

## King Open Entry Plan

### Introduction

**In a real sense all life is interrelated. All men [and women] are caught up in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality.**

- **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

I'm humbled and excited about the opportunity to serve as Principal of the King Open School. Through my initial meetings with parents, staff and other members of the KO community, it is clear to me that The King Open School has a rich and long history grounded in social justice – a history that depicts your committed efforts to service the students in this richly diverse community both socially and academically. Social justice is a theme that links all of us and I certainly look forward to working with the King Open community as we find creative ways to first learn about each other and, thereafter, find creative ways to improve upon our existing practices. While none of us can make any definitive statements about change or restructuring (*other than what has been outlined in the Superintendent's Innovation Agenda and what we know through our individual and collective experience*), what is important is that we understand that our individual actions have a direct as well as indirect impact on each other. It is also important that each of us buy into a process of inquiry that results in a definitive, cohesive and coherent plan designed to meet the social and academic needs of the students we serve.

I am very empathetic to the change that is currently occurring at the King Open and its ambiguous nature – changes in administration, changes in staff, upcoming structural changes and all of this after changes that occurred only a short time ago when the King Open and Harrington schools merged. It is natural to have some reservations about moving forward when confronted with so much change and with a clear path yet to be determined. I suggest that we all remain true to any natural tendency to have questions about the unknown and find productive ways to surface as well as to address these concerns in a safe, and supportive environment with the understanding that we will be drawing from each other (*as well as other sources*) to create a clear action plan that all of us can buy into and, above all, continue to enthusiastically serve the social and academic interests of the students entrusted to us.

In closing, I want to personally thank Tim Groves for his leadership and support. He has been instrumental in helping my transition be as seamless as possible. The entire King Open community in general has been supportive. The reception to date has been warm and welcoming. I believe that learning occurs best in a caring and supportive environment and it is clear to me that this principle is ingrained in current practices at the school.

To officially begin my entry process, I have prepared a series of interview questions that I'm asking each of you to answer and send back to me preferably via email. These questions will ground the thirty minute meeting that I will have with each of you. Please feel free to bring to this meeting or forward to me in advance of this meeting any documents (*Certificates, Project Overviews, Course Syllabi, Curricula, Lesson Plans, Assessments, Progress Reports, Communications etc.*) that you feel will enable me to become better acquainted with you and your contributions to the King Open Community. I want to

learn about you, the school's history, rules, roles and responsibilities, behavioral norms and standard operational procedures. My immediate goals are as follows:

1. To meet with KO staff individually and collectively in order to learn more about the school and the staff's individual and collective contributions,
2. To meet with parents and students to get a sense of their concerns, hopes and dreams for the future of the King Open Community,
3. To set clear expectations for myself, staff, students and parents,
4. To make informed decisions about our current instructional practices using existing data resources (*in and outside of the school*) in a united effort to improve the quality of our work and our impact on our struggling students,
5. To understand the existing structures of communication – among staff, with parents and with students,
6. To use the current School Improvement Plan as a starting place for addressing student performance (*high and low achieving students as well as the students who perform somewhere in the middle*) and to work in unity with staff in formulating the school's priorities and an action plan for moving forward - an action plan that is understood to be a working document.
7. To work with the staff in implementing the superintendent's Innovation Agenda – Particularly the restructuring of the upper school.

## **Method**

My entry plan has three phases which will take from August to Mid-January to complete. **Phase I** of my entry will primarily be a series of individual meetings with classroom teachers, parents, students and district personnel. In preparation for these meetings, I will forward via email and regular mail the interview questions. Please complete these questions prior to the meeting and forward them to me along with any supporting material. Submit only what you believe will accurately and specifically represent who you are and what you contributed or hope to contribute. This will allow for a more productive discussion during which clarifying questions can be asked. Please know that information that you deem to be confidential will not be shared without your permission. These meetings will be followed by classroom visits.

Additionally, my meetings with district personnel will focus on the collection and organization of data that will better equip me to lead and support the King Open community.

**Phase II** of my entry plan will be a series of meetings with the faculty and parents. The focus of these meetings will be primarily to update faculty and parents on the progress of my entry plan particularly on the commonalities in your answers to the same questions – excluding any confidential information. I want to give everyone the opportunity to read and ask clarifying questions through an organized public discourse that result in a common understanding of the strengths and challenges of our school. With this information we will establish goals that are accompanied by indicators that we determine. These indicators will enable us to monitor and assess progress.

During **phase III** of my entry plan, I will present the final results with a draft action plan for reaching our goals. Before I make a final decision on this action plan we (*Administrators/teachers/parents*) will review and make any needed revisions.

Because transparency is important to me, I am disclosing this information in advance so that you have a better sense of what my initial plans are. **It is possible that some parts of this plan might overlap as time constraints or other unforeseeable matters surface. It is my desire to include all stakeholders so please let me know if I have omitted anyone so that I can modify this plan.**

A Summary of What I Plan to Do to Get Started	
<p><b>Reviewing Curriculum Related Material</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Read Social Studies and Humanities curriculum</li> <li>➤ Read Literacy and Language Arts Curriculum</li> <li>➤ Read Math and Science Curriculum</li> <li>➤ Review information Related to Portuguese and Spanish instruction</li> <li>➤ Read information to develop a clear understanding of the regular King Open and Ola Program</li> <li>➤ Read Art, Music, and Physical Education Curriculum</li> <li>➤ Meet with Grade Level Teams to understand strengths and challenges of the current grade structure</li> <li>➤ Review Afterschool and Extended Day Information</li> <li>➤</li> </ul>	<p><b>District Personnel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Read Previous years School Budget</li> <li>➤ Review MCAS Data</li> <li>➤ Read Innovation Agenda</li> <li>➤ Meet with Central Office Personnel</li> <li>➤ Meet with Community Partners</li> </ul>
<p><b>Students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Monthly Meetings with Advisory Group – upper and lower groups</li> <li>➤ Read Alouds with Grades K-2</li> <li>➤ Attend School Functions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parents and Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Read school council’s previous year’s meeting minutes</li> <li>➤ Interviews/meetings with School Council</li> <li>➤ Individual and group coffee meetings with parents – A.M. and P.M. Mtgs.</li> <li>➤ Participate in Open House Activities</li> <li>➤ Meet with Friends of King Open</li> </ul>
<p><b>School Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Individual meetings with staff</li> <li>➤ Meet with Grade-level Teams</li> <li>➤ Meet with Entire Faculty</li> <li>➤ Meet with Union Representatives</li> <li>➤ Principal Advisory Group</li> <li>➤ Serve with ILT and SST</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Create Principal Advisory Group</li> <li>➤ Re-Organize Student Advisory Group</li> <li>➤ Classroom Visits</li> </ul>

Entry Activity Time Line	Interview Schedule
<p>July/August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Meet with central office personnel</li> <li>➤ meet with school Staff Groups: ILT and School Council to set initial goals and plans</li> <li>➤ Meet with main office secretary, parent liaison, extended day program manager and head custodian</li> <li>➤ Read Information received from central office pertinent to district and King Open</li> </ul>	<p>July/August</p> <p>10 – 3 hr. meetings with Administrative team in July</p> <p>05 – 2 hr. meetings in August</p> <p>02 – 1 hr. meetings with Secretary</p> <p>02 – 1 hr. meetings with custodial staff</p> <p>01 – 1 hr. meeting with Math Literacy Coach</p> <p>01 – 1 hr. meeting with Literacy Coach</p> <p>01 – 1 hr. meeting with Asst. Dir. Of Special Education</p> <p>01 – 1 hr. meeting with ESL Coordinator</p> <p>02 – 1 hr. meetings with Inclusion Specialist</p> <p>01 – 1 hr. Meeting Psychologist</p> <p>01 – 1 hr. meeting with Adjustment counselor</p> <p>01 – 1 hr. meeting with Manager KOED</p> <p>01 – 1 hr. meeting with Library Media Teacher</p> <p>02 – 1 hr. meetings with family liaisons</p> <p>02 – 3 hr. meetings with ILT</p> <p>02 – 1 hr. meetings with Parent Council Co-Chair</p> <p>01 – 2.5 hr. meetings with parent council</p> <p>01 – 1 hr. Meeting with Union President</p>
<p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Interview Teachers</li> <li>➤ Conduct Classroom Visits</li> <li>➤ Conduct Student Interviews/Group Meetings</li> <li>➤ Visibility in the corridors, cafeteria and playground, morning arrival, after school dismissal for walkers and busing students</li> <li>➤ Work with Union Reps to form Advisory Tem</li> <li>➤ Serve on SST</li> <li>➤ Serve on ILT</li> <li>➤ Interview School Staff Groups: 5 grade-level teams, OSE Teachers, OLA Program, Staff of Color</li> <li>➤ Co-Chair School Council meetings</li> <li>➤ Coffee Meetings with parents</li> <li>➤ Review progress on entry plan, make adjustments during faculty meetings</li> </ul>	<p>September</p> <p>10 – 30 Minute meetings with teachers</p> <p>10 – 15 Minute classroom visits</p> <p>Weekly meetings with Grade level teams</p> <p>01 – 1 hr. meeting with school nurse</p> <p>01 – 45 Minute meeting with cafeteria manager</p> <p>01 – 30 Minute meeting with Cafeteria help</p> <p>01 – 45 Minute Faculty meeting</p> <p>01 – 1.5 Hr. School Council Meeting</p> <p>02 – 30/45 Minute Student Advisory Meetings –</p>

<p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue teacher interviews</li> <li>➤ Complete pre-evaluation meetings</li> <li>➤ Conduct classroom visits and provide feedback</li> <li>➤ Conduct Student Interviews/Group Meetings</li> <li>➤ Visibility in the corridors, cafeteria and playground, morning arrival, after school dismissal for walkers and busing students</li> <li>➤ Work with Union Reps to form Advisory Team and establish first meeting date.</li> <li>➤ Meet with SST</li> <li>➤ Attend Grade-level meetings</li> <li>➤ Attend Organized Parent Meetings</li> <li>➤ Attend School council meeting</li> <li>➤ Review progress on entry plan, make adjustments during faculty meetings</li> </ul>	<p>October</p> <p>10 – 45 Minute meetings with teachers</p> <p>10 – 15 Minute Classroom visits</p> <p>01 - 30/45 Minute Morning and Afternoon coffee Meetings with parents</p> <p>01 – 45 Minute Principal Advisory Meeting with Union Reps</p> <p>01 – 45 Minute Faculty meeting</p> <p>01 – 1.5 Hr. School Council Meeting</p> <p>02 – 30/45 Minute Student Advisory Meetings –</p>
<p>November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Conduct classroom visits and provide feedback</li> <li>➤ Conduct Student Interviews/Group Meetings</li> <li>➤ Visibility in the corridors, cafeteria and playground, morning arrival, after school dismissal for walkers and busing students</li> <li>➤ Meet With Principal’s Advisory Group</li> <li>➤ Meet with SST</li> <li>➤ Attend Grade-level meetings</li> <li>➤ Attend Organized Parent Meetings</li> <li>➤ Attend School council meeting</li> <li>➤ Review progress on entry plan, make adjustments during faculty meetings</li> </ul>	<p>November</p> <p>05 – 45 Minute teacher interviews</p> <p>05 – 15 minute Classroom Visits</p> <p>01 – 45 Minute Faculty meeting</p> <p>01 – 30/45 Minute Morning and Afternoon coffee Meetings with parents</p> <p>01 – 1.5 Hr. School Council Meeting</p> <p>02 – 30/45 Minute Student Advisory Meetings</p>
<p>December</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Generate a report based on interview data from staff, parents and students with a recommended list of priorities</li> <li>➤ Review priorities with staff, parents and students – allow for clarification and consensus on priorities</li> <li>➤ Draft Action Plan and Time Line to Plan for implementation and School Restructuring</li> </ul>	<p>December</p> <p>12 – 15 Minute classroom Visits</p> <p>01 – 45 Minute Faculty meeting</p> <p>01 – 30/45 Minute Morning and</p> <p>01 – 1.5 hr. School Council Meeting</p> <p>02 – Meetings to review data and solicit feedback</p>
<p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Present final interview results with action plan – Solicit for questions and revisions</li> <li>➤ Review plan with staff, parents and students for review</li> <li>➤ Publish revised report to the community</li> </ul>	<p>January</p> <p>01 – 1 hr. Faculty Meeting to present final findings, recommended priorities and a plan for moving forward.</p> <p>01 – 1.5 hr. School Council Meeting</p>

### **Interview Questions for Teachers**

1. Please write a brief autobiographical sketch of yourself. Be sure to include what you think is particularly important for me to know about you.
2. Describe your current role in the school and describe any contributions that you have and/or would like to make.
3. What current practices need to be preserved to ensure the school's continued effectiveness? What practices need to be changed or modified?
4. Describe what you believe to be the level of parent involvement. Please elaborate on the strengths and challenges of this involvement. What steps do you take to encourage parent involvement?
5. Please share any additional information you would like to share either related to you and/or the school.

### **Team Meeting Questions**

1. How do you know your students are learning individually and as a group?
2. How do you communicate academic progress (or lack thereof) to the student and their families?
3. How often do you look at assessment data (*individually and with your colleagues*) to make decisions about teaching and learning?
4. How often do you look at student work (*individually and with your colleagues*) to make adjustments to your instructional practice?
5. What do you think the school needs to do to improve collaboration among teachers?

### **Interview Questions for Parents**

1. In your experience what has been the most positive ways the teachers have supported your child's learning?
2. How do you think teachers can support students more effectively?
3. Do you think that the needs of your special education students are being addressed?
4. What do you hope your child will achieve by the time he/she graduates from this school?
5. In your view what are the schools strengths and challenges? What would you like to see preserved? What changes are needed?
6. Do you believe that our school is sensitive and responsive to the various cultures represented among families that attend our school? Why or why not?
7. Specifically related to your family, what do you feel is the most important question that you would like your child's teacher to answer?

### **Interview Questions for Students**

1. What are your goals for the school year?
2. What do you like best about King Open? What would you change?
3. Do you feel comfortable sharing information about yourself? Why or why not?
4. In your opinion, what do you think is the best characteristic that a teacher can have?
5. What would you like the new principal to know about you?

## **Logistics**

I am distributing this plan to the school community. Scheduling and time constraints will clearly impact this plan. I will work with our Assistant Principal, Regina Osborne; Clerk, Brenda Christie; Co-Chair of School Council, Leah Rugen; Family Resource Liaisons, Neusa DaCosta and Debra Klein; Bucky O'Hare, KOED Program Manager as well as other pertinent school staff.

## **A Final Note**

As we embark upon the challenges to come, let us embrace this challenge as one. Let us ground our decisions in data and let the information gained from this data inform our practice today and in the months to come. Let us capitalize on the expertise and good work that already exists in this building. As we move forward, let the work that accompanies teaching and learning be grounded in a purpose that is higher than each of us and services the families that have entrusted us with the task of educating their children – a purpose that puts the best interest of the students first, a purpose that makes this work – this calling – meaningful. I look forward to working with each of you!

Darrell Williams