



“As a learning community, the Webster Groves School District will lead in purposeful innovation that challenges each of us to discover and pursue our passions and make a positive impact on the world.” -WGSD Vision

## Table of Contents

District Vision, Mission, Values, and Thematic Goals	2
Letter to the Webster Groves School District Community	3
Strategic Actions to Transition	4
Listen to the Community	4
Foster an effective board-superintendent relationship	8
Assess Organizational Functioning and Effectiveness	9

DRAFT

# Path To Success for Webster Students

---

## Mission Statement

**Our Purpose** The Webster Groves School District community is committed to academic and personal success for every student.

---

## Vision Statement

**Our Future** As a learning community, the Webster Groves School District will lead in purposeful innovation that challenges each of us to discover and pursue our passions and make a positive impact on the world.

---

## Our Values

**We Model & Promote**

- Learning • Curiosity
- Diversity • Courage
- Community • Individuality
- Tradition • Innovation

## Goals

In order to accomplish the district's Mission and Vision statements, the following goals will focus our strategic plan for the future:

### Personalized Learning

Webster Groves School District will personalize learning for all students to increase engagement and rigor resulting in improved student achievement.

### Creating a Culture of Innovation

Webster Groves School District will foster curiosity and exploration throughout the school community to establish a culture of innovation.

### Sustainability

Webster Groves School District will make a positive impact on the world by being a model for teaching, learning and practicing sustainability.

### Communication

Webster Groves School District will engage stakeholders in an open communication process that emphasizes feedback to create a positive and challenging educational experience for students.



Dear Webster Groves School District Community,

First of all, I am incredibly honored and excited to serve the Webster Groves School District as its superintendent of schools effective July 1, 2016. I look forward to partnering with each of you to ensure our community's children have access to the best schools possible. While the Webster Groves School District is widely and rightfully recognized as an exemplary district around the world, I believe that by working intentionally and thoughtfully together, we'll soar to heights that amaze even us!

In an effort to learn more about the district's strengths, challenges, and opportunities, and to build on the district's shared vision, I've created an entry plan which will guide my actions in support of my transition into this new role. Central to the change is my need to spend a significant amount of time listening and learning from a wide range of district community members. The insights from each experience will enable me to gain a deeper understanding of the district community and existing perceptions of the school district. By being open, honest, respectful, and attentive, our direction and inspiration will come from the many voices throughout our district community.

In addition to engaging in meaningful and productive dialogue with district stakeholders, special priority will also be given to fostering strong, effective relationships with the Board of Education to ensure a shared sense of clarity and purpose in our interactions and expectations. Having a unified approach will support our efficiency and effectiveness as a leadership team.

Finally, I will spend a substantial amount of time examining the district's existing practices, structures, and systems through countless conversations and review of documentation. While I enter the position with more knowledge than most due to my eleven years as an employee of the district, engaging in this process will allow me to better understand the district's operations from a broader level so that I can support the organization's systemic movement toward our vision.

I look forward to working with the Board of Education, staff, district families, and all the other members of our district community to move toward our district vision with unwavering purpose and intentions clear to all!

With great anticipation,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads 'John D. Simpson'.

John Simpson

---

"As a learning community, the Webster Groves School District will lead in purposeful innovation that challenges each of us to discover and pursue our passions and make a positive impact on the world."

## Strategic Actions to Transition

LISTEN TO THE COMMUNITY	
Not Started <span style="color: red;">■</span> In Progress <span style="color: green;">■</span> Completed <span style="color: orange;">■</span>	Status
<b>Winter/Spring 2016</b>	
Regularly meet with Dr. Riss to seek her wisdom, guidance, and knowledge regarding everything relevant to the school district and specifically the role of superintendent.	
Provide an opportunity for the central office leadership cabinet to offer thoughts and feedback regarding the transition plan	
Meet with each school's parent community via a PTO meeting or other school gathering	
Meet with Ed Johnson, Ellie Wharton, and members of the North Webster Coalition to listen to their ideas for how to best develop relationships, and regularly connect with and involve families in the North Webster Neighborhood	
Schedule a time to connect with Key Communicators	
Schedule a time to connect with the WGSD Foundation	
Continue participating in a variety of community-based events and programs	
Schedule a time to connect with the Finance Advisory Committee	
Schedule a time to connect with the Building Advisory Committee	
Schedule focus groups with children, staff, and parent/community members	
Secure Dr. Donna Jahnke, superintendent of the Ladue School District, to serve as my professional mentor	
Begin scheduling committee meetings for 16-17	

“As a learning community, the Webster Groves School District will lead in purposeful innovation that challenges each of us to discover and pursue our passions and make a positive impact on the world.”



Work with the central office leadership cabinet and other stakeholders to welcome new administrators (or new to the role) to the WGSD	
Continue attending Legislative Advisory meetings	
Schedule a time to connect with the district's Issues Committee	
Continue work in curriculum and instruction including initiating respectful transition with new hire	
<b>Summer 2016</b>	
Connect with Kevin Murphy and Marty Harris of the Webster Kirkwood Times to initiate a positive relationship and establish a framework for collaboration that is open and transparent	
Co-design and implement the DLT retreat to deepen relationships with new and existing staff, and make decisions regarding the group's organization and functioning moving forward.	
Co-design and implement a central office leadership cabinet retreat to engage in team building, set goals for 16-17, and begin planning for the team's functioning moving forward	
Connect with Don Senti, executive director from EdPlus, to hear what he's learned during the time he's spent with many superintendents and to understand how to maximize use of EdPlus	
Connect with local law enforcement	
Attend a community Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Meeting	
Connect with the mayors and other local officials from Rock Hill, Shrewsbury, Glendale, Webster Groves, and Warson Woods including taking a tour with each of the community each serves	
Create dialogue and partnerships with various faith-based organizations and schools throughout the community in order to mutually support one another and nurture good will	
Develop a cycle for regular school visits which includes debriefing sessions	

---

“As a learning community, the Webster Groves School District will lead in purposeful innovation that challenges each of us to discover and pursue our passions and make a positive impact on the world.”

with building administrators	
Create and communicate a “superintendent communication plan” taking into account the effectiveness of current communication vehicles and tools	
Send a “welcome” to the entire district community	
Develop a schedule for regular meetings with the entire central office leadership team	
Connect with Don Bohannon, Superintendent of Special School District, in support of our districts’ partnership	
Connect with David Glazer, Chief Executive Officer of the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation, in support of our organizations’ partnership	
Receive training regarding use of School Reach	
Connect with all staff groups working during the summer to include but not limited to custodians and maintenance	
Connect with Dougan	
<b>Fall 2016</b>	
Visit a staff meeting at each school	
Participate in each school’s open house (ie: video message)	
Schedule meetings with student groups for initial listening and learning sessions to seek their guidance on a variety of district-related matters and determine how to best stay connected throughout the year	
Connect with the PTO leadership from district schools	
Regularly spend time in schools during the day and at school events in order to meaningfully connect with students, staff, and families	
Begin intentionally entering local businesses and organizations to connect, express a gratitude and/or an eagerness to partner, and nurture good will	
Continue connecting with Webster University leadership and staff regarding	

“As a learning community, the Webster Groves School District will lead in purposeful innovation that challenges each of us to discover and pursue our passions and make a positive impact on the world.”

existing and future partnerships.	
Work with Cathy Vespereny, district administrators, and district stakeholders to seek feedback regarding existing communication channels, refining those channels as needed	
Schedule focus groups with children, staff, and parent/community members	
Work with the central office leadership cabinet to connect with individuals, groups, and companies supportive of the district	
Connect with local legislators individually	

DRAFT



FOSTER AN EFFECTIVE BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP	
Not Started <span style="color: red;">■</span> In Progress <span style="color: green;">■</span> Completed <span style="color: orange;">■</span>	Status
<b>Winter/Spring 2016</b>	
Work with the board to finalize the transition plan	
Regularly meet with board leadership and Dr. Riss to listen, learn, and contribute as needed to the preparation for upcoming board meetings	
Meet with each individual board members to deepen relationships and broaden perspective	
Work with the board to prepare for the board retreat in June including but not limited to our goals to accomplish	
Work with board leadership to create a draft 16-17 board calendar	
<b>Summer 2016</b>	
Co-develop and begin using agreed-upon communication protocols between the superintendent and board	
Establish a regular meeting time with the board president and vice-president to set the agendas for board meetings during the 16-17 school year	
Finalize the 16-17 board calendar	
<b>Fall 2016</b>	
Provide the board with regular updates on the “transition plan.”	

ASSESS ORGANIZATIONAL FUNCTIONING AND EFFECTIVENESS	
Not Started <span style="color: red;">■</span> In Progress <span style="color: green;">■</span> Completed <span style="color: orange;">■</span>	Status
<b>Winter/Spring 2016</b>	
Initiate “data dive” of all departments requesting all information pertinent to the efficient operations of each respective department	
<b>Summer 2016</b>	
Following a review of the information collected in the spring, individually meet with each central office leadership cabinet member to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-discuss his/her department’s “current reality,”</li> <li>-discuss his/her department’s future work and goals in support of the district’s vision and strategic plan, and</li> <li>-determine how I can best support the cabinet member and his/her department</li> </ul>	
Develop a more comprehensive understanding of the district’s crisis plan including the specific role(s) of the superintendent with implementation	
Begin to develop a deep, comprehensive understanding of the district’s finance and operations including financial projections and the process for building the annual operating budget to align with the district vision and strategic plan	
Review the district’s digital presence, including communication via Facebook, Twitter, and district web sites	
Establish communication protocols with the DLT, central office cabinet members, and all district staff	
Begin a review of organizational systems for alignment to strategic priorities	

---

“As a learning community, the Webster Groves School District will lead in purposeful innovation that challenges each of us to discover and pursue our passions and make a positive impact on the world.”

Fall 2016	
Meet with each district administrator to listen, learn, and secure both a targeted and systemic view regarding the district's culture and function	

DRAFT