

NHPS Superintendent Evaluation – March 2015

This evaluation is framed around the 12 core competencies in the Candidate Profile for the superintendency developed during the Board's 2013 search process (listed below). Drawing on these 12 core competencies, this evaluation is divided into four distinct domains for which performance is assessed: Student Impact; Collaboration and Engagement; Transparency, Access and Equity; Vision and Leadership

The Board's evaluation of the Superintendent follows the rating system established in NHPS's principal and teacher evaluation systems (PEVAL and TEVAL), using a scale of 1-5 for each domain of performance being evaluated. Following up on last year's annual evaluation that took place in February 2014, this evaluation covers the period from March 2014-February 2015.

Superintendent Profile:

1. A visible, accessible, and interactive leader who will champion a vision for transformed student outcomes, building on what is working in the current NHPS School Change Initiative and rigorously re-examining what is not. Along those lines, the candidate will conceptualize and develop plans to address New Haven's several educational challenges, for example: high school graduation rates, Pre-K programming; inequities in funding; and special education.
2. Someone who demonstrates a leadership style that encourages and motivates teachers, supporting their development and long-term retention.
3. Someone with strong moral character and integrity who has proven that he/she puts students first and has demonstrated commitment to improving outcomes through a strong instructional core.
4. A collaborator who appreciates and builds upon long-standing business and institutional relationships, and who can also create new and stronger ties with external stakeholders.
5. An executive who has strong negotiating skills, able to work with the multiple unions in innovative ways.
6. A leader who has a global, multicultural perspective on education and its role in New Haven's future as a city and a community.
7. An educator who is keenly aware of current and future political issues, especially about the complexities and varieties of school choice, including the lottery system, magnet schools, charter schools, turnaround models, etc.
8. An educator with a deep understanding of child development along social, emotional and academic dimensions.
9. An educator who will address the issues of rigor, relevance and student engagement in the NHPS curriculum with the end-goal of dramatically increasing the likelihood that New Haven students will succeed after their high school graduations.
10. An executive with a proven ability to develop, plan for, and manage complex budgets, and the ability to communicate with the public, and work with elected officials on budget issues.
11. An outgoing leader who will make communications a top priority, with an emphasis on active and ongoing parental involvement.
12. Committed to empowering students and parents with information about school programs across the district to help families make informed choices.

Superintendent’s Performance Domains

Performance Domain	Core Comp	Areas of Success & Progress (Superintendent’s self-assessment)	Areas of Challenge & Further Development (Superintendent’s self-assessment)	Board Review & Comment	Rating
<p>Student Impact: driving dramatic gains for students by strengthening rigor, relevance, and relationship at the instructional core</p>	<p>1, 3, 6, 8, 9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved student outcomes continue to be the central leadership priority and an area of success. Improvements in graduation rate, college going, and school climate reflect strengthening of our schools. (See School Reform Progress Oct 2014). In the gap of state testing, we have nonetheless engaged in strong substantive efforts across the long pathway to college and career: efforts around literacy development (both early grade and remedial) show improved instruction and results; YouthStat shows engagement of most at-risk youth with benefits for both school and community climate; turnaround gains at Lincoln Basset lead portfolio efforts (recognition from SDE, partners, and parents), with reinforcement from Cross (strong climate gains continue, with planning for deeper SLC engagement), Hillhouse (parent and student positive feedback balances with staff transition challenges), and other schools. Public priority for outcomes reflected in Board T&L discussions, including both overall results and school level balanced progress reports. Central Office feedback reflects strong priority on maintaining a focus on student learning (76%) and using data to inform decisions (70%) (see 2014 COS Survey Results) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community and parental engagement for student outcomes remains an area of development, to strengthen urgency and collaboration at the individual student level – for example, in clarifying ways families can support reading development and intervention Efforts to strengthen social emotional and physical learning, while present, remain disconnected and under-resourced. P&L structure has provided organization, but not yet material change to the experience of students and staff Evaluation and Development efforts proceed, with positive impact on strategic retention and development of staff; however, renewal of program is necessary, in order to continue to raise standards for both teachers and administrators, and to extend attention to non-certified educators 	<p>As summarized in the School Reform Progress Report presented to the Board in October, we can observe noteworthy gains for students in pursuit of some of the School Change initiative’s goals, especially in relation to high school graduation goals—the latest estimate is that the graduation rate rose to 75% for the class of 2014. It is particularly significant to note that the 5 year goal of School Change to cut the dropout rate in half has now been met.</p> <p>Our efforts to assess student progress in narrowing the achievement gap with the state are challenged during the current year by the discontinuity in the state assessment system due to the transition from CMT and CAPT assessments to the new Smarter Balanced assessments. As a result, 2013 was the last year for which we have CMT and CAPT data—and we will not have meaningful growth scores on the new state assessments for at least another year to come.</p> <p>The lack of student achievement data from state assessments does not of course mean that the district has stepped back from a variety of internal assessment tools, and the district’s strong efforts to facilitate the transition to the Common Core continue to be evident. Likewise, the district-wide efforts to improve instruction and interventions in early grade reading are a promising initiative into which much effort has been put. The central office survey results from June 2014 suggest very high levels of appreciation and support (95%+) in particular for the Directors of Instruction and the role that they are playing helping principals and assistant principals improve instructional quality in their schools.</p> <p>Given the substantial variation in student outcomes across the current portfolio of NHPS schools, the school turnaround process remains particularly important in driving student gains for the district’s lowest performing schools. As such, it appears to be achieving positive student impacts in some instances, including positive early results in improving the school climate at Lincoln Basset. However, other, longer running school turnarounds do not appear to be achieving dramatic, sustained gains for students suggesting that continued effort is needed to ensure that our most struggling schools are truly turning the corner after a turnaround intervention.</p> <p>Though it remains challenging for the board to form a complete picture of student progress district-wide on this basis during the transition between state assessments, we know that the graduation rate is trending in a favorable way, and at the same time we are not yet close to where we want to be in terms of student academic outcomes overall. We look to your leadership in driving continued--and accelerating-- progress in this area moving forward, with a particular focus on ensuring that transformational improvements and resulting student progress truly take root in our lowest performing schools.</p>	<p>3.5</p>
<p>Vision and Leadership: providing a vision, strategy, and implementation for transformed student outcomes</p>	<p>1, 3, 10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicit priority and strength of vision reflected in feedback of central office survey, both generally to the district (i.e. 82% headed in the right direction) and specifically to the Superintendent (i.e. 74% positive on Vision). (See both COS Survey Results and Action Steps). Continued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coherence of both message and action from the various central offices to schools needs significant strengthening; revised SIP process seeks to address this gap Consideration of AF partnership, in context of vision of engagement of 	<p>As New Haven’s School Change initiative continues in what is now its sixth year, you have engaged the board and the public to provide an updated vision to guide the district’s ongoing efforts through the “Vision, Belief and Strategy” document presented this past September.</p> <p>While this document does provide a high level vision, it does not constitute in itself an operational plan for pursuing that vision—you have chosen instead to communicate</p>	<p>3</p>

<p>that build on current successes while exploring new opportunities for change and reform.</p>		<p>priority reflected in revised Vision documents (See Vision, Belief, Strategy 9-15; NHPS School Change @2015Jan), as well in continued reiteration of themes of engagement for learning, creative tension, and balance of urgency and sustainability. Strong sense. Ongoing and regular communication reflects reinforcement of vision, including weekly letters including in the Leadership Connection (http://www.nhps.net/node/3394).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six areas of strategic priorities identified in vision materials, organization structure, P&L project management structure, and School Change 2.0, and specific operational plans both in implementation and in planning. Organization reflects stronger project management and integration, including explicit staffing and structure to support strategic priorities and constituent work streams • Reformatting of BOE meetings increases collaboration and engagement of BOE, with launch of Teaching & Learning and Governance as significantly different settings for Board collaboration, and focus of Finance & Operations on overall financial picture. 	<p>partners for student learning, proved a significant challenge, leading to both distraction and broader disengagement of stakeholders; current work seeks to reenergize vision and action across School Change Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued balance necessary to ensure BOE discussions are engaged, continuous, and constructive, giving board members opportunity for meaningful governance • Feedback to Superintendent from COS Survey on trust (60% positive), and implementing administrator suggestions (60% positive) have been particularly important feedback points, reflecting need for both personal connection and organizational alignment so that support of Central Office fully reflects Superintendent priorities 	<p>periodically about your operational efforts through your Superintendent’s Reports at board meetings. While your P&L structure may provide internal organization, it has not been sufficiently clear to the board how you and your team are connecting all the various aspects of your ongoing work back to the district’s overarching goals. The document you presented to the Board in January of this year “NHPS School Change v2.0” listing “Initiatives in Consideration and/or Underway” was a step towards greater clarity—it will be critically important to build on this moving forward.</p> <p>You have successfully led and implemented the re-organization of the Board committee structure, with the formation of a new Governance Committee, as well as implementing the Teaching and Learning Committee sessions every other board meeting in order to allow for a deeper exploration of matters of instructional practice and policy.</p> <p>The results of the central office survey (completed in June of this past year by 100 principals, assistant principal and other administrative personnel) show generally high levels of support for the direction in which the district is headed (82%) as well as support for your vision as Superintendent (74%) and your focus on student learning (76%). It is also clear that important leadership challenges remain, with just 54% of respondents feeling that the Central Office is facilitating overall clarity and effectiveness in all areas of the district’s work, for example. It is also evident that alignment and morale issues surfaced around the Achievement First partnership proposal you have championed.</p> <p>Moving forward we suggest that you consider adjustments to your own leadership team and its structure in order to ensure the strongest possible alignment with the goals and the needs of the School Change initiative as it moves into its next phase, where organizational change and student progress must go hand in hand, as the pace of both continues to accelerate.</p>	
<p>Collaboration and Engagement: collaborating and engaging with students, educators, communities, public officials and institutional leaders to accelerate student progress</p>	<p>1, 2, 4, 5, 11</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant formal and informal engagement of community stakeholders has continued, including monthly Superintendent’s Night Out, student council sessions, Citywide Parent Leadership Team, etc. Targeted engagement efforts with stakeholders who are open to it, including regular meetings with Hispanic leaders, YouthStat forum. • Weekly Performance & Learning launched and productive, as forums for both central office coordination and principal, teacher and others input on key strategic priorities. Superintendent’s meetings and Director’s Meetings reformatted to allow for deeper principal engagement. Leadership Connection provides weekly communication to leaders on both Superintendent’s vision and District coordination. (See 2014 Central Office Survey Action Steps) • School visits from Superintendent more consistent this year, averaging one per week; though with continued desire and room to improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad coalition of supporters of School Change (i.e. community groups, bargaining units, colleges, philanthropy, etc.) are engaged in specific ways and in specific projects, but need to be convened and engaged together around the overall effort and revised goals in order to revitalize the overall sense of common purpose 	<p>NHPS’s School Change initiative is premised in many ways on broad stakeholder engagement and you have continued important efforts to engage and listen to a variety of stakeholders through the Superintendent’s Night Out, school visits, the Citywide Parent Leadership meetings the student cabinet and a variety of other forums.</p> <p>Communicating back to these stakeholders in a clear and compelling way is equally important. Board meetings provide just one of the opportunities to do this, but they do represent an opportunity to speak to a broad audience and range of stakeholders in one setting. The new format for the board meeting, including the Teaching and Learning committee meetings in the round on a monthly basis is an important step to enhance engagement.</p> <p>It is equally important to develop stronger systems for tracking the concerns raised by stakeholder groups and members of the public and ensuring full follow up and communication regarding their disposition—both with those raising them and with members of the board.</p> <p>It will also be more important than ever to develop and maintain relationships with Alders and a variety of other, elected officials and political stakeholders moving forward, particularly as the Board’s composition shifts to include two elected members beginning in January 2016</p>	<p>3.5</p>
<p>Transparency,</p>	<p>7, 10, 12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued strengthening of financial systems reflected in results (both balance and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial systems will require ongoing focus, particularly with insight into the 	<p>The re-organization of the district’s budgeting process, facilitated by your hiring of a new CFO has been an important initiative. The accompanying budget analysis has</p>	<p>3.5</p>

<p>Access, and Equity: committing to provide transparency, access and equity across the district and school environments, including budget and school enrollment processes</p>		<p>balance sheet strengthening for 2013-14 school year, tracking to balance for 2014-15 school year), capacity building (hiring of CFO, ongoing internal and public ERS work), and revised budget process for 2015-16 budget process (enabling board to see both priorities and final budget based on actual funding commitments from City and State)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit resource equity discussion in progress, with data and perspective not previously available or offered • Enrollment improvements for 2014-2015 concentrated on customer service (i.e. improved transfer process, family enrollment worksheets) and on enrollment planning/projections (i.e. class size projections); Redistricting discussions to continue, with foundation of process and tools to enable implementation 	<p>funding needs and gaps that exist both in system as a whole and for specific schools; 2014-15 budget should reflect priorities of schools and district, as a way to address felt needs for greater resource supports from schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While initial steps are under way to strengthen customer service (i.e. parent engagement position training staff on information systems, enrollment office changes), this needs to accelerate through additional offices more systemic training, and evaluation of staff as needed 	<p>created valuable opportunities for the board to engage in discussions about strategic resource allocations.</p> <p>Likewise, this analysis has opened up a window into budget equity issues between schools and across the district. It will be important to ensure that this discussion of budget inputs unfolds with the question of student outcomes in the forefront.</p> <p>As noted in last year’s evaluation, and in the discussion of collaboration and engagement above, better customer service is a vital priority, and despite some positive developments in this area related to the school enrollment process, for example, this continues to be an area with need for ongoing improvement.</p> <p>Communicating with the board on a timely basis when emergencies arise is important, particularly those involving student welfare is important, even if there is not immediate action required by the board—this needs to be done more consistently moving forward.</p>	
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[Superintendent’s self assessment narrative]

March 15, 2015

Board of Education -

At this particular juncture of my Superintendency – in the midst of my second year, and the 6th year of our School Change effort – both our progress and our challenges as a District feel particularly acute and palpable to me. We have seen, and continue to see, immense progress as a district, both in regards to student outcomes and organizational capacity. I would flag our continued graduation gains and extension of emphasis to disengaged youth in particular in this regard, alongside early grade reading and many other components described in the rubric below. At the same time, I feel myself and sense in our community the need to renew School Change, to push over the obstacles and hurdles that feel more jarring now than they have in the past.

I believe that our urgency for change and acceleration of student learning is a good thing. So too is our commitment to working in collaboration as a Board, as a school district, and as a community; even when that collaboration means we must take the time to acknowledge and process different perspectives. .As Martin Luther King wrote in the Letter from a Birmingham jail, lasting change only comes from creative tension, and I continue to believe that New Haven, ahead of the vast majority of urban districts in the country, is in the midst of embracing and learning from a creative tension between urgency and collaboration.

As I wrote last year, thank you for the opportunity to lead this district. I believe that my performance has continued to be strong, pursuing the opportunities and challenges that will define our success as a district, and ultimately the learning of student in the city. That said, the year has obviously reflected challenges, and I take seriously the idea of continuous improvement for the district and for myself. I look forward to your feedback.