THE FIRST 100 DAYS

Advancing LMSD’s Strategic Plan, 'All Forward'

A Report on Dr. Khalid N. Mumin’s First 100 Days as Superintendent of Lower Merion School District & a Vision for the Future
INTRODUCTION

I am PROUD to serve as the Superintendent of the Lower Merion School District.

Since I began this journey on October 18, 2021, I have been graciously welcomed and supported, by the many stakeholders working on the same accord to continually promote, support and sustain student success, excellence and leadership grades K-12 in LMSD. More specifically, the aforementioned began in the interview and transition process, as the Lower Merion Board of School Directors provided a copious outlook on their vision and expectations for the success of all children in the District.

The purpose of this 100 Day Report is to provide an overview and guide in developing a comprehensive picture of LMSD and our alignment to the Strategic Plan and “Bold Statements of Strategic Intent”.

https://www.lmsd.org/all-forward
Collaborate with the School Board to establish goals for the Superintendent of Schools.

Understand LMSD in a brief period of time, including organizational efficiency and effectiveness outside of the daily context and situations of problem-solving.

Prioritize key organizational objectives as identified in the LMSD Strategic Plan.

Identify the tasks that need to be completed short and long term and to rank them in order of priority.

Establish how these tasks shall be accomplished.

Engage stakeholders — students, parents, taxpayers and community — around the District's history, successes, needs for improvement regarding schooling and engagement to inform the future work of LMSD.
OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the culture, operations and finances that have governed how the LMSD Administration and School Board conducted business in the past.

2. Collaborate with the School Board to discuss organizational priorities.

3. Prioritize the challenges LMSD will face in our work next year.
The past few months have been a positive journey of making connections with our many stakeholders and seeing how our collective passion and purpose are aligned to the strategic work of the school system. High academic achievement, leadership, arts, athletics, extracurricular activities, community service, pride, diversity, equity and inclusion are many of the pillars that guide our work in LMSD.
While looking to the future with new vision, the priorities of our work will center around engaging the District’s stakeholders in a process of refreshing the Strategic Plan, commencing in the 2022-2023 school year, along its five Strategic Pathways:

1. **Redefining Success**
2. **Transformative Curriculum**
3. **Spirit of Community**
4. **Student-Driven Schools**
5. **A Commitment to Professional Learning**

During my first 100 days, I was able to observe where our District stands along these Pathways. The following is a synopsis of where we are now and where we are headed.
Dr. Mumin describes himself as a student-centered educator, who has a vision of success for all students and a belief that building positive relationships through cultural competencies is paramount in promoting student success. He is a change agent committed to promoting and sustaining student achievement, equity and access to educational programming for all students, as well as creating plans that are fiscally responsible. Dr. Mumin maintains a keen focus on fostering collaboration with stakeholders, including students, parents/guardians, teachers and other school staff, administrators, community members, public officials, business partners and higher education institutions.

Dr. Mumin has a documented history of success of possessing excellent leadership skills and has been recognized nationally as a "School Board Savvy Superintendent." He has also received several awards as follows: Superintendent to Watch (National School Public Relations Association, 2016), Champion for Youth (Mentors for Berks, 2017), Excellence in Educational Leadership (Boscov’s, 2016), Courageous Institution Award (Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, 2017), Amigo Award (Daniel Torres Centro Hispano, 2017), Innovative School Leader (Pennsylvania School Boards Association, 2018), Jesse S. Heiges Distinguished Alumni Award (Shippensburg University, 2019) and Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year (Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators, 2021).

Dr. Mumin grew up in Philadelphia’s Logan neighborhood and received his Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania, his Master’s Degree in Teaching and Curriculum from Penn State and his Bachelor’s Degree in English from Shippensburg, after earning an Associate’s Degree in the Liberal Arts from Northeastern Christian Junior College, on the site where LMSD’s new Black Rock Middle School is under construction. He is the author of “Problem Child: Leading Students Living in Poverty Towards Infinite Possibilities of Success,” a book that is part autobiography and part educational blueprint. He is married to Dr. Latrice N. Mumin.

Dr. Mumin came to Lower Merion from the Reading School District where he had served as Superintendent of Schools since 2014. Prior to holding that position, he was Superintendent of Caroline County Public Schools in Maryland. He also served as Director of Elementary Education and middle school principal in the Centennial School District and as a middle school principal in New Hope-Solebury in Bucks County. Dr. Mumin began his career teaching language arts and secondary English.
ABOUT LMSD & POINTS OF PRIDE

- The LMSD located in Philadelphia’s historic Main Line suburbs, serves the 62,000 residents of Lower Merion Township and the Borough of Narberth. Established as one of Pennsylvania’s first public school districts in 1834, LMSD enjoys a rich tradition of achievement, innovation and community partnership and a longstanding reputation as one of the finest school systems in the United States. The District’s six elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools provide a challenging, multi-disciplinary academic program and dynamic, co-curricular experience to approximately 8600 students. A third middle school, Black Rock Middle School, will open in September 2022.
- Of the District’s nine eligible schools, all have received recognition for excellence from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and seven have received the National Blue-Ribbon Award for Excellence in Education. LMSD schools rank among the highest in Pennsylvania for SAT and PSAT scores, AP participation rate, total number of National Merit Semifinalists, total number of International Baccalaureate diplomas granted and in numerous publications’ ‘Top Schools’ lists. Approximately ninety-four percent of high school graduates attend institutions of higher learning.
- LMSD’s comprehensive instructional program encompasses an array of services for special needs and gifted children as well as community-based learning programs, early-intervention literacy support, an International Baccalaureate diploma program and a full menu of high school honors and AP courses. An extensive range of course offerings in core areas, music and the arts, technology and special subjects form the foundation of the secondary curriculum.

Students can choose from more than 500 supervised academic, athletic, community outreach and performance-oriented co-curricular programs, from elementary school technology clubs to high school varsity sports.
- The District’s professional staff consists of approximately 630 full-time teachers, 80% of whom have advanced degrees. The faculty is complemented by a support staff of 500+ skilled individuals. A guidance counselor and psychologist are available in every school.
- LMSD maintains one of the lowest class size averages in Pennsylvania.
- LMSD is one of only two districts in PA to earn Moody’s highest bond rating, a reflection of outstanding fiscal strength and stewardship.
- LMSD was Pennsylvania’s first, and one of only 14 school districts nationwide, in the inaugural class of inductees to receive the U.S. Department of Education’s prestigious Green Ribbon Schools District Sustainability Award, selected for its exemplary efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, promote better health, and ensure effective environmental education.
- LMSD is consistently named among the “Best Communities for Music Education” by the NAMM Foundation honoring schools for exceptional efforts to maintain music education as part of the core curriculum and for the breadth and quality of the program.
- All ten LMSD schools have earned “No Place for Hate” designations from the Anti-Defamation League, an initiative aimed at creating and sustaining inclusive school environments.
LMSD's definition of success incorporates creativity, critical thinking, love of learning, and innovation for each and every child to encourage globally aware and engaged students. We reach far beyond standardized test scores, embracing and celebrating the many ways in which students demonstrate individual growth.
LMSD offers a transformative interdisciplinary curriculum that is student-driven and fosters innovation and positive risk-taking. It transcends Standards, is inquiry-based, and connects the classroom to the world. Our curriculum encompasses diverse perspectives, promotes global awareness, and makes use of culturally responsive teaching and learning practices. This dynamic, adaptable curriculum provides vertically and horizontally aligned curricular experiences, ensuring every student learns from the connections across subject areas and receives a comprehensive and balanced education. Innovation is the rule and not the exception.
LMSD is a community that values educators and the critical role they play in ensuring our students’ success. We trust our professionals and seek to support their perpetual growth and development through collaborative professional learning opportunities rooted in self-reflection and inquiry. We believe in providing resources to staff that encourage a culture of engagement, innovation, and exploration.
LMSD students engage in navigating their own learning and growth in close partnership with our professionals. We create an environment where students value self-reflection and inquiry and play a central role in identifying their passions and achieving their goals. We nurture and celebrate the individual strengths of our students and help them to develop competencies that ensure their success beyond the LMSD experience.
A SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY

LMSD takes pride in being a central part of the community. We value the diverse, dynamic talents of every member of our community and their enduring support for public education. We honor this spirit through consistent outreach and the creation of meaningful relationships to promote experiential learning, ongoing service, and engagement that will strengthen and support the student experience during the LMSD years and beyond.
1. **ONGOING WORK:**

   a. **Building on Equity Work to ensure that each child gets what they need to be successful.**
      
      i. The School Board has adopted Policy 101: Equity, which states that educational equity is a shared commitment to ensure that every student gets what they need to be successful. Practicing equity in this District means understanding the needs of individuals and positioning resources – including funding, programs, policies, initiatives, and supports – to target people’s unique experiences and to provide for individual needs so that achievement and opportunity gaps are eliminated on personal and systemic levels. This policy reflects the District’s commitment to ensuring students, employees, or families who may have historically experienced opportunity or achievement gaps due to race, color, ethnicity, national origin, language, immigration status, sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, creed, or religion no longer encounter barriers. In light of social and historical context, this policy provides explicit permission to treat people differently when circumstances necessitate that something different needs to be done.
b. MTSS, Restorative Practices and Focusing on Social Emotional Health
   i. LMSD is implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) over the next five years. MTSS enables staff to provide different levels of support for each child to enhance academic, behavioral and social-emotional outcomes for all students.

c. WIN/Learn/Lunch and Learn
   i. The K-4 and 5-8 committees are looking at how intervention and enrichment activities, such as Learn and WIN time, clubs and activities are incorporated into school culture and schedules to provide opportunities for all students to participate and, we hope, find their passion and voice.

d. CP4Kids and Cultural Proficiency
   i. Lessons for students occur across all grades, along with ongoing Cultural Proficiency Professional Development for staff.

e. Program evaluations of Gifted Education, Special Education and Academic Supports
   i. Following the recommendations of these reports will improve data-driven, measurable outcomes for all students
2. Steps to Advance the Work:

a. Hiring a Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: In July, Shawanna James-Coles will become LMSD’s DEI Director. She will coordinate LMSD's educational, employment and safety/security initiatives designed to provide equitable educational opportunities for students who have historically experienced opportunity or achievement gaps. She will monitor data related to these initiatives to ensure that new programs will be implemented as needed and inefficient or ineffective programs are eliminated. The Director will also coordinate communications regarding these efforts with stakeholders.
1. **Ongoing Work:**

   a. Teams of educators, administrators and parents/guardians have worked to reimagine the K-4 and 5-8 curriculum and schedule to ensure additional time for core courses, add electives, intensify consistent world language exposure and instruction, and focus on problem-based learning. At the high school level, offerings from the Central Montco Technical High School are being expanded. Across the District, focus on problem-based learning is being increased.

2. **Steps to Advance the Work**

   a. New programs for data-gathering and analysis are being implemented and the way homework is assigned and assessments given are being reviewed to decrease student stress and emphasize knowledge acquisition, retention and application skills.
1. Ongoing Work:

1.1 COMMITMENT TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Ongoing Work:
  - COMMITMENT TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Lower Merion School District Organizational Chart

- Superman
- Assistant to the Superintendent
- Human Resources
  - Manager: Felicity Hanks
  - Compensation & Benefits: Supervisors
    - Eric Darnell

- Director of Operations
- Business Manager
  - Victor Orlando

- Assistant Director of Operations
  - Ken Fills

- Director of Nutritional Services
  - Karsin Castillo

- Director of Nutritional Services
  - Mahmoud Hassen

- Director of Nutritional Services
  - Chris Schaffler

- Foreman Grounds
  - Bob Schuller

- Supervisor of Safety, Security & Custodians
  - Dennis Will

- Custodial Foreman
  - John Kush

Note: An organizational chart is merely a symbolic interpretation of administrative positions and their supervisory responsibilities. It does not reflect the working relationships of the school district. It is the formal and informal relationships of all staff members that shape how well an organization can accomplish its mission.
1. Ongoing Work:

a. Eliminating, adding and aligning positions in the District to foster greater collaboration, organizational effectiveness and sustainable professional development.

   i. Dr. Mumin recommended and gained School Board approval to eliminate the Special Assistant for Research and Program Evaluation position and add the Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion position (see highlights on the Org. Chart). The aforementioned allows for the Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to be included as a member of the Superintendent’s Cabinet and to directly have input in all of the professional development plans and administrative priorities of LMSD.
1. **ONGOING WORK:**

   a. **Student Health & Safety**
      
      i. Through the pandemic, LMSD Administrators attended regular meetings with other area superintendents and the Montgomery County Office of Public Health (MCOPH) to keep abreast of the latest developments of COVID-19.

      ii. LMSD maintains a collaborative relationship with the Lower Merion Township Police Department, who have been both responsive and proactive in working with us to keep our students and staff safe.
b. Meetings with Students at All Schools
   i. At Belmont Hills, I danced with Kindergartners and took part in a math lesson that highlighted diversity, as we measured and compared the size of our feet (mine were definitely the biggest!).
ii. At Cynwyd, I read a book about kindness and listened as first graders discussed how important kindness is to who they want to become.
iii. At Gladwyne, I watched as second graders practiced mindfulness to release stress and energy so they could focus on the assignment at hand.
iv. At Merion, I joined third graders as they learned about coding and created bracelets with their initials in binary code.
v. At Penn Valley, I explained to fourth graders what a superintendent does, noting that they – the students – are our constant focus.
vi. At Penn Wynne, I heard from fifth graders who are excited about the prospect of being among the first students who will attend Black Rock Middle School.
vii. At Bala Cynwyd, I met with diverse groups of students who are already making their voices heard to effect change on issues that are important to them.
viii. At Welsh Valley, students shared their dreams for the future and I am confident that the careers they imagine in science, medicine and the arts are within their grasp.
I visited the Black Rock Middle School site with Ambassadors from Bala Cynwyd and Welsh Valley as they exclaimed over the flexible learning spaces of their future school.
x. At Harriton and Lower Merion, I met with student leaders and journalists who challenged me with questions and calls for social justice, while expressing deep empathy for one another and admiration for their teachers and staff who support them every day.

c. Student Interviews
i. Dr. Mumin was interviewed by students from the Harriton Banner, Harriton TV and the Merionite. The interviews can be viewed on the LMSD-TV, Comcast Channel 22 and Verizon Fios Channel 36.
d. School Board Student Representatives
i. At each meeting of the Lower Merion Board of School Directors, student representatives from Lower Merion and Harriton high schools report on issues that are on the minds of their peers.

e. Meetings with parent groups, community groups and elected officials
i. Dr. Mumin met with a small group of stakeholders from the Achievement Imperative Task Force (AITF) and The Committee to Address Race in Education (CARE) to discuss past issues, concerns and future community partnerships around upcoming LMSD work in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

ii. Dr. Mumin met with the officers of the Interschool Council (ISC) to discuss projected LMSD planning, programming and strategic areas of focus for the student body aligned with the Strategic Plan.

iii. Dr. Mumin met with the officers of the Committee for Special Education (CSE) to discuss future partnerships and collaboration with parents whose children receive IEP, GIEP or 504 services.

iv. Dr. Mumin was involved in a Community Conversation at the Zion Baptist Church of Ardmore to listen to community concerns and communicate his visionary aspects of how LMSD will look to the future with new vision.

2. Steps to Advance the Work
a. Ongoing community engagement activities to foster greater collaboration, trust and partnership.
As we look to the future with new vision, it is important to recognize the major challenges that exist as expressed by various stakeholders, which may have tremendous programmatic and financial impact on the school system. The areas are as follows: Full-Day Kindergarten, Lights on Arnold Field, Healthy Start Times, Athletic Fields at Black Rock Middle School, and Ongoing Budget Litigation.

These are challenges, but not insurmountable barriers, to overcome to reach successful outcomes. More specifically, the challenges are correlated and equally important to student success. From my vantage point as the Superintendent of Schools, I am committed to lead and work alongside the stakeholders—Students, Parents/Guardians, Educators, Community and School Board--to balance these prioritized challenges. This balance will include transparent communication, fiduciary fiscal responsiveness, a keen focus on market conditions impacting systemic change and a continued investment in highly qualified educators.
Commencing the 2022-23 school year, the direction of the Administration will continue to be guided by the Strategic Plan. Simultaneously, great time, work and attention will focus on a “refresh” of that Plan. This refresh will entail gathering focus groups to assess the intensity and metrics in the five Pathways in the specific areas highlighted in the chart below—Meaningful Growth Metrics, Cultural Proficiency, Revised Learning Calendar, Student Voice, and Alumni Engagement.

1. Redefining Success
Transform how we define, measure, and report student achievement with a focus on each student’s individualized growth and success in areas that extend beyond traditional academic indicators.

2. Transformative Curriculum
Shift from content area silos to a connected curriculum that prepares students to transfer knowledge and apply them in education and other disciplines.

3. A Commitment to Professional Learning
Transform professional learning from a top-down model to one that honors and harnesses our educators’ collective wisdom.

4. Student-Driven Schools
Adjust our system from one characterized by heavily-prescribed requirements to one that affords more self-directed goal setting and positive risk-taking—where students navigate their own learning in close partnership with professionals.

5. A Spirit of Community
Transform our approach to community outreach from one that is less coordinated to one that strategically leverages and maximizes community resources to strengthen our schools.

Meaningful Growth Metrics
Expanding reporting strategies will provide deeper, more holistic indicators of growth.

Expanded Reporting Strategies
Reporting procedures will be expanded and individualized to provide a more comprehensive, nuanced view of student performance.

Balanced Assessments
A variety of summative practices will provide deeper, more holistic indicators of growth.

Cultural Proficiency
Culturally proficient teaching and learning practices will help ensure that the diversity of our students is reflected in the curriculum, information technology, instructional materials, and institutional outcomes and supports the elimination of achievement gaps.

Leadership Excellence
The capacity of educator leaders will be expanded through strengthened networks, increased student voice, and expanded opportunities for mentorship and sounding.

Student Goal-Setting
Protocol will be developed for student goal-setting and self-reflection so that each student has a greater understanding of their individual growth.

Student Voice
Opportunities for students to provide direct feedback and share their views will be expanded across the District and in classrooms.

Community Connections
Enhanced communications and opportunities for community feedback will strengthen community trust and support for school programs.

Strategic Partnerships
Students and staff will build, leverage, and establish partnerships with businesses, community organizations, higher education, and alumni to enrich the educational experience and stimulate involvement.

Alumni Engagement
The District will launch a strategic alumni engagement and development program to maintain and expand the long-term relationships that engage alumni and strengthen District resources.

Leveraging the Brand
The District will leverage its expertise in retention and engagement to ensure innovative, revenue-generating programs for audiences beyond the school community.
The focus groups will be guided through a book study with the text, *Accelerate: Building Strategic Agility for a Faster Moving World*, by John Kotter, to create renewed energy and alignment system-wide for the admirable work—past and present -- and for deliverables guided by the Strategic Plan. Succinctly, the goal will be to refresh the District’s outlook, from traditionally operating as a school system to operating as a system of schools. This approach will further our goals and reputation as a premier school district in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and nationally, by employing a process of empowerment, efficiency and effectiveness at each school building among Administrators, teachers, support staff and students.

I am grateful to the students, parents/guardians, educators, School Board and community for their active engagement and support.

Together, we will continue to excel, “All Forward,” providing opportunities for children to learn, lead and achieve.
CONCLUSION

As the Superintendent of LSD, I am extremely proud of our history of academic excellence, goal-oriented students, active parents, passionate educators, caring community groups, distinguished alumni and future-focused School Board Directors. I have been embraced by our many stakeholders. The plethora of meetings, conversations (formal and informal), visits and impromptu dialogues in the public have continued to energize me to inspire innovation, support our schools and sustain excellence for all students in LSD. Moreover, from my vantage point, I will continue to lead with high expectations in all we do, while focusing on sustaining our commitment to educating students for life and for reflective democratic citizenship. I will work feverishly to empower students and educators in the preservation of their identity and culture, while substance, depth, and critical thinking are as important as test scores, and more important than mere compliance.

Thank you to the many constituents that graciously gave time to provide information in forming this 100-day report. The support, passion, and purpose of all of us collectively is a recipe for sustainable student and school district success. I continue to be elated regarding our future goals, plans, and the infinite possibilities of success, while we look to the future with new vision—tomorrow is not yesterday!