Dear Board and Community Members of Hampton City Schools,

As I share the outcome of my six-month journey as the new superintendent of Hampton City Schools (HCS), I am not only reminded of the words of Nelson Mandela, but I restate such profound words with a personal conviction: “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” It is with a commitment to and understanding of these words that I joined a team of committed educators in Hampton City Schools on July 15, 2015.

Over the past six months, I have had the wonderful opportunity to meet with over 1,000 members of the Hampton City Schools community. The conversations have been enlightening, and it is reaffirming to hear that education is an essential priority for this community.

Resoundingly, members of the Hampton community have shared with me their belief that a strong prekindergarten through 12th grade educational program is necessary for a healthy workforce and a stronger community for all citizens.

As such, I am delighted to share with the many vested members of the Hampton City Schools the Superintendent’s Look, Listen and Learn (LLL) Tour report. This report accomplishes the following:

- Outlines the Superintendent’s Look, Listen and Learn process;
- Shares observations learned during the LLL tour;
- Provides a snapshot of aspirations regarding the public education in our community as we fulfill our mission;
- Summarizes initial steps taken by the HCS team under my leadership;
- Outlines additional action steps that will further enhance our work and outcomes for students; and
- Provides relevant research that addresses the question of why certain strategies and action steps are necessary as we plan for the future of Hampton City Schools, in particular, a culture of excellence for all.

And so, thank you to the members of our learning community for the opportunity to hear from you as well as to share with you my personal journey and commitment to students and their families. Please know that I am committed to the work that comes with actualizing our mission of Every Child, Every Day, Whatever It Takes.

I recognize the valuable contributions made by previous leaders prior to my administration. I look forward to working with an outstanding team of educators as we build from places of strength.

Warm regards,

Jeffery O. Smith
The Superintendent’s Look, Listen and Learn Tour

Understanding the Current Reality of Hampton City Schools

The goals and process are included in the addendum section as a part of the Superintendent’s Look, Listen and Learn Tour report. However, a preface, a summary of the goals and process are listed below to provide clarity of rationale for the time and energy devoted to this undertaking.

Goals of the Superintendent’s Look, Listen and Learn Tour are to:

• Create opportunities to listen to and engage stakeholders as well as share aspects of my personal journey

• Provide a framework for a smooth transition of superintendent leadership within the division

• Gain knowledge that will assist in the development of action plans for the 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan

Process and Structure of the Superintendent’s Look, Listen and Learn Tour follow:

• Meet with individual members of the Hampton City School Board

• Participate in a HCS School Board retreat to establish agendas for the 2015 – 2016 school year and to discuss expectations, various protocols, roles and responsibilities

• Meet with central office staff and school administrators to discuss priorities and goals for the 2015 – 2016 year based on student achievement and other data

• Visit schools and begin classroom visits

• Initiate and hold listening sessions with various stakeholders

• Review various data sets

• Review processes regarding systems for monitoring student achievement

• Deepen knowledge of the HCS academies
Essential Questions of the Superintendent’s Look, Listen and Learn Tour

1. Where would you like to see Hampton City Schools in the next three years (indicators of success)?

2. What are the programs and/or initiatives currently in place to help Hampton City Schools achieve the indicators of success?

3. What are the inhibitors/challenges?

4. What do you see as your role in assisting the school division in reaching the indicators of success in the next three years? In what ways will you partner with Hampton City Schools?

Expected Outcomes of the Superintendent’s Look, Listen, and Learn Tour

- Increased knowledge and awareness for the superintendent of Hampton City Schools and the community for informed decision-making that will be shared with internal and external stakeholders
- Action plans for the 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan
- Greater staff and community awareness of the Division’s strategic plan
- Support for, and greater engagement of, stakeholders in attaining the goals of the 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan

Superintendent’s Look, Listen and Learn Presentations

Included in the addendum is a copy of the Superintendent’s Look, Listen and Learn presentations. However, listed below are essential components of the presentations. Each community stakeholder group’s presentation included the following components:

- Highlight of my personal and educational journey – family, education and career
- Life and leadership value system
- Personal philosophy
- Essential beliefs regarding teaching and learning
- Personal commitment to fulfilling the mission of HCS
- An understanding that accomplishing the work is based upon effective and supportive relationships
- Overview of HCS mission, vision and core values
- Synopsis of the six strategic focus areas – HCS Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020
• Persisting challenges to meeting the mission and moving toward the vision

• Greatest resources for the work of teaching and learning

**Superintendent’s Look, Listen and Learn Observations and Opportunities**

During the Superintendent’s Look, Listen and Learn Tour, I was provided the occasion to test my personal supposition that opportunity, human capital, commitment to student success, community pride, and a competitive spirit were supportive pillars in Hampton City Schools (HCS) for accomplishing the work of teaching and learning.

Below are some of my findings that are directly aligned to the new Hampton City Schools Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020. Please note that goals of the strategic plan are not addressed in their entirety, given this is not the intent of the report.

Additionally, this report provides an outline of some of the initial steps that I recommend we begin to take as we fully give our attention, and direct our energies toward, ensuring our students graduate career, college, and life ready.

**Maximize Every Child’s Learning**

**Key Goals**

• Increase achievement for students

• Increase literacy for every student

• Intentionally close achievement gaps

• Graduate 100% of our students

**Observations**

Throughout the Superintendent’s Look, Listen and Learn Tour, it was evident that staff and community members are committed to the mission of academic excellence for every child, every day, whatever it takes. An underlying element that was observed was a keen interest in clearly understanding what resources would add the greatest value and yield the best outcomes for the young people being served in HCS.

Responses to the question “Where would you like to see HCS in the next three years?” addressed this key goal. Specifically, persons indicated a desire for 1) increased student achievement, 2) emphasis on academic excellence, 3) attaining fully accredited schools, and 4) ensuring HCS as the division of choice for students and staff.

As we ensure the HCS mission of **academic excellence for every child, every day, whatever it takes** is realized, each person, structure and process must be aligned to the mission. Otherwise, we lose the ability to influence the work on behalf of students through the lens of the division’s mission.
Therefore, we must ensure a systems approach (aligned acts of improvement) is in place in order to achieve our desired outcomes. “Systems thinking” will be discussed later in this report in the maintaining effective, efficient and innovative support systems section. However, a systems approach is referenced at this point in the report because it must have a prominent place of influence as we review the division’s curriculum to ensure it is guaranteed and viable, which is essential to maximizing every child’s learning.

Recognizing that maximizing every child’s learning is not only essential but also multifaceted and enhanced by expanding or developing certain educational opportunities for students’ development, I believe the opportunity exists for us to do so by directing our immediate attention to the following:

**Opportunities**

A. Ensure “A Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum”

While there are several priorities that we must remain sensitive to in attaining this goal such as attracting, developing and retaining exceptional staff, among many others, an excellent staff must have a good road map. Therefore, an important starting point of engagement for academic excellence for every child every day, whatever it takes is ensuring that our staff has a process in place which will enable us to consistently focus upon our core business, teaching and learning, which is accomplished in part through a guaranteed viable curriculum. Essential components of “A Guaranteed Viable Curriculum” include the following:

- Standards are unpacked at the appropriate cognitive level
- All students have access to learning the essential knowledge and skills as well as opportunities for enrichment
- High-yield strategies are embedded in the curriculum to assist students in mastering the content
- Sufficient time is provided for teaching the content for student mastery
- Additional authentic learning opportunities are provided for students who need more time to master the content
- Authentic assessments are administered to measure whether students have mastered the curriculum at the appropriate cognitive level
B. Ensure Alignment of Lesson Design & Delivery with Curriculum

Another component of a guaranteed viable curriculum is that teachers understand the essential knowledge and skills embedded within the curriculum. In order to ensure a strong alignment between the written and taught curriculum, the first step in this process is to provide teachers with written curricula that is well aligned to state standards. Division leadership must be able to assure schools that all “big ideas” and essential understandings in the state documents are incorporated into HCS curricula. The HCS written curricula should also be constructed in such a manner so that teachers find utility in the documents. For example, the curricula should include resources for supporting the teaching of various standards, samples of assessment strategies, and detailed guidance for select skills when division data indicate an area for growth.

School administrators play an integral role in ensuring the alignment between the written and taught curriculum. It is critical for teachers, for example, to receive guidance and feedback from administrators as it relates to this work by providing professional development inservices on this topic, coupled with the feedback teachers receive via the teacher evaluation process, a number of opportunities exist to support staff in this area. In addition, growth opportunities exist for members of the division leadership team in order to ensure a common understanding and consistency in implementation.

C. Enhance Alignment of Assessment Program with Curriculum

In recent years, revisions to the Standards of Learning have led to increased rigor throughout the state’s curriculum framework documents. As a result, school divisions have made adjustments to their curriculum documents in an effort to ensure a strong alignment between curricula and the state standards. It is just as important, however, that we keep pace with these changes as they relate to assessment of student learning. Through several professional development sessions with staff this school year, we have begun to emphasize that C=I=A (curriculum equals instruction and instruction equals assessment).

In order to achieve the academic goals outlined in the division’s strategic plan, there must be strong alignment between curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In part, the change in rigor for certain standards is related to the cognitive level of that standard. In other words, students are now expected to be able to demonstrate their understanding of select standards at a higher level of cognition. Thus, it is important that teachers are able to determine students’ understanding using a strategy/instrument that is aligned with the identified cognitive level of the standard.

D. Create a literacy program – Birth to Postsecondary

Realizing the importance of reading and the impact that sound literacy skills have on all aspects of a child’s educational experiences, creating a literacy program which focuses on literacy development from birth to postsecondary will not only further enhance students’ literacy development, but more importantly, such a focus becomes a vital aspect to closing
achievement gaps. Research clearly supports the need to address foundational literacy skills prior to students’ arrival in kindergarten:

- By age three, there is strong evidence of a gap in vocabulary knowledge for children of different socioeconomic status (Hart & Risley, 1995).
- First grade children from higher socioeconomic status groups know about twice as many words as children from lower socioeconomic status groups (Graves, Brunetti, & Slater, 1982; Graves & Slater, 1987).
- First grade vocabulary predicted students’ reading achievement in their junior year in high school (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997).
- Early literacy intervention is essential. The longer the delay, the wider the gaps become, which increases the difficulty of correcting those gaps (Canady, 2015).

Opportunities exist to build and strengthen the relationships between key stakeholders in this community in an effort to build a comprehensive, birth to postsecondary literacy program.

E. Create Academic Portraits of HCS Students - Fifth, Eighth, and Twelfth

Another observation in this key goal area is the importance of engaging various stakeholders in developing criteria that will gauge student success along the continuum of their prekindergarten through twelfth grade journey. In essence, based on the development of certain skills and other experiences, create a portrait of a student which outlines what a student should know, understand, and be able to do at strategic years of a student’s experience with HCS.

For example, we may choose to create an academic portrait for a fifth grade student, eighth grade student, and twelfth grade student. Each portrait would help to “paint a picture” of the critical skills and characteristics needed in order to ensure that students are prepared for the next phase of their life (e.g., the skillset a 5th grade student will need to possess when entering the middle grades). Ultimately, this is necessary in order to ensure our students are college, career, and life ready. This strategy removes the randomness of determining student readiness and serves as a promise statement to the community at-large about the caliber of an HCS graduate.

F. Expand Dual Enrollment and Industry Certification Programs

As a part of our core business, we have the responsibility to ensure students are prepared for as many opportunities as possible upon their completion of high school. An expansion of our current dual enrollment program with the community college and industry certifications will enable students to complete high school with a competitive edge. While attending HCS, we want to maximize students’ educational experiences. Therefore, we will expand dual enrollment and industry certifications by creating seamless opportunities for students to start or complete an associate degree while at the same time acquiring high school credits for an
Advanced Studies Diploma. We will also provide students with as many opportunities as possible to earn industry certifications. Regardless of a student’s future aspirations or plans, HCS will seek to provide them all the necessary tools to be college, career, and life ready.

G. Transform Teaching and Learning via Academy Programs

We know that we are better able to engage students when there is relevance for the learning. Our goal is to ensure that students are connected to the learning with real-life application opportunities that enable them to have greater context for their learning. The expansion of academies will enrich students' learning experiences as well as place them in a more competitive position with their peers. In addition, the high school transformation process we are embarking upon will serve as a conduit to provide greater relevance for the daily teaching and learning in HCS. For example, the career academy model will afford students the opportunity to participate in internships and staff with the opportunity to collaborate with the business community on the curriculum. Academies also provide students with another lens from which to see and experience the workforce world. For students, there is not only an increased awareness of the plethora of careers that awaits them but also the preparation that is required as they begin to pursue initial career interests. This learning model will no doubt deepen and broaden students' knowledge base and strengthen community partnerships through job shadowing, internships, mentorships, and ultimately build greater capacity for the school division as we maximize every child’s learning.

H. Create an Intense Accreditation Plan of Action

Based on the current student achievement data at each school, it is necessary to provide a laser focus to ensure all of our schools are fully accredited. As a part of this focus, it is necessary to provide a system of differentiated supports that is data driven. Division leadership has begun to address the various needs of schools through a pyramid of interventions. Criteria were established, based on student achievement data, to determine where and when specific resources would be allocated to address the identified needs. While the pyramid of interventions for school support takes into account the current standing of all schools in the division, the level and intensity of support increases for schools whose data indicate the need for additional guidance and assistance from the division. Opportunities exist, via a systems approach, to create action plans to target a specific school’s needs. For example, resources have been allocated to train 10 tutors who will be working with students in the middle grades in select schools to provide intervention services in the areas of reading and writing.
The ability for school leadership teams to create sound school improvement plans is paramount to their success as it relates to growth in student achievement. This school year the school improvement planning process has been revised in an effort to assist schools in their efforts to develop a laser focus based on student achievement data. Ongoing meetings are being held between school administrators and division staff to ensure that aligned acts of improvement are becoming commonplace.

I. Formulate a Plan of Action to address On-time Graduation

Ensuring students graduate from HCS college, career and life ready is a priority. We also know that the longer a student’s graduation is delayed, the less likely it is that he or she will finish. By offering a continuum of services for credit recovery and non-traditional educational placements, we have begun to overcome some barriers to graduation and have increased the graduation rate by 16% since 2008. However, we must continue to build on our success and strengthen our schools’ action plans by emphasizing a holistic view in which students and families are supported in the successful journey to high school graduation. We plan to improve the PreK-12 processes to further engage school and community partners for buy-in and empower parents and students to take an active role in the planning so that strategies will address their actual needs and interests. Graduation symposiums will be held to engage all stakeholders to participate in the development of strategies to boost high school graduation rates, resulting in action plans for success. While we will continue to build on our strengths and engage our families, schools, and the community in this planning process, we must also examine innovative approaches and strategies to enhance family and community engagement in order to facilitate a 100% graduation rate.

Create Safe, Nurturing Environments

Key Goals

- Increase our cultural competence and relationships
- Increase student engagement and responsibility

Observations

Over the past six months, I have observed that our school staff members diligently work to ensure welcoming and inviting places for teaching and learning to occur. However, what I have also observed is that building staff members would greatly benefit from consistency in our focus and practices regarding safe, nurturing environments. In order to accomplish our core business, teaching and learning, we must have learning environments that are conducive to learning with students who are ready to learn.

Opportunities

We know from experience that a positive and caring environment is absolutely necessary for quality teaching and learning to take place. Yet, the challenge is to create and sustain such a culture. Current research continues to support the need for a focus on climate:
• Children who perceive school as a community with a feeling that they belong, that they are safe, that they matter and that their needs will be met have enhanced academic, social, behavioral and emotional well being. (Grover, Limber, & Boberiene, 2015)

• There is a significant positive effect between school climate and academic success for students historically at risk. (Lopez, 2015)

• Increases in emotional support and classroom organization are clearly associated with increases in achievement. (McCormick, 2015)

• Poor school climate can affect teacher motivation and attendance as well as student performance. (Garedew, 2015)

Recognizing that safe and nurturing schools are essential to creating an environment which maximizes teaching and learning, I believe the opportunity exists for us to do so by directing our immediate attention to the following:

A. Define Safe, Nurturing Environments for HCS

A safe nurturing environment for HCS students and staff is comprised of three key elements, which must each be addressed in order to accomplish our goals. The first element is physical safety so that buildings are secure for students and staff to learn and work in environments free from fear of intruders and physical harm. Physical environments must also be inviting and comfortable so that students and staff can focus on the work at hand. The second element is emotional safety so that all students, staff and families feel welcomed and valued. Elements of emotional safety are best achieved through intentional relationship-building and interactions grounded in cultural competence. The final element is an environment free from disruption to allow teaching and learning to be the primary focus at all times.

B. Expand Written Protocols

Given the complexity of maintaining environments safe from intruders in the current era, there is a need to enhance the information that guides the work of our staff. We need to have clear protocols for staff action from the most routine work of our school security officers to the most complex emergency response protocols for the entire school staff and community. While many protocols exist, we will work to update and republish all of them to assure they reflect the most current industry standards for creating and maintaining safe environments. We will additionally establish schedules for security drills and procedures, working with the support of the Hampton Police Department to increase the frequency of preventive searches and school safety audits. By focusing on these protocols, we can shift our organization to a consistently proactive approach to foreseeing and preventing security risks.

C. Develop a Five-year Professional Development Program

High functioning organizations know that the most amazing improvement plans and protocols, even those supported with extensive resources, will produce little change until all staff members in the organization are aware of the new plans, understand the need for the new plans, and have the motivation and skills to implement the new plans. To address the chal-
lenges to creating and maintaining a safe and nurturing environment, the office of Organization Effectiveness will work with the department of Student Services to create a five-year plan to develop the necessary awareness, motivation, and skills to bring about positive results in addressing all three elements of a safe, nurturing environment: physical safety, emotional safety, and positive behavior. The plan will clearly articulate the following:

- Skills necessary for success in implementing plans in each of the main components of a safe and nurturing environment (i.e. physical safety, emotional safety, positive behavior)
- Skills necessary for success in implementing plans defined by role (i.e. what leaders, teachers, security staff, support staff and students need to know and be able to do in each component area)
- Tools to assess present level of knowledge and skills
- Plans and timelines for delivering sustained training in multiple formats
- Tools to measure the effectiveness of professional development
- A monitoring plan and evaluation schedule

D. Expand the Implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS)

After piloting what was then called Effective School-Wide Discipline (ESD) at several schools, HCS began the implementation of PBIS on a division-wide basis as a part of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan. Since that time, each of our schools has formed a PBIS team which facilitates the implementation of the program at the school level. In buildings with strong teams, there is a positive effect on student behavior. Implementation across the division is not yet consistent from building to building, especially after changes in leadership or staffing. In order to implement PBIS as a consistent way of doing business across our school division, below are the key steps, some of which are already underway:

- Integrate a tiered system of supports for students who have behavior challenges into the Response to Intervention (RtI) database and make the implementation of supports a part of the RtI process
- Create best practices documents for PBIS implementation at the classroom and school levels as part of the written protocols for school climate
- Identify the skills necessary for the effective implementation of PBIS at every level of the organization and create reflection tools for staff and students to assess their current levels of performance
- Include PBIS and the knowledge and skills associated with it into the Five-year Staff Development program
- Align PBIS with career readiness by using business etiquette standards as the behavior expectations for interactions in classrooms, schools and throughout the school community
E. Create a Model of Excellence for Facilities, Grounds & Maintenance

The research is clear that there is a strong correlation between student achievement and the school learning environment. We desire for students and staff members to take pride in the overall environment for teaching and learning. As such, we have created a Partnering Responsibly in Delivering Excellence (PRIDE) initiative in which we will focus on creating a welcoming and comfortable environment in which students and staff take ownership for maintaining and enhancing their facilities. This will be done in partnership with GCA, the maintenance department, the city’s Parks and Recreation department, the finance department, student clubs, and other partners as identified. Expected outcomes of this initiative are:

- A system of prioritizing facility and grounds maintenance requirements to ensure safe and nurturing environments for teaching and learning;
- A collaborative, clearly defined approach to quality customer service;
- Preventive comprehensive planning for facilities, grounds and maintenance to create division ownership at all levels;
- A model of excellence for facilities, grounds and maintenance, incorporating best practices while also creating a school division of choice.

Attract, Develop and Retain Exceptional Staff

Key Goals

- Staff 100% of our instructional positions with highly qualified employees by the opening day of school each year
- Reduce the percentage of employees who opt to leave Hampton City Schools each year
- Increase the percentage of employees who express satisfaction with their work environment

Observations

It has been a pleasure to meet members of the HCS educational team at the School Administration Center as well as at the schools. My Look, Listen and Learn Tour has reaffirmed that the greatest asset within the school division resides in our human resources. Through small group and one-on-one conversations with staff members, I have heard firsthand the staff’s desires and aspirations for our students. They want our young people to excel and be prepared for productive and fulfilling lives after high school graduation. Responses to the question “What are the programs and/or initiatives currently in place to help HCS achieve
the indicators of success?" addressed this key goal. Specifically, persons not only indicated 1) great programs but more importantly, 2) exceptional staff, and 3) meaningful professional learning opportunities.

**Opportunities**

Given HCS is an organization which heavily relies upon its human capital (in FY 2016 80% of our budget is committed to human resources), it is important that we continue to ensure innovative ways of attracting and retaining an exceptional staff at all levels within our school division. Additionally, we must ensure all staff (new hires and returning) clearly understand our core business of teaching and learning and the expected outcomes. We must also know the persistent challenges of reaching and exceeding the expected outcomes as well as know and be able to readily access and deploy the division’s prescribed resources with fidelity and consistency as master teachers and expert instructional leaders. It is important to build and sustain a culture of excellence by investing in our human resources and institutionalizing best practices so that it occurs with automaticity.

Recognizing the mission of any organization is ultimately attained through its human resources, and that attracting, developing and retaining exceptional staff are essential to fulfilling the mission of academic excellence for every child, every day, whatever it takes, I believe the opportunity exists for us to do so by directing our immediate attention to the following:

**A. Ensure Regional Compensation Competitiveness**

In order to attract and retain our human resource investment, it is important that we factually know our regional competitiveness based on salaries and the total compensation package through a study. The next important step is to provide a set of recommendations through a well-defined action plan based upon the findings.

**B. Develop and Deliver a Five-Year Professional Development Plan**

Given that our daily charge is to “Work on the Work,” it is encumbered upon us to begin planning and developing staff with a focus on the next five years. While accountability systems will always change, the elements of outstanding teaching and learning are constant variables in the equation. As such, our focus will be to support and sustain a culture of educational excellence for all. Research indicates that we must constantly assess ourselves, our work, organizations and the associated outcomes. Philip Schlechty notes in his work three big areas regarding a division’s capacity which include: the division must create and maintain a clear focus on its preferred future, the focus on the division’s future must be system-based rather than personality-based, and the division must strategically engage in its work. To the point, professional development provides opportunities to learn the why, how, and the expected student outcomes, if implemented with fidelity. Also, it enables us to not only plan for the future but to sustain our efforts regardless as to the members on the team.
Maintain Effective, Efficient and Innovative Support Systems

Observations

I have observed that there is a lot of great work occurring in HCS and that staff members are committed to the overall mission. However, we will benefit from ensuring that the work is purposefully connected. Research clearly supports that “achievement of excellence requires not only a moral commitment, but also a firm and reliable infrastructure to support it” (Ray, 2005). A systems approach will ensure that we not lose sight of the whole among the many parts. More importantly, a systems approach will enable us to put into place structures and processes for teaching and learning that lead to desired outcomes. In our daily work, we must understand how all the moving parts are interrelated in accomplishing the whole - the mission of our organization. We can accomplish this by avoiding work silos and creating systematic collaborative work environments.

Recognizing that efficient, effective operations and innovative approaches are essential processes to our core business, I believe the opportunity exists for us to do so by directing our immediate attention to the following:

Opportunities

A. Ensure a Systems Approach

As we move toward the future of HCS, we will take a deliberate approach which is necessary to maximizing every child’s learning. Systems are comprised of people, structures, and processes for some defined purpose. More specifically, a deliberate process will enable us to accomplish the following:

- A culture in which members of our organization know why the organization exists;
- An environment in which members of our organization consistently see the whole among its many parts;
- Clarity for members within our organization as to why the organizational parts exist;
- An understanding of how various aspects or operations within our organization are interrelated;
- Work environments in which departments within our organization work together for the objective of the whole;
- Greater focus for the daily work;
- Synergy within our organization for meeting the mission of its existence;
- Removal of silo thinking;
• Outcome-based thinking;
• A focus on planning, doing, monitoring, measuring and adjusting the work; based on student outcomes.

The U.S. Senate Productivity and Quality Award which is anchored in the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence will be closely examined as a consideration for enhancing our organizational performance through a systems approach. Participation in the Discovery Program will be an initial step which will enable our team to explore how the Baldrige Excellence Framework can assist HCS in improving our overall organizational performance through a systems alignment approach.

B. Expand and Ensure Meaningful Partnerships

We know the benefits of strong partnerships. Expanding and creating stronger partnerships is necessary as we transform our high schools. As we focus our work to ensure students are college, career and life ready, it is important that we provide them with workforce experiences through meaningful mentorship and internship opportunities. We must create opportunities for students to complete high school with not only an awareness of potential career pathways but also with the skills and knowledge that will help them be successful beyond high school.

Enhance Family and Community Engagement and Satisfaction

Key Goals
• Create a welcoming environment in every school and department
• Expand partnerships with community groups and organizations
• Expand marketing of strengths and successes

Observations

Overwhelmingly, I experienced support for the work of teaching and learning from the Hampton community. Within my first sixty days, the community resoundingly expressed their interest and commitment to ensuring the students of the HCS community are given a high quality education and that they are prepared (college, career and life ready) to fully engage in the opportunities that await them after graduation.

I quickly learned that the HCS community desires to be engaged. As a school division, we must assess the current level of engagement as well as ensure that collaboration with the community is deliberate and strategically aligned. Specifically, we must ensure that the community fully understands the division’s strategic focus areas, key goals and performance measures, as well as the identified key initiatives.
Opportunities

The responses to the question, “What are the inhibitors/challenges?” follow: 1) a need for funding which impacts each of the six strategic focus areas, 2) a desire for greater parental involvement, and 3) effective engagement of parents in the educational process. As such, we must ensure that our conversation is not only with our internal community (students, staff and parents) but also with our community at-large. Essential to our mission, we must articulate the message of why we exist – our core business – teaching and learning, where we are headed, how we will get there, and desired outcomes while ensuring collaboration at all levels. This will enable us to engage all of our communities in a thoughtful manner and ultimately propel us toward ensuring all students graduate from high school and are college, career, and life ready.

Recognizing that the opportunity exists for all stakeholders to not only add value to the work of HCS, but to further strengthen the division as a whole, I believe the opportunity exists for us to do so by directing our immediate attention to the following:

A. Ensure Parents and Community Members are Connected to the Real Work
- Create Awareness

An important aspect of our work is to ensure stakeholders have the opportunity to be engaged in a meaningful way. We must first consider the “partnership” itself. As educators, we can become so focused on implementing a plan or initiating a new program that we overlook critical steps and areas of consideration that are essential to establishing solid home-school and school-community partnerships. The word partnership indicates a sharing of information, resources and skills. Parents and community members must believe that they are equal partners in the effort to bolster student achievement (Beers, Beers, Smith, 2010).

B. Create and Implement a Five-Year Family and Community Engagement Plan
- Create Process

As we strategically undertake and refine current practices that are directed toward improving student performance, developing a process for engaging stakeholders at appropriate intervals is absolutely essential. Additionally, we must create structures and opportunities to keep all stakeholders engaged during the implementation phase. This will enable stakeholders to know the why, how, as well as the expected outcomes of a particular program or initiative. At the end of the day, we must successfully and regularly engage and communicate to staff, students, parents and other community stakeholders the importance of the learning plan (initiative/program) as well as ensure they can participate at an informed level.
Manage Fiscal Resources Effectively and Efficiently

Observations

The past six months have yielded that we have an excellent system of checks and balances, as well as strong business practices to support the mission of HCS. As we move forward, it is important that we create connectivity and linkages to the daily work through vertical alignment.

Opportunities

Recognizing that effective and efficient management of fiscal resources is essential to accomplishing the HCS mission, I believe the opportunity exists for us to do so by directing our immediate attention to the following:

A. Increase Vertical Discussions

It is important to ensure that each department remains in touch with our core business - teaching and learning. Initial steps that will move us toward this objective will be to expand the initial decision-making meetings to include members of other departments. To the point, all of the parts of the organization must know how the work is interrelated to the whole. A prime example of this strategy is ensuring that the budget reflects the values of the organization. This reinforces the importance of having all departments possess a clear working knowledge of key initiatives and the expected outcomes for student performance.

B. Expand Outcome-based Budgeting

We have begun a journey of creating a budget that is based on specific performance-based outcomes. Specifically, we desire to ensure that the dollars invested in key initiatives are reviewed and determined to be providing the return on investment that was anticipated when the dollars were originally allocated. Outcome-based budgeting creates the appropriate tension in the decision-making process to ensure human resources, programs and services are directly aligned with the key goals of the HCS Strategic Plan 2016-2020. Ultimately, it facilitates an environment and delivery of services which will maximize every child's learning.
Superintendent’s Initial Action Steps

“Building from Places of Strength for Desired Student Outcomes”

The past six months have provided opportunities to engage over 1,000 internal and external stakeholders of HCS. During this time, I have also been intimately involved in guiding and influencing our current work on behalf of the students and families we serve. In this section of the report, I have highlighted certain accomplishments as well as initiatives that I believe over time will increase student achievement as we work to ensure students are college, career, and life ready.

Look, Listen and Learn Tour: Developed a comprehensive plan for a seamless transition of superintendent leadership in Hampton City Schools and submitted to members of the Hampton City School Board. Engaged over 1,000 internal and external vested members of HCS. These opportunities have enabled me to gain insights on the community’s perspectives regarding the role of education in community growth and a strong future workforce.

School Visits: Visited each of our schools during the first week of school as a means of beginning to establish relationships.

Strategic Leadership Focus: Provided staff with a conceptual framework of the “Superintendent’s Focus”, which is a detailed breakdown of the integral elements of teaching and learning that support the core principle of the HCS Strategic Plan - Maximizing Every Child’s Learning requires aligned acts of improvement.

Pyramid of Interventions for School Support: Provided senior staff members with a resource document for the development of a tiered pyramid of interventions and support to provide the resources and tools necessary for our schools to improve academic achievement in our school division.

Curriculum Forecasting Documents: Initiated the development of “Curriculum Forecasting” documents in which the core curriculum leaders provide teachers with supplemental resources to support the teaching of select skills. The skills are identified based on a review of summative assessment data and denote areas for improvement. These resources are provided to core teachers every four and a half weeks.

Superintendent Success Indicator Meetings: Established bi-weekly meetings with specific members of the Division Leadership Team to discuss the superintendent’s identified indicators of success. These meetings are also used as a vehicle to determine additional resources and supports that are needed to increase student achievement.

Accreditation Plan of Action: Requested and received from specific members of the Division Leadership Team a plan of action that deploys
additional resources needed to improve student achievement at our tier two and three schools.

**Curriculum Auditing Process:** Initiated a review of our current curriculum to ensure we have unpacked the standards at the appropriate cognitive level as well as to review the processes that are currently in place for teachers to demonstrate a clear understanding of how to deliver the written curriculum. Additionally, this process has created the opportunity for curriculum leaders to discuss the alignment of our division’s curriculum, instruction, and assessment program.

**Literacy for All (Hampton READS):** Initiated a team of stakeholders to begin coordinating efforts to address the literacy needs of students in our community from birth to postsecondary. The first charge of this team will be to develop a plan of action to increase the level of collaboration between early childhood centers and HCS staff who specialize in early childhood education.

**Community Partnerships:** Met with several stakeholders to begin the process of expanding partnerships that will provide relevance for student learning, industry certifications, as well as potential career pathways. These meetings have included, but are not limited to, the following: Chief of Police (criminology program), Virginia Tech (Virginia Seafood Agricultural associated research and industry certifications), and Langley Air Force Base Operations (STEM). Our goal is to ensure students’ educational preparation and experiences are transformed by their participation and engagement in well defined workforce opportunities.

**Dual Enrollment:** Initiated a dual enrollment design team with stakeholders representing higher education, teachers, curriculum leaders, counselors, parents, students, and administrators. The goal is to create a quality Pre-K–16 pipeline for dual enrollment and HCS teacher credentialing in partnership with higher education. The design team will be recommending courses for the 2016-17 academic year to be taught in HCS high schools that are linked to career pathways, revising dual enrollment policies, and creating a dual enrollment guidebook for parents, students, and staff.

**On-time Graduation:** Facilitated a discussion with specific members of the division leadership team to prioritize the needs to achieve our strategic key goal to graduate 100% of our students, which revealed the need for a comprehensive, community-based approach. The first of a series of graduation symposiums will be held January 28, 2016, 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., with community partners to develop plans of action to support schools, students and families on the journey to high school graduation. The symposiums will focus on removing barriers to graduation and building stronger connections between families, schools, and communities.
**Academy Planning:** In August of 2015, met with administrators and teachers from all four high schools, along with our community partners relative to our college and career academy development. The discussions included the implications for the master schedule, and afforded attendees the opportunity to complete an analysis of their high school and current academy program. Before the session ended, the teachers participated in a facilitated workshop to help them begin looking at their curricula to determine the areas they could focus on for a cross-curricula activity or project. Each high school has a strong advisory council made up of local business and industry members. These councils have been helpful in developing real-world projects to tie in the academy theme with the curriculum, and in providing field trips and other opportunities for our students. In September, October, and November, we sent groups of teachers, administrators, curriculum leaders, and city leaders to the Academies of Nashville Study Visit in order to help them develop their understanding of the career academy concept and learn best practices for implementation. All of our websites have been updated to share information about our academies and one common application was created to ensure consistency for our students, parents, teachers, and counselors. There is a School Board resolution proposed for January 20, 2016, to formalize our agreement to partner with Ford Next Generation Learning to expand our career academy development.

**PRIDE:** Initiated the development of a program which focuses on creating a system for prioritizing facility, grounds and maintenance to ensure safe and nurturing facilities for teaching and learning as well as to ensure preventative comprehensive planning in the area of operational management.

**Systems Approach:** Development of a systems approach model for HCS with emphasis on a deliberate process which accomplishes systems thinking - always asking the question, “how is this part related to the whole”? This cannot be a secondary approach to our work but must remain in the forefront of our decision-making process.

**Budget Development Criteria:** Initiated and facilitated decision-making criteria for the development of the FY 2017 budget based upon the new HCS Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020 to ensure staff members maintain the focus of providing the resources that will enable us to fulfill our mission of maximizing every child’s learning.
Superintendent’s Look, Listen and Learn Presentations

Over the past six months, it has been a pleasure to engage over 1,000 vested stakeholders of HCS to include:

Hampton City Schools

- School Board members
- Division Leadership Team members
- Department heads
- Principals
- Former superintendents (3)
- Hampton Education Foundation
- Key Communicators
- Student Advisory Group
- Hampton Education Association Officers/representatives
- TAC members
- Special Education Advisory Council
- Hampton Retired Teachers Association
- PTA President
- Hampton Council PTA
- Community Priorities Workshop participants

City/State

- Mayor, Vice-Mayor
- City manager
- City Council members
- Police Chief
- Economic Development director
- Social Services director
- Judge & court officials
- Neighborhood Commission
- Senator, Congressman, Delegates of Virginia

Community

- Hampton - Newport News Community Services Board
- Members of the clergy
- NAACP
- Community Leaders group
- Virginia Peninsula Rotary Club
- Hampton Rotary Club
• Hampton Kiwanis Club
• Exchange Club of Wythe
• Hampton Forward
• Tuskegee Airman
• Faith-based members
• Communities in Schools director
• Coliseum Central Business Roundtable
• Langley Air Force Base officials
• Smart Beginnings director
• Marching Elites director

Civic & Business

• Aberdeen Gardens Museum
• Hampton Roads Educators’ Credit Union director
• Hampton Education Association President
• Virginia Tech Seafood director
• Hampton Roads Center for Civic Engagement director
• WHRO director
• Virginia Air & Space Center director
• Old Point National Bank president
• New Horizons Regional Education Center director
• American Heart Association

Higher Education

• Hampton University professors & other staff
• Thomas Nelson Community College president

Addendum

Copy of the Superintendent’s LLL can be found at the link below:
http://www.hampton.k12.va.us/about/LLLplan.pdf

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”

- Henry Ford
The Hampton City School Board

MARTHA M. MUGLER
Chair

WILLIAM “DAVE” PEARSON
Vice Chair

LINWOOD “BUTCH” HARPER

PHYLLIS TAYLOR HENRY

JOE C. KILGORE

MONICA J. SMITH

JASON S. SAMUELS

Look Listen Learn

Hampton City Schools
Every Child, Every Day, Whatever it Takes!

HCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age or other protected classes in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Robbin G. Ruth, Executive Director, Human Resources, One Franklin Street, Hampton, VA 23669 757-727-2000.