INTRODUCTION

I’d like to thank each of you for always lifting up what matters most – our continuous work to create a better future for the children of Baton Rouge. My wife and I moved to Baton Rouge in my early twenties, where I began my professional career in EBR schools as a teacher. Over the years, I progressed through the organization in a variety of school and district leadership roles including principal, executive director and associate superintendent. Fast forward to today, I am now the proud father of four EBRPSS graduates and a grandfather to the future generation of EBR students. As a twenty-four-year veteran of this school system, it is a tremendous honor to serve as its interim superintendent in the district that has shaped my life and the lives of countless others in this great community.

The past nine months have brought much uncertainty to our country, our state, and to our city. The pandemic brought about many social, emotional, and physical health challenges to students and their families. These unforeseen impacts necessitated immediate change and led us to the creation of a unique educational landscape. This team’s collective resiliency and ability to adapt to the ever-changing circumstances will carry us into a brighter future.

In response to my recent appointment by the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board, I have prepared an action plan to create an intentional focus for the next six months of my service as the Interim Superintendent of Schools for our district.

This plan symbolizes my wholehearted preparation and commitment to advancing the goals of the children and families of this community. Moreover, this document represents my firm beliefs in relationship building, engaging in data-driven decision making and seeking multiple modes of input to foster a collaborative, thriving learning community. This document serves as a fluid roadmap to foster ongoing conversation with the greater community of stakeholders and a precursor to a formal strategic planning process.

Sincerely,

Adam Smith
EBRPSS Interim Superintendent
OVERVIEW AND PLAN

This action plan is strategically organized into areas that lie at the core of the effectiveness of any educational organization. Throughout its implementation, I will engage in listening and learning exercises to solidify and improve relationships; to better understand the district’s capacity beyond the perspective of my current role; to gauge the various perceptions of a variety of stakeholders and build trust; to readjust organizational systems and structures to be more efficient in all key areas of district operations.

My proposed plan is rooted in the district’s mission and three short term objectives to carry out that mission. Leadership at all levels must embrace its role elevate our culture to meet the following objectives:

- Ensure stability to support a strong finish to the 2020–2021 school year.
- Engage in data-driven decision making to meet academic and overall organizational goals in an equitable manner.
- Provide leadership and vision, reach short-term and long-term goals, and lay the foundation for a successful strategic planning process within a professional, collaborative learning community.

In order to meet these objectives and set purposeful planning into motion, it is important to study the current state of the organization’s shortcomings and its vast potential for success.

REPORT CARD

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CHILDREN COMMUNITY COMMITMENT
A fundamental set of core values will guide and permeate our daily operations, as well as my tenure of service.

- Adam Smith

**CORE VALUES**

**OUR CHILDREN**

Our students - past, present and future - are our top priority. Their success must be at the heart of all that we do, and the constant inspiration that guides our decision-making processes.

**OUR COMMUNITY**

Our citizens deserve faithful stewards of their resources. We must build upon what works and correct inefficiencies of the past to earn the trust of the members of this community.

**OUR COMMITMENT**

Our greatest strength is the collective and wholehearted dedication to our mutually agreed upon purpose - Building the Future of Baton Rouge.

**LAYING THE FOUNDATION**

In alignment with the school board’s guiding principles, I’ve identified four cornerstones to cement our dedication and commitment to the children of this community. In this plan, you will find a brief synopsis of the tactics and tools that will be used to guide the staff in pursuit of our desired outcomes.
THE four CORNERSTONES

TEACHING AND LEARNING
HEALTH AND SAFETY
OPERATIONS AND ORGANIZATION
COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS
A commitment to supporting the teaching and learning of all children is the primary purpose and expectation of every district employee. Essential to our success is the school system’s capacity to establish a culture and climate that supports learning at the highest levels. Towards this goal, my entry plan focuses on ensuring equitable and rigorous academic programming for all children; increasing academic outcomes to create quality seats to foster greater school choice within our community; deploying appropriate supports to level the playing field for at-risk children and special populations of students. Staff must remain committed to the ongoing analysis of student achievement data to inform instructional practices and ensure the allocation of twenty-first century, technology-based resources. This data will help us address achievement gaps, inequities, and identify needs for the upcoming spring testing cycles. To ensure our schools are being served and supported to the best of our abilities, central office staff will be refocused to support the four key priority areas.

Tactics

DEVELOP DETAILED PROCESSES AND ACTION PLANS WITH EVIDENCE-BASED OUTCOMES TO ENSURE THE FOLLOWING:

- Creating equitable access to Tier 1 curriculum
- Aligning assessment resources across the district
- Delivering purposeful professional development to strengthen the quality of in-person and remote learning
- Planning intensive preparation for the rigor of state testing
- Ensuring equitable college and career readiness preparations for all students
- Reassessing and shifting district office personnel to better support schools and identified instructional priorities
A city is only as strong as its public school system. We owe it to the community to serve as faithful and responsible stewards of taxpayer funds and ideals. Our district is committed to demonstrating its priorities through its allocation of resources, especially during this worldwide pandemic. The equitable distribution of resources must support safe and healthy learning environments. The past nine months have highlighted the need for new and improved monitoring of facility maintenance and cleaning as well as the procurement of the essential resources to achieve these tasks. My plan calls for the careful examination of processes and procedures related to COVID tracking, COVID response, building cleanliness, distribution of PPE, and a renewed focus on activities to support the social and emotional wellbeing of children and staff. Increased attention to the overall wellbeing including the mind, body, and spirit of those we serve, is essential for the continued growth and prosperity of our community.

**Tactics**

DEVELOP DETAILED PROCESSES AND ACTION PLANS WITH EVIDENCE-BASED OUTCOMES TO ENSURE THE FOLLOWING:

- Creating intentional, student-centered plans to support Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and wrap-around support services
- Implementing transparent COVID tracking procedures and response protocols
- Monitoring facility cleanings daily and added layers of accountability
- Evaluating facilities and building preparedness to serve students and staff in a safe and reliable manner
- Adapting child nutrition continually to serve the daily needs of both in-person and virtual learners
The effective identification of tools and resources is essential to achieving an organization’s goals. Moreover, once resources are properly identified, they must be organized and realigned to ensure operational effectiveness. This plan calls for increased focus around organizational efficiency and operational effectiveness through the following:

- The equitable distribution of resources must demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement. This plan calls for the careful examination of all budgetary allocations and resource utilization to ensure resources are being allocated to all children in an efficient and equitable manner; sustainability for continued community service; and modern and progressive thinking for overall organizational and operational effectiveness. Included in this key area is a detailed analysis of staffing models and school support functions. In response to the COVID pandemic and identified achievement gaps, a shift in staffing may be required to address instructional inequities brought on by the unexpected school closures last spring. The upcoming budget cycle will be one of the most challenging ever. Staff and I are committed to presenting a balanced budget next spring. In order to achieve this, we will engage in a series of tactics to review efficiencies at all levels while preserving the integrity of the classroom at all costs.

**Tactics**

- Evaluating school staffing and recruitment models at all levels
- Shifting resources to support the classroom and address inequities
- Implementing fiscally responsible budgeting cycles and resource allocation reviews
- Monitoring and adhering to tax plan implementation timeline
- Ensuring timely action is taken in accordance with facility maintenance project specifications
- Analyzing the district’s portfolio of schools and programming to identify possible reconfigurations and efficiencies for a better strategic coordination of academic programming and access to high-quality seats
- Collaborating with stakeholders to further conversations regarding RSD reunification and other avenues for continued efficiency and diversification of programming
COMMUNICATIONS & RELATIONSHP

EBRPSS Communications seeks to engage with staff, students, families and all other stakeholders to keep the community informed of the innovative and exciting moments occurring daily throughout the East Baton Rouge Parish School System. This plan aims to provide strategic communications and marketing campaigns to effectively interact with all stakeholders, collect and analyze constructive feedback, and implement changes to meet the evolving needs of information consumers. Additionally, communication structures must be consistent to foster important and collaborative conversations, and uplift progress and student achievement – both of which are essential to systemic change and overall district improvement. Over the course of the next six months, staff will engage in a variety of advertising and marketing tactics to extend the current lines of communication and to improve the district’s visibility in the community.

Because of the strength, passion, and talents of its students and staff, the East Baton Rouge Parish School System is home to extraordinary talent and inspiring stories. It is an honor to share these stories of hard work and success as we continue to Build the Future of Baton Rouge. It will take commitment and dedication from all stakeholders to change the narrative and celebrate the diversity of this dynamic educational ecosystem.

**Tactics**

- Establishing enhanced communications amongst board members, staff and community members
- Creating collaborative opportunities to ensure avenues exist for all stakeholders to make their voices heard
- Analyzing marketing and advertising methods to ensure messaging is reaching the appropriate audiences
- Scheduling community forums (virtual or in-meetings) to collect input on the strategic planning process
- Communicating consistently and across various channels to expand buy-in from diverse groups throughout the community
- Celebrating student and teacher achievements and pushing for positive cultural shifts districtwide
DIGGING DEEPER

Senior leadership will lead the implementation of the aforementioned identified tactics and partner with staff to ensure all four cornerstones are prioritized. Once aligned, collaborative committees will break down these priorities into a series of measurable tasks. Through this important work, staff must feel called to fulfill their purpose and succeed for our children. All aspects of the organization must feel involved and have clearly defined roles to inspire change and momentum. Their collective commitment to our children and our community is essential to our success. To this end, a series of workshops are being scheduled in the next few weeks for staff, department heads, and key instructional leaders to outline expectations and goals.

All progress will be documented and chronicled throughout the implementation of this plan. I will provide open and transparent progress reports to the board and the public periodically to drive solution-oriented feedback throughout the year.

As I conclude this document, I feel compelled to state my intentions and let it be known that this district will not settle for mediocrity. As someone who has spent nearly half of his lifetime in EBR Schools as an employee, parent, and grandparent, I am fully committed to serving the children of this community. The challenges of the past nine months require solutions beyond traditional models. The keys to our success will be elevated thinking, pushing past comfort zones, breaking down historic barriers, and re-emerging as the new standard of excellence that shines for all to see.

Whether it be as an educational leader or as a private citizen, there will never come a day when I am finished Building the Future of Baton Rouge. Our collective investment is too strong, and there is too much at stake. Join me on this journey to excellence.

I am confident that together, as one team with one mission, we will achieve new heights and emerge stronger and better than before.

- Adam Smith