Report of Superintendent's Entry Findings

I have greatly appreciated the warm welcome I have received from the entire Carlisle School Community since starting my tenure as superintendent in July. Faculty, staff, parents, community members, and our students have all been most gracious and welcoming, which has made my transition to Carlisle quite smooth. As a new superintendent in a new district, I have spent my first six months in Carlisle getting to know the district and the community, and this process has given me the opportunity to meet with many parents, town officials, and of course students, teachers, and administrators as I seek to see the district from each of their perspectives. While I feel I have gained a great deal of insight into our school community during this time, I am also well aware that there is still much for me to learn.

The design of my entry plan provided me with the opportunity to gather and analyze data from a wide-variety of sources. The plan consisted of interviews with key town officials, school administrators, teachers, parents and students; classroom observations along with observations of other school activities including grade level meetings, faculty meetings, and professional development programs; and a review of relevant district and school reports including but not limited to student performance data, teacher and administrator evaluation reports, school and district improvement plans, and district budget documents. Each of these sources of information provided me with a deeper and more complex understanding of the Carlisle School District, as they highlighted those characteristics of the district of which we are most proud, while also providing some insight into those areas where further work would be beneficial.

On the whole, my findings are overwhelmingly positive with parents, students, teachers, administrators and town officials all giving the district high marks in regards to student learning, educational experience, positive culture, and caring community. While interviews and observations did identify areas for further inquiry and work, the level of satisfaction and pride in the district was impressive. The findings for this report have been broken down into four key areas Teaching and Learning, Leadership and Culture, Community and Communication, and Facilities and Operations.

Beneath each finding I have identified the primary sources for information in support of the finding. In many cases the findings are based upon testimony provided through interviews with parents, teachers, administrators, support staff, or other members of the community.

Note: Under the key areas of Leadership and Culture, Community and Communication, and Facilities and Operations abbreviations are used to denote testimonies. The following abbreviations are used: P is for Parents, T is for Teachers, A is for administration, S is for Students, and SC is for School Committee members.

Teaching and Learning

Strengths

Students perform exceedingly well on district and state standardized assessment. (PARCC and MCAS data)

Students are engaged in classroom activities that require thought, creativity, and involvement.

(classroom observations, student reports, Challenge Success data)

Teachers care about all students and make close personal connections with students and families

(TELL survey, classroom observations, evaluation documents, parent testimony, teacher testimony)

Students feel connected to their teachers and their school

(Challenge Success data, observations, parent testimony)

Teachers and service providers communicate and collaborate effectively (schedule design, observation, teacher testimony)

Teachers integrate technology effectively into teaching and learning (professional development calendar, teacher presentations at faculty meetings, classroom observations, evaluation documents)

Teaching and learning has been enhanced by the integration of technology (classroom observations, teacher evaluations, professional development, parent testimony)

Teachers pursue professional development both within and outside of school. (professional development records, Carlisle College course activity)

Collaborative environment for teachers and students

(schedule design, observation, TELL Survey, teacher testimony)

District and community organizations work to provide students and teachers with all the necessary and many additional resources to enhance student experience (budget development process, PTO and CEF Grants)

Teachers know students and families

(parent testimony, teacher testimony, Challenge Success data, middle school practice, observations)

Curriculum and instruction are aligned with state frameworks

(curriculum documentation, classroom observation, teacher testimony)

Teachers have high expectations for all learners

(Challenge Success data, parent and teacher testimony)

Teachers vary their instructional practices to meet the needs of all learners (classroom observations, professional development activities, district goal work, evaluation documents)

Teachers have the ability to focus on teaching and are not burdened with additional responsibilities

(schedule design, teacher responsibilities, contract language, TELL Survey)

Teachers are supportive of one another and district leadership

(teacher and admin evaluations, observations, faculty meetings, parent, teacher admin testimony)

Special education support program

(special education outcomes, parent testimony, teacher assist team records)

Carlisle has highly qualified, skilled and creative teachers

(teacher evaluations, classroom observations, professional development)

Learning assistants are professional and highly qualified individuals who support student learning.

(teacher testimony, parent testimony, observation)

A rich STEAM program

(parent, teacher, admin. Testimony, STEAM course offerings)

Outstanding world language program, which exposes students to French, Spanish, and Chinese

(parent testimony, teacher testimony, observation)

Areas for further discussion/work

Documented curriculum maps at all grade levels and for all disciplines

(teacher testimony, admin testimony, school improvement plan)

Lack of Tier 2 supports for students K-8

(teacher and admin testimony, observation)

Some discrepancy with Concord in student opportunities leading to CCHS

(parent, community, and admin. testimony)

Increasing demand for ELL services

(service delivery grid, teacher and admin. testimony)

Special Education support service delivery

(teacher and admin. testimony, observations, master schedule)

Leadership and Culture

Strengths

Stable and engaged School Committee

(parent, teacher, admin, and School Committee testimony, observation)

Reflective school committee focused on the needs of all students and faculty

(school improvement plans, School Committee goals, School Committee policies)

Experienced building administrators

(educator evaluation documents, parent-teacher-admin-school committee testimony)

Positive school culture

(Challenge Success data, TELL survey, P-T-A-SC-S testimony, observations)

Leadership team has a great deal of experience and institutional knowledge including the business manager, facility manager, and superintendent's assistant (evaluation documents, SC-A-testimony)

Collaborative and supportive culture

(P-T-A-SC testimony, master schedule, faculty meeting agendas, Professional Learning Community documents, professional development opportunities, Carlisle College)

Areas for further discussion/work

Inspiring faculty

(teacher testimony)

Developing trust among teachers and administrative team

(teacher and admin testimony, TELL survey)

Working towards continual improvement and advancement in our school

(T-P-SC testimony)

Collaborative decision-making

(teacher and admin. testimony)

Maintaining respect for people and opinions

(teacher and admin. testimony)

Decision making responsibilities and protocols

(teacher and admin. testimony)

Developing a culture of teamwork

(teacher and admin. testimony)

Declining enrollment

(T-A-SC-C testimony, enrollment data, School Committee goals, district goals)

Improving the connectedness of para-professionals

(teacher and admin. testimony)

Increase collegiality among faculty

(teacher testimony)

 $Contributions \ to \ the \ further \ advancement \ of \ the \ education \ profession$

(School Committee and admin. testimony)

Community and Communication

Strengths

Strong Positive relationship with community

(P-T-A-SC testimony, budget process, budget)

Strong Community support for teachers and school

(P-T-A-SC testimony, PTO-CEF Grants)

Community and school partnerships (COA, Clark farm)

(P-T-A testimony, observations)

Community feel to the school

(P-T-A-SC testimony, observations)

Parent volunteers and parental involvement in school

(P-T-A-SC testimony, observations)
Carlisle Education Fund, Carlisle PTO, SEPAC
(P-T-A-SC testimony, observations)
School is the center of the community
(P-T-A-SC testimony, observations)
Pasta Dinner
7th Grade Play
Communication with parents and community
(P-T-A testimony, website, weekly communiqués from principals, Buzz)

Areas for further discussion/work

Communication with parents and students regarding transition to high school (*P-SC testimony, observation, CCHS superintendent and principal testimony*)
Further develop connections to community organizations (*SC testimony*)

Enhance school communication to parents

(parent testimony)

Increase information sharing regarding tech school options/possibilities (*P, SC, guidance, Carlisle Selectman testimony, change in technical school membership*)

Maintain communication with students and families who do not attend CPS (parent testimony)

Facilities and Operations

Strengths

Knowledgable and experienced facility manager and business manager (A-SC testimony)

Attentive custodial and facility staff

(P-T-A-SC testimony, observations, capital plan, budget planning process)

Clean and well maintained facility

(P-T-A-C-S testimony, observations)

Technology support

(P-T-A-C-S testimony, observations, tech meeting schedule-communication) Availability of technology for teaching and learning

(observation, inventory, professional development, collaborative time, faculty meetings, shared presentations to faculty and school committee)

A budget process, which involves all stakeholders

(observation, School Committee testimony)

Areas for further discussion/work

Air conditioning and ventilation in parts of the building (observation, capital plan, P-T-A testimony, budget process)
Future considerations as Facility Director approaches retirement (budget planning, maintenance documents, observation, T-A-SC-C testimony) Identify possible uses for Brick Building (SC-A testimony, SC goals,)
Food service program upgraded (P-T-A testimony, observation)

Through this entry process, I have identified much to be celebrated within our district, and we have also identified areas to focus our attention, in order to further improve the overall educational experience of our students and their families. These initial findings will guide our work, as we develop a strategic plan to address those areas identified as needing further attention, discussion and work.

I look forward to leading our district through this important work.

Respectfully submitted, James F. O'Shea