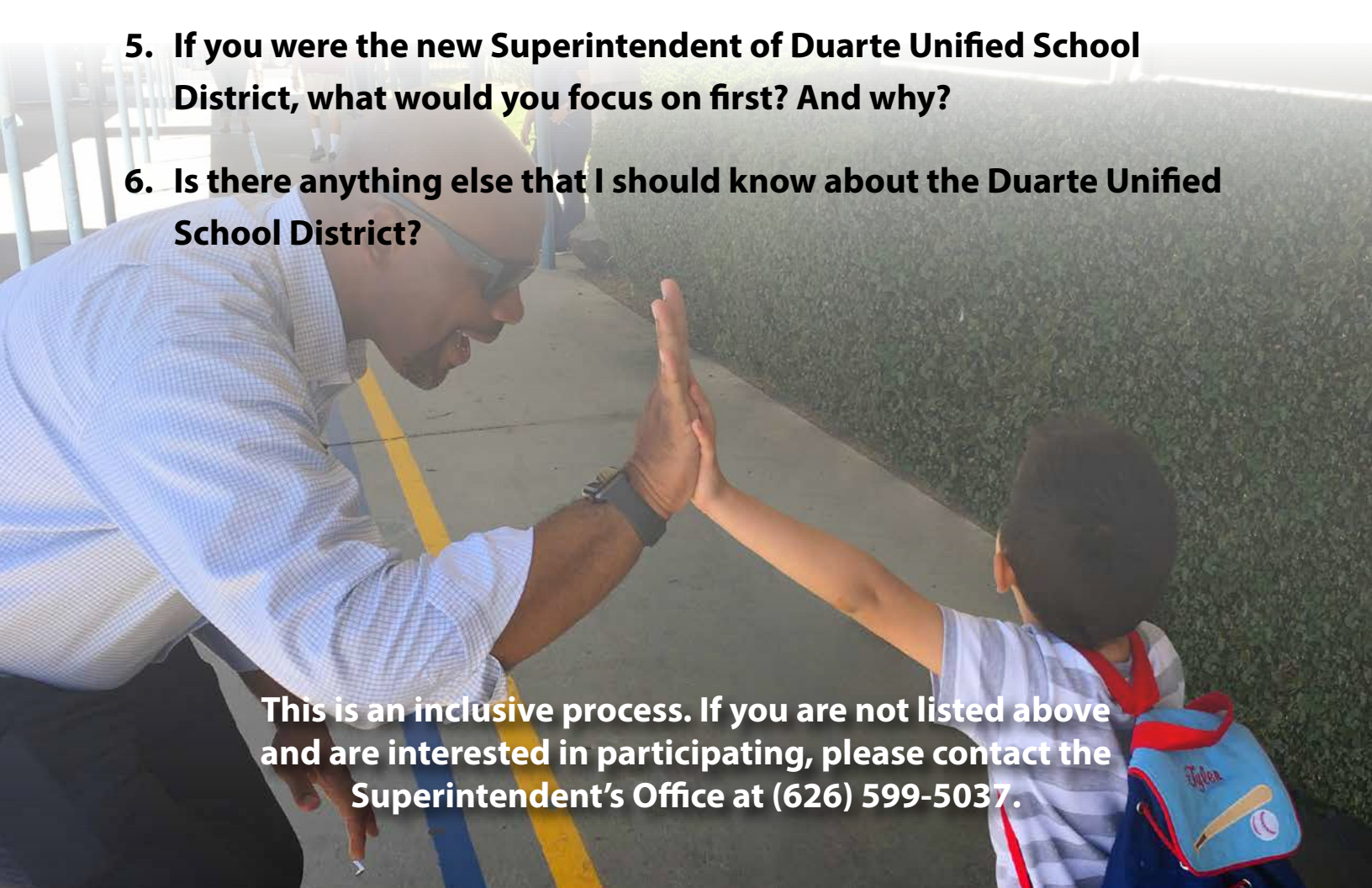
Meetings with Key Stakeholders including:

Site Parent Associations, Community Youth Councils, Law Enforcement Agencies, Local Community Service Groups, Student Leadership Teams, Community Education Council, Higher Education Partners, Local Business Leaders



KEY QUESTIONS ASKED DURING INTERVIEWS

- 1. What 1-2 key things should I know about the Duarte community as the new Superintendent?**
- 2. What are the strengths of the Duarte Unified School District's Competitive Advantage Plan (CAP) that should be maintained or expanded on?**
- 3. What are the challenges facing the Duarte Unified School District?**
- 4. What are some of the opportunities that Duarte Unified School District should further explore or develop?**
- 5. If you were the new Superintendent of Duarte Unified School District, what would you focus on first? And why?**
- 6. Is there anything else that I should know about the Duarte Unified School District?**

A photograph of a man in a light blue button-down shirt and glasses, wearing a watch, high-fiving a young child. The child is wearing a blue and white striped shirt and a blue backpack with a red strap. They are outdoors on a paved path next to a green hedge.

This is an inclusive process. If you are not listed above and are interested in participating, please contact the Superintendent's Office at (626) 599-5037.



PHASE 2

Assessment, Planning & Reporting

TIMEFRAME

October 2018 - December 2018

I will use the data and information gathered during the Listening to Learn Duarte phase to develop a summary report and presentation. The information gathered will outline my findings, observations, and recommendations for next steps. The recommendations for next steps will serve as another resource to help advise and inform the School Board on the District's goals, strategic focus areas, and planning. Information gathered during Phase I will be shared with staff members as well as the community.

ASSESSMENT TO SUMMARIZE

The information gathered will be used to create a summary report and findings. The report will serve as a resource and guide to the School Board, District staff, and school staff in strategic thinking and planning to better support school leaders and teachers.

PLANNING WORK SESSION

A work session with the School Board will be held to study results of the Listening to Learn about Duarte Phase.

REPORTING TO REVIEW & ADJUST

At a retreat or workshop, the School Board and I will review and adjust current goals, initiatives and priorities.

CONCLUSION

We are at a unique point in time in the transformation of the Duarte Unified School District and our Duarte community. It is a time of significant challenges, but also a time of great hope, optimism, and opportunity. It is a time to believe in the spirit of our young scholars, while we listen, learn, collaborate, and build trust in one another. It is a time to focus on our shared values of:

- Community
- Caring and respect
- Engagement
- High expectations
- Increased student performance and achievement
- Social justice and equity

Let us focus forward and use our time wisely to ensure that we are doing all that is possible to ensure every scholar realizes their full potential in our learning community. As we reflect on the excellent work that has already been done by our staff and community, we must remember that much work remains as we continue the transformation of Duarte Unified School District. I look forward to meeting with our community and working together to create a robust, inclusive school system that produces a bright future for every one of our scholars.

Gordon Amerson, Ed.D.

