



Transition Team Report

Executive Summary

October 2022

A study by the American Association of School Administrators noted that newly-hired superintendents, and their districts, benefit from an efficient transition. Immediately upon his entry into the School District of Philadelphia as the new superintendent, Dr. Tony B. Watlington, Sr., commissioned a structured process for his transition. The process consists of three phases with specific outcomes:



Phase 1 - The First 100-Day Priorities

Designed to gather input from stakeholders in order to learn the needs and concerns of the community and District - June - October 2022

Phase 2 - The Transition Team

Designed to formulate a comprehensive overview of the District and make recommendations for strategic actions - July - October 2022

Phase 3 - The Strategic Plan

Designed to develop future paths and strategies to reach the Board's vision for all students to thrive, succeed, and lead in a global society - November 2022 - June 2023

The present report documents and details the process and outcomes of Phase 2: The Transition Team. It describes the activities and deliberations of each of the five sub-committees: Student Achievement; Operations; Anti-Racist District Culture; Community Engagement and Communications; and Enriching and Well-Rounded School Experiences. Each group received a specific charge that guided its work. The Transition Team process involved more than 100 internal, community, and external stakeholders who engaged in an in-depth examination of the District.

Through investigation and discussion, document reviews, inquiries, analyses, and focus groups, the team members ascertained strengths and challenges related to each subcommittee area, and generated 91 short-term and long-term recommendations and suggestions.



The sub-committees noted a number of strengths in the District. The School District of Philadelphia has been able to move from a deficit budgeting position to a focus on making investments in students, staff, and facilities. Also, a major accomplishment for the District was the dissolution of the School Reform Commission in 2018 and the return to local control governed by a Board of Education. All sub-committees noted the hard work and dedication of District staff. It is through their efforts, and the efforts of external partners, that major challenges in the past have been met and overcome.

The sub-committees also noted issues that remain and need focus and resolution, such as student academic achievement, facilities safety and repairs, communications, and operations. As the sub-committees developed their recommendations, three major themes emerged as critical imperatives to achieve the Board of Education's Goals and Guardrails and operational excellence:

Communication/Customer Service

Two-way communication and engagement with staff, students, parents/families, and the community is imperative to rebuild trust.

Coordination/Collaboration

Greater collaboration and inter-departmental systems are needed to conduct the District's operations and address issues more efficiently.

Accountability/Evaluation

Shared accountability for student success must be established and supported with more strategic data collection and monitoring to track and report progress toward specific District goals.

The Transition Team's work will help Dr. Watlington formulate his Strategic Plan and specify actionable and measurable goals for the future. By implementing specific recommendations, Dr. Watlington will be able to bring together the collective strength and intellect of the School District of Philadelphia under his collaborative leadership to accelerate progress.

Learn more by visiting
philasd.org/100days