



August 10, 2020

Dear High Tech High Community,

I am honored and excited to join you as your Chief Executive Officer! Since going through the interview process and over the last couple weeks since my introduction to you, I have been preparing to join you in San Diego. The time has finally arrived! I am eager to meet you all and for us to begin building strong relationships through our work and collaboration.

I write to share with you how I will spend my time during my onboarding during the first few months of school. It's important to me that you know what I will be doing and how I will be spending my time, particularly because this is such an unusual school year and there will be many reasons for me to jump right in and get to work. While it's inevitable that I will begin digging in right alongside you, I also will be thoughtful, intentional, and deliberate about how I spend my time, so that I get a full view of who you are as humans, what you do at High Tech High, and how organizational culture and the culture in schools are impacting our work.

My primary goal is to build strong, foundational, lasting relationships with you that will set the stage for how we will collaborate across the High Tech High community. This entry plan¹ outlines how we will begin the amazing and incredible work that we have ahead of us.

In any normal year, a new leader must be thoughtful about how to learn and engage with a new community. This year we have multiple challenges that make it much more important that we get this right. The dual pandemics of Covid-19 and racism are impacting our community in ways that are undeniable, and I truly appreciate the planning that has gone into how we will start the school year. Our teams have been planning and working to create learning experiences for teams across the community that will help us build awareness and skills to work toward becoming an anti-racist learning community. This is going to take lots of reflection, commitment, and personal work on everyone's part to extend the range of our skills and abilities. We must have the right conversations and engage with one another in new and different ways to help us approach the vision of the community we will become. It also means that we take a systemic look at ourselves and interrogate our policies and procedures to ensure that we are not perpetuating exclusion or inequity, even unintentionally.

¹ This Entry Plan is adapted from Jentz, B. (2012). *The EntryPlan Approach*. Newton, MA: Leadership and Learning, Inc.



We are in this together! And it's going to take all of us working as a team to get through these challenging times and see our way to a promising future for the kids and families that we serve. The potential of our work together has no limits, and the work that we do now will certainly enrich our culture and community, now and for many years to come. I eager to see how we can have that impact, and I am here with you to do all that it takes to get there. Please join me to ensure a prosperous future for our students – that's why we do this work! Take care and be well.

Sincerely,

Rasheed Hakim Meadows, Ed.L.D.
Chief Executive Officer

Dr. Rasheed Hakim Meadows

Entry Plan School Year 2020-2021

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Dr. Rasheed Hakim Meadows

Entry Plan School Year 2020-2021

Entry Plan Goals

1. Get to know as many people in the High Tech High (HTH) community as possible—from the various stakeholder groups, including students, families, educators, support staff, Board members, and community and corporate partners—as I onboard and lead the organization through the opening of schools and through the first quarter of the school year.
2. Learn about the events, issues, and concerns that influence, or have influenced the organization.
3. Learn the values, norms, expectations, and goals of the community—in essence, the culture.
4. Lead HTH in collective examination of this information in order to define priorities and plans for improving education for our students.

Entry Plan Process

The plan comprises a sequence of three activities that build upon one another and will lead us to arrive at a set of shared goals and plans to achieve them:

1. Personal interviews with as many individuals and groups as possible, followed by
2. Data Review meetings with teams across HTH where we interpret the interview data together, and
3. Goals and action-planning meetings where we will discuss the synthesis of recommendations for priorities, goals, and plans resulting from the data analysis. This process becomes the foundation for a larger strategy development process for the organization.

Interviews, Data Collection, and Feedback

Interviews are important for us to get to know each other and for me to understand the context and the content of your work. They are designed to build trust and I will identify norms such as confidentiality, candor, and compassion as we get our conversations started. Confidentiality is critical, as I intend to share patterns across conversations. I will not identify individual comments. Should a topic come up that I cannot keep confidential because of the safety of students or adults, I will be fully transparent about that. Candor is key, as you will see in this document a set of pre-determined questions so there will be no surprises about the process. If you are honest and direct in your comments, then the quality of the information I receive and the degree to which we will be able to act upon it as a larger community will ensure that we are focused on the right data to determine priorities, goals, and strategic plans. And with candor and honesty must come compassion. I have learned over the years my preference to communicate directly, even when it's hard. When I develop empathy and compassion for the person on the receiving end, it's easier to have important conversations that require courage and vulnerability. I know I will have to earn your respect and trust, and I am confident that as we work together over time, you will see my commitment to sustaining a learning culture for everyone that supports students to achieve their educational and life goals.

To save time and to ensure the accuracy of the data, I will be collecting information in two ways. First, I will ask you to fill out a confidential survey of questions in advance of our one-to-one or small group

conversations. Second, I will take notes during interviews and dig a bit deeper into your answers (you can see all of the interview questions in the section to follow). Finally, I will work after our conversations to aggregate your comments into themes so that I can share back with our teams, and ultimately, with the whole community the information and patterns that emerged. We will look at the data together in Data Review and Feedback meetings, and I will seek your reactions so that we can collectively make sense of what the data says, as we begin to narrow in on the most important work to do – our short-, medium-, and long-term priorities. As I conclude my onboarding, we will develop goals together around these priorities, put plans in place to achieve those goals, and work together as a community to implement a student-centered, equity-focused agenda that moves our work to the next level!

Process Summary

TIMEFRAME	ACTIVITIES
Day 1 – 30 (Aug 10 – mid-Sept)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Introduction to the HTH Community • Prepare with teams for strong start of school delivered through distance learning • Launch ongoing DEI and racial equity work • Interview Board members, HTH Cabinet, Directors, GSE leaders • Launch cadence of recurring staff meetings with central and school teams • Launch searches for Directors and Central Management Organization (CMO) vacancies • Ongoing Data and Feedback sessions with team to review and process interview data
Day 31 – 60 (mid-Sept – mid-Oct)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue ongoing work above • Interview Central Management Team • Interview school-based teaching and support teams • Interview student and family focus groups • Begin Interviewing elected officials, partners, funders, HTH Learning, and HTH Foundation • Ongoing Data and Feedback sessions with team to review and process interview data
Day 61 – 100 (mid-Oct – Nov 20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue ongoing work above • Interview remaining GSE staff • Continue conversations with elected officials, partners, and funders • Ongoing Data and Feedback sessions with team to review and process interview data
Day 100+ By Dec 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release draft report to the HTH community synthesizing my learning across all groups • HTH Community Meetings to discuss findings and recommendations for organizational priorities and goals.

Entry Plan Organization

The plan below is divided into sections that include the HTH Board, Central Management Organization (CMO) administrators and support staff, school Directors and support staff, teachers, students, families, Graduate School of Education faculty and staff, and community, elected officials, and corporate partners. Each of these sections is organized into categories: Objectives, Entry Activities, and Interview Questions.

HTH Board

Objectives

1. Understand Board members' background and history both on the Board and leading up to the work at High Tech High.
2. Learn and understand the norms and processes by which the Board functions, and understand the policies and procedures guiding how the Board and CEO interact and collaborate.
3. Review and agree upon my entry activities and approach to designing a plan in collaboration with the High Tech High community to be presented at a December Board meeting.

Entry Activities

1. Meet with the Board chair to discuss hopes and expectations and learn about organizational best practices working with the CEO.
2. Conduct two one-hour interviews with each Board member.
3. Schedule a Board Retreat to take place in mid-September to:
 - Review collated data from Board members
 - Define working relationships between Board members and between the Board and CEO, and between the Board members, CEO, and the High-Tech High community and decision-making rules and operating principles
 - Review and/or establish procedures for the Board to evaluate the performance of the CEO
 - Review the calendar of Board meetings and work to set the agenda and topics based on our collaborative goals.

Interview Questions

1. Please give me a brief biographical sketch to help me know you. What drives your passion for this work, and how you originally become interested in High Tech High and the Board?
2. What do you hope to accomplish as a Board member?
3. Given your experience with the school, what is your own assessment of how students are learning. To what extent do others hold these views in the community?
4. How do you assess the effectiveness of HTH personnel, and what do you see as the most important needs of the staff?
5. What do you see as the two or three most important needs to be addressed by the HTH Board? By the staff?
6. What groups or individuals have major influences on the schools?
7. What are our system goals? Are they on target? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome the obstacles?
8. What are your expectations of me as CEO?

9. What is most important to preserve in our schools? What's most important to change?
10. Describe a difficult decision you had to make. What was the issue? How did you reach a decision?

CMO Administrators and Support Staff

Objectives

1. Learn and understand the critical issues and tasks each central office staff person will work on and learn about this year.
2. Collaborate around strategies and timelines for accomplishing tasks and building skills in each administrative area.
3. Understand the norms, values, and procedures that govern the central organization, and, as necessary, make adjustments in the relationship between central office and the CEO, Directors, and the HTH community.

Entry Activities

1. Conduct an initial, hour-long call with senior leaders to learn more about the work of the staff and their teams.
2. Conduct a second, hour-long briefing session with each direct report that will launch the regular cadence of weekly and bi-weekly meetings.
3. Conduct at least one Central Administration Data Review meeting in mid-September to:
 - Define procedures and guidelines for the working relationships between the central office and the CEO, schools, and the community
 - Define strategies and timelines for accomplishing systemwide tasks in each central management area.
4. Meet with individual administrators to do necessary detail work in each area.

Interview and Briefing Questions

Interviews and briefings serve different purposes. The interview calls serve as an introduction to who you are as an individual and what you bring to the work and what you value and what you would like to see changed. Briefings focus on issues and tasks that are most pressing and time sensitive. These meetings form the foundation for the planning we will do together for the year. The interview questions follow:

1. Please give me a brief biographical sketch to help me know you and what drives your passion for this work.
2. What would you most like to accomplish in your position?
3. What do you see as important issues in program, personnel, and school-community relationships?
4. What are your expectations of me as CEO?
5. What has been the nature of the relationships between the CEO/central office, central office/Directors, and central office/community?
6. Who are the people and groups active in the schools? How do these people influence the schools?
7. What are our system goals? Are they on target? What's in the way of achieving them? How do we overcome the obstacles?
8. What's most important to preserve in our schools? What's most important to change?

9. What has been or is most difficult for you in your position
10. What changes, if any, in working relationships or job structure do you see as necessary?

During the briefings, I would like to cover the following:

1. Please describe your job in terms of scope of responsibility.
2. What are your communication style and preferences for routine and emergency communication, and what processes do you have to manage the internal/external communications of your division/area of responsibility?
3. What are the biggest successes you have experienced in the last 12-15 months?
4. What are the biggest failures you have experienced in the last 12-15 months?
5. What are your most pressing short-term tasks?
6. What are your most pressing long-term tasks?
7. What is on your Current Project List (CPL)? Why are these your top priorities and how do they link or support the goals of the Board?
8. What do I need to do to support you in your work now and going forward? Please think about the specific areas of growth you expect support in and the areas of strengths that others should expect to grow from your expertise.
9. Begin to determine the five (max) metrics that we will use to monitor the progress of your deliverables (and work) over the course of the year.

School Directors and Support Staff

Objectives

1. Identify important issues at the school level.
2. Define or re-define relationships between Directors and CEO, central office, community.
3. Coordinate work on system level tasks.

Entry Activities

1. Interview each Director.
2. Conduct at least one Director's Data Review meeting to discuss the collated interview data from Directors, and use it to:
 - Define expectations, procedures, and ways of collaborating for the relationships between Directors and CEO, central office, community, and with other Directors
 - Review central office strategies and timelines for accomplishing relevant systemwide tasks and identify needed adjustments to take school-level issues into account
 - Coordinate activities across schools.
3. Hold meetings with individuals as necessary.
4. Spend time walking and visiting each school *with the Directors*, which may include participating in virtual meetings and visits with staff and students (August through December).

Interview Questions

Interviews, as previously stated, are intended to help me to know who you are as individuals and also learn about what is happening in schools across the network. In the interviews, we will discuss the following:

1. Please give me a brief biographical sketch to help me know you and what drives your passion for this work.
2. What are the accomplishments you look upon with pride as a Director?
3. What goal would you most like to achieve in your building and what makes achieving it difficult?
4. What are your expectations of me as CEO?
5. What is the current state of the working relationships between directors and CEO, central office, community, and with other Directors?
6. What is your assessment of the support you receive from the Central Management Organization and the Graduate School of Education?
7. Please assess your school in terms of program and personnel.
8. What are our system goals? Are they on target? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome the obstacles?
9. What individuals or groups influence the system? How is that influence achieved?
10. What would you most like to see preserved in your school? In the system?
11. What would you most like to see changed in your school? In the system?
12. What responsibilities are the Directors alone? What responsibilities are shared with other Directors?
13. Are there areas of decision-making that are unclear (e.g. your role in curriculum, staffing, budgeting, maintenance, student services)?

Teacher Focus Groups

Objectives

1. Build relationships with teachers and understand their perspectives on their school learning culture.
2. Engage teachers in the development of plans that impact them and the experience of their students.

Entry Activities

1. Conduct multiple focus group interviews with small groups of teachers that represent the broad spectrum of the HTH community of educators.
2. Spend time in teachers' classrooms (virtual and in-person) to gain an understanding of what it is to be an HTH teacher.
3. Conduct Data Review meetings with teachers to share the patterns that emerge from focus group conversations and take feedback on emerging priorities and planning activities.

Interview Questions

1. Please provide a brief background of who you are and why you teach at your school.
2. What are the best things about being an HTH teacher? What are the most challenging aspects?

3. What is the most exciting project your students have engaged in? What recent projects did not go as intended? Why? What challenges did you face?
4. What is your assessment of how your school is doing? How do you know?
5. What do teachers say about your school? What do they say about the other schools in the network?
6. What happens at your school that you want to make sure continues? What must change?
7. What are your expectations of me as CEO?
8. If you could offer advice to your school directors and central support team, what would it be?

Student Focus Groups

Objectives

1. Build relationships with students and understand their perspectives, especially those that have been in the system multiple years and in multiple HTH schools.
2. Integrate students into leadership structures to ensure they have voice and audience with senior leaders, the CEO, and the Board.

Entry Activities

1. Conduct multiple focus group interviews with small groups of students that represent the broad spectrum of students across HTH schools.
2. Shadow students across learning and leadership experiences to gain an understanding of what it is to be an HTH student.
3. Conduct Data Review meetings with students to share the patterns that emerge from focus group conversations and take feedback on emerging priorities and planning activities.

Interview Questions

1. Please provide a brief background of who you are and why you attend HTH schools.
2. What are the best things about being an HTH student? What are the most challenging aspects of the student experience?
3. What are your expectations of me as CEO?
4. What is your assessment of how your school is doing? How do you know?
5. What do students say about your school? What do they say about the other schools in the network?
6. What happens at your school that you want to make sure continues? What must change?
7. If you could offer advice to your teachers and school leaders, what would it be?

Family Focus Groups

Objectives

1. Build relationships with families and understand what keeps them attending HTH for their students.
2. Engage families to share perspectives on what's going well and what needs to change at HTH schools.

Entry Activities

1. Conduct multiple focus group interviews with small groups of families that represent the broad spectrum of identities and perspectives across the HTH community.
2. Learn more about the leadership structures that engage and activate family participation.

Interview Questions

1. Please provide a brief background of who you are and why you chose HTH schools.
2. What are the ways that HTH schools serve your student best? What are they challenges that your student has at school?
3. What is your assessment of the HTH system? What is your assessment of your child's school? How do you know?
4. What are your expectations of me as CEO?
5. What do families say about your school? What do they say about the other schools in the network?
6. What happens at your school that you want to make sure continues? What must change?
7. If you could offer advice to your child's teachers and school leaders, what would it be?

Graduate School of Education (GSE) Faculty and Staff

Objectives

1. Learn about the relationship between the GSE and the K-12 management organization.
2. Agree on ways of collaborating between the organizations.

Entry Activities

1. Conduct Interviews with as many personnel from the Graduate School of Education as possible.
2. Conduct a GSE Data Review meeting with members of the GSE and seek agreement on ways that the organizations will work together.
3. Schedule regular meetings with various members of the GSE team.

Interview Questions

1. Please give me a brief biographical sketch to help me know you and what drives your passion for this work.
2. What are the most satisfying aspects of your current work assignment? About being a member of the GSE? What is most exciting about how you work with the schools?
3. What is your assessment of the overall program of the schools and of the staff in and across schools?
4. What are your expectations of me as CEO?
5. What are the goals of the school management organization? Are they on target? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome the obstacles?
6. What are your hopes about for the GSE and the K-12 collaboration in the future?
7. Describe what you would consider a good relationship between the GSE and the HTH CEO. How do you think this could be achieved? What needs to be in place to make that happen?
8. What is most important to preserve in the schools? What's most important to change?

Elected Officials

Objectives

1. Learn about the priorities and commitments of locally elected officials.
2. Learn about the education policy agendas at the state and local levels.
3. Collaborate with to draft policies that support High Tech High's efforts to increase opportunities for students and to ensure that HTH is able to thrive and sustain itself into the future.

Entry Activities

1. Make introductions and meet with as many elected officials as possible at the local and state levels who directly or indirectly impact the work at HTH.
2. Work with the HTH Board to fortify existing relationships and engage in strategic outreach to expand HTH's political network.

Interview Questions

1. Please give me a brief biographical sketch to help me get to know you.
2. What was important about your campaign that got you elected?
3. What policies and initiatives are you and your administration pursuing that would impact HTH?
4. In what ways do you have contact with the schools?
5. Under what circumstances do you discuss the schools with other people?
6. What is the image you have of the schools? How do you see our schools relative to other systems?
7. What are your expectations of me as CEO?
8. What are our system goals? Are they on target? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome the obstacles?
9. What are ways that you imagine we can collaborate during your administration?

Community and Corporate Partners

Objectives

1. Learn about the organizations and community partnerships that support the schools.
2. Learn more about the neighborhoods where students live.
3. Seek opportunities to increase and expand resources and support for the schools.

Entry Activities

1. Interview San Diego District and County officials.
2. Interview leaders of civic and community groups, including faith-based leaders, community organization leaders, and ancillary support organizations.
3. Interview corporate sponsors and funders.
4. Meet administrators of local public and private schools.
5. Meet presidents and officials at local universities and corporations.

Interview Questions

1. Please give me a brief biographical sketch to help me get to know you.
2. In what ways do you have contact with the schools?

3. Under what circumstances do you discuss the schools with other people?
4. What is the image you have of the schools? How do you see our schools relative to other systems?
5. What are your expectations of me as CEO?
6. What are our system goals? Are they on target? What stands in the way of achieving them? How could we overcome the obstacles?
7. What do you see as the role of the HTH schools?
8. What groups in the city or county have an influence in the schools?
9. How well do the schools communicate with you as an external partner?

Goals and Action Plan Report and Community Meeting(s)

By December 4, 2020, I will present a report that will reflect the cross-constituent, community-wide views about goals, obstacles to achieving them, and actions needed to overcome the obstacles. Based on these data, the second part of the report will be a draft proposal that lays out my best sense of our goals and priorities and a plan to achieve them. This report will be disseminated to all groups across the High Tech High community, and we will have Goals and Action Planning Meeting to discuss the findings. The report will then be revised based on reactions, suggestions, and feedback from community members. The final report will be presented to the High-Tech High community before the holiday break.