



BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

2023 - 2024 Entry Plan for Superintendent Cliff Chuang – August 2023 DRAFT



“Go slow to go fast.” – Various

“Assume there is goodness to be found and work toward finding it.” – Lindsey Sampson

Whose voices and perspectives are missing? What else do I need to know?

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August 2023

Dear Bedford Public Schools Community,

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve the Bedford Public Schools as superintendent. I appreciate everyone who welcomed and met with me during the [initial transition process](#), and have really enjoyed getting to know the members of this community. It is clear to me that each stakeholder I have spoken to cares deeply about the success of our children and brings assets we can all benefit from. In order for me to successfully lead the district and serve the community, it will be vital for me to continue to listen, observe, and learn from everyone with an interest in the success of the Bedford Public Schools. I plan to use the recommended entry plan model supported by the [New Superintendent Induction Program \(NSIP\) - M.A.S.S. \(massupt.org\)](#). *I will approach this process with a sense of curiosity and wonder, with the assumption that there is wisdom and goodness to be found in each person or group that I speak with.*

In the coming months, I will be hosting multiple meetings and forums with students, staff, families, employers, and community partners—both individually and in group settings—here in Bedford, in Boston, on Hanscom Air Force Base, and virtually. I am committed to seeking multiple, varied, and divergent perspectives and will be consistently asking: *Whose voices and perspectives are missing? What else do I need to know?* I am Chinese-American and grew up in a part of the country that required me to learn how to speak up in a dominant culture that wasn't used to families like mine. I want to hear from all voices and ask for your partnership in elevating the voices in our community that may not always be easily heard.

I will also be seeking information through surveys and observing our students and educators in action in as many learning settings as possible: in classrooms, fields, courts, rehearsal rooms, and performance space. Additionally, I will be conducting an in-depth review of school and district policies, programs, budgets, and data. I will then seek to deeply understand, digest, and analyze this information with the Bedford Public Schools team, share my findings with the community, and begin a period of strategic planning and goal setting to build upon the strong educational foundation already in place.

You can find additional details about my entry plan and process below. However, I begin by sharing a bit about me and my lived experiences—both personal and professional—and my core values, to provide context for my perspective and how I approach educational leadership. I invite questions and dialogue throughout this process, and feedback on this entry plan over the next few weeks. Please feel free to email me at superintendentoffice@bedfordps.org. I plan to issue a final version in early September. Thank you for the opportunity to partner with you.

Sincerely,

Cliff Chuang 莊宏毅, Superintendent of Schools

A Bit About Cliff 莊宏毅



Many of you may have learned a bit about me during the superintendent search process and also during the transition process, but I am providing information about me here in one place for easy reference if you'd like to learn about some of my lived experiences—both personal and professional—that inform my approach to educational leadership. Overall, I intend to lead in alignment with my core values (outlined further below) and my given Chinese name, which translates to “great perseverance” (thanks, mom and dad!). The August 7 Bedford Citizen article linked to below provides more information about my background and initial thoughts in my new role. Please don't hesitate to ask me questions!

Recent coverage/information:

- [My introductory video to the community](#)
- [New Superintendent Expounds on His Background, Priorities, Affinities - Mike Rosenberg, The Bedford Citizen, August 7, 2023](#)

Coverage/information shared during the superintendent search process:


- [BPS Superintendent Interviews: Cliff Chuang - The Bedford Citizen](#)
- [BedfordMATV YouTube video of Superintendent Interview \(starting at around the 2:08:00 mark\)](#)
- [School Committee's Unanimous Pick Followed a Different Path to Superintendency Role - The Bedford Citizen](#)



Basic information:

- [Biographies/Contact | Bedford Public Schools \(bedfordps.org\)](#)
- [Cliff Chuang - LinkedIn Profile](#)

Superintendent Chuang’s Core Values for Educational Leadership

I share these core values to communicate the belief and priorities that have driven my approach to educational leadership and how I hope to work together with the Bedford Public Schools team and community. I believe that my core values align well with those articulated in the [district improvement plan](#): Achievement, Inclusivity, Community, and Empathy. I will continue to refine how my core values guide my actions and decisions as I get to know the team and community.


Note: I have chosen to borrow concepts and words from other languages and cultures that more fully capture what I’m trying to communicate. [Click the  symbol for pronunciation support.]

Core Value	Meaning...	Which guide my actions & decisions in the following ways:
<p>Ujima</p>  <p>We’re in this together.</p>	<p>Ujima is a Swahili (an East African language) word, and one of the seven principles of Kwanzaa, a celebration held from December 26 to January 1 that honors African heritage in African-American culture. It means collective work and responsibility; to build and maintain our community together and make our brothers' and sisters' problems, and all in our community's problems, our problems and to solve them together.¹</p>	<p>I practice ujima by taking personal responsibility (through self-reflection and self-correction) and collective responsibility (a problem for one is a problem for all) in order to solve problems. To the maximal extent possible, I work with impacted stakeholders to serve our learners better. This requires gathering multiple perspectives and seeking out and elevating voices that aren’t necessarily the loudest.</p>
<p>Stewardship</p> <p>We take good care.</p>	<p>Stewardship is the careful and responsible management of resources entrusted to one’s care; the assignment of responsibility to shepherd, supervise, manage, and protect resources. Native Americans understood the importance of incentives and built their societies around institutions that encouraged good human and natural resource stewardship.²</p>	<p>I act as a good steward of the public resources and the educational journeys for the students, families and community that I serve. This means that I may need to make difficult decisions to allocate resources for the greater good that doesn’t always satisfy an individual’s desires, though I will always strive to achieve maximum mutual benefit.</p>
<p>Kaizen 改善</p>  <p>We never stop improving.</p>	<p>Kaizen comes from the Japanese “Kai” (“improvement” or “change”) and “Zen” (“good”), meaning good change; change for the better; constant, continuous improvement. It emerged from Japanese manufacturers working to improve efficiency and productivity after World War II. The concept has since been applied to many contexts.³</p>	<p>To serve our learners better, I practice kaizen by examining how I can improve processes, practices, and policies. I do this on a constant and incremental basis, as there is always room for improvement. I pursue improvement with healthy respect for what has come before and the investment and knowledge of the people involved.</p>

¹ [Official Kwanzaa Website](#)

² [Conservation Native American Style | PERC](#)

³ [Kaizen - Gaining the Benefits of Continuous Improvement \(mindtools.com\)](#)

Core Value	Meaning...	<i>Which guide my actions and decisions in the following ways:</i>
<p>Con Ganas</p>  <p><i>We are all in.</i></p>	<p>Con ganas is a Spanish phrase that means to give all your effort; to act wholeheartedly with courage, passion, purpose and conviction.⁴</p>	<p>I will work con ganas until all learners are successful. I will not shy away from tackling hard issues that affect the families we serve, even if it is uncomfortable and means navigating difficult circumstances, taking risks, or challenging the status quo. We will have courageous conversations when necessary.</p>
<p>Learner-Centered</p> <p><i>We put learners first.</i></p>	<p>Learner-centered refers to my commitment to keep learners at the center of everything that we do and valuing the unique strengths and potential of each individual.</p>	<p>I do my best to know who our learners are and to act in their best interest, promoting their self agency and choices as much as possible. I support a wide variety of educational programs and settings, learning experiences, instructional approaches, and support strategies that address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, and cultural backgrounds of each learner.</p>
<p>Equity & Racial Equity</p> <p><i>We provide each learner what they need to succeed.</i></p>	<p>Equity means ensuring that every learner has what they need to succeed and thrive in society. [5] An equitable approach to education means adjusting the distribution of resources and investments based on historic and present need in order to correct opportunity and outcome disparities between student groups.⁵</p> <p>Racial Equity is a process of eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone. It is the intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems, and structures by prioritizing measurable change in the lives of people of color.⁶</p>	<p>Historically and presently, different groups have had varying degrees of access to resources and power. With this understanding, I must pursue equity by ensuring that our decisions and actions consider the impact on various communities.</p> <p>I develop policies and practices that ensure that all students have an equal opportunity for success.</p> <p>In particular, I am clear that in order to close the persistent gaps in outcomes for racially marginalized communities, while continuing to push all learners to their maximum potential, I must view our policy decisions and actions through the lens of racial equity.</p>
<p>Both/And</p> <p><i>We are open to all possibilities</i></p>	<p>Both/And means that multiple things can be true and oftentimes there is a “third way”.⁷</p>	<p>I am committed to remain open to creative possibilities and to seek solutions that may result from the best of multiple perspectives. I reject false either/or dichotomies and make space for new approaches.</p>

⁴ [Con Ganas We Can Blog - Latinos for Education](#)

⁵ [Equity and Equality Are Not Equal - The Education Trust \(edtrust.org\)](#)

⁶ [What is Racial Equity? | Race Forward](#)

⁷ [The Tyranny of Either/Or Thinking \(And Moving to Both/And\) \(executivecoachingconcepts.com\)](#)

2023-2024 Draft Entry Plan for Superintendent Cliff Chuang, Bedford Public Schools

Entry Plan Phases and Timeframe

This entry plan outlines the process I will use to learn more about the Bedford Public Schools in my role as superintendent. I will conduct the process in several phases throughout my first year:

Phase 0: Transition/Pre-Entry (June – August 2023)

Phase 1: Listen, Observe, Learn (September – November 2023)

Phase 2: Synthesize & Analyze (December 2023 – January 2024)

Phase 3: Share (February 2024)

Phase 4: Plan (March - Summer 2024)

These phases are detailed more fully below. Throughout the fall and winter, I will keep the district leadership team and school committee informed of my progress. I anticipate sharing my *Report of Entry Findings* to the School Committee by February 2024, with the exact date to be determined once the schedule for the budget development process is set. After a strategic planning process in the spring of 2024, this process will culminate in the summer of 2024 with the finalization of the next comprehensive three-year district improvement plan for 2024 to 2027.

Notes: During this first year (and the following two years), I will be participating in the [New Superintendent Induction Program \(NSIP\) - M.A.S.S. \(massupt.org\)](https://massupt.org). I will be supported by a NSIP Coach (John Phelan) who may “shadow” some of my entry activities to provide me feedback for my own professional development. In addition, for reference, I include a draft set of superintendent goals for the 2023-2024 school year that will be finalized in the fall and in place simultaneously while the entry plan process is underway. See Appendix B.

Phase 0: Transition/Pre-Entry – June, July, and August 2023

This phase provided for a smooth transition from Superintendent Conrad to Superintendent Chuang and was focused on informal get-to-know-you activities and initial relationship building and was outlined in this [transition plan](#).

Phase 1: Listen, Observe, Learn – September, October, and November 2023

Goal for this phase: *Develop and deepen constructive working relationships with the Bedford Public Schools team and the diverse array of partners who support the success of our students in order to deeply understand the systems, structures, and culture of the district and schools and the primary interests of stakeholders.*

This phase will include three major components: listening to and learning from diverse stakeholders; instructional observations; and data, document, and policy review described more fully below.

Listening to and Learning from Diverse Stakeholders

I will be meeting with stakeholders—both individually and in group settings—here in Bedford, in Boston, on Hanscom Air Force Base (HAFB), and virtually. These stakeholders may include, but are not limited to, the list outlined below. During this process, I am committed to seeking multiple, varied, and divergent perspectives. As I seek to understand the district, I will be consistently asking and considering:

- *Whose voices and perspectives are missing, and what else do I need to know?*
- *Are practices, policies, and/or structures preferences, traditions, or requirements?*

I ask for your partnership in identifying and elevating other voices that need to be heard. If interpretation/translation services or special accommodations are necessary for all stakeholders to fully participate in this process, we will provide them. In order to provide another format for feedback. The general areas of inquiry can be found in Appendix A: SWOT Analysis and Other Questions, which are intentionally designed to be relatively open-ended, in an effort to avoid pre-conceived notions of what is important to stakeholders.

- **Students:** Focus groups by school, including formal engagements with existing student council/advisory structures.
- **Parents/Families:** Focus groups by school and via individual appointments.
- **Educators and staff** (including administrators, administrative assistants, teachers, teaching assistants, food service workers, custodians, maintenance and technical staff) via focus groups and 1-1 conversations. I plan to meet 1-1 with the entire instructional leadership team. I will also randomly draw several dozen other team members to meet with 1-1 if they'd like and will invite others to do so if they wish.
- **Bedford School Committee** members individually and regularly.
- **Family/Support Organizations:** PTAs (BEST, MSPA, and BHSPA), SEPAC, ELPAC, Parent Diversity Council, Patrons of Music in Schools (POMS), Bedford Athletic Association, Bedford Education Foundation, and METCO, Inc.
- **Town Officials:** Town Manager, Finance Director, Police Chief, Fire Chief, School Resource Officer, Health and Human Services Director, Public Works Director, Recreation Director, Archivist, Assessor, Finance Committee members, and Select Board members.
- **Educational Partners:** Bedford Educators Association, Bedford School Administrative Assistants Association, Bedford School Nurses Professional Unit, Bedford School Cafeteria Employees Association, Bedford Schools Custodial & Maintenance Organization, LABBB Collaborative, CASE Collaborative, Middlesex Community College, Bedford Charter, Research for Better Teaching, HAFB School Liaison and leadership, and Lincoln Public Schools (who share responsibility for education our HAFB families).
- **Community Partners:** Bedford Citizen, Bedford Embraces Diversity, Rotary Club, CSF of Bedford.
- **Local Employers:** Bedford Chamber of Commerce, MITRE, Lincoln Labs, iRobot, Ultragenyx, etc.
- **Elected Officials:** State Representative Ken Gordon, State Senator Michael Barrett.

I also plan to solicit similar feedback via an **open community survey**. The survey will largely be open-ended reflecting the same type of prompts as in Appendix A, but I plan to seek research consultation support to ensure that the structure is sound, and intend to have the results analyzed by a third-party partner to maximize objectivity in the process of identifying themes and areas for further inquiry.

Instructional and Operational Observations

The core of the educational process occurs through the interactions between educators, students, and the curriculum, which encompasses not only academic subjects, but athletics, the arts, work-based learning experiences, and other learning activities. I will be a regular presence in and around our schools, classrooms, fields, courts, and performance spaces in order to observe teaching and learning. From mid-September to mid-November, I plan to visit each of Bedford's four schools at least once every two weeks, with the goal of observing a broad and representative sample of our students and educators in action with as many of the district's instructional leaders across a diverse array of instructional settings. During these observations, I will:

- *Observe how educators are meaningfully including, engaging, and challenging each student.*
- *Collaborate with instructional leaders to develop shared expectations for observing instruction.*
- *Seek to contextualize what I have heard from stakeholders.*

These observations will not be evaluative in nature, but are designed to inform future planning and establish a baseline for conversations about instructional practice. I will also be observing various aspects of district and school operations, including school starts, lunches/food service, and dismissals, as well as riding our buses (from Boston and within Bedford).

Data, Document, and Policy Review

During this initial entry phase, I will also review a number of key documents, reports, and student outcome data that tell their own story about the district. These may include but are not limited to :

- District and School Improvement Plans
- All data submitted to and presented by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) via sites such as [School and District Profiles](#), [District Analysis and Review Tools](#) (including but not limited to data about finance, enrollment, attendance, discipline, MCAS, AP, SAT, English Learners and Special Education).
- District and Program evaluations and assessments such as DESE Tiered Focus Monitoring Reviews and Accreditation Reports
- Baseline and end of year local assessment data, IEP Referral data
- Budget Documents and Financial Audits for both the school and towns
- Collective Bargaining Agreements and individual staff contracts
- School Safety Review, Safety Plans and Emergency Response Protocols
- Documented curriculum taught in schools and Professional Development Plan
- All school and faculty handbooks
- School committee policy manual
- Policies related to METCO and HAFB student participation and inclusion

As time permits, I may do a deeper dive to learn more about specific areas which have emerged during my initial transition process as areas of heightened interest and discussion, which include, but are not limited to: METCO; Preschool programs; the district's overall approach to social-emotional learning and restorative practices; diversity, equity and inclusion strategies; and academic leveling.

A final note on this phase: As I go through the extensive process of listening, observing, and reviewing all the information during the first few months of my time in the district, I will seek to deeply listen and understand the perspectives of various stakeholders. During this phase, I will do my best to heed the informal motto of the New Superintendent Induction Program: *go slow to go fast*. This means refraining from moving too quickly to planning, problem-solving, and decision making. In this spirit, I have made a commitment to avoid any major policy changes until this entry process is complete; I ask for your patience if you are eager for certain changes. I know that this will require a great deal of self-discipline on my part, and I welcome reminders about the goals of this phase. This also means that I will need to continually and deliberately seek out other perspectives and keep asking: *what else do I need to know and who else do I need to hear from?* I ask that you work with me to carefully and patiently set the stage for the collaborative planning process to follow in the spring of 2024 after the initial phases of the entry process have been completed.

Phase 2: Synthesize & Analyze – December 2023 and January 2024

Goal for this phase: *Identify trends and priority areas of focus for further inquiry and for strategic planning.*

At this second phase of the process, though I will continue listening, observing and learning through additional stakeholder engagement, instructional observations, and data review, my focus will shift to deliberately synthesizing and analyzing all of the information gathered in the first phase. This will include recognizing the trends, patterns and themes that emerge and triangulating the various data gathered in Phase 1, resulting in more formally identifying the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats for the Bedford Public Schools. All individual data from stakeholder engagement activities will remain anonymous. The development of entry findings and recommendations will be done in collaboration with the leadership team in an iterative fashion, and I will seek ways to continue to gather feedback from other stakeholders during this process. This synthesis and analysis will culminate in an entry plan report of findings and recommendations.

Phase 3: Share – February 2024

Goal for this phase: *Transparently share my learnings and findings about the district with the community.*

I will formally present my entry plan report to the School Committee and the community in February 2024. I expect that the final report will include:

- 1) A high-level summary of the information gathered in phase 1, including themes, trends, and areas for potential further inquiry.
- 2) A synthesis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from all data sources.
- 3) An assessment of organizational structure and initial design thinking regarding changes, if any, needed to ensure optimal student learning.
- 4) Preliminary findings, recommendations, and areas of focus for the collaborative strategic planning process in Phase 4.

Phase 4: Plan – March through July 2024

Goal for this phase: *Work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop the vision and strategic plan for the next 3 years.*





Once the entry plan report is finalized and presented, we will be well positioned to engage the collaborative strategic planning process that will culminate in summer 2024 with a comprehensive three-year district improvement plan for 2024 to 2027. My hope is that the leadership team and stakeholders can *rumble with vulnerability* throughout this planning process.

Appendix A: Introductory Conversation with Superintendent Chuang – “SWOT” Analysis and Other Potential Questions

Getting to Know Stakeholders and Identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) in the Bedford Public Schools

SWOT Analysis Questions

Note: “We” and “us” in the prompts below refer to the Bedford Public Schools. The prompts are designed to help frame your thinking and are not exhaustive, but please feel free to share whatever is helpful in each area.

Strengths 	Weaknesses 	Opportunities 	Threats 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What do we do well? ● What are we praised for? ● What draws families and/or educators to us? ● Who is excelling? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What could we improve? ● What are we criticized for? ● Why do families and/or educators leave us? ● Who is being left behind? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What can we take advantage of to improve our schools? ● What emerging trends or resources should we keep an eye on? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What obstacles do we face that we need to counteract? ● What emerging risks should we monitor?

Other Questions

- Tell me about your self/team/organization and your role/work for the Bedford Public Schools?
- How would you describe the culture and climate of the district/school/team?
- What are you/team/organization really good at?
- If you had a magic wand and were not constrained by resources, time, or politics, what would you change in the Bedford Public Schools?
- What can I do to support you?
- Is there anything else you would like to share or would like to know?

Appendix B: Superintendent Chuang's Potential Draft First Year Goals

Part of the entry plan process will be to collaborate with the Bedford School Committee to develop evaluation goals based upon my core values, the mission of the district, and the immediate short term needs for this year. These goals will be developed during the fall, presented to the school committee for feedback, and finalized at a subsequent school committee meeting. The successful attainment of the goals depends heavily on collaboration among the leadership team. In keeping with the objectives of New Superintendents Induction Program (NSIP), the goals established for a superintendent's first year should take into account a reasonable timetable for that work and, at the same time, ensure forward momentum on important ongoing improvement efforts at the school and district levels. To that end, the following draft goals may serve as starting points as I collaborate with the school committee to develop first year goals. These goals are informed by Appendix E of [DESE Model System Guide for Superintendent Evaluation \(mass.edu\)](#).

Goal 1: Effective Entry and Direction Setting. By late spring, the district will have broad recognition by key stakeholder groups about the district's most critical needs and will have a widely understood process underway to identify the strategies and goals that will address those needs most effectively, and the measures that will be used to assess progress.

Key Actions

1. By September, present to the school committee a written Entry Plan, including an articulation of core values and four phases: (1) Listen, Observe, Learn; (2) Synthesize & Analyze; (3) Share; and (4) Plan. March - Summer 2024)
2. By March, complete and present a *Report of Entry Findings* that includes
 - a. A high-level summary of the information gathered in phase 1, including feedback from stakeholder conversations and survey information; themes and trends identified from instructional observations; and findings from the review of data, documents and policies.
 - b. A synthesis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from all data sources.
 - c. An assessment of leadership and organizational structure and identification of any design/staffing changes needed to ensure optimal student learning.
 - d. Preliminary recommendations and areas of focus for the collaborative strategic planning process that will begin shortly after the report is finalized.
3. By July, complete a draft of the 2024–2027 comprehensive three-year district improvement plan.

Benchmarks

1. Key components completed on schedule as described above.
2. Results of spring survey of district staff demonstrates awareness and engagement in the entry process and confidence that the Report of Entry Findings captured important insights about the state of the district and the issues that most require attention

Goal 2: Maintaining Momentum During the Transition. Keep the district moving forward working with principals and district leaders to ensure that meaningful progress is made on critical district and school goals.

Key Actions

1. Evaluate progress toward district and school improvement goals via goal-setting and evaluation of leadership team members.
 - a. By October 15, review and establish student learning, professional practice and district/school improvement goals with all principals and district leaders.
 - b. By March 1, complete formative evaluation conferences with each principal and district leader supervised by the superintendent.
 - c. Conduct at least monthly visits to each school.
 - d. By July 1, analyze progress on goals and complete summative evaluation reports for all supervisees.
2. Other key actions:
 - a. By November 2023, ensure that School Safety Security Plan policies are in place, Phase 1 implementation is underway, and budget and timeline for out-year phases are established.
 - b. By May 31, 2024, complete FY2025 budget process.
 - c. By June 30, 2024, execute new collective bargaining agreements with the Bedford Education Association and other unions requiring contract renewal that honors staff, supports student learning, and aligns with the district’s strategic goals.

Benchmarks

1. Educator evaluations are completed timely.
2. Summative evaluation reports demonstrate “meets” or “exceeds” ratings on at least 75 percent of principal/administrator goals.
3. Results of a spring survey of district staff reflect that the superintendent is a regular presence in the schools.

Goal 3: (Professional Practice) New Superintendent Induction Program (NSIP). Develop skills in strategy development, data analysis, and instructional leadership by actively engaging in the first year of the New Superintendent Induction Program.

Key Actions

1. Attend all NSIP content sessions (barring district emergencies).
2. Complete all NSIP assignments.
3. Regularly consult and reflect with my NSIP coach at least monthly.

Benchmarks

1. Calendar documents active participation in NSIP sessions and contact with NSIP coach
2. NSIP leaders/coach can confirm that the superintendent actively engaged in the first year of the program.