

Becoming Principal of Jamestown: Leading through Collaboration and Communication



Kenwyn Schaffner, Principal
Jamestown Elementary School
3700 N. Delaware Street
Arlington, VA 22207

After being a part of the Jamestown community for six years, my entry plan focuses on the transition from assistant principal to principal. This plan which builds on my mentorship with the former principal, Laura Annan Glascoe, and on my relationships with members of the Jamestown Community focuses on three important needs:

- To provide a rigorous, engaging academic program utilizing the responsive classroom approach to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of every child, including children with special needs.
- To hire and retain highly qualified staff and nurture stable, collaborative, cohesive grade level teams where teachers work together to achieve what they could not accomplish alone.
- To foster a school climate of open, consistent communication among students, staff, and parents in order to build effective relationships.

The plan is designed so that it is keyed to constituency groups within our community with specific objectives and activities for each constituency. The list is not all-inclusive; this is a flexible plan which will address concerns as they arise.

Selected Activities to Implement Goals by Constituency Group

Constituency	Introductory Activities—through early September	Mid-Transition Activities—September until early November	Late Transition Activities—early November forward
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome letter to students Attend community summer events Assist in transition of new families Communicate via APS SchoolTalk Greet children by name <p>Document review: Student Satisfaction Survey 2010-2011 Student test data 2010-11 Student Handbook</p> <p>Find out: What do students like most about their school? What would they like to change?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write morning message Attend Morning Meetings Observe math & science instruction Assess transitions of new students Observe recess and lunch activities Attend PTA activities Celebrate student success <p>Document review: Students' Hopes and Dreams Classroom ground rules Beginning of the year assessments</p> <p>Find out: How are classes doing building classroom communities? Is bullying a problem?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in Morning Meetings Observe language arts instruction Engage students at lunch & recess Participate in SCA activities Conduct student satisfaction surveys Do daily "walk throughs" to observe instruction and school environment Celebrate student success <p>Document review: Students' Multiple Intelligence Reports Student Data Notebooks Students 1st semester assessments</p> <p>Find out: Does every student have a trusted adult at school?</p>
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write welcome letter to all staff Informally interview individual staff Establish open-door policy Collaborate with grade level teams on curriculum mapping and planning Analyze 2010-11 data with leadership teams With leadership teams, set expectations for the "First Six Weeks of School" Collaborate with staff to plan professional development <p>Document review: Staff Handbook, schedules, checklists, etc. 2010-2011 School Management Plan</p> <p>Find out: What are the individual strengths of each staff member?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Professional Development Plans Observe and confer with teachers Encourage peer observations Encourage teams to assess student work collaboratively Meet monthly with leadership teams Meet weekly with management team, office staff & custodians Celebrate staff success <p>Document review: Staff Satisfaction Surveys Annual goals of staff</p> <p>Find out: What is the best way for the principal to communicate with staff? What procedures established at the beginning of the year need to be revised?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct midyear evals for all staff Midyear eval of the Principal by staff Analyze student data and projects with leadership teams Realign professional development according to the current staff needs Conduct staff satisfaction survey Celebrate staff success <p>Document review: Friday Folders Student work</p> <p>Find out: How do resources need to be realigned? What support do teams need in order to operate as professional learning communities? Do teams need more help from content specialists?</p>
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write letter to parents Meet with PTA President Communicate regularly via APS SchoolTalk Meet with PTA Executive Board Establish open-door policy Attend Back to School Night <p>Document review: Parent Satisfaction Survey Parent Handbook</p> <p>Find out: What expectations do the parents have of the new principal?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate regularly via APS SchoolTalk Schedule "meet and greet" per grade level. Attend PTA functions Be available after school for informal chats in the student pick up area <p>Document review: Home School Communication Plans</p> <p>Find out: How do parents like to communicate with administrators?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct Parent Satisfaction Surveys Facilitate Responsive Classroom Training Collaborate with parents on the planning of after school events <p>Document review: Parent comments in Friday Folders</p> <p>Find out: How do parents feel we can build a stronger home-school partnership? What do parents feel are the strengths of the school? What do they feel are the challenges?</p>

Selected Activities to Implement Goals by Constituency Group (cont'd)

Constituency	Introductory Activities—through early September	Mid-Transition Activities—September until early November	Late Transition Activities—early November forward
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate info about appointment • Identify members for the Advisory Board <p>Find out: What are the community organizations located in our school neighborhood?</p>	<p>Meet with representatives of partnering organizations.</p> <p>Find out: How could our partnerships be improved to enhance social, emotional, and academic needs of our students?</p>	<p>Participate in community functions hosted by civic and community groups.</p> <p>Find out: What are the community assets that could be utilized by our students & shared with students in other APS schools?</p>
Superintendent and Senior Staff	<p>Attend introductory meetings.</p> <p>Find out: Preferred means of communication.</p>	<p>Invite superintendent and senior staff to school events.</p>	<p>Communicate needs and goals on an ongoing basis.</p>
Department of Instruction & Student Services	<p>Attend summer trainings related to new initiatives.</p>	<p>Schedule meetings with curriculum supervisors & directors from Department of Instruction and Student Services.</p>	<p>Invite Department of Instruction & Student Services staff to visit Jamestown.</p>
Leadership of Team Schools	<p>Visit team schools and meet with administrators.</p> <p>Find out: How are the team schools similar? How are they different?</p>	<p>Attend monthly meetings with principals of team schools.</p> <p>Find out: Is it feasible to plan joint professional development?</p>	<p>Collaborate with team schools regarding new initiatives and programming.</p> <p>Find out: How can we work with Key School to strengthen our Spanish program?</p>
Leadership of Pyramid Schools	<p>Visit Williamsburg and Yorktown and meet with the administrators.</p>	<p>Establish channels of communication.</p> <p>Find out: How are Jamestown students doing at the middle and high school?</p>	<p>Attend concerts and theatrical presentations at the schools where our former students attend.</p>
Educational Leaders Outside of APS	<p>Contact area Principals who use the Responsive Classroom (RC) approach.</p>	<p>Visit area schools that implement the RC approach.</p>	<p>Invite schools that use the RC approach to visit Jamestown.</p>

Objectives by Constituency Group

Constituency	Objectives
Jamestown Students	Increase opportunities for engagement and communication between students and the principal.
Jamestown Staff	Establish and strengthen collaborative relationships based on respect, open communication, and shared interests.
Jamestown Parents	Strengthen relationships with parents so that they understand that they are welcomed as partners in the social, emotional, and academic growth of all children at Jamestown.
Members of the Community	Build and nurture relationships with community members to encourage them to support Jamestown students and to become advocates for them.
Superintendent and APS Senior Staff	Establish effective professional relationships with the Superintendent and members of the Senior Staff.
Department of Instruction & Student Services	Strengthen collaborative working relationships with instructional supervisors, directors, and staff to improve the instructional program at Jamestown.
Leadership of Team Schools	Develop strong professional relationships with the administrators of Jamestown’s Team Schools that will benefit the instructional programs at all team schools.
Leadership of Pyramid Schools	Maintain and enhance successful partnerships with administrators at Williamsburg and Yorktown to provide the best possible Kindergarten – Grade 12 educational continuum for Jamestown students.



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