

Maintaining Success through Effective Leadership at Tuckahoe

A Transition Plan to Build Relationships, Enhance Communication and Support Professionalism



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Having a new leader assume the role of principal at a school where the current leader has been at the helm for more than twenty years can be anxiety-producing for all stakeholders. Understandably, the community wants to know what will happen next so that current successes can continue and further evolve under the guidance and direction of a new principal. The development of a comprehensive entry plan that outlines objectives for the new principal's initial, mid, and final transition periods goes a long way to alleviate anxiety and answer questions.

Fortunately I had the opportunity to serve as Tuckahoe's Assistant Principal for the past five years. While the role of principal is a new one, the school community is one in which I feel welcomed and at home. As part of the leadership team for this high-performing school, I come to the role of principal with a significant degree of knowledge about the school's successes, challenges, areas for improvement, staff, community, culture, traditions, and most importantly, student body. As the new Tuckahoe Principal I am carrying this knowledge with me as I begin the work to achieve the goals developed as part of my transition plan.

Three big ideas will impact all the work I do: **Building Relationships, Communication, and Professionalism**. My transition plan focuses on these three areas, and my efforts for each of these will be centered around the following goals

- Continue to foster and build relationships with adults and students, among members of the staff team, and between staff and parents.
- Develop and maintain regular channels of communication with staff and the community to ensure that timely, accurate information is provided and questions and concerns are addressed.
- Lead by example to promote strong academic success for all students, and hold high expectations for all stakeholders to conduct themselves appropriately and with respect for others.

These goals will be incorporated into all phases of the transition plan and progress will be monitored as objectives are fulfilled throughout the year. Discussions around the success of these goals will consider Tuckahoe's current strengths and needs, and will help to expand my knowledge of the daily operation requirements as the school's Principal.

The process of building relationships started on the day that I was appointed to this position. Over the summer I have invited staff members to meet with me to discuss their perceptions of what needs to be maintained and what might be considered for modification to ensure student success. I have also focused on learning what goals staff members have for themselves to contribute to this process. I have spent time with the retiring principal to glean insights from her long tenure at Tuckahoe. Relationship building with the parent community is critical, beginning by working with the new PTA president and leadership to determine the most effective ways to work collaboratively to serve the Tuckahoe community. I have met with parents to get to know members of our community who are not as familiar with me to help us form relationships to support my work in guiding Tuckahoe through its next phase of accomplishments and achievements.

The remainder of the summer has been spent continuing the transition and preparing for the new school year. This has included filling staff vacancies and working with custodial staff to ensure that the building is ready to open and welcome students for another year of learning. I have also spent time working with my Instructional Leadership Team and with my administrative staff to communicate our message about priorities for beginning the new school year. This includes a focus on professionalism among all staff members, building relationships with others, and clearly communicating our vision to develop academically strong students who enjoy learning and are prepared to become productive, responsible citizens. Careful review of the past year's data will guide our learning goals in the year ahead. We are focused on identifying the greatest areas of need among our students, and on working collaboratively to craft the targets that will become the basis of next year's School Management Plan.

Specific Activities to Achieve the Objectives of the Entry Plan

Stakeholder Group	Initial Transition: July-August	Mid Transition: September-November	Final Transition: December-Forward	Document Review/ Other
Students	• Visit Tuckahoe students at summer school sites • Attend rising kindergarten play dates • Send introduction letter • Send welcome back letter • Back to School Open House	• Visit all classrooms and maintain regular visibility throughout building • Weekly News @ Nine messages to students reinforcing goals and expectations • Back to School Assembly • Daily morning announcements • Invite students to lunch • Attend school events	• Continue visibility and regular student interaction • Work to know all students' names • Continue lunch bunches to talk with students about perceptions of school • Monthly school spirit events • Review student midyear progress	• School/PTA/APS calendars • Master Schedule • Current and Past School Management Plans and Assessments • School Assessment Data (PALS, DRA, ACCESS, SOLs, NNAT, CoGAT, IA)
Staff	• Send email to all staff announcing new role as principal • Invite all staff members to meet over the summer to discuss strengths, needs, goals • Hire new assistant principal and work together to develop goals for the year • Hire staff to fill any remaining vacancies • Meet with front office staff to prepare for the opening of school • Meet with ITC to discuss current and new initiatives • Meet with Instructional Leadership Team to review previous year's data and plan goals for upcoming year • Meet with Custodial Staff to clearly articulate expectations and responsibilities • Invite staff members to meetings to review calendar and master schedule • Meet with Special Education Team and ESOL teacher to ensure plans are in place to facilitate efficient program delivery • Plan Back to School Week activities	• Staff meetings weekly in September and then monthly, initiate focus on monthly professional learning • Weekly staff memo • Meet with new staff members • Attend CLT meetings • Monthly Instructional Leadership Team meetings • Regular classroom walk-throughs with informal feedback provided • Review SMART goals	• Continue mid-transition phase activities • Midyear staff conferences • Discuss status of professional development plans with Instructional Leadership Team	• Local School Report Card • Parent/Staff / Student Satisfaction Survey Results • School Website • Emergency Management Plans • Staff Handbook • Student Handbook • Program of Studies • Staff Evaluations and Document Logs/SMART Goals • Budget and Financial Reports • PLC minutes • School Safety Audit • LeaderNews

Specific Activities to Achieve the Objectives of the Entry Plan (cont'd.)

Stakeholder Group	Initial Transition: July-August	Mid Transition: September-November	Final Transition: December-Forward	Document Review/ Other
Families	• Send introduction letter • Attend rising kindergarten play dates • Meet with PTA President • Update school web site • Hold Principal coffees • Send welcome back letter • Back to School Open House • Create formal Family Handbook	• Continue to provide timely, accurate communication through blog, web site, Twitter, weekly PTA blasts • Back to School Night • Attend PTA meetings and other school events • Meet with School Advisory Committee to review School Management Plan	• Continue regular, frequent communication • Continue attending school events	
Central Office/ Other APS	• Schedule meetings with central office supervisors/directors to discuss current progress, needs, goals for upcoming year • Establish relationship with a mentor principal • Conversations with Executive Leadership Team members • Meet with feeder school principals at Administrative Conference	• Work with central office staff to discuss implementation/ support needed for professional development throughout the year • Invite School Board members to visit Tuckahoe • Invite ELT members to visit Tuckahoe • Meet with mentor • Attend Elementary Principal and Administrative Council meetings	• Continue mid-transition phase activities	
Community Partners	• Send introductory letter to current community partners • Discuss ideas for partnership plans during the upcoming year	• Establish opportunities for existing partners to work with students/community • Investigate potential for new community partnerships	• Continue to investigate potential for new community partnerships • Attend community/civic events	

Success in meeting the goals I have established in this transition plan will be measured throughout my first year as principal. Midyear, as the final transition phase begins, I will meet again with key stakeholders to gauge how well these goals are being implemented. Feedback will be solicited from the Instructional Lead Team and other staff members, PTA leadership, central office staff, and student representatives. This will allow time during the second half of the school year to examine ways to make changes and further improvements. At the end of the school year, we will review the years progress to provide guidance for our administrative and instructional team to begin formulating our plans for the 2016-17 school year.

I feel fortunate to have been a member of the Tuckahoe community for the past five years. Being part of this community has underscored the critical importance of maintaining strong relationships with all of stakeholders and to clearly communicate what we value as it pertains to helping our students. Throughout the coming year of transition, I look forward to working with you to identify additional ideas and strategies to maintain Tuckahoe as one of the top performing schools in Arlington and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Sincerely,



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