



Buffalo Public Schools

Superintendent's Performance Evaluation 2017-2018

Standards Critical for Achieving Goals		DON'T KNOW	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT Score = 1	SATISFACTORY Score = 2	GOOD Score = 3	EXCELLENT Score = 4
I. RELATIONSHIP WITH BOARD						
1	Works collaboratively with the board to shape district vision, mission, and goals with measurable objectives of high expectations for student achievement.					✓
2	Regularly informs the board on issues, needs, and operations of the school system.					✓
3	Makes appropriate recommendations, based on thorough study/analysis.					✓
4	Appropriately interprets and executes the intent of Board policy.					✓
5	Makes considerable effort to have a positive working relationship with the board, treating all board members fairly and respectfully, and attempts to resolve any serious conflicts with board members.				✓	

Relationship with Board comments:

Together, we have given shape and substance to a shared vision and plan to transform the District’s academic and business performance. The plan is called, “The New Education Bargain with Students and Parents”. The performance evaluation instruments and results indicated herein are evidence of accomplishment toward realizing the full promise of the NEB. As a Governance Team, I believe we can be pleased and encouraged by the widely recognized progress being made by the District.

Meanwhile, I have continued to focus the Executive Team, with great intentionality, on the work at hand. Together, we have executed a strong start to each of the six (6) planks of the NEB, with ongoing improvements being addressed at each level. We continue to work to gain the confidence and trust of each Board member. Darren Brown and my Cabinet team respond professionally and timely to Board members’ many requests. I return direct texts or calls from you same day. We seek to build a better esprit de corps, professionalism, joyfulness, and focus on children into the discourse of Board meetings. We communicate, delegate, and follow through on all appropriate Board member requests. We have empowered the Board to do their job better by providing well-researched and well-presented information and recommendations to help guide their decision-making. This takes time and cannot be rushed. Moreover, when Board members, individually or collectively, meet with me to discuss their ideas or share promising solutions to advance student learning, equity, and opportunity, I assemble and guide staff to execute the work.



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Relationship with Board Comments Continued:

Extraordinarily, Elena Cala and I have produced more than 160 Daily Communication Briefings to inform the Board (and many Community leaders) on specific issues, substantive news items, community engagements, plans and operations of the District that advance the New Education Bargain and that advance access, equity, and opportunity for all BPS children. The Daily Brief to the Board from the Superintendent is a national best practice.

It continues to be an essential part of my leadership style (since my high school and college point guard playing days) to collaborate and foster teamwork as the preferred way of doing things. I will continue to exhort us all to get into schools to see our students and teachers at work, participate in District-sponsored activities, promote the NEB, talk publicly more about what's strong than what's wrong, and celebrate success – together!

II. MANAGEMENT OF DISTRICT

A) Instructional leadership

1	Provides a clear strategic direction for the district.					✓
2	Demonstrates a deep understanding of quality instruction and consistently promotes effective instructional programs and high expectations for student learning outcomes.					✓
3	District goals are systematically aligned throughout the district with a focused plan for student achievement and school improvement supported by resources.					✓
4	Monitors and reviews the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction and their alignment with state standards.					✓
5	Visits school sites and communicates effectively with teachers, students and staff.					✓

B) Leadership for Executive Staff



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1	Develops systems thinking, strategic alignment and high accountability for all district operations.					✓
2	Delegates appropriate authority to senior staff; monitors their follow-through.					✓
3	Inspires, motivates and develops senior staff.					✓
C) Management of Employees						
1	Treats all personnel fairly and impartially.					✓
2	Provides recognition to others for high performance.					✓
Management of District comments:						
<p>In concert with all Board members, we have established a clear vision and direction for the District through the NEB. District climate and culture has been reset and focused on providing greater access, quality, and opportunity so that all students can achieve to high levels. I continue to visit schools two to three times per week, discuss expectations with principals, greet many teachers in their classrooms, and observe students' academic and social behavior in multiple settings. I have set the instructional course and tone for the District through a deep professional expertise in curriculum and instruction, cultural diversity and equity, accountability, performance management, knowledge capture and best practices, and systems thinking. I have provided Level 5 leadership, mentoring, and support for our Executive Team; created and conducted the third annual "Unsung Hero" recognition event for Central Office (City Hall) employees; conducted our third annual BPS Urban Forum to continue to examine solutions to make the District's instruction more culturally responsive; and, together with the Board members and Cabinet leaders, provided 24 opportunities this year for students and families to meet and discuss the operation of the District.</p> <p>Under the thoughtful leadership of Anne Botticelli, and for the further instructional and learning benefit of all students, we continued to lower class size in the pre-k—3 continuum, implemented comprehensive daily after school programs in all schools, expanded MyOn, NextLesson, Global Cities, Inc., and state-of-the-art zSpace computer labs as academic enrichment initiatives. We are also excited about our emerging plans to infuse GT curricula and training in our Pre-K – 4 grades district-wide.</p> <p>We are equally motivated about our plans to strengthen secondary literacy through the following research-based practices: Subject area expectations (SAEs) for Grades 9-12; Lexia online intervention program; QUILL implementation; myoN online library expansion for high school students, Step Up to Writing "inspect what we expect" walkthroughs for all high schools; and rigorous review of all high school course syllabi.</p>						



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Management of the District comments continued:

Significantly, under the determined leadership of Tino Cimato and Jim Weimer, we have launched 10 new Innovative High Schools and programs and established seven (7) new Career Technical Education certifications for students aligned to emerging industry in the WNY region. We are also working to reframe our partnership with D'Youville College and morph DaVinci High School into an academic/CTE school with a curricular focus in the allied health professions, an aligned strength of the college as well. The innovative Virtual Pathways Program has graduated 31 after just over a year in operation. And, we are very excited about the extraordinary promise for students represented in prospective new dynamic partnerships with Google, Facebook, and IBM.

Meanwhile, our Strong Community Schools, under the gifted leadership of Dr. David Mauricio, have grown to 16 with 42 collegiate, corporate, healthcare, and faith-based partners that support four (4) Promise Zones city-wide. And, we have fully implemented enriched After School Programs in every District school for two hours, five days per week.

For the first time in 13 years, we approved a new competitive collective bargaining agreement with the BCSA. We also negotiated new agreements with the District's substitute teachers (SUB) and our foodservice workers (Local 264). The Legal Team we now have, under the leadership of Nate Kuzma, is doing an amazing job in winning cases and holding down legal costs compared to just a few years ago.

We have been able to accomplish all of these important NEB priorities, while also managing to balance the budget and close the deficit gap for 2018-19. In the day-to-day management of our over \$1 billion budget, we now have a realistic and detailed four-year financial plan approved by the Board that we are performing well against. Furthermore, I have made it clear to all of the high impact vendors who do business with us that it will be necessary for them to vigorously compete to earn our business. Commendations are in order for Geoff Pritchard for his dedicated work in finance.

III. RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMUNITY

1	Works effectively with parents, listens to their concerns, and includes them in decision-making.			✓	
2	Uses effective public information strategies to communicate and promote a positive image of the district with families, community, the media, state and local officials.				✓
3	Creates an atmosphere of trust and respect with staff, families and community members.				✓
4	Regularly attends events and visibly engages the school community and the community at large.				✓



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5	Engages community in the work of the school system, as appropriate.					✓

Relationship with Community comments:

This year, under the skillful guidance of Dr. Will Keresztes, we continued to build strong relationships with the Parent Congress including the DPCC, BPTO, and SEPAC leadership teams; also, with the Hispanic Heritage Council and Casimiro Ramirez; our extensive New American community through conversations with the MEAC, BIRLT, and the Karibu News staff; also, continued to build upon a strong alliance, for the benefit of the District, with Mayor Brown, Say Yes Buffalo leadership David Rust, Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker, Alphonso O’Neil-White, and national Say Yes President Mary Anne Schmitt-Carey; Leadership Buffalo and CEO Althea Luehrsen, the Honorable Paula Feroletto, Administrative Judge of the Eighth Judicial District and her colleagues in the local Judiciary, BTF President Phil Rumore, Council President Darius Pridgen, Education Committee Chair Ulysses Wingo, and other Common Council Members, Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes, Assemblyman Sean Ryan, Senator Tim Kennedy and Senator Chris Jacobs; and other WNY delegation members; County Executive Mark Polancarz and his senior staff, Governor Andrew Cuomo’s lead executive staff for the Buffalo region Adam Sassone, Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul and her local staff, NYSED Commissioner MaryEllen Elia, NYS Regent Catherine Collins, radio, TV, and print media correspondents, many leaders from the business and philanthropic community - eg. New M & T Chairman Rene Jones, Robert Gioia, Blythe Merrill, Jon Dandes, Nick Sinatra, and Dottie Gallagher of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, Yvette Vincent, VP of Delaware North ; NAACP President Mark Blue, area faith-based leaders, WNY higher education presidents, the Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority (BFSA), and many other strategic partners for BPS.

Moreover, through the centerpiece of our NEB, Strong Community Schools, and its associated Parent Centers and Saturday school programming, we have engaged over 60,000 students and their families in a vast array of enrichment activities, and in sharing ideas to continue to improve the District. We have also partnered with over 150 community-based organizations in all phases of the NEB.

Under the capable leadership of Dr. Eric Rosser, Services for our Neediest Children and Families are burgeoning. We now have mental health clinics in every school and one at the Adult Education Center. Our four comprehensive Parent Centers have kicked into high gear to empower, engage, and educate families. Say Yes Family Support Specialists are assigned to every school, Legal Clinics offer free counsel, and Mobile Health Units provide comprehensive health services to our children and families.



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DON'T KNOW

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
Score = 1

SATISFACTORY
Score = 2

GOOD
Score = 3

EXCELLENT
Score = 4

Relationship with Community Commnets continued:

Moreover, we have hired 10 multilingual cultural resource specialists at the Central Registration Center and expanded ELL services and services for our New Americans. We won substantial national and State grant awards to improve student health and wellness and to support My Brother's Keeper programming for males of color district-wide. We have enlisted the assistance of over 150 strategic partners, vendors, and CBOs to support the extraordinary needs of our students.

One of our NEB Basic Elements of Success is an emphases on Whole Child and Healthy Youth Development. I am a tremendous advocate and supporter of our August Wilson Monologue Competition and our annual Richmond Speaking Contest. Below are some more of the remarkable learning experiences we are providing to our children and families through our Strong Community Schools.

Academic Enrichment:

Pre-Natal to Pre-K readiness classes, Toddler Zone, "Raising a Reader" program, theater, music, plays, violin and Suzuki lessons, drum circles, chess clubs, beginner robotics, build your own computer, Minecraft, field trips, 3D computers, Engineering for Kids, Zoomobile experiences with animals, programs for new Americans, access to our computer labs and art rooms, literacy and math enrichment, cartooning, African and Latino history, preparing for high school, SAT prep, internships, college trips, on-line college courses, virtual AP, FAFSA form assistance, and college simulation experiences...and more!

Health and Wellness:

Zumba, PiYo exercise (Pilates and Yoga), basketball, soccer leagues, Paws of Love, healing circles for children and adults, healthy cooking classes, karate, roller skating in the gym, bounce houses, community gardens, free dentistry oral exams and cleanings, health exams, learn to swim programs in our pools, walking clubs for senior citizens...and more!

Sample Adult Courses:

FAFSA completion, tax preparation, extreme couponing, computer classes, parenting fatherless daughters, understanding special education, citizenship test preparation, translator courses, first time home buyer orientation, fundamentals of swimming, community circles, home improvement...and so much more!

As you know, we have also been working hard all year long to upgrade our Athletic Programs in four main goal areas. I am pleased with the overall accomplishments so far on these goal areas and look forward to more exciting news for this work in the near future.

Meanwhile, Board members, Executive staff and I have collectively delivered 226 community engagement presentations to build trust, strengthen the positive narrative, and instill public confidence in the District. The Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) has featured the progress of the Buffalo Public Schools in several stories published in the Urban Educator, the CGCS national publication. We have productive and astounding partnerships with 23 colleges and universities. I have been invited to teach a graduate course on Urban School Leadership in the Fall and Spring at Saint Bonaventure University and at SUNY – Buffalo, respectively.

IV. FOCUS ON RESULTS



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1	Leadership actions, staffing and resources are clearly aligned to a student achievement focused vision.					✓
2	Establishes stretch goals for the District.					✓
3	Anticipates and solves problems, thoroughly analyzes issues.					✓
4	Creates a high-performance culture and team.					✓

Focus on Results comments:

I am impatient by nature when it comes to the urgency of providing an equal and high quality education for all our children. Yes, the BPS graduation rate has risen 7 points to 64% since 2015. Yes, Grades 3-8 proficiency rates in ELA and Math have “inched” forward; and, yes, the number of schools in “good standing” have nearly doubled to 26 in just over two years. Nonetheless, we must move many more children higher, faster. Attendance, behavior, disproportionality, and equity indicators must improve substantially. And, many of our staff’s mindsets about student learning, high expectations, and content rigor must improve substantially as well.

81 of 104, or 78% of the Superintendent’s Performance Objectives Mostly Met (10), Completely Met (53), or Exceeded (18) targets, an aggressive, comprehensive array of performance objectives aligned to the District’s Strategic Goals and the New Education Bargain.

29 of 32, or 91% of the Standards Critical for Achieving Goals are assessed Excellent. Together, it is clear that we have set the District culture to one of “Continuous Improvement toward Excellence” on all measures.

V. LEADING CHANGE

1	Champions change and nurtures innovation.					✓
2	Aligns and adjusts resources accordingly to meet district priorities and annual goals/objectives (e.g. The New Education Bargain) operating within budget and fiscal guidelines.					✓
3	Captures and shares best practices, benchmarks with other leading organizations.				✓	



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Leading Change comments:

The “New Education Bargain for Students and Parents” is our extraordinary plan to transform the culture and performance of the Buffalo Public Schools. The community response has been collaborative, inspiring, and robust. Numerous community organizations continue to pledge support - i.e. Mayor, Common Council, State Assembly, NYS Regent, major businesses, foundations, Say Yes Buffalo, healthcare organizations, churches, CBOs, colleges and universities, etc. Practically all of our schools are requesting to become Community Schools, and each community presentation and launch is met with overwhelming excitement and follow-up meeting requests to collaborate with a particular or several NEB planks. Moreover, most of the New Innovative High Schools now have applicant numbers which exceed the number of seats. Clearly, there is a re-invigorated community energy (from alumni, parents, students, businesses, colleges/universities, etc.) regarding the industry demand and aligned career programs that we now offer.

Colleagues and I have been asked to present the NEB at major national professional conferences, symposia, Council of Great City Schools, and urban Superintendent Academies. Several national news media have run stories on the progress being made in Buffalo Public Schools. Because of our aggressive and effective use of Receivership authority, NYSED has asked Buffalo to participate in and host “best practices” conferences regarding Receivership Schools in the Big 5 School Districts.

When we learned that the historic B.U.I.L.D. Academy was flagged by the state for poor academic performance, I took aggressive, proactive measures to keep the school under District control and work with a number of stakeholders, including SUNY – Buffalo, to revamp and re-imagine the school. Additionally, I have visited most Charter Schools in Buffalo and convened a BPS/Charter School Work Group to address common challenges and share best practices with all principals and teachers.

VI. PROFESSIONAL / PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

1	Demonstrates ethical and professional behavior, inspiring others to higher levels of performance.				✓
2	Demonstrates appreciation for, and sensitivity to, the diversity of the school community, and respects divergent opinions.				✓
3	Maintains a caring and professional relationship with staff, grounded in shared district values.				✓
4	Is trustworthy and decisive.				✓



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5 Is a strong role model and lead education ambassador for the district.					✓

Professional/Personal Attributes comments:

I have worked throughout my career to establish and exemplify a high standard for the professional and personal attributes described herein. I was raised by my parents to live by one rule – “Do What’s Right”. I consider the wondrous diversity of the Buffalo Public Schools to be its greatest beauty and strength. It is an honor to know that many current and former employees consider me a positive mentor and role model in their lives.

Summative Comments:

The data presented for this performance review indicate that we are on the right track, taking great strides, and making progress. There is always much more work to be done in a large, complex urban school district. This work is difficult. This work takes time. A systemic pathway of interventions and enriched opportunities for our students, as well as rigorous accountability for all - framed by our NEB - has been designed and is being laid down to yield results.

Improving student achievement, behavior, attitudes, and interests constitutes the core of our work as educators. Sustaining the momentum that has begun into the months and years ahead is essential. We have a concise and elegant framework to advance the transformational work occurring in the District. We have delineated the NEB’s: 1) Guiding Principles; 2) Basic Elements of Success; 3) Strategic Goals; 4) Core Beliefs and Commitments; and, Key Outcomes. With the Board's continued commitment, focus, guidance, vigilance, study, and support for these critical elements of the NEB, there are no limits to what can be accomplished for the children of Buffalo. Stay the course!

Date & Sign: _____

Print Name: _____

June 21, 2018