

# PROVISO TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOLS DISTRICT 209



## SUPERINTENDENT ENTRY PLAN



## PROVISO TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOLS DISTRICT 209

**Jesse J. Rodríguez, Ph.D.**



PROVISO EAST



PMSA



PROVISO WEST

**NIHIL NISI OPTIMUM**  
"NOTHING BUT THE BEST"

# PROVISO TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOLS DISTRICT 209

Dear Proviso Township High Schools District 209 Community,

It is a distinct honor to lead Proviso Township High Schools District 209 (PTHS 209) and to commit myself to the Board of Education's charge to ensure that every school is a thriving community that prepares every student for college, career, and life.

During the interview process, the PTHS 209 Board of Education communicated its priorities for the leadership qualities sought in a superintendent of schools. Those qualities included a strong commitment to a "student first" philosophy, a vision for continuous improvement, the capacity to inspire a community of learners, and the ability to plan for improved student outcomes. A successful partnership for school governance requires shared commitments, and it has become clear that my experiences and values are well aligned with the goals of the Board of Education and the Proviso school community. As a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and district leader, my focus on creating effective and efficient systems for adult and student learning has never wavered. In addition, a robust system of support and accountability that is collaboratively developed and executed with staff provides the necessary guideposts to move PTHS 209 toward our common vision of educational excellence for all learners.



Our collective plan will build on the strengths of PTHS 209 and identify the most powerful strategies for addressing our challenges as opportunities while addressing the significant achievement gaps directly with perseverance and firmness. I will be using a structured entry plan to guide my work during the first 100 days after my official start date of July 1. That plan is described in detail in the following pages. It is critical that we learn as much as possible quickly, assessing data to determine what is and is not working in our school district. Otherwise, we will have failed before we even get started, and failure is not an option for our students.

In "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," Stephen Covey makes the case that leaders must "first seek to understand, then to be understood." The transition activities outlined in this plan are intended to allow for deep understanding of the context of public education in PTHS 209. It outlines the immediate and long-term challenges and opportunities we face, along with the hopes and dreams of the Proviso Township High Schools community. This plan of entry reflects my strong desire to make a thoughtful and deliberate entry into this diverse and high-profile school district. It provides the necessary time to listen and learn about PTHS 209 while working collaboratively to develop, articulate and execute an educational vision that builds upon the current and historical success of PTHS 209 that results in "Nihil Nisi Optimum."

As PTHS 209 enters a new chapter in its 106-year history, I am eager to serve as superintendent of schools in service of talented students, devoted teachers, committed staff, loving families, supportive community members, and a dedicated Board of Education. Collectively, we will strengthen trust with our stakeholders and obtain a deeper understanding of our District. Our listening, learning, planning, and researching tour will help us make immediate improvements and determine the best course of action for our students, community and staff. I look forward to our collective work to turn the page and write a new chapter toward a brighter future for all stakeholders to make PTHS 209 "Nothing But The Best."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jesse J. Rodríguez". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jesse J. Rodríguez, Ph.D.



**VELLE EST POSSE**  
"WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY."

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The following beliefs provide the foundation for the pillars of this entry plan:

## Commitment to Equity

If children are to enjoy all that life has to offer, they must receive a high-quality education that builds on their strengths, addresses their needs, and prepares them for college and career pathways. An African proverb tells us that “it takes a village to raise a child.” To do this, we must continually identify and remove the institutional barriers that prevent students from being successful. We will function with data-driven leadership behaviors centered on improvement for all learners.



## Coalition for Excellence

If we are to provide a high-quality education for all students, we need to focus on continuously improving the quality of teaching and leadership in every school. Good teaching matters and good teaching does not happen consistently without the ongoing support of a strong principal at the helm. A focus on teaching, learning, and leadership will become the pillars of achieving our goal of educational excellence. In “Good to Great,” Jim Collins argued that “Good is the enemy of Great.” We must engage in a review of our processes and unify PTHS 209 human capital to enhance our existing infrastructure through systemic improvement.



## Cultivating Leadership Through Empowerment

Ultimately, the equity and excellence pillars will enhance the collaborative framework by working toward a common goal, engaging different viewpoints, and identifying multiple pathways to success. It is the responsibility of the leaders within their respective departments to cultivate and enhance leadership capacity. A good leader listens for understanding, carefully weighs multiple perspectives, and then takes assertive action. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated, “Everybody can be great because anybody can serve.” I have no doubt we will become one of the best school districts in Illinois.



**VERBA DOCENT EXEMPLA TRAHUNT**  
“WORDS INSTRUCT, ILLUSTRATIONS LEAD.”

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## Goals for the Entry Process

The entry period is designed to reach the following 10 goals:

- Commence a smooth transition of leadership
- Create a structure to listen broadly and learn comprehensively about PTHS 209
- Embrace multiple perspectives and assure that voices are heard
- Create the foundation for a vision of the future and strategic planning process
- Purposely and carefully structure the transition as a first step toward continuous improvement of instruction and student achievement measures for all students
- Build a positive working relationship with the Board of Education that is anchored in a set of common goals and priorities aimed at accelerating student growth and eliminating achievement gaps
- Develop a shared understanding of the district's strengths and challenges
- Build trust and gain commitment from school and community members to address the district's challenges
- Identify a set of strategic actions with aligned resources for the 2016-2017 school year
- Establish a management structure, a set of management processes and practices, and a district culture that truly supports teachers and students in the classroom



## Outcomes/Deliverables

The expected results of this entry plan include:

- A “100 Days of School” report on observations, findings, and an approach for collaboratively developing a compelling vision for the future of PTHS 209 (based on 100 school days, a report will be provided in early February 2017).
- The outline of a strategic planning process to develop a three- or five-year strategic plan including measurable objectives and defined strategies.



The desired outcomes and deliverables “start with the end in mind” as explained in “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” by Stephen Covey.



**VERITAS LIBERABIT VOS**  
“THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE.”

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## Phases

The entry plan consists of three phases:

— **Phase 1: Transitioning in April-June:** During this phase, I will make regular visits to PTHS 209 before my official start date in an effort to ensure a smooth transition. I will meet with board members, administrators, certificated and classified staff, key elected officials, and community leaders to:



- Analyze a variety of data, focusing on instructional and operational data
- Examine goals and objectives of the administrative team
- Review organizational charts of all departments and schools
- Observe Board meetings to familiarize myself with the existing organizational structure and communication protocols
- Participate in school events with Board of Education members
- Start researching community strengths, challenges, and opportunities
- Meet and greet activities with district staff and Proviso community

— **Phase 2: Listening and Learning in July-November:** During this phase, which will begin on my official start date, I will meet with a variety of stakeholders to discuss the district's goals and better understand the district's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. My goal is to attain a deep and rich understanding through an analysis of multiple perspectives:

- One-on-one meetings with the Board of Education and all direct reports to discuss priorities, progress to date, effectiveness, and outcomes
- Interviews and focus groups with students, teachers, staff, principals, parents, and community members
- Meetings with the central office team to review priorities, progress to date, effectiveness, and 2015-2016 year-end outcomes
- Meetings with principals, both one-on-one and as a focus group
- Listen broadly to all stakeholders
- Prepare for an effective and efficient opening of the 2016-2017 school year
- Establish organizational structures that promote instructional and operational leadership
- Survey administrative staff with a risk management tool that protects the best interests of the school district
- Coordinate the efforts for a detailed, long-range facilities master plan



VERITAS VITA MAGISTRA  
"TRUTH IS LIFE'S TEACHER."

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— **Phase 3: Planning in November-January:** During this phase, I will use the data collected during the listening and learning phase to finalize goals with the Board and determine the district’s strategic priorities and actions. In order to finalize the plan moving forward, I will convene a guiding coalition, which will include school and central office representatives, to analyze the data collected in Phase 2.



- Align organizational structure to strategic priorities
- Develop a process and timeline for discussing progress on the strategic plan
- Hold a retreat with the management team to review the plan and prepare for the initiation phase
- Convene a design team comprised of key school, district, and community leaders to identify the strategic actions that we must take to reach the district’s goals
- Examine the findings and work of the design team in collaboration with PTHS 209 administration to prepare strategic objectives aligned to the goals and priorities of the district
- Establish management routines for ensuring effective development of the strategic plan
- After 100 school days, a report to the Board of Education will be provided by February 2017



**VERO POSSUMUS**  
"YES, WE CAN."

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## Conclusion

As the superintendent of PTHS 209, this entry plan will afford me the opportunity to listen and learn from a vast array of PTHS 209 stakeholders and gain a deeper understanding of the context and structure of public education in Proviso Township. In addition, this entry plan will help me begin to formulate ideas and strategies to strengthen, intensify, and build upon PTHS 209 past success.



I would like to thank everyone in advance for their patience during this entry phase. Please keep in mind that this is a living document that will be adjusted as needed based on feedback and new learning. It is mission critical that we take time to reflect on progress to date and identify the best possible way forward before we act. We must build upon our instructional strengths and realize our collective goal of supporting all students to achieve at high levels, preparing them for success in college, rewarding careers, and life.

I look with eager anticipation toward working with the community to move the school system closer to excellence. Let's continue to work and make PTHS 209 a great school district for all students!



**Dr. Patrick Hardy**  
Principal, Proviso East



**Dr. Bessie Karvelas**  
Principal, PMSA



**Mr. Oscar Hawthorne**  
Principal, Proviso West

