

Connecting, Listening, Learning

100-Day President/CEO Entry Plan Update Actions Towards Desired Outcomes & Initial Progress Observations September 12, 2025 Draft

Desired Outcome 1: Establish effective, collegial relationships with members of the Board of Directors

Actions

- Met individually with Board members
- Met most weeks with the Board Chair
- Communicated with Board members via bi-monthly Board Updates as a foundation for effective, collegial relationships
- Planning collaborative work regarding a strategic roadmap with the Board

Initial Progress Observations

- Board members and I are off to a good start in terms of effective, collegial relationships.
- I plan to continue to build strong relationships with individual Board members to understand their perspective, while engaging in robust, two-way communication and collaboration with the Board as an entity to engage them in effective *governance* work.

Desired Outcome 2: Accelerate collaboration with all levels of Collier County Public Schools

Actions

- Communicated regularly with the Superintendent and Director of Community Engagement through meetings, phone calls, emails, and text messages
- Communicated multiple times with the CCPS Chief Communication Officer
- Attended the Back-to-School Administrators kickoff event and the Bear Creek Elementary School Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
- Presented at the August Principals Meeting regarding student and educator programs

- Met with Deputy Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, Director of Community Engagement and others to collaborate regarding the Golden Apple selection process
- Met with the Executive Director and two coordinators of Career & Technical Education to collaborate regarding the Entrepreneurship Program
- I am starting to facilitate more robust communication among Champions For Learning staff members and CCPS staff members.

Initial Progress Observations

- CCPS is an eager partner with us. As part of her emphasis on “The Power of We,” the Superintendent has clearly communicated to senior level leadership that she envisions much closer collaboration between CCPS and Champions For Learning. This message is already being received by other district-level staff members and school-level leaders as well.
- CCPS is backing up its verbal commitment to collaboration with strong actions. A few examples include the following: promotion of and logistical support for the Thank-a-Teacher Teacher-of-Distinction nomination process; opportunities to present at counselor meetings and parent nights regarding student programs; and the provision of input regarding Golden Apple, student programs, and grants programs.

Desired Outcome 3: Connect with staff members, volunteers* and external partners (*initial entry plan was revised to insert volunteers in this desired outcome)

Actions

- Reshaping team huddles (staff meetings) into collaborative work sessions rather than just information sharing
- Engaging team members in collaborative work i.e. proposal for enhancing student programs; Strategic Roadmap; selection of Chief Development Officer; Golden Apple educator recognition program
- Enhanced organization-wide transparency i.e. sharing of Board Updates, hiring updates, strategic planning

- Periodically integrate icebreakers into team huddles Met individually with staff members
- Met with leaders of the Community Foundation of Collier County, the Schultze Foundation, Suncoast Federal Credit Union, the Schoen Foundation, Owens Ames Kimbell, Greater Naples Leadership
- Joined Leslie Ricciardelli in meeting with Dr. Aysegul Timur, President of FGCU
- Met separately with Alan Horton and Susan McManus
- Participated in the Entrepreneurship Mentor Meet-Up, meeting with entrepreneurship volunteers, teachers of the entrepreneurship course, and CCPS Career & Technical Education staff members
- Met with the Night For Champions Gala Committee
- Reached out to leaders of the Immokalee Foundation, Naples Children and Education Foundation (the wine festival), Grace Place, Bank of America, Greater Naples YMCA, the Daveler Foundation and Stock Development with meetings scheduled or waiting to be scheduled

Initial Progress Observations

- We have a strong staff. Staff members and I are off to a good start in collaborating with one another across functions. We will build on this foundation with intentionality.
- External partners appreciate my outreach to them and appear receptive to returning to closer collaboration. They will want to see that we back up our words with actions.
- Similarly, I am starting to connect with our volunteers and will build on my initial efforts.

Desired Outcome 4: Learn more about the impact of Champions For Learning on Collier students and opportunities to expand this impact

Actions

- The implementation of this Connecting, Listening, Learning Entry Plan is informing the assessment of our organizational structure.

Initial Progress Observations/Questions

- Based on strong feedback from stakeholders, including individual members of the Board of Directors, we've already

implemented/returned to a combination of three Golden Apple practices: a community-based nomination process; a one-hour Golden Apple program broadcast on local television soon after the Golden Apple Celebration; and a sit-down dinner. Also, we are placing much greater emphasis on the Thank-a-Teacher aspect of the nomination process. We should be proud of facilitating a community-wide nomination process that expresses appreciation to hundreds of teachers, regardless of whether they are selected as Teachers of Distinction.

- We should develop a shared vision of the specific problem that we exist to address.
- Examples of questions under consideration (we need to collaborate with internal and external stakeholders, particularly Collier County Public Schools, in answering these questions):
 - Should we serve *more* students through our own version of a program with purposes similar to those of Take Stock in Children? If so, how many students should we continue to serve through Take Stock in Children?
 - How can we collaborate with Collier County Public Schools and other partners to promote the college and career readiness of all students from low-income families? What services might we offer all students so that we reach students from low-income families in a cost-effective manner?
 - How might we expand our role as a convener of volunteers in support of students and teachers in Collier County? This expanded convener role could relate to parents, businesses (including, but not limited to, volunteers for the entrepreneurial program), and other community members.

Desired Outcome 5: Preliminarily assess the ability of the organizational structure to maximize impact on students; fill high-priority staff positions

Actions

- The implementation of this Connecting, Listening, Learning Entry Plan is informing my assessment of our organizational structure.

Initial Observations/Questions

- I currently directly supervise nine full-time staff members and will supervise five full-time staff members with disparate job responsibilities once a Chief Development Officer is hired. I also manage three contractors (fractional Chief Financial Officer; HR consultant; technology support contractor) with assistance from our Manager, Finance & Administration.
- Examples of questions under consideration:
 - Should contractors continue to take the lead in fulfilling finance and administrative responsibilities, particularly with the transition of Stephanie Viviano from a staff position to a contractor role that concludes December 31, 2025?
 - How and with what timing might we reorganize and/or expand our program staff to increase our impact in a cost-effective manner? Should we create a Chief Program Officer position?
 - What size and structure of the development team will best position the organization to expand our fundraising and impact in a cost-effective manner?

Desired Outcome 6: Create and launch a dynamic, strategic roadmap to strengthen programs and expand development efforts to directly increase the number of Collier students served and deepen the long-term impact on their success

Actions

- See other materials already provided relating to the strategic roadmap.

Initial Progress Observations

- Staff members have significant insight that is informing the creation of the strategic roadmap and appreciate being involved.