



OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Superintendent's Listening and Learning Tour Summary Fall 2016

Over the course of the past three months, Dr. Andrew G. Houlihan has attended over 200 public meetings and met with approximately 1,000 stakeholders as part of his ***Listening and Learning Tour***. As a result of these discussions, the following themes have emerged:

Celebrations (What's Working)

- Culture—sense of family, teamwork, and relationships
- Collaboration—effective professional learning communities
- Talent—dedicated, empowered, effective teachers, administrators and staff
- Technology—equity in device deployment across the system
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Development—continuous improvement cycle
- Communication—efforts between schools and parents in particular
- Expectations—high sense of expectations for students
- Course Offerings—wide variety offered
- Vertical Pride—how schools within clusters are working well with each other
- Responsiveness—sense of urgency by central office to respond to school/family needs

Areas of Growth (How We Can Improve)

- Cross Collaboration—time/ability to share best practices/plan across schools and clusters
- Technology—professional development for teachers and leaders
- Mental, Social and Emotional Health—providing adequate resources and support for students
- Class Size—reducing class sizes at the secondary level
- Teacher Recruitment and Retention—development and compensation
- Transportation—need to be more efficient and timely
- Readiness—need to educate students at a younger age regarding college and career
- Facilities, Funding and Organizational Transparency—ensure equity in decision-making and resource alignment
- Dual Language—need to expand
- Literacy—ensure all students have resources they need
- Engagement—increase parental and community involvement

As a result of these themes, and in partnership with the Board of Education, the UCPS administration has declared the following priorities in moving forward, each of which will feed into a new strategic planning process that will launch in winter of 2017:

Priorities Going Forward

Equity

We can significantly improve outcomes in UCPS if we ensure there is equity amongst and between each of our schools. Currently, numerous examples of inequities exist within our academic programming such as dual language and technology integration, and other entities such as college and career readiness, resource allocation, mental health, and student discipline. We must do a better job addressing and correcting these areas over time.

Human Capital Development

The education profession today is at a crossroads. We as a system must develop a plan to ensure our current and future employees feel valued, supportive, recognized and are compensated at an appropriate rate. In addition, we must ramp up talent development, recruitment, and retention efforts especially for teachers and school leaders. Simultaneously, we must address human capital needs in our lowest performing schools and strive to get our very best teachers in front of our neediest students. An effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every building should be a non-negotiable.

Continuous Organizational Improvement

Considering UCPS is one of the highest performing systems in the state, we must continue to push for advancing rigor, expectations, and growth without becoming complacent. We must develop district-wide strategies for improving all schools while closing achievement gaps between identified racial and ethnic demographics. Efforts to better align the organization to ensure streamlined ownership and responsibilities have begun. Such efforts, including performance monitoring, aligned goal development, school improvement, fiscal and operational efficiency/ transparency, and non-academic efforts such as reducing chronic absenteeism and increasing parental/community engagement, are all critical to ensuring future success. The development and implementation of a continuous improvement framework and performance management system are crucial next steps.

College and Career Readiness

Students, even at an early age, must be afforded the opportunity to become aware of the vast possibilities to achieve their full potential via college and career readiness. In the elementary grades, college and career *awareness* should be the goal while in middle school, students venture more towards college and career *exploration*. In high school, college and career *specification* is the end game. In addition, as a system, we must improve our resources devoted to counseling and college access while building a K-12 vertically aligned experience for all students.

Academic Programming

Currently, students across the system have access to a varied array of coursework and academic programs. Greater consistency between and amongst schools, as well as expansion of existing offerings that are working, is a major next step. We must develop a strategy to expand dual language and global education opportunities to students in all feeder patterns. We must expand/increase advanced coursework opportunities such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate. A clear vision and implementation plan regarding the use of instructional technology is also required if we are to ensure that our blended learning initiatives are truly about changing teaching and learning. And we must revisit our current approach to literacy in grades K-3 and ensure all students have access to the similar quality of resources, teaching methodology, and literacy structures.



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