

BELMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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EXHIBIT D  
3-24-15

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To: Laurie Slap, School Committee Chair  
From: John P. Phelan  
RE: Mid- Year Review  
Date: March 20, 2015

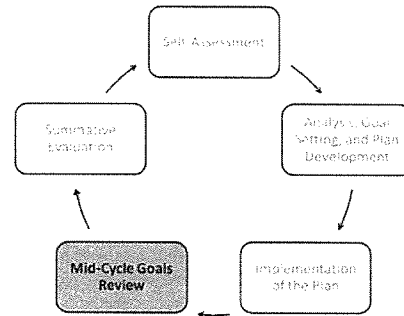
Please see the four attached documents that outline the work for the Superintendent's Mid-Year Review by the School Committee.

1. Page 14 of the Implementation Guide for Superintendent Evaluation, outlining the Mid-Year Review Process
2. Appendix H. of the Implementation Guide for Superintendent Evaluation, outlining process timelines for New Superintendents
3. Mid-Year Progress Report submitted by Superintendent John P. Phelan
4. Copy of Superintendent Goals submitted by Superintendent John P. Phelan in September 2014

## Step 4 of the Cycle: Mid-Cycle Goals Review Meeting

### 1. The superintendent prepares a progress report.

At mid-cycle, the superintendent synthesizes information obtained to date and prepares an assessment of progress on each of the goals detailed in the Superintendent's Annual Plan to present to the school committee for review. To enhance public understanding of the evaluation process, the superintendent typically presents the progress report on goals as an agenda item at a regularly scheduled meeting of the school committee.



### 2. The school committee and superintendent review the progress report at a public meeting:

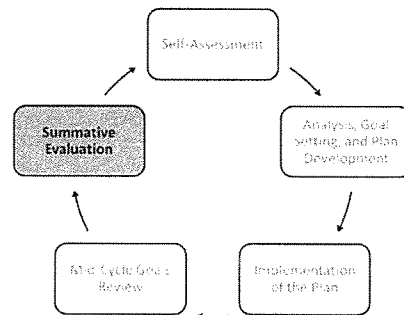
The superintendent and school committee review and discuss the report and evidence. Their purpose is to share relevant feedback, develop a clear understanding of the progress being made on each goal, and achieve agreement on what, if any, mid-course adjustments may be needed. To enhance public understanding of the evaluation process, it is recommended that the committee review the report and evidence at the same meeting at which the superintendent presents the report or at a subsequent regularly scheduled meeting of the school committee.

## Step 5 of the Cycle: End-of-Cycle and Summative Evaluation and Report<sup>14</sup>

### 1. The superintendent submits an End-of-Cycle Progress Report.

The superintendent prepares and submits to the school committee an assessment of:

- Progress on the goals
- Performance on each of the Standards
- Impact on student learning with data supporting the assessment



<sup>14</sup> Appendix E offers a detailed step-by-step guide to conducting the end-of-cycle performance review.

## Appendix H. What Changes in the Process and Timelines Should Be Considered for New Superintendents?

The evaluation process for superintendents who are new to the district or who have been promoted from within need not be substantially different from the process used for superintendents who have served more than one year in the district. Two modifications to the process are worth considering.

The first difference lies in the rating system as it applies to superintendents new to the role of superintendent. As described earlier, ratings of *Exemplary* performance will not be commonplace. They are reserved for performance on Standards or Indicators that exceed *Proficient* and are worthy of serving as a model for others. *Proficient* performance represents performance that is fully satisfactory. It, too, is meant to represent a high standard. Few new educators—be they superintendents, principals, or teachers—are expected to be *Proficient* on every indicator or even every standard in their first years of practice. For that reason, the *Needs Improvement* level of performance has a particular meaning for educators new to the role of teacher, principal, or superintendent. In these cases, *Needs Improvement* has the meaning of developing. It means that the educator's practice on a standard or indicator is not yet *Proficient*, but the educator appears to be "on track" to achieve proficiency within three years.

The second modification applies to both superintendents new to the role and those who are new to a district. It has to do with the substance of the goals established for the superintendent in the first year.

Most new superintendents in Massachusetts will be participating in the three-year New Superintendent Induction Program launched in 2010 by ESE and MASS in collaboration with MASC. The induction program supports superintendents to be effective instructional leaders, build strong relationships with their school committees and union leaders, and develop high-functioning leadership teams of district administrators and principals. They are supported to spend a considerable portion of the first year working with key stakeholders—including, of course, the school committee—to examine district needs and develop a coherent, widely understood strategy and goals for addressing them. The goals established for the superintendent's first year need to take into account the timetable for that work and, at the same time, ensure forward momentum on important ongoing improvement efforts at the school and district levels.

To that end, the following four goals can serve as starting points for the superintendent and school committee as they collaborate to develop the goals to be included in the Superintendent's Annual Plan for the superintendent's first year.<sup>1</sup> The first two are district improvement goals. The third is a goal related to the superintendent's own professional practice. The fourth can be a good starting point for implementing educator evaluation in the district in a fair, transparent manner.

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<sup>1</sup> Joan Connolly, retired superintendent from Winthrop and Malden, contributed to the development of these examples. Dr. Connolly directs the New Superintendent Induction Program.

**Goal 1: Effective Entry and Direction Setting.** By early spring, the district will have broad agreement from key stakeholder groups about (a) the district's most critical needs, (b) the strategies and goals that will address them most effectively, and (c) the measures that will be used to assess progress.

**Key Actions**

1. By mid-August,<sup>2</sup> present to the school committee a written Entry Plan, including (a) types of evidence to be analyzed, (b) stakeholders to be interviewed, (c) methods for assessing instructional practice, and (d) methods for assessing district systems of support including financial management, human resources, and operations.
2. By December, complete and present a report of Entry Findings that (a) synthesizes evidence collected, (b) identifies strengths of the system and the most critical areas for improvement that require further inquiry, and (c) identifies next steps for study.
3. By March, propose key strategies to improve student learning and other district systems of support.
4. By April, collaborate with school committee to identify three to five student learning and district improvement goals.
5. Secure stakeholder feedback about engagement, awareness, and commitment to the strategies and goals.

**Benchmarks**

1. Presentations completed on schedule (process).
2. Goals adopted (process).
3. Results of spring survey of key stakeholder groups demonstrate engagement (85 percent), awareness (75 percent), and agreement (60 percent) (outcomes).

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<sup>2</sup> This timetable applies to superintendents who begin July 1; it will need to be adapted for those starting at other times.

**Goal 2: Maintaining Momentum During the Transition.** Keep the district moving forward during this year's transition in leadership by working with principals and other district leaders to ensure that meaningful progress is made on critical district and school goals.

**Key Actions**

1. Within six weeks, complete with all principals and district administrators Steps 1 and 2 of the new Educator Evaluation Cycle (Self-Assessment; Analysis, Goal Setting, and Educator Plan Development).
2. By end of February, complete Formative Evaluation conferences with each principal and the district administrators the superintendent supervises.
3. By late spring, conduct at least three school and classroom visits to each school.<sup>3</sup>
4. By June 30, complete Summative Evaluation Reports for supervisees and analyze goal attainment.

**Benchmarks**

1. Completed Educator Evaluation Plans (process).
2. Log demonstrating at least three visits per school (process).
3. Analysis of Summative Evaluation Reports demonstrates meets or exceeds rating on 75 percent of principal and district administrator goals (outcome).

**Goal 3: (Professional Practice) New Superintendent Induction Program.** Develop skills in strategy development, data analysis, and instructional leadership by completing the first year of the New Superintendent Induction Program and earning at least *Proficient* ratings on each major assignment.

**Key Actions**

1. Attend eight daylong sessions.
2. Complete all assignments.
3. Consult with my assigned coach at least monthly.

**Benchmarks**

1. Calendar documents attendance and contact with coach (process).
2. Rubric rating on each assignment demonstrates proficiency (process and outcome).

The superintendent and school committee may consider a fourth goal. Pursuing this goal will help a district implement the new educator evaluation system at the same time as the district leadership team is strengthened in ways that will lead to improvements in teaching and learning districtwide.

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<sup>3</sup> In districts with more than 10 schools, responsibility for school visits may need to be shared with one or more assistant superintendents.

**Goal 4: Fair, Effective Classroom Teacher Evaluation.** By June, principals' and district administrators' ratings of classroom instruction will reflect a shared understanding of what classroom instruction entails when it is being done at the *Proficient* level.

***Key Actions***

1. Monitor the frequency of principal visits to classrooms and review the quality of their feedback to teachers.
2. Devote time at five leadership team meetings to viewing digital recordings of teaching and sharing conclusions about the level of practice observed.
3. During school visits, observe classrooms with the principal and share conclusions about the level of practice observed.

***Benchmark***

June administrator ratings of selected digital recordings of classroom instruction are comparable (outcome).

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## **Superintendent Mid-Year Progress Report**

March 20, 2015

Submitted by John P. Phelan, Superintendent Belmont Public Schools

### **Preface:**

After 8 months in the role of Superintendent in the Belmont Public Schools I have learned a great deal. The support and effort of all staff, the Leadership Council, School Committee members, and the community have been extraordinary.

### **Goal 1: Effective Entry and Directions Setting**

The majority of the work in July and August was spent on creation of the Superintendents' Entry Plan and the review and update of the Belmont Public Schools Strategic Plan.

The Entry Plan was presented to the School Committee in September. The work supporting the entry plan was conducted in May of 2014, through the summer months, and organized and communicated in September.

The Strategic Plan work was conducted in July and August during the three full Retreat Days with the Leadership Council and School Committee. This work proceeded into the fall and the updated Strategic Plan was presented to School Committee, staff and parents in November. The foundation for this work was to take into account the body of research completed by the district, (Modeling Group Summaries), previous Strategic Planning documents and present needs for 2014/15. The full Leadership Council brainstormed and decided the challenges of the district and the best way to prioritize the work for the upcoming school year—as represented in the updated Strategic Plan.

The Findings from the Entry Plan were outlined at our last School Committee meeting and a full report is forthcoming. The results of the Findings Report is being utilized by the Leadership Council, along with the internal work, and student achievement data to prepare for our goal setting and updated Strategic Plan for the 2015/16 school year.

**Goal 2: Maintaining Momentum During the Transition**

From a Team perspective: In an effort to keep the district moving forward, I utilized the documents and Strategic Planning information in existence (see above) to capitalize on the work that has been done prior to my arrival. I felt it important to respect this body of work and use it as the foundation to set goals for the 2014/15 school year. The conversations, meetings, and collaborative leadership work completed over the summer and fall were all predicated on the good work in place and utilized to address the identified “pressure points on the district” for the 2014/15 school year. The Leadership Council identified those pressure points as: 1. Enrollment, 2. Social Emotional Learning, 3. Safety. These became the priorities of our work this school year. Additionally the impact of lack of funding became an immediate pressure as well.

From an Individual Perspective: I met with every administrator under my supervision and completed the Education Evaluation Plan process in September. Each administrator submitted goals that will guide their work this school year. In an effort to observe administrators in action I have completed at least three (3) **Learning Walks** in each school, and attended staff meetings, curriculum meetings and other venues to assess performance and effectiveness.

**Goal 3: (Professional Practice) New Superintendent Induction Program**

I have been an active participant in the New Superintendent Induction Program. I attended all full day sessions and continue to meet monthly with my “Coach” Rose DiTullio. Additionally, I have completed all homework assignments and continue to utilize the program as useful resource to navigate my first year as a Superintendent.

**Goal 4: Fair, Effective Classroom Teacher Evaluation**

As stated above, I have conducted at least three (3) **Learning Walks** with building principals and will continue this practice through June. This time is spent discussing teaching and learning expectations, observing classroom teachers in action, and discussing our observations. This dialogue has proved to be a great tool in determining how teaching and learning is conducted in the schools and how each principal views his/her role in the positive impact of teaching and learning in their schools. Additionally, I have participated in the district-wide “Staff Review” sessions. Staff Review meetings are conducted at each school with principals, department heads and Central Office administration. In these meetings we discussed the performance and evaluation status of every teacher in every building. This practice was in place prior to my arrival in Belmont and has proven to be an effective tool in creating a common language and viewpoint of our staff that ensures high quality instructional practices.



**Goal 1: Effective Entry and Direction Setting.** By early spring, the district will have broad agreement from key stakeholder groups about (1) the district's most critical needs, (b) the strategies and goals that will address them most effectively, and (c) the measures that will be used to assess progress.

**Key Actions**

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4. By June, collaborate with school committee to identify three to five student learning and district improvement goals.
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