

September 2018

Dear Cambridge Community,

I am honored to serve as the new Assistant Superintendent of Student Services for Cambridge Public Schools (CPS). I look forward to partnering with students, families, educators, and the greater community to ensure that we achieve the district's vision of building postsecondary success through "rigorous, joyful, and culturally responsive learning" in each of our schools. It is both a privilege and a pleasure to be part of an organization that is deeply committed to providing equitable access to quality learning experiences for all students.

I have been fortunate to spend my career working on behalf of students with unique strengths and diverse learning needs. Throughout my career as a special education teacher and state and district administrator, I have collaborated with general and special education teachers, principals, and families to design rigorous and authentic learning experiences that actively engage students and advance their acquisition of knowledge and skills. The outcome of these partnerships has led to a shared understanding of the challenges that hinder particular groups of students from maximizing their full potential and achieving academic success. In my new role, I will continue to work with the Cambridge community to establish to effectively identify and respond to factors that prevent the provision of specialized services and supports to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities.

In order to build new relationships and develop an understanding of the challenges that impede our goals to ensuring all students have an opportunity to excel, I have designed an Entry Plan process that will facilitate my transition as the new leader of the Office of Student Services (OSS). The Entry Plan will serve as a framework as I listen to and learn from a wide range of stakeholders and review key documents, policies, and procedures to ensure that I deeply understand the department's strengths and opportunities for growth.

Ultimately, I hope to achieve the following over the next few months:

1. Cultivate relationships with students, families, educators, and community members to identify areas of strength and areas of concern that have the greatest impact on students.
2. Understand how the district's strategic initiatives are being implemented by our dedicated staff and school leaders, and identify the role of the Office of Student Services in realizing our shared vision of success for all learners.
3. Analyze our current approach to identifying the root causes contributing to the opportunity and achievement gap.

If you would like to learn more about my Entry Plan process, please see the attached documentation. I look forward to partnering and learning from each of you as we continue to build on the district's ongoing efforts to improve outcomes for all students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alexis Morgan
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF STUDENT SERVICES

Continued on following page >>

PHASE ONE: LISTENING AND OBSERVING

(July through December 2018)

Phase One of my Entry Plan process will commence in July 2018 and end in November 2018. During this time, I will meet with students, parents, school and district staff, and community members to learn about the triumphs and areas needing improvement for the Office of Student Services (OSS). By gathering multiple perspectives, I hope to obtain a clearer view of how different stakeholders view our efforts to ensure that students receive a high-quality education in the least restrictive environment. I will hold focus groups and forums with constituents throughout Phase One. **The following questions will frame our discussions:**

1. What is important to know about the CPS community as it relates to students with IEPs, 504s, and advanced learners?
2. What strengths of OSS should be sustained? Which OSS actions have helped our students to succeed and to prepare for postsecondary life?
3. What are the most significant challenges facing OSS? What internal or external factors contribute to these challenges?
4. What are two or three opportunities that OSS should further explore or develop? Why?
5. How can we create more inclusive environments to help our students?

TIMELINE OF PHASE ONE

TIME OF YEAR

STAKEHOLDERS

SUMMER 2018

- Extended School Year (ESY) visits and observations
- Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) Chairs
- OSS Staff (Interviews)
- Central Office Staff (Interviews)

- Special Education Advisory Council Chairs (Interviews)
- Cambridge Advanced Learners Association (CALA) Officers (Interviews)
- School Administrators (Interviews)
- Cambridge Education Association Officers

FALL 2018

- School visits and classroom observations
- High School Students (Focus Group)
- Assistant Superintendent Meet and Greet (Special Education Parent Advisory Council)
- Dissemination of Parent Survey
- High School General and Special Educators (Focus Group)
- High School Paraprofessionals (Focus Group)
- Related Services (Focus Group)
- School Administrators (Interviews)

- School visits and classroom observations
- Upper School Students (Focus Group)
- Recent graduates from Cambridge in-district and out-of-district schools (Focus Group)
- Upper School General and Special Educators (Focus Group)
- Upper School Paraprofessionals (Focus Group)
- Related Services (Focus Group)
- School Administrators (Interviews)
- Out of School Partners (Focus Group)
- Meet with Community Engagement Team
- Student Services Advisory Committee

- Work with American Born Black Outreach Team and SEPAC liaison on phone surveys of African American families of students with IEPs (Focus Group)
- School visits and classroom observations
- Elementary School Students (Focus Group)
- Elementary General and Special Educators (Focus Group)
- Elementary Paraprofessionals (Focus Group)
- School Committee

- School visits and classroom observations
- Out of District School Administrators
- OSS Vendors
- Community, Industry and University Partners

Members of the community who are interested in sharing their perspectives, but cannot join one of the sessions above are invited to complete a 10-minute survey: [HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/FEEDBACK_OSS](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/feedback_oss). If you do not have access to a computer, feel free to complete the survey and return it to my office: Office of Student Services, 159 Thorndike Street, Cambridge, MA, 02141.

In addition to activities described above, I will observe classrooms and student-centered meetings to understand how OSS and school-based teams provide specialized services and supports to meet the unique needs of children and youth.

PHASE TWO: ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

(January through March 2019)

Once I have completed the focus groups, forums, and observations, I will embark on Phase Two of my entry plan: analysis and reporting. Analysis of existing data and documentation will help the department to refocus its goals and objectives for continuous improvement. I will review the following data and documents, among others, to assist me in forming a complete picture of our district and the Office of Student Services:

- Achievement and performance data
- School climate and disciplinary data
- Curriculum guides and district accommodation plans
- Student learning plans
- Student and staff surveys
- Financial and operation reports
- Task Force reports

Phase Two will launch in January 2019 and conclude in March 2019. The information gathered will help me partner with the district and community to update and define the strategic direction of the department during Phase three of my entry plan process. During a work session with schools and the community, I will share the results of my listening and learning tour in March 2019.

PHASE THREE: PLANNING

(April 2019 through June 2019)

After engaging with the Cambridge community and deepening my understanding of our department's learning needs and priorities, I will work with the community to develop a strategic direction for the department. From April 2019 through June 2019, we will identify priority actions and set the direction for equitable teaching and learning throughout our department (and CPS). Similar to previous phases, this will be an inclusive process that will ensure that the needs and concerns of those directly impacted by the strategic plan are the driving force behind its development.

CONCLUSION

As I begin my tenure as the Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Student Services, this Entry Plan will propel our community engagement, department diagnoses, and development of a collective, department-wide strategy. The process will be driven by the gathering of data, engaging with students, families, and district personnel, and mapping out the short term and long term outcomes that will have the greatest impact on student achievement. I look forward to partnering with you as we enable the next generation of scholars to aspire to new heights of greatness.