

# School District Coherence: Connecting the Strategic Plan to Teachers

By

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## Coherence in School Districts: Connecting the Strategic Plan to Teachers

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## **Abstract**

School districts have adopted strategic planning as a means to develop a vision and promote agency for the vision. Committees for strategic planning often include superintendents, principals, administrators, community members and teachers, but they often don't consider the nuances of being a teacher while developing the strategic plan. Concepts such as personalized learning or college and career readiness are often focal points for strategic plans; however, teachers are already incorporating these methods into their classrooms because it is part of being a teacher. The moral imperative of being a teacher often involves these behaviors without direction or motivation. This creates a disconnection between what district level administration desires in their schools, and the actual teaching that is taking place.

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# **School District Coherence: Connecting the Strategic Plan to Teachers**

A Proposal for dissertation by

Joshua Allen Luke

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

School districts have adopted strategic planning as a means to guide organizations towards goals to meet the needs of their students, teachers, and staff. This process has become so popular that some universities have adopted strategic planning as a course of study required in the credentialing process. Strategic planning is a popular process because it allows organizations to think, learn and act strategically (John M Bryson, 2010). As school districts set the aims to accomplish their mission, the strategic plan must be managed to fruition. This is often carried out by mid-level managers who take the directives from their supervisors and create procedures to accomplish those goals.

School districts typically develop strategic plans by incorporating various stakeholders, including those mid-level managers (principals), yet planning committees only harbor a perspective of those creating the plan and dissemination of those details is vital. Strategic management refers to the process that connects the front-line worker (teachers) with the plan for school districts. "Strategic planning suggests that managers should look for models of good management in both the public and private sector," (Berry, 1994, p. 328).

Fullan and Quin (2015) focus on the drivers to foster coherence and reduce fragmentation. School district strategic planning should value the efforts of focused coherence within school districts as means of strategic management. The greatest villain to strategic planning is the lack of understanding connection between teachers and the guidance set by the strategic planning process. Coherence aids the connection by addressing the goals of school

district collectively and individually by building capacity among those in the organization (Fullan & Quinn, 2015).

This study sets out to determine whether teachers understand what they are charged to accomplish based on the school district's strategic plan. Are strategic plans embraced by key stakeholders such as teachers? This is often a struggle for teachers due to the decentralized nature of education; once the classroom door shuts, administrators trust that the tasks teachers are charged with are being carried out with few opportunities to monitor the teachers progress through the school year. This menace to strategic planning is coupled with the level of nuance teachers often implement in their classrooms to assure students master various learning objectives derived from the curriculum.

The strategic planning process is handled differently by school districts, ranging from multi-page documents referring to different characteristics of the school districts to a single-page document outlining the direction and beliefs of the school district. These strategic plans are often published on the school district's website to promote their organization. The public access to these documents assumes that the organization has clearly adopted the practices, and the study attempts to determine if the qualities outlined in the strategic plan are embraced by teachers.

Fifteen teachers were interviewed to analyze a connection between their practice and the school district's strategic plan. Teachers in the interview ranged from core to elective teachers, and all but two teachers sponsored an extracurricular or co-curricular activity. These teachers were selected through personal professional networks or through an administrator.

Interviews with teachers lasted approximately 20-25 minutes depending on the interviewee and were transcribed afterwards. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify common connections to the school district's strategic plan, and between the teachers participating in the study. Four themes emerged from the interviews.

Through data analysis, the following four overarching ideas permeated the study:

- Coherence in school district is lead through developing structures and systems to administer the strategic plan.
- Strategic Management: What the principal does matters.
- Once teachers begin teaching, they want to accomplish their own goals, which indirectly matches the strategic plan.
- Teachers are already facilitating the strategic plan without direction.

Each theme garnered consistent input from teacher with a resounding altruistic implication with one teacher's outcome for students being, "Be good people, be able to meet challenges and overcome those challenges." This idea resonated at various levels among the participants in the study while all participants desired for their student's skills to improve over the duration of the school year.

Coherence in school districts can be seen by school districts developing structures and systems for teachers to building administrators to operate under. The principal of the school then becomes the "glue" that keeps the strategic plan functioning in schools. The enthusiasm and leadership of the principal plays a large role when facilitating that strategic plan. Teachers have a natural connection to the strategic plan due to their goals as teachers. Teachers will facilitate a prescribe curriculum, support structure, or instructional obligation (i.e. displaying objectives), but teachers will also find time to fulfill their goals as a teacher. Due to the decentralization of education, teachers are able to do what they want once class begins and the classroom door shuts. Teachers take advantage of this opportunity to fill

their cup. This self-promoted satisfaction was seen to correlate with the goals of the school district and teachers often found their purpose within this idealist perspective.

The greatest finding of the study is school districts outline as personalized learning, developing relationships, and creating real-world experiences are what teachers facilitate in their classrooms, regardless on whether it is a part of the school district's strategic plan. These aspects are natural components of being an educator and with developing students. This result was unanticipated but important to the overall functioning of school districts. If school officials understand the innate strengths and purpose of teachers, then they can use that information to develop greater coherence by managing the strategic plans effectively.

In summary, the student set out to answer the following three research questions:

- RQ1: Are strategic plans embraced and/or implemented by key educators?
- RQ2: Do strategic plans affect the day to day working of teachers?
- RQ3: Do the goals of strategic planning get communicated to teachers?

The study finds that strategic plans are embraced and/or implemented by key educators due to the bureaucratic structures that are in place to help facilitated and support the strategic plan. When school districts incorporate time in the school day to support students (advisory courses), then teachers must operate under that schedule and implement any prescribed materials. This concept further states that strategic plans do effect the day to day works of teachers, because the strategic plan distinguishes what the organization will be doing operationally; however, the day to day classroom instruction may not be as impacted by the strategic plan due to the natural tendencies of being a teacher. Lastly, strategic plans are indirectly communicated to schools through the school's principal. Teachers found the leadership of their principal valuable and they would follow the directives of their principal whether it be through the evaluation process or shaping the culture of the school.

This study benefits the education field because it better describes the connection between the teachers and the school district's strategic plan. Strategic plans vary between school districts and they are often more ceremonial than operational. Utilizing the findings in this study could foster better coherence within the school district and reap greater results.

## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

#### Do Strategic Plans Trickle Down to Teachers?

Strategic Planning may not be embraced and/or implemented by administrators or key educators. Adopted from the corporate world, strategic planning harbors influence for shaping the school district's practical/political purpose and direction for future performance. While reviewing the research for schools and corporations, they are lengthy indications that the teachers or other frontline employees may not receive the information outlined in the school district's strategic plan. This indicates a threat towards coherence within the school district and perpetuates the decentralized nature of education towards further fragmentation. Conley (1993) describes this disconnection effectively:

“Strategic planning attempts to walk a delicate line between interactive/political elements of planning that demand broad-based participation and agreement on general principles and goals, and rationalist elements that require adequate detail and measures to ensure plan implementation. The planning process, with its emphasis on global perspective and consensus decision making, tends to produce rather general statement of intent. There frequently is some point in the process where the plan makes the leap from general to specific. Often this leap is not gradual, nor articulated” (p. 26).

The delicate innerworkings of strategic planning does not end with central office personnel, principals, and community creating a documented plan, but rather the facilitation and communication of the plan ignites the change that encompasses the school district's identity. Do teachers, the most valued resources within an educational system, understand the identity, aims, and actions the overall organization is striving to achieve?

Coherence within school districts distinguishes a shared common belief structure and action plan that is understood throughout all ranks of the organization. Strategic planning is the process to develop this belief structure and action plan to better serve the students, community, and constituents of the organization. While strategic planning, providing coherence and coordination among decisions made locally continues to be a problem (Pinson, Louçã, & Moraitis, 1997). Aligning all constituents within the organization to walk the same walk and talk the same talk proposes great orchestration from the organizational leaders to the mid-level managers. Coherence consists of shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work, not the structure, alignment, and it is not strategy (Fullan & Quinn, 2015).

### **Strategic Planning and Management**

The rise of the strategic planning in corporate enterprise appeared in the mid-1960's as leaders embraced the best ways to devise and implement strategies to be competitive (Mintzberg, 1994). Essentially, strategic planning developed through the evolution of decentralization within organizations where staff executives coordinate, approve, and plan short and long-term decisions (Kirkland & Chandler, 1962). As strategic planning developed over the next sixty years, it's become known as a deliberative, disciplined, approach to producing fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is, what it does, and why (John M. Bryson, 2011). Connecting Kirkland, Chandler, and Bryson displays how strategic

planning has transitioned from creating linear processes to addressing the complexity or fundamental purpose of the organization.

The emergence of corporate strategic planning in public planning parallels the rise of economic development in the late 1970's as a focus of local planning (Kaufman & Jacobs, 1987). The Reagan administration was a strong supporter of strategic planning in communities as indicated in the 1982 National Urban Policy Report, "Strategies for Cities" (Kaufman & Jacobs, 1987). Proponents of strategic planning assert that it is best viewed as a way to promote strategic thinking, acting, and learning to improve decision making and organizational performance (John M Bryson, Crosby, & Bryson, 2009). Strategic thinking refers to the synthesis of organizational planning that involves intuition and creativity (Mintzberg, 1994). Strategic thinking creates complexity within strategic planning, giving rise to the thorough development of actions addressing culture and shared values. Mintzberg (1994) elaborates that strategic planners should make their contribution as managers to create a series of concrete steps to carry out a vision. Delineating strategic thinking and strategic planning proposes the characteristics required of the individual at the helm of any organization.

### *Mission and Vision Statements*

Mission and vision statements are created for groups spanning large corporations, mid-size public entities, to small teams of people all uniting to accomplish a common goal. One of the most important steps in strategic planning is the formulation of mission and vision statements (Ozdem, 2011). There is a relationship between the development of mission and vision statements. Prior to writing a mission statement, scholars believe that leaders in the organization must have an idea of what is in store for the future, the vision, which creates the foundation of the mission statement (Darbi, 2012). Vision statements provide impetus for mission statements,

and mission statements provide targets for goal setting (Rozycki, 2004). Congruent with strategic planning, the progression from vision to mission can narrow the scope of targeted areas for an organization's achievement.

There is an overwhelming consensus that mission and vision statements are communication tools for both internal and external stakeholders (Darbi, 2012). CEO's of small- and mid-size enterprises favor that mission statements provide four areas of influence over an organization: developing and planning business strategy; increasing profit and growth rate; promoting a sense of shared expectations between entrepreneur and all employees; and provide clarity for employees, managers, and entrepreneurs (Analoui & Karami, 2002). The usefulness of visions and missions is found in the development and implementation processes, not the final product (Mullane, 2002). One of the important reasons for the articulation of mission and vision in a business corporation is to define and diffuse a set of beliefs and notions that guide people's behavior through communicating what the organization cherishes (Verma, 2009). Mission statements communicate the description of a firm that allows current and prospective employees, suppliers, investors, and customers to determine whether they want to be involved with the firm (B. Bartkus, Glassman, & McAfee, 2000).

Of executives interviewed, Mullane (2012) found that executives who incorporated their middle-level managers in developing their vision and mission statements later disseminated the messages among members in the organization. Verma (2009) found that that lack of awareness of mission statements are relatively low, and they emphasize qualities such as ethics, honesty, customer satisfaction, loyalty, and quality to commitment. Developing a belief system may standardize decision making and interactions among stakeholders; however, there are implications that make these values more difficult to institute than expected. Sometimes the

contents of mission statements are developed by institutional pressures while other are related to actions (B. R. Bartkus & Glassman, 2008). This perspective shines light on the political nature of organization and how mission statements may be more ritualistic than actionable.

### *Development of Strategic Plans*

Development of strategic plans creates a sense of meaning and direction of an organization: What they do, and why they do it. Knowing the identity of an organization helps craft an approach to handling various situations and growing the capacity of the organization. At the core of every strategic plan are people and changing the organization requires changing the way people behave and interact with one another (Whelan & Sisson, 1993). This mindset allows the strategic plans to not only develop the aims of organization, but rather change the culture of the organization.

The future of business, government, and education is often unknown. Forecasting the direction for the future provides clarity of organizational norms and goals to guide decision making. At minimum, strategic plans should include the following components: vision statement, mission statement, outline of goals, objectives and activities, assessment of current resources, and strategic analysis (Chukwumah, 2015). Each of these are actionable values that are present on the tangible plan, but the theoretical framework of strategic plans begins much deeper by explore strategy. Strategy refers to a general plan of action for achieving one's goals and objectives (Nickols, 2016).

Strategic thinking, strategic planning, and strategic management are all components of guiding the future of organizations. Each of these have an operationally different mindset for approach. Strategic thinking involves the creative side of goal planning to drive the direction of

an organization, often using a visionary approach to what the organization can become. Strategic planning is the entity that creates the ends and means, with a recognizable set of activities (Nickols, 2016). Strategic management refers to the implementation of the plan to reach the end goals as developed by internal and external stakeholders.

There are different approaches to strategic planning. Chang's (2008) simple three-stage process that explores sector analysis, policy design, and action plans. John M. Bryson (2011) describes his ten-step process to achieve a strategic plan: initial agreement, mandates, mission and values, strategic issues, strategic formulation, strategy and plan review and adoption, description of organization in future, implementation, strategy and planning process reassessment.

Techniques involved in strategic planning and management includes clarifying factors such as mission, strategy, and future of enterprise; identifications of distinctive competencies; a stakeholder's analysis to determine the interests and priorities of the enterprise; ongoing analysis of key sectors; and financial and operational audits to flag areas of improvement for strategic advantage (Nickols, 2016). Strategic planning is typically pursued by senior elected officials and/or general managers and focuses on an organization, collaboration, or community (John M Bryson, 2010). Bryson (2010) further states that temporary cross-boundary communities such as strategic planning coordinating committees, task forces, or teams are often intentionally created to shake up people's thinking, acting, and learning.

Providing and sharing information in the process of developing strategic planning is fundamental for effective planning (Turan & Sny, 1996). Strategic planning helps improved decision making because it focuses attention on the crucial issues and challenges an organization faces and it helps key decision makers figure out what should do about them (John M. Bryson,

2011). The major benefits of strategic planning do not fall in the development of the plan, but rather the dialogue and interaction of management (Whelan & Sisson, 1993).

The strategic planning process includes various stakeholders, organizational executives, and mid-level managers. Each plays a vital role in forming the goals of the organization and executing those goals. Finding the right people to create strategic plans is essential and tactical to the development of the organization. Mid-level managers and some frontline personnel are crucial to pursuing strategic plans because they are likely to be the ones translating policies and decisions into operations (John M. Bryson, 2011).

### *Strategic Management*

Strategic management refers to the carrying out of the strategic plan. Bryson (2011) elaborates:

“Strategic management systems (or performance management systems or results-based management systems) are ongoing organizational designs or arrangements for strategically managing the implementation of agreed-upon implementation strategies, assessing the performance of those strategies, and formulating new or revised strategies. These systems in other words, are themselves a kind of organizational (or interorganizational) strategy for implementing policies and plans, reassessing those strategies, and coming up with new policies and plans.” (p. 323).

The process of strategic planning is arguably more important than simply providing the document itself (van Wyk & Moeng, 2014). Some strategists questions the need at all for

mission and vision statement while others believe creating one is good, but using it is even better (Darbi, 2012). Strategic planning should be a thing that people do with the help of artifacts (John M Bryson, 2010). Both Bryson and Darbi suggest that action among strategy and strategic plans is most important rather than creating a plan. Few companies in Reid's (1989) study found that strategic planning is a live process. With this plethora of support for cyclical use of strategic plans, there is merit in continually revisiting the strategic plan.

Chang (2008) conveys that plans of action should design a living framework that allows for adjustment as new developments arrive throughout implementation. Creating a strategic plan that adapts or can be adapted to new policies or funding provided by the government strengthens the overall effectiveness of the strategic plan. This addresses the demerits of strategic planning which state that strategic plans do not offer room for the changing world. While being malleable during implementation of the strategic plan, it is wise to continue assessing procedures and strategies to make adjustments to the next strategic planning cycle. Attention should be focused on which successful strategies should be maintained and unsuccessful strategies should be altered or terminated (John M. Bryson, 2011). "When people have discussions about strategic planning in abstract, they are talking about it as an entity. In contrast, practice as performance refers to the active doing through which a practice-as-entity is maintained, reproduced, and possibly change" (Bryson, 2011, p. S259). Bryson continues to affirm that the effectiveness of a strategic plan is within its continual engagement, implication, and assessment, rather than the creation of the plan. Amplifying the resonating theme of strategic planning as a process rather than the creation of a totem.

### *Communication of Strategic Plans*

Various stakeholders in the organization provide input on the strategic plan, but who is aware of the content? Theoretically, the organizational executives and middle-level managers are aware of the contents of the strategic plan and action steps to carry out the plan because they helped develop the details; however, but are frontline workers aware of their goals? It appears that the communication of the strategic plan may be paramount to using strategic planning as a practice rather than an entity as John M. Bryson (2010) previously mentioned.

Darbi (2012) found that while an institute's employees had a high level of knowledge about the mission and vision statements and their purpose, most employees do not have a good knowledge of the components of the mission statement. Mission and vision statements are the mantras for organizations and the employee's purpose for what their work, simply knowing they exist does not meet the purpose for strategic planning. Darbi (2012) further recommends wall hangings and displays around the premises of the institution to propose the necessary impact intended by mission and vision statements.

“Some strategies fail because there is insufficient buy-in to or understanding of the strategy among those who need to implement it.” (Sterling, 2003, p. 30). Sterling's statement carries great weight for managing the strategic plan. If the frontline employees cannot identify their goals, how are they to facilitate the vision of the organization? Sterling (2003) elaborates that good strategies should distinguish the organizations from others and how it makes a difference with its customers. Communication continues to be a key tool in strategic management. Strategies fail due to lack of buy-in, understanding, and poor communication (Sterling, 2003). How middle-level managers provide strategic management is paramount to the overall success of the overarching strategic plan.

Communication wields great power within an organization. Communication issues such as low trust, high turnover and absenteeism breed disenchantment, disengagement, discord, and departure (Berger, 2014). These factors would greatly inhibit the implementation of any strategic plan, let alone the initial strategy of any organization. Whelan & Sisson (1993) found that a lack of perception knowing and understanding strategic plans is present. Ninety-seven investor-owned gas and electric utility companies found that 74% of respondents stated that they engage in a formal strategic planning process, but after analyzing the organization's content within their plans, Whelan found that the more accurate incorporation of strategic planning ranges between 20% and 50% (Whelan & Sisson, 1993). This picture sets the stage for the sheer lack of strategic planning by planners and managers of these organizations. If the leadership within the organization cannot develop strategies for the future of the company, how are they to accurately communicate the details to the employees? Yes, Sterling (2003) affirms the advice that "effective implementation of an average strategy, beats mediocre implementation of a great strategy every time (p. 27)," but it is even more ineffective when there is a poor plan with poor communication.

### **Strategic Planning and Management in Schools**

Strategic planning has become the most acceptable way for schools to prepare for the future (Bell, 2002). Enrollment, economic uncertainties, housing development, and commercial development can all be forecasted, but the actual effects influencing school districts are overwhelming. To overcome future tensions and uncertainties, schools can implement strategic plans (Turan & Sny, 1996). Effective school leaders are urged to have strategy and strategic plans that lead their schools down a successful path. These leaders are known as "transformational leaders" and they include strategic planning as obligatory for an organization to respond to change and uncertainties (Turan & Sny, 1996). Schools without properly developed

strategic plans lack commitment to quality management which jeopardizes quality of educational services and potentially lower test scores (Chukwumah, 2015). Given these aspects of strategic planning in schools, it is common to find and locate these documents on a school districts website. Each of them follows the recommended length of three to five years and cover a variety of goals for the future. As is in enterprise, school districts begin their strategic planning procedures by developing the mission and vision of their organization.

School leaders must articulate the organization's moral purpose and underpinning values that moral purpose which links to the vision for the future (Davies & Davies, 2006). School leaders implement strategy which translates vision and moral purpose into action (Davies & Davies, 2006). Whether strategic planning incorporates constituents at a district level, or is building centered by the principal, leaders are responsible for developing and implementing their strategies. Creating a strategic plan that involves key stakeholders and managing the plan while remaining flexible to change is a monumental feat when done correctly. It is no wonder then that personnel expected to act as change agents in districts and schools have little training on facilitating systemic change (Adelman & Taylor, 2007). This raises concern to the impact principals have schools and superintendents have on school districts.

To label the levels of leadership for enterprise within school districts, central office staff are comparable to executives and principals are comparable to mid-level managers. When comparing the organizational scaffolding of corporate examples of strategic planning, these comparisons clarify the players for strategic management. Creating a strategic plan for school districts often involves interviews, surveys, archival data, budget information, reports, personnel/program evaluation, and audit report recommendations to shape the direction and identity of the school district (Lane, Bishop, & Wilson-Jones, 2005).

From the business realm, education has adopted vision and mission statements to craft school improvement plans or provide a school districts a sense of purpose. A vision is the source of inspiration for one's life work and education is fundamentally a sacred craft we offer to others (Hallinger & Heck, 2002). This moral compass often provides generic visions of schools such as, "All students will succeed," or "Inspiring minds for a brighter future." While these statements are often found in education, they can be too broad to shape the values of an organization. For school leaders, establishing a shared purpose through vision and direction carries the bulk of a leader's efforts (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). When twenty secondary teachers were interviewed, they communicated that vision matters, especially the underlying rationale and hope for sustained success (Lambersky, 2016). The teachers in Lambersky's (2016), to embrace initiatives in higher numbers. Due to the moral culpability and interpersonal interactions among individuals in education, vision and mission statements have the propensity to hold great value among organizations.

The approach to strategic planning is often approached as a linear means-to-an-end concept, but within schools, planning is much more complex in its entirety. Fostering ownership over the plan and shared vision is developed through the quality of the process rather than being a precondition (Fullan, 2007a). When developing a strategic plan, the document that communicates the plan is often shared with the community, promoting transparency among its stakeholders. Doug Reeves (2006) describes plans as being pretty and ugly. The plans that are pretty are often placed in page protectors and put on a shelf, while ugly plans are marked up with reviews by the administrators promoting the plan. The metaphor extends that plans are either used or not used as a tool for action. Ugly plans are more effective than pretty plans because ugly plans account for updates, modification, and reality which further promotes student achievement

(Reeves, 2006). This affirms that schools can implement strategic planning as a practice rather than rather than an entity to be more effective (Mintzberg, 1994)

While strategic plans exist at the district level, individual schools create School Improvement Plans (SIP) as well. Fernandez (2011) found that school planning improves school performance and is a positive attribute associated with the schools performance. Site-based strategic planning is a phenomenon existing in the decentralized nature of education, similar to that of decentralization in enterprise. “When decentralization of decision making is used for purposes of increasing accountability (the voice option), one of its central aims often is to increase the voice of those who are not heard, or at least not sufficiently listened to, in the context of typical school governance structures” (Leithwood & Prestine, 2002, p. 45). This tactic empowers and encourages those who are doing the work, teachers, while sharing the power reserved for the principal (Leithwood & Prestine, 2002). Principals exercise the responsibility for connecting teachers to the school district’s strategic plan. When sight-based plans are developed, there may be a stronger connection with teachers to the school district’s strategic plan. Conversely, if a sight plan is non-existent, the goals of the school district may not be communicated to teachers.

Communication continues to arise as the subtext of literature to set the tone of the effectiveness of a strategic plan. “Clarity of focus and mission seems even more important at time when many organizations are attempting to decentralize decision making” (Conley, 1993, p. 26). Furthermore, clear, manageable expectations reduce the misunderstandings between leaders and employees, and leaders must repeatedly clarify their expectations around effective actions (Schmoker, 2016).

Capacity building is a common term that continues to ascend in school reform (Fullan & Quinn, 2015; Leithwood & Prestine, 2002) “Capacity building refers to the skills, competencies, and knowledge that individuals and groups need in order to be effective at accomplishing the goals at hand” (Fullan & Quinn, 2015, p. 6). Incorporating capacity building exercises the idea that strategic planning is an opportunity for learning (John M Bryson et al., 2009). Educating teachers on district goals and essentially the reasons those goals were developed helps build the capacity of the teachers.

### **Are Strategic Plans Embraced by Teachers?**

As Fullan and Quinn (2015) clearly state, “Coherence consists of the shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of their work (p. 1). Strategic planning can lay the framework for fostering coherence within school districts; however, the strategic plan must be embraced by the administrators and teachers. Mission statements, which are a part of strategic plans, have been evaluated, as well as their impact on day-to-day practice (Camiré, Werthner, & Trudel, 2009; Gurley, Peters, Collins, & Fifolt, 2015). Also, the involvement of principals in strategic planning has been measured, assuring that the those charged with carrying out the plan are part of developing the plan (Ndegwah, 2014). While the theoretical framework for strategic planning and strategic management are sound, what methods mobilized teachers towards accomplishing the strategic plan?

Legislation has driven central office administrators to create policy to strengthen school-based improvements and foster teaching and learning in schools districtwide (Honig, 2008). These focuses are much different than the typical districtwide managerial processes central offices are familiar with, in addition to guiding teaching and learning. Decentralization within school districts continues to pose a problem to obtaining coherence. Once the classroom door,

office door, or doors to the school shut, we trust that the prescribed reform (in this case the strategic plan) is being implemented with fidelity. But this may not be the case. Little change has occurred in schools once they become understood, educators, students, and the public identify these structures as a “real school” (D. Tyack & Cuban, 1995). The sheer bureaucratic structure of schools not only allows for little classroom governance by central office, but they can literally be shut out by teacher. This poses a significant threat to institutional reforms in school districts regardless of rationality.

Bureaucratization has been the means to efficiently educate students since it is a compulsory public service, but this process does not mean it is effective for teachers. “The task of teaching, requiring a personal orientation and professional autonomy, clashes with bureaucratic rationalization, which requires an impersonal and hierarchical orientation” (Ingersoll, 2009, p. 34). While this may seem as a surprise, the bureaucratization of schools has been well underway since the early 1900’s. Around the turn of the twentieth century, the role of the school administrator emerged which applied business efficiency and scientific expertise to the structure of schools (D. B. Tyack & Hansot, 1982). The continuing theme resonating throughout the research is the continual incorporation of business models into the educational systems. These rational systems, such as strategic planning, do not take into account the complexity and subjectivity that the job entails. Essentially, teachers should be outlining the academic instruction that occurs in the classrooms and administrators should be allocating and coordinating schoolwide activities (Ingersoll, 2009). This eludes that strategic planning may not consider the teachers perspective and teachers may not need to be aware of the school district’s strategic plan.

A major complication to strategic planning is that those involved in strategic planning customarily belong to one of two groups: the professional planner and line manager (Reid, 1989). Formal strategic planning leads to superior strategy implementation rather than performance measures (Elbanna, Andrews, & Pollanen, 2016). This is congruent with research on the lackluster performance of providing carrots and sticks as motivators for success (Pink, 2009). When speaking about strategic management, the benefits of strategic planning are often nullified unless the process can be totally integrated as an organizational way of life, thus continuity and inseparability with the execution process are critical factors (Reid, 1989).

Do teachers need to know the specific details of the strategic plan? This depends on the items directly pertaining to their involvement within the organization. This would involve ideas such as collective teaching strategies, resource allocation for instruction, and over-arching student outcome goals for students. Items in strategic planning that may not be of use to teachers would be financial goals, redistricting procedures, facilities goals for schools, and those of support services (transportation and food service). Referencing the bureaucratic structure of schools, there are distinct governing bodies that influence policy and practice within a school district: school boards, central office administrators, and school principals. Principals are in most cases the site-based, front-line manager instituted to carry out a school districts plan. They are responsible for developing site-based goals, defining the culture of the school, evaluating personnel, ensuring adequate student achievement, and managing public relations with the community. While leading, principals communicate their core values in their everyday work and teachers reinforce values in their actions and words (Peterson & Deal, 1998). The dissonance in communication of the strategic plan is like that of the classic game of “telephone.” As the plan travels through the ranks of the school district, a unique twist is inserted or left out based on that

person's values or understanding. This method of communication can eliminate the effectiveness of the strategic plan which will deter from the path for a coherent school district.

Focusing on the teacher's relationship to strategic plans, their work may be directly related to producing adequate student achievement set forth by the school district. Fullan (2007b) states the role of change perfectly by stating that "Understanding the change process is less about innovation and more about innovativeness. It is less about strategy and more about strategizing" (p. 31). The principal's role is to connect the strategic plan with goals directly related to the school. This would lead teachers to not be able to identify the individual aspects of the strategic plan.

Once strategic plans are developed and in place, who is knowledgeable of their components? Ndegwah (2014) surveyed principals or deputies within forty schools in two sub-counties of Nyeri County, Kenya. The responses gleaned that thirty-five schools had a strategic plan and the principal or deputy was involved in the creation of the strategic plan. Further investigation uncovered that twenty-six schools with strategic plans had a reward/incentive program that impacted the strategic plan's implantation (Ndegwah, 2014). Incentivizing the aspects of the strategic plan is a way to communicate the plan and reward employees for meeting the goals of the organization. This type of communication may help strategic management for mid-level managers.

Another study conducted asked school district personnel including teachers, building administrators, and central office personnel, found that ninety-four percent of their participants were able to declare their school had a mission statement; however, only forty-five of the ninety-five participants reporting a mission statement stated it had a large to maximum impact on their

daily professional practice (Gurley et al., 2015). Another study explained the knowledge of mission statements into three distinct levels:

“First, there were the administrators responsible for communicating the mission statement who reported being very knowledgeable of their school’s mission. The second category of individuals consisted of the coaches and teachers delivering the services who worked at the school. For the most part, this group of individuals reported knowing or being at least familiar with the mission statement, given that they were exposed to the school’s culture and to various initiatives in place to communicate the mission statement. The final category of individuals consisted of athletes who received services and parents who were not physically present at the school on a regular basis. These individuals reported limited or no knowledge of the school’s mission statement” (Camiré et al., 2009, p. 82).

This delineation of communication proposes essential questions regarding the management of a strategic plan.

Strategic planning does not consider the implementation by principals in schools. Today, principals are asked to manage personnel, funds, and strategic planning which is garnering a change in principal preparation programs (Lynch, 2012). Principals are also tasked to lead and manage schools by examining student data to set targets for future performance (Bell, 2002). Additionally, principals are overly constrained by school-district governing boards and centralized district bureaucracies, and as a result, they are unable to manage schools efficiently

(Ingersoll, 2009). Teachers would only be knowledgeable to the principal's rendition to the strategic plan rather than the overall strategic plan itself. Principals are then evaluated on whether their plan accomplishes the goals of the school district.

Coherence between the strategic plan, principals, and teachers should exist at some level. If teachers are tasked with specific strategies, there should be some connection between what their principals are instructing them to do and the overall school district strategic plan. Coherence created through this lens may be most effective and supported by the research while allowing the necessary autonomy for principals to address problems necessary to their school.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Data and Methodology**

#### **Research Question**

The study's objective is to explain the following problem: Are strategic plans embraced and/or implemented by key educators? This question sets up the subsequent questions of: Do strategic plans affect the day to day working of teachers? Do the goals of strategic planning get communicated to teachers? "Successful change processes are a function of shaping and reshaping good ideas as they build capacity and ownership" (Fullan & Quinn, 2015, p. 25). Strategic plans are responsible for forming the school district's values, structure and goals that employees should be able to discern. The strategic planning process, whether in corporate or public organization, provides a theoretical framework from a vast body of research on how to achieve systemic change. A qualitative approach to assess the validity of the theoretical framework is the approach for this study by taking the perspective of teachers into account (Maxwell, 2012).

Qualitative research is best suited to accomplish the purpose of the study because it sets to understand the context within which the participants act, and how that context influences their actions (Maxwell, 2012). The aim for the outcome of the research is interpretation analysis to create generalizations, identify problems, or elaborating on existing concepts (Peshkin, 1993). Identifying behavioral patterns through interviews with teachers will shed further insight on the inner workings of teachers and how strategic plans are managed because poor communication or understating is often why strategies fail (Sterling, 2003).

#### **Analytical Approach**

The study will be conducted using variants of case study qualitative research. The case study approach explores a single bounded system or multiple systems over time through detailed in-depth data collection (e.g. interviews and documents) and reports case-based themes (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). School districts with a strategic plan available on the internet were chosen to conduct the study. This criterion was selected because the public accessibility of the document insinuates that members of the community, teachers, staff, administrators, and students have access to view. Each strategic plan was analyzed, and goals identified to student performance were isolated as those would be the most relatable goals for teachers to know and understand. While analyzing strategic plans for the study, concepts such as governance structures of the school district and community partnerships were omitted as they do not directly pertain to teacher goals. The study narrowed the focus of strategic plans to student performance indicators such as but not limited to, increasing test scores, college and career readiness, and social emotional learning. Goals such as these are what identified in the strategic plan and often the front-line employees (teachers) are responsible for operationalizing these goals (John M. Bryson, 2011).

Questions asked for interviews were developed by looking at each school district's strategic plan. Treating each school district as an individual case allowed for flexibility with questioning, and the opportunity for the researcher to be more specific towards the teacher's experience. The study took the tree and branch approach to creating questions for the interview by dividing the research problem into multiple parts with each part covering a main idea (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Even though each school district was treated as an individual case, each school district had similar goals and allowed for similar question stems to encompass each case.

Questions developed using the strategic plans aimed to encourage interviewees diving deep into the details of their work and providing the nuance to their craft (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

School districts selected for the student include suburban and urban schools outside of a midsized metropolitan city with a population of less than 500,000 residents. School districts were selected if a strategic plan was labeled on their website. Ten strategic plans were cataloged for the study, and a range of questions were developed that could be applied to the strategic plan. Excerpts of the strategic plans that relate to teachers are excluded in Appendix A. The length and number of years were noted to reference during the study.

	Number of Pages	Number of Years for Implementing Strategic Plan
Strategic Plan 1	18	4
Strategic Plan 2	40	5
Strategic Plan 3	2	1
Strategic Plan 4	4	5
Strategic Plan 5	1	5
Strategic Plan 6	2	1
Strategic Plan 7	18	5
Strategic Plan 8	Webpage	5
Strategic Plan 9	20	5
Strategic Plan 10	20	5

### **Sampling and Data Collection**

Several school districts were selected to provide a broad perspective on whether teachers understand, are knowledgeable, or purposefully carry out goals related to teachers on the school district's strategic plan. Purposeful sampling was the best approach to selecting school districts and candidates to be interviewed for the study because this method of sampling pertains directly to the objective of the study (Maxwell, 2012).

Participants for interviews were recruited through professional networks of colleagues or by communicating with the school administrators in each district. Each colleague from a different school district helped recruit two to three interviewees. Sampling is snowballed into small clusters, with the number of potential interviews not extending more than two individuals from the initial referral. To further convey the sampling method, if a candidate provided two additional candidates, no other candidates were sought from the two sources referred from the initial candidate. This method of snowballing helps limit bias in sampling. Enrollment, demographics, socioeconomics, and school size all vary for each teacher's school. Teachers from primary and secondary schools were considered for this study because the strategic plans outline blanket goals that provide direction for teachers at all levels of the school system. Each interviewee met the criteria for having access to a strategic plan via the internet. Interviews were arranged to take place in person for a duration of thirty to sixty minutes. Each interview was conducted at a location mutually agreed upon by the researcher and the interviewee. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for data analysis. Notes regarding the body language and tone of the interview were noted as questions were asked or a response to the question was provided.

Questions selected for each interview were directly correlated to the school district strategic plan. The questions listed below are potential questions for the interviews and are directly related to the interviewee's school district's strategic plan.

*Tell me about your day to day interworking's of what it is like being a teacher in your school?*

- *Follow-Up: Walk me through your day.*
- *Follow-Up: What does your plan period look like?*

*Tell me about how you plan and develop your lessons?*

- *Follow-Up: Are there any resources you use?*
- *Follow-Up: Are there any tools or structures you use to monitor student learning?*
- *Follow-Up: Do you collaborate with anyone?*
- *Follow-Up: How do you assess the effectiveness of your lessons?*

*How do you support students in your classroom?*

- *Follow-Up: Are all students approached in the same manner?*
- *Follow-Up: How do you develop relationships with students?*
- *Follow-Up: Do you call home often?*
- *Follow-Up: Is your instruction solely focused on teaching your content area?*
- *Follow-Up: Are there opportunities for the student's families involved in the student's education?*

*Does the state's APR (state test scores) influence your lesson planning and instruction?*

- *Follow-Up: Are you attempting to hit a certain score with your students?*

*What are other things students can do outside of your classroom that enrich learning?*

- *Follow-Up: How are the options advertised?*
- *Follow-Up: How do teachers influence the connectedness with students.*

*When your instructing your class, do students receive experiences that go beyond the content of your subject area?*

- *Follow-Up: Do the students receive any job-related experiences?*
- *Follow-Up: Are their opportunities for students to receive real-world experiences?*
- *Follow-Up: Are there opportunities for students to engage with opportunities in the community?*

*What does your administrator look for when he or she visits your classroom?*

- *Follow-Up: Does professional development assist what is expected of you in the classroom?*
- *Follow-Up: Do the instructional goals from year to year remain the same or are they different?*
- *Follow-Up: How are state test scores discussed in your building?*

*What are your goals as a teacher?*

- *Follow-Up: Why did you choose those goals?*
- *Follow-Up: Does your school shape your goals as an educator? How?*

*What are the goals for your school district?*

- *Do you receive professional development around these goals?*
- *How are the goals communicated to teachers?*

Prior to conducting interviews with teachers, the questions were piloted among three teachers within the professional network of the researcher. Pilot students help develop an understanding of concepts and theories held by those being studied (Maxwell, 2012). During the pilot study, teachers were asked to provide their response to the interview questions, then provide their overall feedback of the quality and scaffolding of the questions. During this process, questions were revised, developed and refined to increase the richness of the interviewee's descriptions. Data collected from piloting the questions was proactive and unexpected. The participants in the pilot garnered lengthy responses to the questions, and body language of the participants displayed deep thought for the interview questions. The responses incorporated concepts such as "individualized learning," and fostering opportunities for learning outside of the classroom. One respondent stated that they had personal goals in addition to the goals of the school district. The most fascinating finding of piloting the questions was the implicit connection to the items outlined in the strategic plans. It appears that teachers are naturally gravitating towards the strategic plans without crediting their supervisors for their actions.

### **Data Analysis**

Each interview was transcribed and coded to develop common themes among the interviews (Maxwell, 2012). As the interviews are analyzed, assessing similarities and differences in the interviewee's responses provide the foundation to developing to categories to analyze larger ideas found in the study (Maxwell, 2012). Approaches to finding common themes by grouping them by case (school district) or relevant themes that permeate multiple cases is the goal for the study. The reactions to questions such as inflection in voice and demeanor were also

recorded to provide better context to the findings. These common themes were then cross-referenced with the strategic plan pertaining to each interviewee. The essence of the study displays whether the interviewee's responses are congruent with the strategic plan as proposed by the school district.

To develop common themes, coding was required to organize the data gleaned from interviews. Each interview transcription was assigned a number and labeled with the strategic plan for the school district the teacher was employed by. To begin coding, each interview was compared to the details of the cooperating strategic plan and commonalities between the two were identified. Once identified, those commonalities were then compared with the other interviews that fell under the same strategic plan. Further commonalities were developed between the commonalities found within each teacher's response.

Once the coding and comparison was completed among teachers within the same school district, the scope of similarities became broader to show consistencies between each of the teachers' responses from other school districts. The responses generalized responses were then compared between school districts, creating main themes consistent across all school districts. This process developed the major themes as a result of the study.

### **Protocols**

Each interviewee was assigned a number and the related strategic plan was provided another number. Each interviewee was informed that their responses will not be identifiable yet quotes from their answers may be incorporated into the study. "Being seen as honest, open, fair, and accepting helps build trust." (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 93). Building trust with the

interviewee sets the framework to discuss the inner workings of teaching and learning with much more depth which garnered richer data.

To protect the integrity of the study, the purpose the of the study was not revealed to those interviewed. The interviewee was informed that they we would be discussing their day to day instruction as a teacher. This method garnered an honest approach to the nuance of the instructional procedures of teachers. Teachers are aware of educator's language such as college and career readiness, social emotional learning, extra-curricular activities, and other exaggerated concepts within education. Eliminating these buzz words avoided a stock response that the interviewee may have heard during professional development, by reading an article, or through colleagues during their times as teachers.

At no time in the interview was the strategic plan or the strategic planning process referenced to better conceal the aim of the study. Unveiling the research regarding strategic planning would invalidate the results of the study due to the specific goals and action steps listed on the plan. Questions regarding the goals of the school district were asked at the end of each interview so that data gathered earlier in the interview could not be skewed by the question. The aim of the research question is to identify if the expectations of teachers are congruent with the goals of the strategic plan. For these reasons, the questions derived from the strategic plans avoid direct language to the strategic plan when at all possible. Great caution was taken on this front while developing main questions, follow-up questions, and probes.

### **Timeline**

Data collection is expected to take approximately two months to complete.

### **Summary**

This chapter describes the outlined research questions, conceptual framework, data collection procedure, and the data analysis process.

## Chapter Four

### Results

Fifteen teachers were interviewed for the study. Two to three teachers were selected from five strategic plans. These teachers were selected either through personal professional networks, or by working with a school's administrator. Each participant in the study taught at the secondary level and thirteen of the fifteen sponsored an extracurricular or co-curricular activity. Participants in the study ranged from three years of experience to over twenty years of experience as a classroom teacher. The size of the school districts varied from having one to four high schools within the district. Lastly interviews ranged from seventeen to thirty minutes depending on the succinctness of the interviewee.

The interviews sought to gather data regarding the following research questions.

- RQ1: Are strategic plans embraced and/or implemented by key educators?
- RQ2: Do strategic plans affect the day to day working of teachers?
- RQ3: Do the goals of strategic planning get communicated to teachers?

Interviews were transcribed and open-coded line by line to determine themes among each interview, and the interviewee's responses were compared to each school district's strategic plan. Thematic analysis was applied to find common trends with each interview and its connectedness to the school district's strategic plan. The following themes were gleaned from the data:

*Coherence in school district is lead through developing structures and systems to administer the strategic plan.*

Participants in the study continually referred to structures and programs established within the school day or beyond the school day. Each of the strategic plans aim for students to receive personalized learning during the school day. To accomplish this goal, school districts have set up programs to support students given their current abilities. One school developed a program that supports student agency for math, and students are able to work at their own pace through the curriculum. This teacher describes that the students have to manage their own agenda and achieve mastery prior to moving onto the next concept. To further this idea, a school district developed structures to have teachers monitor students while they facilitate online learning. Both of these examples connected directly to the school district's strategic plan by offering flexible and personalized learning opportunities for students.

Another prime example of personalized learning comes in the form of scaffolding ability levels of students into different categories by providing them an accurate ability based on the student's abilities. This was seen in a co-curricular area that stratifies students into four different levels of orchestra based on their abilities. This phenomenon was also seen in multiple class periods by offering programs such as International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, Honors Class ROTC and vocational opportunities. There are also structured opportunities for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and they receive instruction in small group settings or with another teacher in the classroom by utilizing the CWC model. Multiple teachers in the classroom was not only distinguishable for students with IEPs, two of the school districts had multiple teachers in classes such as math and weightlifting to increase the amount of opportunities for individualized instruction.

To take the concept of personalized learning further, the candidates of four of the five school districts implemented some form of advisory where students had the opportunity to

receive tutoring, participate in a club, or conduct a lesson that helps develop the social-emotional skills of that student. There was an emphasis on how the advisory period was different between each school. One school district emphasized the advisory time as an opportunity to receive help from other teachers, so systems were implemented for students to visit with other teachers during that time. Two of the school districts utilized this time for school-based clubs to meet. One teacher described their use of advisory as, “A flex time to accomplish more, well, goals. Number one intervention and tutoring, two, team, community building, team activities. [It] could be also just enrichment, fun things in the building.” These are all examples of structures that the school districts have implemented to fulfill their goal of personalized learning.

Personalized learning also extended beyond the school day. Each school offered a variety of activities from tutoring, athletics, clubs, and extra-curricular activities. Students are provided the opportunity to be involved with the school through various avenues that the school district is able to afford. One academic enrichment opportunity a school district provided was an “academic blitz” opportunity. Students have the opportunity to stay after school on a Friday, or come into school on a Saturday to receive two-and-a-half hours of tutoring. Teachers were paid to participate in this activity, which displays school district support to encourage this opportunity for students. Another academic program discussed by teachers was a program named AVID. This program offers students support who are college-bound and navigate issues such as, “What classes should you take in high school? What study skills you’d have? What does a college campus look like? How do you fill out a scholarship application?” When teachers discussed these structures of the program, it supported a personalized path for students.

Another common thread among strategic plans and the interviews was collaboration among teachers. Each school district had a structure to encourage and facilitate collaboration

between teachers. Candidates in the student communicated that this was either in the form of common planning periods among teachers teaching similar courses, a specific day of the week where teachers met with each other, or a more regimented process where a group of teachers met with an administrator during a specific time. Two teachers described their time to collaborate as an opportunity to meet with teachers in similar content areas. One of the teachers stated, “We do a decent amount of lesson planning together as well as developing new labs.” This substantiated the use of the collaboration time as delineated by the school district’s strategic plan.

School districts also had structures to implement data-driven instruction. School districts utilized testing systems and student information systems to support teachers in the classroom. Several teachers mentioned a type of online platform where teachers upload educational materials for their course. The teachers utilizing this platform declared that this is a requirement as a teacher. Another use of technology came from common testing platforms that that teachers use to monitor student achievement. Each school district utilized a different testing platform that monitored the performance of students in the classroom. Through the conversations with teachers, it appears that these are purchased by the school district and teachers are obligated to utilize these services.

*Strategic Management: What the principal does matters.*

While conducting interviews, there was an overwhelming positive sentiment towards the teacher’s principal. When asked about the school district’s goals, one candidate responded, “Closing the achievement gap is the feeling I get, or at least that’s [principal’s name redacted].” This statement from the teacher shows that the principal’s voice that can easily be perceived as the school district’s goal. The following statements were used to describe the principal for the building:

*“Our building goals are crystal clear. We have great leadership in our building and we have academic success, postsecondary success, sense of community, three building goals. They are on signs, they’re on t-shirts, they are everywhere in front of us.”*

*“I think the way [principal’s name redacted] talks and the way [principal’s name redacted] promotes himself and promotes the school just empowers you. I mean, I know many other assistant principals do a great job. They do a great job, but there he is. He’s the leader of this place and he’s the one star.”*

*While referencing the principal and culture of the school, “he speaks about the students in school, you know, about [schools name redacted] being a family.*

Most candidates cited their evaluation cycle when referencing their principal or administration. Through the evaluation model or tool, teachers were able to reference the particular standards they were being evaluated on. Collectively, teacher references often included student learning objectives, student engagement, and relationships with students. After analyzing these statements, these indicators were correlated to the school districts strategic plan. This proves the role of the principal plays a significant role in managing the strategic plan.

The principal or other administrators connected the school district strategic plan to staff members by structuring professional development opportunities. Teachers declared that they had received professional development regarding what administrators are looking for when they visit their classrooms. One teacher stated that their administrators are looking for “What data have you been using to determine our student’s learning?” This teacher elaborated that there has been professional development on how to get good data and use that data to support classroom instruction.

The role of the principal is also bringing teachers along in the process to meet the goals of the school district. When referencing an online tool teachers are expected to use, one teacher declared that they are not going to use it until someone informs them of how it benefits their content area. When discussing professional development, another teacher referenced the goals of the building by stating, “Yeah, we have [received professional development], I just don’t buy into it. I’m just playing the game.” This data describes the role of the principal and how to persuade staff members to perform the goals of the building.

*Once teachers begin teaching, they want to accomplish their own goals, which indirectly matches the strategic plan.*

When teachers were asked, “What are your goals as a teacher?” Every teacher took a moment to think about the question before answering. Their body language became more relaxed and when they answered, their answer was direct and personal. Each teacher clearly communicated their passion for developing or mentoring students. It was very clear that teachers held a lot of value in their craft.

As teachers enter the career, they innately have a sense of efficacy to shape the next generation. Each interview consisted of comments that described students to be successful to some degree beyond their content area. One teacher summed it up by saying, "I'm teaching life skills." Some were more specific to a content area by stating, "I think it's changing the student's mentality and their thought process about math is my primary goal." Other statements from teachers include, "Treating others the way you want to be treated," "Be good people, be able to meet challenges and overcome those challenges," and "I just want to be effective."

While teachers were discussing their goals, they aligned with the values or directions of the strategic plan. One teacher stated:

"I want them to make sure they know what they're doing when they leave. Not just, hey, good luck. Here's your diploma, go find something. It's what college you are going to go to? What trade are you going to go to? What job are you going to go to? Where are you going to be?"

For this teacher, each of these are reflected in the school district's strategic plan. Other teachers described their goals for students as spreading a passion for their content area, promoting student growth, or preparing students for life.

Another teacher conveyed a similar idea stating:

"So one goal I have for all my classes, work ethic, this is where your key life's going to be. You know, the other thing is treat others the way you want to be treated. The whole, get along with people you know and respect others, whether you agree with them

or not. At least you respect their opinion, you'll be able to explain yours."

A few teachers stated that their goals are to, "Be effective," "First and foremost, to better my craft," or "to do the very best that I can every day." These data align with strategic plans for the school district regarding collaboration and professional development to continually developing teachers. These teachers expressed a sentiment that the quality of their instruction was important and they wanted to deliver high-quality instruction.

*Teachers are already facilitating the strategic plan without direction.*

When teachers were asked about the goals of the school district, they were not able to provide a deep explanation. One teacher sighted a buzz word from the strategic plan, while another cited twenty-first century skills, in another interview. Another teacher describes providing relevant, real-world instruction by saying, "Eventually, where you're going is having to deal with words and numbers together, and let's face it, life's a word problem, right?" This teacher expressed that they are not pushed to provide relevant instruction, but feel like it is a part of their job to make the content relevant. Based on the data gathered during the interviews, it appears all teachers were meeting the strategic plan with in some form.

When teachers were asked, "Do you support (or approach) every student the same way," there was an overwhelming majority answering, "no," "you can't," or "nothing is blanketed." Some teachers appeared astonished that this question was asked. Teachers further stated the level of learner may vary in their classroom by having a student with an IEP in their classroom, or a variety of students with different reading levels. Another teacher stated that they, "Do a lot of

individualized coaching, fifteen to twenty minutes usually.” This has been the simplest form of personalized instruction that this teacher is naturally doing

Teachers tend to naturally wear several hats in the classroom. “I mean you are a teacher, counselor, emotional therapy... First, I need to know like this kid didn’t eat today, or they’re dealing with what crazy family stuff at home. This is why they didn’t bring a pencil. Like let’s just be glad they’re here and appreciate that.” While speaking to this teacher there was a clear dedication to meeting each student where they were at each day, and providing them a positive experience.

“I greet every single student every single day at my door before they walk in,” is a way one teacher provides personalized instruction and builds relationships with students and further elaborates, “I’ve done this for years.” This sentiment of checking on students continues with another teacher stating that they use their plan time for, “checking in on kids.” This concept extends the idea that the moral imperative is woven into the natural framework of being a teacher.

Multiple teachers stated they are all about relationships. These teachers led their classrooms by understanding that every person in the classroom is different and may need a different interaction ranging for a joke, or an empathetic person to listen to. Two teachers discussed how they speak with students about activities outside of high school or something the students are interested in. One teacher stated that they spend three to five minutes assessing where the students are and determining if they need to talk to someone because the teacher can, “automatically tell them when they are sad or having an attitude, or whatever it is.”

During the interviews, teachers communicated joy in their abilities to build relationships with students and tailor their instruction towards their classes. One teacher stated, “But even kids, just even a year’s worth of not know how to do this stuff. And then at the end of the year just really loving it and having the confidence to do it. I think that’s really cool.” The interconnectedness between teacher and student is the foundation of success teachers to depend on. When one teacher discussed the importance of building relationships with students, they stated, “I would like to think this is an expectation, but also I would like to think that is something that I do naturally as well.”

Collaboration was another aspect cited in strategic plans that teachers appear to be doing as a part of their job. One teacher stated, “My resources has really been an accumulation of stealing stuff from other [activity redacted] coaches over the years.” Another teacher mentioned during an interview that the teachers in common subjects collaborate, and her demeanor while describing this process made it appear that informal collaboration is routine behavior.

Several strategic plans cited that they are using data to drive their instruction, but it appears that some teachers are already doing this. Several teachers mention that they regularly assess what went well and did not go well from the previous class period as a starting point for lesson planning. A teacher who taught the same class throughout the day appeared to adjust their instruction, stating, “I know what the questions were going to be before the kids even ask them. So I would make notes, this a little bit more, go back over that.”

Another teacher elaborated how they assess effectiveness of their instruction by quoting their mentor: Every time you give an assessment, you need to ask what is it for? And every time you do an activity in class, you need to ask, what is it for?” The teacher further elaborated stating, “What got accomplished with this, and did it move the needle on motivation? Did it

move the needle on unskilled? Does it move the needle on content knowledge? Did it move the needle backwards?” This teacher’s statement was the most vibrant when discussing the effectiveness of instruction, and, while related to the strategic plan, this teacher was dedicated to regularly assessing their effectiveness according to a self-imposed standard. While not as clearly articulated, this was present among other teachers who participated in the study. Teachers are also attempting to incorporate real-world examples to help teach their materials. Two teachers referred to developing a professional network of professionals to speak to their classes. Each teacher said over the year they have developed these networks themselves.

A teacher stated during assessing instruction that there is an underlying theme to all classroom instruction, “Be good people, be able to meet challenges and overcome those challenges.” This snippet of data describes the integrity of teachers and what they want overall out of each student that enters their classrooms.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

Throughout the data collection, there were resonating discrepancies in the strategic plans which questions the validity of the documents. Bryson (2011) outlines a process to support strategic planning that begins with strategy and creates necessary components within a strategic plan. The variance among what school district's label as their strategic plans influences the findings of this study. Also, the commonalities among these documents could be exploiting educational trends which teachers are familiar with (i.e. Social-emotional learning, college and career readiness, and personalized learning). These documents may serve as a communication of internal functions or legitimacy documents, rather than a strategic plan to guide the school district.

### Summary of Findings

The data gleaned four themes regarding strategic planning and coherence in school districts:

- Coherence in school district is lead through developing structures and systems to administer the strategic plan.
- Strategic Management: What the principal does matters.
- Once teachers begin teaching, they want to accomplish their own goals, which indirectly matches the strategic plan.
- Teachers are already facilitating the strategic plan without direction.

coherence in schools is fostered by the structures and systems developed within the organization. Fullan (2007) discusses how strategizing is a main theme to developing coherence. This is seen in the data because when school districts developed a strategic plan, there was a system or

structure to help support implementation. This takes the “pie in the sky” idea and makes it an operational concept that teachers can conduct. The data showed strong connections to systems in the organization such as built in opportunities for collaboration, variety of classes to support personalized learning, and courses offerings that are structured differently from the traditional class period. This connection aligns with research on teacher’s belief.

Fullan and Quin (2015) discuss how strategic plans lay the framework for school districts, and that is what the data explains as well. Most strategic plans in the study show a complicated or simple network of values and expected performance of students who graduate from that school district. The strength of coherence varied from school district to school district, but each had some bureaucratic structures to support the attainment of those goals.

The principals’ role is imperative when carrying out the strategic plan for the district. The findings in the study display that teachers hold a lot of confidence in their principal and as Reid (1989) found strategic management is about total integration as an organizational way of life. What teachers report about their principal shows congruency with reinforcing their actions and words (Peterson & Deal, 1998). Connecting these to concepts displays a distinct role that the principal must play to foster coherence within the school district. The principal must mirror the values of the school district and then put action to those values. This is a clear integral component to fostering coherence within school districts. Ingersoll (2009) describes the role of the principal as coordinating schoolwide activities.

The data also shows that principals are responsible for building capacity in teachers (Fullan & Quinn, 2015; Leithwood & Prestine, 2002). Principal behaviors influence the emotions of the teacher’s work in their schools by providing professional respect, acknowledgement for teacher commitment, competence and sacrifice, protecting teachers from damaging experiences,

maintaining a visible presence, allowing teacher's voices to be heard, and communicating the schools vision (Lambersky, 2016). This displays that the role of principal as a mid-level manager bares the responsibility for developing teachers and leading them to achieve the goals of the school district. Teachers displayed a strong following for their principal, and desired to uphold their expectation, even when they did not want to. While discussing the evaluation process with teachers, they describe indicators that match characteristics outlined in the strategic plan. This spans an overarching connection between building capacity with teachers and assisting building teachers with bureaucratic structure to facilitate strategic plans. Teachers who spoke highly of the values were able to distinctly communicate the goals of their district. Signs were made to properly communicate these values to students and teachers around the building (Berger, 2014; Darbi, 2012).

The data garnered an explicit conflict between the goals of teachers and what they are asked to do in the classroom. Teachers appear to meet the goals of the school district; however, they are going to use their own professional judgement to determine what is effective. With strategic plans being a practice adopted from corporations, there is conflict with the professional autonomy of the teacher (Ingersoll, 2009). Due to the decentralization and loose coupling of classroom instruction, teachers will continue to operate under their own discretion when it comes to effective classroom instruction.

The most dramatic finding in the study shows that teachers are readily meeting the goals of the strategic plan as an innate function of being teacher. Teachers care about their students, develop relationships, and provide personalized learning because the efficacy teachers lay with developing their students. There is a sense of moral purpose to be a teacher, and teachers carry a vision for the future. Davies and Davies (2006) articulate these characteristics in school leaders;

however, it is apparent that teachers carry the same visionary attributes. Teachers in the study directly or indirectly communicated that preparing students for the future, whatever that future may look like for that student. The pride the teachers displayed in their craft communicates underlying idealism as a foundation for a teacher repertoire.

## **Conclusion**

The study set out to answer three research questions regarding strategic planning.

*RQ1: Are Strategic plans embraced and/or implemented by key educators?*

Strategic plans are facilitated by teachers, but they do not need to know the precise details of each strategic plan. Teachers have a moral imperative to provide an experience for students and develop all students regardless of their background (Fullan & Quinn, 2015). The moral imperative often connects to the school district's strategic plan. This concept is exponentially increased when bureaucratic structures are put in place help facilitate teachers achieve the goals. The data show a strong correlation when creating opportunities for personalized learning for students. Structures implement by central office assisted teachers meeting this goal in the classroom or through activities.

*RQ2: Do strategic plans affect the day to day working of teachers?*

Strategic plans do impact the day to day structures of teachers when speaking to the logistics of the day. Early release days, advisory periods, master scheduling, and professional development opportunities are all related to the strategic plans; however, as teachers dive deeper into the actual art of classroom instruction, teachers have a natural inclination to provide students the best experience possible. This dissonance is related to the loose coupling of classroom instruction and that classroom instruction varies from class to class and teacher to teacher. This is

congruent with the research on organizational theory stating, “Affixing right labels to activities can change them into valuable services and mobilize commitment of internal participants and external constituents,” (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 350). The strategic plan can be seen as a myth of a formal structure to shape an organization.

*RQ3: Do the goals of strategic planning get communicated to teachers?*

Strategic management shifts to the principal’s role as the leader of the building. As the strategic plan begins to trickle down to teachers, it becomes apparent that superintendents begin playing less of a role. Teachers look to their principal for leadership and direction. As the teacher’s supervisor, principals’ align the values of the strategic plan with their staff and continually manage the components of the plan. The principal is a leader that must possess the energy-enthusiasm-hopefulness constellation to lead greater moral purpose within themselves, build relationships, and seek coherence to consolidate the moral purpose (Fullan, 2007b). These qualities assist in the dissemination of the school district strategic plan through strategy and action.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study has limitations that may modify the results on a more massive scale. As stated earlier in the study, all but two teachers sponsor an extracurricular or co-curricular activity. The two teachers that did not sponsor an activity discussed providing opportunities after school for tutoring or enrichment. General speaking, teachers who commit to sponsor events or tutor have a greater sense of efficacy in the profession. This may be why the teachers all valued personalized learning and relationships as a staple to their classroom instruction. If a lesser quality of teachers were interviewed, there is a possibility the results would be different.

Another glaring limitation of the study is the breadth of the study provided the sample size. Fifteen teachers were interviewed and on three occasions did one school have multiple participants in the study. The aim of the study was to measure coherence among several school districts, but the sample size may serve as an implication to the student. The sampling also included high school teachers. These teachers bring a specific perspective to the conversation that middle school and elementary teachers may not share.

When provided leads for interviews, administrators or colleagues were likely to provide names of high-quality teachers rather than low-quality teachers. Also, there is an assumption that higher-quality teachers are likely to participate in the study rather than lower-quality teachers. If a lesser quality of teachers were interviewed, there is a possibility the results would be different. Also, when candidates were suggested by administrators, they may have spoken to the candidates about what to say prior to the interview. During the interviews there was no inclination that this occurred; however, the possibility that this occurred could not be ruled out. Lastly, given the fact that high quality teachers were recommended for the study, mimetic isomorphism could have played a role in the findings of the student. While social-emotional learning was present several strategic plans, teachers were able to speak to how they conduct social-emotional learning in their classroom without acknowledging it as a goal for the district. Currently, social-emotional learning is trend in schools and structuring programs to incorporate the concepts of social-emotional learning. While the findings state that teachers accomplish their own goals in the classroom as class begins, the broader trends in education could limit the study because those trends are imposed on teachers, principals, and central office employees through various advocacy groups and platforms. High quality teachers may be in tune with these trends and accomplishing them in the classroom without direction from the school district.

The table below summarizes the six school districts and their strategic plans that were utilized for the study. Each strategic plan had uniqueness in its design and length. The overarching goal among the five of the six strategic plans was personalize learning. Each strategic plan with the expectation of strategic eight incorporate some form of effective instruction, whether that was in the form of cultural responsiveness and inclusion, twenty-first century skills, or by simply establishing effective instruction.

Strategic Plan 1	Interviews: 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personalize Learning.</li> <li>• Opportunities to Engage and Connect with School.</li> <li>• Academic Achievement.</li> <li>• Effective Instruction and Support.</li> </ul>
Strategic Plan 2	Interviews: 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personalized Learning.</li> <li>• Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning.</li> <li>• Caring and Effective Teachers.</li> <li>• Data Informed Systems.</li> <li>• Safe Climate and Strong Relationships with Families.</li> </ul>
Strategic Plan 3	Interviews: 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personalize learning.</li> <li>• Clarity among teachers, learners, parents and career pathways.</li> <li>• Culturally responsive and inclusion to meet needs of diverse learners.</li> <li>• Technology and connectivity for all learners.</li> <li>• Modified schedules and spaces for learning.</li> </ul>
Strategic Plan 4	Interviews: 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversified learning experiences.</li> <li>• Shared responsibility of successful schools within a vibrant community.</li> <li>• Strengthen inclusion.</li> <li>• Culture of wellness for students, staff and community, encouraging health of whole person.</li> </ul>
Strategic Plan 5	Interviews: 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College and career readiness.</li> <li>• Social-Emotional Learning</li> <li>• 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills</li> </ul>
Strategic Plan 8	Interviews: 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personalize learning.</li> <li>• Safe, positive, respectful, welcoming learning environment.</li> </ul>

The variance between the strategic plans serves a limitation based on the depth of execution for each of the goals. Goals in strategic plans five and eight do not describe much detail to each goal, while strategic plan two has exceptional detail by delegating the responsible party and action to accomplish this goal. This furthers the limitation by determining what may be labeled as a strategic plan, may not serve as a strategic plan at all.

### **Implications to Practice**

Measuring coherence within school districts assist school officials in utilizing their time wisely. There is a wide variety of examples that school districts call their strategic plan. Some school districts provide significant dialogue in their strategic plan and others are extremely concise with the direction and values of the school district. It is important to note that strategic plans are actionable or “ugly” as Reeves (2006) puts it. Regardless, the study showed that agency for district initiatives was low and greater value was placed on their principal’s goals.

Superintendents and other school officials should see strategic planning as a launching point for creating bureaucratic structures to support principals and teachers carrying out the plan. When strategic planning, one of the main problems is automating the process to obtain automatic coherence and coordination among individuals in the system (Pinson, Louca, & Moraitis, 1997). The study communicates the importance of these structures when it comes to meeting the goals for the school district. On rare occasion did the participants in the study downplay a structure in the school because it held value and aligned with goals for teachers. For school district officials, specifically superintendents and the board of education, regularly communicating the goals and supporting site-based leaders with coaching, resources, or funds can help foster coherence within the system.

The study also presents evidence that distinguishes the role of the principal as imperative. The principal carries out the day to day management of the plan. Principals shape school culture by communicating core values in what they say and do, speak of the deeper mission of the school, and preserve the focus on students by recounting stories of success and achievement (Peterson & Deal, 1998). If school districts wish to have coherence in their school districts, then principals, acting as the mid-level manager, must be connected or involved in making the plan (Reid, 1989). A principals' ownership over their actions and words carries the weight of the school district. Teacher follow their principals, even if they are just, "playing the game," as one participant in the study put it.

The largest asset to the profession is the unanticipated results found in the study. School districts outline practices for their teachers that they are already doing. Consider that teachers are already practicing what is outlined in the strategic plan, therefore, it may serve as the antagonist to the purpose of strategic planning when school districts outline goals that the teachers are already doing. The study shows that teachers naturally have the fortitude for personalized instruction, building relationships, and providing real world instruction, which are all outlined in strategic plans. "The elements of rationalized formal structure are deeply ingrained in, and reflect, widespread understandings of social reality," (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 343). And the reality is, "Commitment to the moral imperative of education for all would seem to be a natural fit for public schools," (Fullan & Quinn, 2015, p. 17). School districts can utilize this information to build on the natural strengths of teachers to be more effective in the planning process to support teachers with additional tools and training they may need.

Coherence is difficult to overcome with considerations through conditions of overload, fragmentation, and policy churn (Fullan & Quinn, 2015). Through the findings of this study there

is an overall propensity for school officials to mandate an elaborate plan, or a concise idea and expect all actors within the organization to have a sense of agency regarding the published values, beliefs, and district goals. School officials first need to be in tune with what is occurring in the classroom with their teachers and principals. As outlined in the findings, there is a shared sense of altruism that permeates education and align with what school officials desire in their schools. “School leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions,” (Leithwood et al., 2008, p. 28). The greatest move boards of education and superintendents can make are developing structures and support systems to help serve classroom teachers and their students. Nickols (2016), refers to strategy as action to achieve goals; therefore, school officials should consider their teachers as assets and build from perspectives that are distinctive to teachers as opposed to starting with a blank slate. Whether a strategic plan is ostentatious or a simple spread sheet, truly understanding the perspective of teachers will aide in the strategic management of a school district’s strategic plan. “Some strategies fail because there is insufficient buy-in or understanding of the strategy among those who need to implement it,” (Sterling, 2003, p. 30).

### **Implications for Research**

The following three implications to research could garner further results to the overall body of research:

1. Do strategic plans in school districts bring new actions to school districts?
2. How are school district strategic plans shaped by the three mechanisms of institutional isomorphism: coercive, mimetic, and normative?
3. How do school district’s manage their strategic plans?

This study found that teachers are largely already performing actions listed on the strategic plan without know, or vaguely knowing, the goals for the school district. This leads researchers for strategic planning in public schools down a new path that reframes the approach researchers can take when analyzing strategic plans and their effectiveness. Do strategic plans bring new actions to school districts? Institutionalized organizations that incorporate strategic plans attempt to promote conformity to coordinate and control activity in order to promote efficiency, undermining an organization's ceremonial conformity which sacrifices its support and legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Meyer & Rowan (1977) further state, "To maintain ceremonial conformity, organizations that reflect institutional rules tend to buffer their formal structures from the uncertainties of technical activities by becoming loosely coupled, building gaps between their formal structures and actual work activities," (p. 341). Due to the loose coupling of within school districts, can strategic plans actually make a large organizational change for teachers instructing their students in classrooms?

Organizational theory also supports this direction of research for strategic plans. "Organizations may change their goals or develop new practices, and new organizations enter the field. But in the long run, organizational actors making rational decisions constructed around themselves an environment that constrains their ability to change further in later years," (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). While all the school districts in the study developed their own strategic plan, the emergence of the four themes through the data depicts isomorphism between the organizations. School districts developed structures for secondary schools to operate under, their principal delivered the themes and focus of the school, the goals for teachers aligned with the strategic plan, and teachers were already doing what was asked of them by the strategic plan. These conditions depicted in institutionalization and organizational theory shows little merit in

the effectiveness of strategic plans due to decentralized decision making. Diving further into the why these actions are the same could describe which mechanism of isomorphism prevails among school districts.

This study displays interesting insights on strategic management of the strategic plan in school districts. A case study of a school district is recommended. The study was superficial in determining the connection between teachers and strategic plans, and a further research can expose the innerworkings of managing a school district's strategic plan. A clear understanding of the how the strategic plan is facilitated and administered in a school district could provide greater perspective on failures in communication, what principals embrace, and what teachers embrace for strategic planning. Data from the study expresses significant connection between the decisions of central office and prescribed structures in which teachers operate. To promote permeation of the strategic plan, mid-level manager (principals) must be involved in the process because, "those who execute plans can be enhanced by their involvement and participation," (Reid, 1989, p. 557). There is great nuance in the field of education and determining what structures and procedures support the nuances in education could provide greater insight on understanding school district bureaucratic structures. A case study would provide further insight on each of the components of strategic planning: strategy, strategic thinking, and strategic management.

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## Appendix A: Strategic Plan 1

### Student Performance

#### Focus Area: Student Performance

Develop and enhance quality educational programs and experiences to improve performance and enable students to meet their personal academic and/or career readiness goals.

#### GOAL ONE

Each student will be provided a personalized learning experience that creates student ownership of learning thereby demonstrating growth in student achievement as evidenced by local, state, and national norm comparisons.

**ACTION PLAN A** The District will create a personalized learning environment for each student.

**Task 1** Identify a team of appropriate stakeholders to research and define viable personalized learning models which could be implemented in R-7 within a defined timeframe.

**Task 2** Construct a working definition of personalized learning for students.

**Task 3** Identify and recommend resources required to implement personalized learning.

**Task 4** Design and recommend a staff development model which is inclusive of but may not be limited to: choice, variety, job-embedded experiences, individual learning plans, varying delivery models (online, in person, year-round), etc.

**Task 5** Annually measure programs that lead to more personalized learning opportunities for students through district CTE programs.

#### GOAL TWO

The District will increase student connectedness and engagement to the school experience as measured by student participation.

**ACTION PLAN A** The District will provide a variety of opportunities for students to connect and engage in school.

**Task 1** Analyze current student engagement opportunities for students at each school level and determine areas of deficit.

**Task 2** Annually measure students' connectivity to school through participation in extra-curricular activities and clubs to determine opportunities to direct students to choices and opportunities for increased connectedness.

**ACTION PLAN B** The District will continue to study and explore programming options to increase continuity of learning throughout the calendar year.

**Task 1** Explore and compare options for expansion of elementary summer school, an extended school calendar and online learning opportunities for students.

### Student Performance

**Task 2** Analyze and determine financial feasibility of an extended school year calendar option for a limited number of school sites.

**Task 3** Develop an early initiation experience for incoming kindergarten students consistent with recommendations from the Early Childhood PrAT.

#### **GOAL THREE**

**Students will demonstrate academic achievement as measured by identified targets at the district, elementary and secondary levels.**

##### District:

- The District Annual Performance Report (APR) score will improve annually and reach 100% by 2021.

##### Elementary School(s):

###### *State Benchmark(s):*

- Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) Grade Level Assessments will be in top three of | comparison group as measured by overall district MPI in ELA, Math, and Science.
- Each elementary school will demonstrate increased achievement as evidenced through analysis of MAP growth as identified by increases in MPI in ELA, Math and Science.
- Achievement disparities between the majority student group and each subsequent subgroup at each school will be narrowed or eliminated as measured by MPI in ELA, Math, and Science.

###### *Local assessment benchmark(s):*

- The % of 2nd and 4th grade students meeting their identified NWEA growth goals will increase annually at each elementary school.

##### Secondary School(s):

###### *State Benchmark(s): Middle School MAP*

- Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) Grade Level Assessments will be in top three of | comparison group as measured by overall district MPI in ELA, Math, and Science.
- Each middle school will demonstrate increased achievement as evidenced through analysis of MAP growth as identified by increases in MPI in ELA, Math and Science.
- Achievement disparities between the majority student group and each subsequent subgroup at each school will be narrowed or eliminated as measured by MPI in ELA, Math, and Science.

###### *State and Other Benchmarks(s): High School*

- Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) End of Course Exams will be in the top three of o comparison group as measured overall district MPI in ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies
- Each high school will demonstrate increased achievement as evidenced through analysis of MAP growth as

### Student Performance

<p>identified by increases in MPI in ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Achievement disparities between the majority student group and each subsequent subgroup at each school will be narrowed or eliminated as measured by MPI in ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies</li> <li>● The percentage of graduating seniors who meet the ACT College Readiness Benchmark in English, Math, Reading, Science, and All Four will increase by 2% annually.</li> <li>● The district ACT Composite Score will increase by 0.2 annually.</li> <li>● The district will achieve a 95% graduation rate annually.</li> <li>● The number of students who take one or more IB/AP courses will increase by 2% each year.</li> <li>● The number of students who receive a score of four or higher on an IB exam or a three or higher on an AP exam will increase by 2%.</li> <li>● The number of IB diploma candidates will increase by 5% each year.</li> <li>● The number of students who take STA courses will increase by 5% each year.</li> <li>● The number of MIC candidates will increase by 5% each year.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ACTION PLAN A</b> The district will provide and deliver a guaranteed and viable curriculum by providing effective instruction and support.</p>
<p><b>Task 1</b> Identify Balanced Assessment classroom implementation goals related to look-fors as related to Balanced Assessment and the Learning Cycle. Continue to monitor the work toward full implementation of Balanced Assessment and the Learning Cycle</p>
<p><b>Task 2</b> Continue to provide the necessary staff development and work toward full implementation of Balanced Assessment and the Learning Cycle.</p>
<p><b>Task 3</b> Build capacity in teachers to develop formative assessments that are differentiated as part of the learning cycle.</p>
<p><b>Task 4</b> Ensure that collaboration continues to focus on supporting the Learning Cycle and examining student work when appropriate.</p>
<p><b>Task 5</b> Develop and recommend a long-range plan to respond to emerging early education programming needs.</p>
<p><b>ACTION PLAN B</b> The District will meet the unique needs of diverse learners through a well identified system of support and extension for each Student</p>
<p><b>Task 1</b> Analyze achievement data to determine if disparities exist between subgroups and if so, design a plan to decrease and close existing gaps.</p>
<p><b>Task 2</b> Develop a systemic plan to provide support for students' social, emotional and behavioral needs.</p>
<p><b>Task 3</b> Meet the requirements of the Title IA federal grant by providing supplemental services to low performing students in Title IA schools and in early education programs.</p>

### Student Performance

<p><b>Task 4</b> Meet the requirements of the Title III federal grant by providing supplemental services to limited English proficiency and immigrant students. (English Language Learners)</p>
<p><b>Task 5</b> Meet the requirements of the Title ID federal grant by providing academic supplemental services and behavioral interventions to meet the needs of at-risk students.</p>
<p><b>ACTION PLAN C</b> Respond appropriately to findings from the Academic Systems Review (ASR).</p>
<p><b>Task 1</b> Analyze the results of the fall 2016 Academic Systems Review (ASR) and implement a measured, appropriate, and fiscally responsible response to the Academic Systems Review (ASR).</p>
<p><b>Task 2</b> Execute a multi-layered communication plan regarding ASR findings and associated next steps.</p>

## Appendix A: Strategic Plan 2

## MEASURES

1	<p><b>Success in the Early Years</b></p> <p>Every student will receive the social-emotional, cognitive, health and community support necessary to be successful by the end of Grade 3.</p>	<p><b>a.</b> Increased percentage of Kindergartners who have pre-kindergarten experiences.</p>	<p><b>b.</b> Increased percentage of students from each student subgroup meeting or exceeding standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics at the end of Grade 3.</p>	<p><b>c.</b> Increased percentage of students who demonstrate persistence and confidence in social, emotional, and problem solving skills.</p>
2	<p><b>Whole Child: Safe, Challenged, and Supported</b></p> <p>Every student will be challenged and supported within a safe learning environment to be a responsible and productive citizen capable of meeting high expectations.</p>	<p><b>a.</b> Increased percentage of students who feel that their school offers a safe environment for learning, and who have a sense of belonging and personally meaningful friendships.</p>	<p><b>b.</b> Increased percentage of students who receive effective social and emotional behavior interventions and continuous access to an advocate/mentor/counselor.</p>	<p><b>c.</b> Increased percentage of students participating in athletics or other extra-curricular/co-curricular activities.</p>
3	<p><b>Continuous Growth Toward Mastery of All Academic Subjects</b></p> <p>Every student will progress at a pace that closes the achievement gap, and will meet or exceed academic standards in academic subjects.</p>	<p><b>a.</b> Increased percentage of students meeting proficiency standards on local, state, and national examinations.</p>	<p><b>b.</b> Increased percentage of identified students who move up or out of tiered academic support (e.g., English Language Learners (ELL); Problem-solving Team (PST); Individualized Education Program (IEP)).</p>	<p><b>c.</b> Increased growth rate by a minimum of one year for students at/above grade level and 1.5 years for students below grade level.</p>
4	<p><b>21st Century Critical Thinkers and Problem-Solvers</b></p> <p>Every student will demonstrate global competitiveness, creative thinking, and innovation through effective reasoning, communication, and advocacy for themselves and their community.</p>	<p><b>a.</b> Increased percentage of students who can solve real-world, interdisciplinary problems.</p>	<p><b>b.</b> Increased percentage of students who can use appropriate digital tools and resources to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions.</p>	<p><b>c.</b> Increased percentage of students meeting standards on performance-based assessments (e.g., Career/Technical Education, CTE; industry licensing or certification; Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, ASVAB; apprenticeships)</p>
5	<p><b>Readiness for College, Career and Life</b></p> <p>Every student will graduate from high school with a post-secondary plan and the experiences and preparation to execute that plan successfully after high school.</p>	<p><b>a.</b> Increased percentage of students with school attendance of at least 90%.</p>	<p><b>b.</b> Increased percentage of students who complete courses, activities, and experiences based on college and career plan.</p>	<p><b>c.</b> Increased 4-year high school graduation rates and decreased 4-year high school dropout rates.</p>

## Chapter 3 - The Recommendations

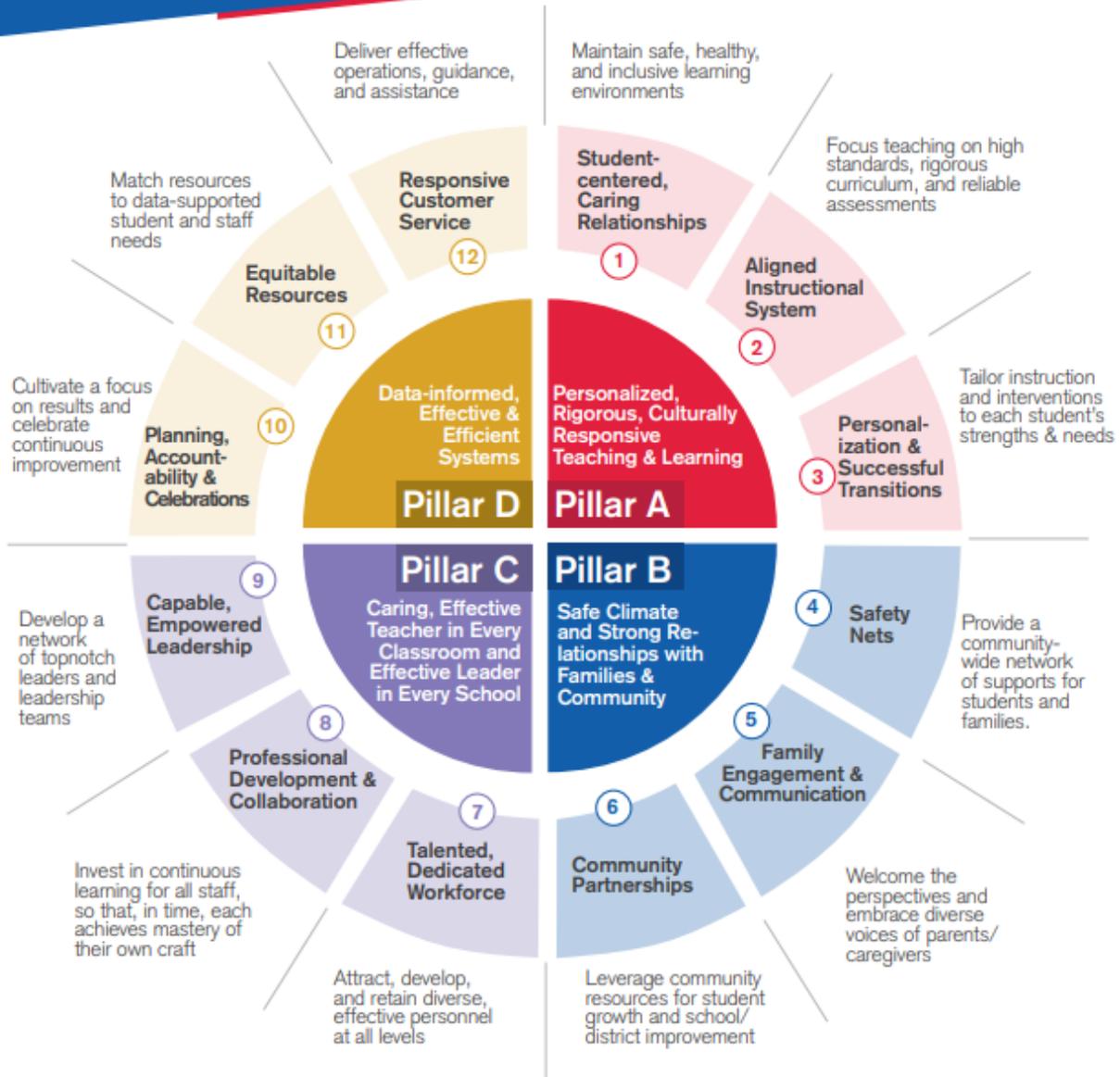
### Professional Practices for Instructional Effectiveness

The Professional Practices for Instructional Effectiveness are focused on defining the teaching practices, leadership practices and organizational practices most essential for responsive instruction across our school system. The practices outline the expectations for all staff and the standards by which we will be held accountable. The practices are organized around the Four Pillars.

	PILLAR A Personalized, Rigorous, Culturally Responsive Teaching & Learning	PILLAR B Safe Climate & Strong Relationships with Families & Community	PILLAR C Caring & Effective Teachers in Every Classroom & Effective Leaders in Every School	PILLAR D Data-Informed, Effective & Efficient Systems
TEACHING PRACTICES	<p><b>T1:</b> Teachers guide students to direct their own learning and to work with other students on culturally and socially relevant, research projects and assignments.</p> <p><b>T2:</b> Teachers utilize a variety of high engagement strategies, real-life and authentic learning opportunities and motivational approaches to raise expectations for all students, regardless of current level of performance.</p>	<p><b>T3:</b> Teachers implement a caring environment that fosters high expectations, responsibility, independence, and social and emotional competencies.</p> <p><b>T4:</b> Teachers routinely communicate with families about each student's progress relative to academic and behavioral expectations, and seek their involvement as equal partners.</p>	<p><b>T5:</b> Teachers engage in ongoing reflection of their own professional growth, and assess their instructional effectiveness relative to student learning.</p> <p><b>T6:</b> Teachers demonstrate continuous learning through classroom application of relevant strategies learned through professional development and ongoing collaboration.</p>	<p><b>T7:</b> Teachers meet regularly to review and utilize formative and summative assessment data to target instruction to the personalized needs of students.</p> <p><b>T8:</b> Teachers utilize an effective system to maintain accurate data records and artifacts on student/instructor-tracked completion of assignments, academic assessments and assigned discipline.</p>
LEADERSHIP PRACTICES	<p><b>L1:</b> Principal/Leadership encourages teachers and staff to challenge their own beliefs and actions about students' ability to meet high expectations and provides culturally relevant, ongoing professional development.</p> <p><b>L2:</b> Principal communicates high expectations by prioritizing mastery of instruction for all student subgroups, and leading ongoing teacher, team and school-wide dialogue about student work products.</p>	<p><b>L3:</b> Principal supports educators, students, families and the community to sustain high achievement in a positive, safe school environment.</p> <p><b>L4:</b> Principal provides information to parents/caregivers regarding how to foster learning at home, gives appropriate assistance, supports homework and academic resilience, and engages in two-way home-school communication.</p>	<p><b>L5:</b> Principal uses multiple strategies to provide timely feedback about classroom practices and student learning (e.g., lesson study, collaborative analysis of student work, classroom observations, and team planning).</p> <p><b>L6:</b> Principal/Instructional Leadership Team implement differentiated professional development, focused on continuous improvement of student learning and professional practice.</p>	<p><b>L7:</b> Leadership Team uses student work and data to recommend instructional strategies and interventions for all students, and disseminates periodic progress reports to all stakeholders.</p> <p><b>L8:</b> Principal/Leadership Team works collaboratively with teachers to use a well-defined system to gather and analyze data about student growth and professional practices.</p>
ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES	<p><b>O1:</b> School staff communicates a consistent message of high expectations, high support and instructional approaches from a wide range of historical, cultural, and linguistic perspectives.</p> <p><b>O2:</b> District/School leadership ensures that standards-aligned, culturally relevant curricular are implemented and supported with curriculum guides, professional development, and a balanced assessment system.</p>	<p><b>O3:</b> District builds systems to link educators, students, parents, caregivers and the community to the schools, and to foster a safe caring environment.</p> <p><b>O4:</b> District enables parents to participate as partners in developing school policies and practices, and in analyzing student and school performance data.</p>	<p><b>O5:</b> District Leadership creates work environments that support teachers and principals in what they need to focus on: quality instruction and well-run schools.</p> <p><b>O6:</b> Administrative Team clearly communicates the district's vision, mission, teacher-quality and performance data, and seek community input for continuous improvement.</p>	<p><b>O7:</b> District leadership implements a user-friendly system to provide information in order to monitor and adjust professional practice and to guide professional development.</p> <p><b>O8:</b> Central Office partners with all schools to provide professional development to all educators regarding analysis and interpretation of a variety of data about student learning and professional practices.</p>

# A ROADMAP FOR STUDENT GROWTH AND SUCCESS

**Strategic Priorities** are the programs, targeted solutions, or continuous improvement initiatives which, when fully implemented, will facilitate the accomplishment of the Goals. These Strategic Priorities are framed around the 4 Pillars.



"The Four Pillars" are the building blocks of what we must do well to achieve the outcomes for students; i.e., they are the means to the ends. Together, they define the capabilities we need and must develop continuously to strengthen instructional effectiveness and organizational infrastructure.

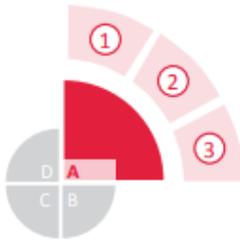
Pillar A focuses on **"TEACHING & LEARNING"**, the most important function of our schools. It advocates for a personalized instructional system that is responsive to the needs of each student.

Pillar B recognizes that **"SCHOOLS CAN'T DO IT ALONE"**; it promotes trust, open communication, and healthy partnership with families and community.

Pillar C emphasizes **"INVESTING IN PEOPLE"**, by attracting, developing, and retaining high-caliber staff at all levels.

Pillar D – **"MANAGING THE WHOLE"** – champions the creation of mission-focused structures and processes that will facilitate effective and efficient operations and continuous improvement.

## Strategic Priorities and Key Actions



### PILLAR A

Personalized, Rigorous,  
Culturally Responsive  
Teaching & Learning

### Strategic Priority ①

## Student-Centered, Caring Relationships

Maintain safe, healthy and inclusive learning environments.

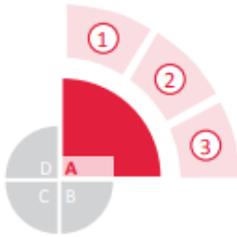
### Key Actions

- 1.1** Ensure that every school is a safe, secure, orderly, drug-free environment for learning, with uniform standards for ensuring a positive learning culture within which students feel valued, cared for, challenged and supported.
- 1.2** Nurture students' sense of belonging and appropriate conduct by validating their social-emotional and cultural identities, and by implementing appropriate, asset-based interventions and discipline practices.
- 1.3** Create opportunities for student voice and ownership by integrating students' knowledge, culture and experiences into instructional planning, classroom projects and assignments, and setting classroom/school norms.
- 1.4** Expand and support extracurricular and co-curricular athletics and activities (examples: intramural, science and math clubs, forensics, student councils, Lego League) that enrich students' schooling experiences, develop teamwork, and nurture well-rounded, balanced young adults.\*

\* from 2016 Master Plan

## Chapter 3 - The Recommendations

### Strategic Priorities and Key Actions



#### PILLAR A

Personalized, Rigorous,  
Culturally Responsive  
Teaching & Learning

### Strategic Priority ②

## Aligned Instructional System

Focus on teaching high standards, rigorous curriculum and reliable assessments.

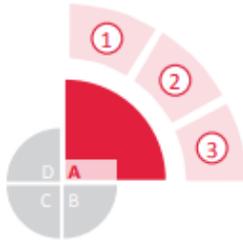
#### Key Actions

- 2.1** Align curriculum, assessments, instruction, instructional materials and technology across content areas and implement, with fidelity, a culturally responsive, standards-aligned, guaranteed and viable curriculum with embedded supports in all subjects and in every classroom.
- 2.2** Use ongoing assessment results to monitor the progress of each student and to differentiate instruction, acceleration and enrichment.
- 2.3** Target specialized programs that support early literacy and math in elementary schools.
- 2.4** Implement a district-wide framework for critical thinking, problem solving and cultural responsiveness for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, and expand and support access to higher-level coursework, independent learning opportunities, co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities for students to apply 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.
- 2.5** Expand access to elective courses for students, and strengthen the quality of existing courses.\*
- 2.6** Support teachers to collaborate within grade levels and departments to develop question progression and visual mapping to improve students' critical thinking skills.
- 2.7** Targeted interventions for unaccredited schools (i.e., extended-year calendar).\*

\* from 2016 Master Plan

## Chapter 3 - The Recommendations

### Strategic Priorities and Key Actions



#### PILLAR A

Personalized, Rigorous,  
Culturally Responsive  
Teaching & Learning

#### Strategic Priority ③

### Personalization and Successful Transitions

Tailor instruction and interventions to each student's strengths and needs.

#### Key Actions

**3.1** Personalize instruction for all students, including: an English language acquisition program with ample daily instructional time for English learners; specialized enrichment opportunities for gifted and advanced students; and intervention services for special education students toward meeting grade-level standards or their IEP goals.

**3.2** Implement a student-friendly portfolio process to enhance student responsibility for, and monitoring of, their own learning, and to offer personalized pathways to meet graduation requirements.

**3.3** Implement an early-warning process and continuous monitoring of middle and high school students' progress toward on-time high school graduation.

**3.4** Ensure that Problem-Solving Teams (PST) work collaboratively with the students to develop an individualized success/learning plan for students in need.

**3.5** Collaborate with students and parents/caregivers to create an academic and a career plan, including implementing a process for continuous monitoring of middle school and high school students' progress toward on-time high school completion.

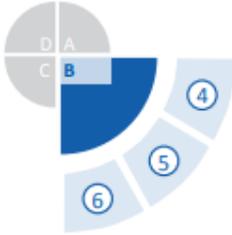
**3.6** Establish college and career pathways for all high schools.\*

**3.7** Reduce class size for grades K-2 to a desired standard of 22 students, and phase in reduction of desired standards for grades 3-4 to 25 students and grades 5-6 to 27 students.\*

\* from 2016 Master Plan

## Chapter 3 - The Recommendations

### Strategic Priorities and Key Actions



#### PILLAR B

Safe Climate & Strong Relationships with Families & Community

### Strategic Priority ④ Safety Nets

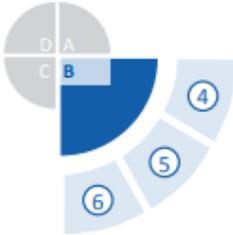
Provide a community-wide network of supports for students and families.

#### Key Actions

- 4.1** Increase capacity of families to be advocates for their child's education, and provide targeted services by expanding promising programs (e.g., Parents-as-Teachers, Parent Liaisons).
- 4.2** Implement and communicate trauma-sensitive, data-informed behavior models that fit the needs of the students and families at each school, and that address health-related and social-emotional barriers to learning.
- 4.3** Educate students and parents on how to access school and community resources to support academic, behavioral and life success.
- 4.4** Develop a system of academic safety nets that are easily accessible to students and families, including: (a) expanded educational options (e.g., evening school, Saturday school, intersession); (b) mentoring and tutoring (e.g., by community, peer-to-peer); (c) easing barriers to participation (e.g., proximity to home/school safe meeting place, transportation, Master Schedule constraints).

## Chapter 3 - The Recommendations

### Strategic Priorities and Key Actions



#### PILLAR B

Safe Climate & Strong Relationships with Families & Community

#### Strategic Priority ⑤

### Family Engagement & Communication

Invite the perspectives and embrace diverse voices of parents/caregivers.

#### Key Actions

**5.1** Increase outreach to parents/caregivers of kindergartners to clarify academic and social-emotional expectations that would ensure successful transitions.

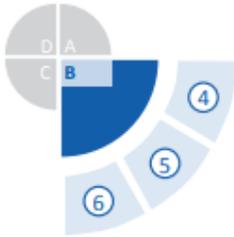
**5.2** Ensure that staff meet with students and families at least twice each year to engage in two-way dialogue about the student's academic and social-emotional progress, using district-wide, developmentally appropriate protocol to ensure consistency and coherence.

**5.3** Provide frequent two-way communication with students and families, in an increasing number of languages, regarding each student's academic progress toward mastery of all subjects.

**5.4** Implement a series of Family Nights for parents to learn how to support their children's academic success in reading, math and science by using critical-thinking skills and technology.

## Chapter 3 - The Recommendations

### Strategic Priorities and Key Actions



#### PILLAR B

Safe Climate & Strong Relationships with Families & Community

#### Strategic Priority ⑥

### Community Partnerships

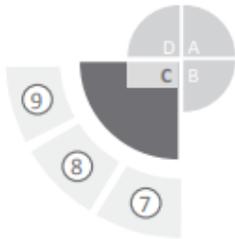
Leverage community resources for student growth and school/district improvement.

#### Key Actions

- 6.1** Meet regularly with preschool providers to ensure they are equipping students with the knowledge and skills for a successful transition into kindergarten.
- 6.2** Explore the use of real-world problems that are based within the community, and that can be supported by local businesses and civic groups.
- 6.3** Collaborate with business and community mentors to support students in solving real-world problems, exploring new opportunities and using technology to strengthen applied learning skills.
- 6.4** Provide ongoing training and facilitate communication between stakeholders to help students explore college and career opportunities.
- 6.5** Partner with governmental agencies, community-based organizations, youth development agencies and law enforcement to motivate and reward positive student behavior.
- 6.6** Convene an annual gathering of community partners and providers to reach consensus on priority focus areas for the school year; align efforts and resources to needs for optimum efficiency and impact; conduct mid-year and end-of-year evidence-based progress reviews; and to publish an end-of-year community-wide report to highlight accomplishments, challenges and recommendations for next school year.

## Chapter 3 - The Recommendations

### Strategic Priorities and Key Actions



#### PILLAR C

Caring, Effective Teachers  
in Every Classroom &  
Effective Leaders in Every  
School

Strategic Priority ⑦

### Talented, Dedicated Workforce

Attract, develop and retain diverse, effective personnel at all levels.

#### Key Actions

**7.1** Define the Standards of Professional Practice for teachers, school administrators, district-level leaders and managers and support staff. Outline professional expectations and explicit criteria to assess progress toward mastery of the professional standards.

**7.2** Develop and implement an intensive, yearlong induction program for new school-based employees to equip and prepare staff to effectively meet the needs of all students.

**7.3** Design and implement a school staffing succession plan.

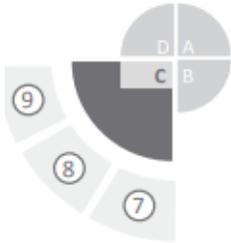
**7.4** Develop a pipeline to recruit a talented and diverse workforce through ongoing relationships with local, state and national colleges and universities.

**7.5** Implement a formal on-boarding process for new school and department leaders, focused on the essential knowledge and skills needed by all leaders (including awareness of Standards of Professional Practice, key board policies, district's equity guidelines and cultural competencies).

**7.6** Provide focused support and consistent encouragement for accomplished teachers who are interested in becoming school leaders, including formal opportunities to acquire core leadership knowledge and skills (e.g., via membership in a special program for cohorts of aspiring leaders).

## Chapter 3 - The Recommendations

### Strategic Priorities and Key Actions



#### PILLAR C

Caring, Effective Teachers in Every Classroom & Effective Leaders in Every School

Strategic Priority **8**

### Professional Development & Collaboration

Invest in continuous learning for all staff so that, in time, each achieves mastery of his or her own craft.

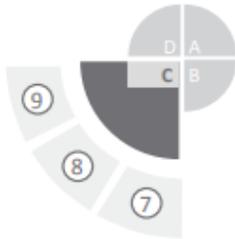
#### Key Actions

- 8.1 Implement a cycle of inquiry process as a tool for continuous improvement of practices and processes at every level, including: six to 12 week instructional planning, a data summit at the end of each assessment cycle, and a user-friendly data management system to facilitate evidence-based dialogue.
- 8.2 Strengthen the effectiveness of teachers, leaders and staff by institutionalizing professional development systems focused on effective practices, deeper content knowledge, professional learning communities and collaborative inquiry.
- 8.3 Support cross-department and grade-level teams to use and implement common approaches to critical thinking and problem solving.
- 8.4 Link teachers, leaders and staff with effective trauma-sensitive strategies, professional development and resources to facilitate academic and social-emotional growth all students.
- 8.5 Improve instructional and classroom management support for teachers.\*
- 8.6 Help all K-2 teachers earn a reading certification by SY2022.\*

\* from 2016 Master Plan

## Chapter 3 - The Recommendations

### Strategic Priorities and Key Actions



#### PILLAR C

Caring, Effective Teachers  
in Every Classroom &  
Effective Leaders in Every  
School

Strategic Priority ⑨

### Capable, Empowered Leadership

Develop network of top-notch leaders and leadership teams.

#### Key Actions

**9.1** Develop and implement a year-round leadership development curriculum for site administrators, managers and district-level leaders focused on strengthening their capabilities and effectiveness relative to professional leadership standards.

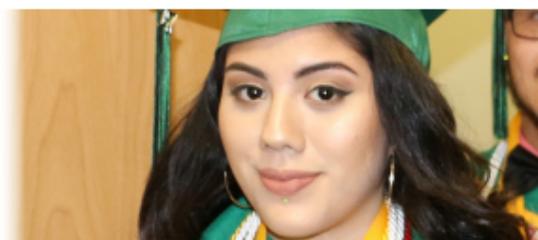
**9.2** Provide training and ongoing capacity-building for the leadership team at each school, with particular emphasis on strengthening the effectiveness of instruction, using data about student learning and professional practices to improve outcomes, building a culture of collaboration and collegial accountability, and strengthening relationships and outreach with stakeholders.

**9.3** Develop an internal leadership pipeline and succession planning process to promote leadership from within (“grow our own”) and to motivate aspiring leaders.

**9.4** Create leadership academies that will build school-level leadership teams and facilitate the acquisition of core leadership knowledge and skills essential for promoting effective practices that will raise student learning, especially in low-performing schools.

## Chapter 3 - The Recommendations

### Strategic Priorities and Key Actions



#### PILLAR D

Data-Informed,  
Effective & Efficient  
Systems

Strategic Priority ⑩

### Planning, Accountability & Celebrations

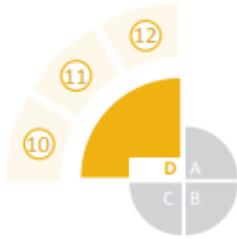
Cultivate a focus on results and celebrate continuous improvement.

#### Key Actions

- 10.1** Ensure each school and department develops a results-driven, equity-focused Annual Action Plan, with clear targets and implementation strategies that are aligned to the strategic plan.
- 10.2** Ensure all plans for social-emotional initiatives are defined, articulated and implemented across professional levels (i.e., teachers, principals and classified staff), with emphasis on trauma-sensitive schools.
- 10.3** Establish the Community Roundtable for Performance and Accountability to build community commitment to the schools, including: setting annual goals for the district and its stakeholders, sharing periodic progress reports, and holding an annual recognition ceremony to celebrate progress and accomplishments.
- 10.4** Conduct an annual survey to assess students' perception and satisfaction regarding their academic and social-emotional experiences.
- 10.5** Develop and implement a School Performance Framework to provide a comprehensive picture of each school's progress regarding student growth and professional practices; promote greater, evidence-based collaboration across schools and teams; identify schools in need of tiered district-level supports (e.g., School Quality Review [SQR] process); and identify proven or promising practices for further development and dissemination across the school system.

## Chapter 3 - The Recommendations

### Strategic Priorities and Key Actions



#### PILLAR D

Data-Informed,  
Effective & Efficient  
Systems

#### Strategic Priority 11

### Equitable Resources

Match resources to data-supported student and staff needs.

#### Key Actions

**11.1** Allocate resources (i.e., people, time and money) based on data-supported needs of students, staff and schools.

**11.2** Create data collection and reporting systems to increase the effective use of data to drive leadership decisions, particularly regarding matters of access, opportunity and equity.

**11.3** Create and sustain an equitable and fully-supported feeder system of neighborhood and signature schools to ensure progress toward mastery of all subjects for all students (i.e., explore creation of a third middle school and the expansion of the Lincoln Middle program).

**11.4** Explore coordination, collaboration and partnership opportunities with charter schools and charter sponsors to ensure that the public education systems within boundaries are effectively and equitably serving the needs of all students.

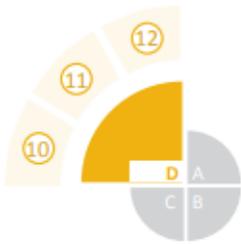
**11.5** Develop and maintain relationships and a proactive posture relative to governmental, business, philanthropic and other potential channels for financial and material resources to leverage first-rate educational experiences for our students.

**11.6** Conduct independent school evaluations.\*

\* from 2016 Master Plan

## Chapter 3 - The Recommendations

### Strategic Priorities and Key Actions



#### PILLAR D

Data-Informed,  
Effective & Efficient  
Systems

#### Strategic Priority 12

### Responsive Customer Service

Deliver effective operations, guidance and assistance.

#### Key Actions

**12.1** Develop an integrated data infrastructure that facilitates system-wide monitoring, analysis and dissemination of data about student learning and organizational performance, as a means to build trust, transparency and accountability with stakeholders.

**12.2** Strengthen the use of technology as a platform to conduct the work of the district and schools in a seamless way, and to provide a technology-rich environment for students and staff.

**12.3** Define the standards of practice and key performance metrics for each school and district-level service unit (e.g., payroll, secretarial/administrative support, facilities, human resources, purchasing, special education), with input from each unit's key customers/clients.

**12.4** Conduct annual feedback surveys of each department's customers/clients to assess the quality of services provided by the unit, identify opportunities for improvement, compile annual service ratings, and recognize departments that meet improvement targets and/or achieve significant year-to-gain growth in their services ratings.

**12.5** Develop a comprehensive Marketing and Communication Plan to cultivate a distinct, consistent brand presence for the school system, to communicate proactively with internal and external stakeholders, and to maintain a positive image about the district across a variety of media (broadcast, print, web, social media).

## Appendix A: Strategic Plan 3

Strategic Plan 2019/2020 @G&D Associates							
Vision Area	Vision Statement	Deliverable	Owner	Budget	Due By	Project Title	Plan Number
Learning	Personalized and competency-based learning opportunities are accessible to all learners across grade levels and content areas.	Published learning progressions and lexicon of competency-based terminology.		\$15,000	6/12/20	Competency-Based Learning	Plan 1
Learning	Personalized plans of study support the diverse needs of all learners.	Prototype and field-test student led goal setting systems throughout all schools.		\$3,500	6/1/20	Learner Agency	Plan 2
Learning	Learning experiences will extend beyond the classroom in partnership with mentors and experts from a variety of career fields.	Identify classrooms and programs incorporating experiential learning and develop a system of storytelling to capture learner, teacher, parent, and business partner experiences.		\$2,000	5/29/20	Experiential Learning Opportunities	Plan 3
Learning	Flexible scheduling allows learners to customize their learning experience in pursuit of their passions and interests.	Assess and eliminate academic and operational barriers to learning beyond the walls of the classroom to ensure access of opportunity for all.		\$15,000	5/29/20	Access & Opportunity	Plan 4
Learning	Technology resources and connectivity are available to all learners in support of anytime, anywhere learning.	Develop and implement virtual learning approaches across all grade levels for use on inclement weather days.		\$5,000	12/6/19	Anytime, Anywhere Learning	Plan 5
Teaching	Teaching practices are culturally responsive and inclusive to meet the needs of our diverse learners.	Culturally responsive teaching professional development modules.		\$2,500	5/29/20	Culturally Responsive Teaching	Plan 6
Teaching	Diverse needs of learners are addressed through Multi-Tiered Systems of Support.	Multi-Tiered Systems of Support procedural guide in place across all schools.		\$180,000	5/29/20	Multi-Tiered Systems of Support	Plan 7
Teaching	Flexibility in scheduling provides greater access for all learners to Real World Learning opportunities.	Flexible scheduling designs in place at the high school level.		\$1,290	5/29/20	Flexible Scheduling	Plan 8
Teaching	Spaces are designed to enhance teaching and learning experiences.	Innovative spaces to support learning redesign.		\$10,000	2/15/20	Innovative Learning Spaces	Plan 9
Teaching	Interdisciplinary Project-Based Learning experiences enhance learners' Communication, Collaboration, Critical-Thinking, and Creativity (4Cs) skills.	Process for middle level to expand interdisciplinary Project-Based Learning to all four middle schools.		\$0.00	5/29/2020	Project Based Learning	Plan 10
Teaching	Clarity exists among teachers, all learners, and parents of career pathways and post-secondary opportunities.	Communication plan of experiential learning opportunities for learners, teachers, parents, and business/industry partners.		\$0.00	5/29/2020	Real World Learning	Plan 11
Leadership	Teachers and administration collaborate and share innovative approaches taking place throughout our schools, emphasizing learner agency and real world learning opportunities.	Communication plan to showcase innovative practices taking place across schools.		\$0.00	5/1/2020	Innovative Storytelling	Plan 12

Leadership	Existence of two-way cross-cultural communication structures ensure equitable voice and input from diverse stakeholder groups in service to all learners.	Two-way communication protocols will solicit diverse perspectives and inform District decision-making.		\$2,500	5/1/2020	Cross-cultural Communication	Plan 13
Leadership	Recruitment, hiring, and retention practices are designed to attract a diverse applicant pool equipped to meet the needs of all learners.	Identified dispositions of prospective employees in support of the District's Vision and Strategic Plan.		\$0.00	2/1/2020	Aligned Late-Stage Recruitment	Plan 14
Leadership	Talent development strategies support the District's vision and meet the needs of our diverse learners.	Expand partnerships in support of LPS talent development strategies.		\$1,250	5/1/2020	Talent Pipeline Development	Plan 15
Leadership	A culture of happiness prioritizes time for family and support of both physical and social-emotional health.	Marketing materials to foster a culture of well-being through work-life balance.		\$700	6/30/2020	Work & Life Balance	Plan 16
Leadership	Faculty, staff, and administrators are committed to equity through service to our diverse community.	Needs assessment to inform cultural sensitivity and empathy training plans within all schools.		\$2,500	5/29/2020	Cultural Competency	Plan 17
Professional Growth	Professional learning is personalized and aligned to the District's vision.	Job-embedded coaching models for beginning and experienced administrators.		\$0	5/29/2020	Personalized Professional Learning	Plan 18
Professional Growth	Professional Learning Communities are advanced across all schools through embedded collaboration time.	Expanded collaboration time in all grade levels and content areas to support Professional Learning Communities.		\$6,708	4/1/20	Professional Learning Communities	Plan 19
Community	Experts from the community support learner interests, passions, and pursuits to access college and career opportunities.	Deploy a College & Career Readiness Advisory Board		\$250	Ongoing	College & Career Readiness Network	Plan 20
Community	Exploratory, experiential, and immersive real world learning opportunities exist for all learners.	Establish XP53 at both high schools in support of College & Career Pathways, Common Sector Competencies, and Real World Learning.		\$2,000	5/29/2020	Career Navigators	Plan 21
Community	Learners, parents, and teachers are fully aware of experiential learning opportunities and programs available throughout the District.	Branding of experiential learning opportunities available throughout Liberty Public Schools		\$10,000	1/4/2020	Market Experiential Learning Opportunities	Plan 22
Total				\$260,198			

## Appendix A: Strategic Plan 4

**MISSION STATEMENT**

As champions for students, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ mission is to ensure that all are life-ready and ethically grounded in an ever-changing world through innovative educational experiences that:

- ▶ Inspire Lifelong Learning
- ▶ Embrace Inclusion
- ▶ Forge a Unified Community

Just north of \_\_\_\_\_ is a district of nearly 20,000 learners who experience innovative educational experiences every day. This strategic plan guides the work of \_\_\_\_\_ from the boardroom to the classroom, and determines district priorities each year as part of the Board of Education's Balanced Scorecard.



### Timeline

- ▶ A Steering Committee of 30 community members, civic leaders, business owners, elected officials, parents, students and staff came together for three days – November 14-16 – to draft the Strategic Plan document and determined strategies.
- ▶ Four strategies were handed off to Action Teams to turn the concepts into a working reality. More than 100 people were involved in this process that took approximately four months.
- ▶ The Steering Committee reconvened April 12-13, 2017 to review the Action Plans and finalize the Strategic Plan.
- ▶ The Plan was presented to the Board of Education on June 13, 2017 for its formal approval.





## Beliefs

- ▶ All people have the right to equitable opportunities to reach their full potential based on their individual needs.
- ▶ Respect and dignity are essential to a strong foundation.
- ▶ Appreciating individuality and embracing inclusion cultivates personal growth and safe, strong communities.
- ▶ High expectations and positive attitudes lead to greater success.
- ▶ Personal responsibility builds initiative and accountability.
- ▶ Collaboration leads to vested ownership.
- ▶ Change is inevitable and essential for growth.
- ▶ Investing resources in our youth delivers dividends for the future.
- ▶ Timely, open and honest communication fosters an educated shared understanding.
- ▶ A strong and vibrant society relies on both individual and community accountability.
- ▶ Taking risks is an essential and positive process toward growth.
- ▶ People are empowered through a safe culture that promotes risk-taking, allowing vulnerability and self-discovery.
- ▶ Individual pride affirms personal value and self-worth.
- ▶ Every person is an unfinished work with continual opportunity for growth and learning.



## Strategies

### Strategy I:

▶ **We will ensure diversified learning experiences that celebrate personal growth and promote lifelong learning for all.**

- **Action Plan 1:** Provide personalized learning that increases student achievement and mastery through choice in product and learning styles; utilize technology to adapt to students' needs, increase efficiency and explore innovation.
- **Action Plan 2:** Support creative learning spaces that are flexible and equitable.
- **Action Plan 3:** Promote student success by creating a flexible framework for professional development that allows for staff choice, authenticity and variety based on the desired area for growth.
- **Action Plan 4:** Ensure students are digitally literate: and that they choose and utilize appropriate technology to communicate, plan, research, solve problems and collaborate as productive digital citizens.
- **Action Plan 5:** Establish a universal culture and process standards around the belief that abilities can be developed through learning, perseverance and quality mentoring support (growth mindset).
- **Action Plan 6:** Consider academic offerings centered around a specific theme that can promote focused learning.
- **Action Plan 7:** Explore Pre-K accessibility to families and maximize materials, curriculum, training and resources for early childhood programs.
- **Action Plan 8:** Expand equitable and systematic learning experiences that are provided through activities that occur beyond the school day.

### Strategy II:

▶ **We will instill in our community a shared responsibility for successful schools within vibrant neighborhoods.**

- **Action Plan 1:** Explore ways to tie neighborhoods to our schools and students.
- **Action Plan 2:** Find ways to connect students with volunteer opportunities to benefit our community.
- **Action Plan 3:** Expand current programming, where possible, to open our facilities to our community.

- **Action Plan 4:** Strengthen the connection between our business community and our district to better provide authentic learning experiences for students.
- **Action Plan 5:** Use \_\_\_\_\_ Education Foundation to build opportunities for our district students and community.
- **Action Plan 6:** Work to support the district’s new feeder patterns

### Strategy III:

- ▶ **We will strengthen inclusion in all aspects throughout our community.**
  - **Action Plan 1:** Commit to establishing, nurturing and maintaining meaningful relationships with every student, among all parties, in an inclusive learning community.
  - **Action Plan 2:** Ensure a culture of inclusivity, as reflected in recruiting, hiring and retention practices, staff professional development and performance standards for all employees.
  - **Action Plan 3:** Design curriculum and instructional practices to transform awareness, honor inclusion and prepare all district students to fully excel and positively contribute in our increasingly global society.
  - **Action Plan 4:** Create and maintain relationships with all community members celebrating the value students and community bring to each other.
  - **Action Plan 5:** Embed inclusive programs, policies, organizational structures, facilities, funding and processes in all facets of the district.

### Strategy IV:

- ▶ **We will create a culture of wellness for students, staff and community that encourages the health of the whole person.**
  - **Action Plan 1:** Establish a wellness program at each building with district coordination.
  - **Action Plan 2:** Provide mechanisms so that staff, students, and community members have access to preventive services and healthy living resources on an ongoing basis.
  - **Action Plan 3:** Establish an environment that supports social and emotional health, including training that results in a positive culture.



## Objectives

- ▶ Each student will acquire an exemplary academic education that will instill the desire to become a lifelong learner.
- ▶ Each student will lead with strength of character exhibited by kindness, compassion and confidence.
- ▶ Each student will serve the common good as a positive change agent, contributing to an honorable purpose that transcends self.



## Parameters

- ▶ We will base decisions on what is best for all students.
- ▶ We will treat all people with dignity and respect.
- ▶ We will communicate honestly, clearly and openly.
- ▶ We will be responsible stewards of our resources.
- ▶ We will maintain the fiscal integrity of the district.
- ▶ We will not compromise excellence.

Appendix A: Strategic Plan 5

**2018-2023**  
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

**GOAL AREA NO. 1**  
**Each student will graduate ready for college, career and life.**

**Measure 1:** *College and Career Readiness (CCR) Index*

**Measure 2:** *Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Index*

**Measure 3:** *21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Assessment*

**GOAL AREA NO. 2**  
**Ensure success for ALL students, regardless of background.**

**Measure 1:** *Access and Opportunity Index*

**Measure 2:** *College and Career Readiness (CCR) Index Gap*

**KEYS TO EXCELLENCE:**

- FINANCIAL** *(Sustainability)*
- ACADEMIC** *(Quality Instruction)*
- CLIMATE** *(Safe, Caring, Welcoming Environment)*
- EMPLOYEE** *(Quality Staff)*

**CORE VALUES:**

- Visionary Leadership*
- Integrity*
- Student Focus*
- High Expectations*
- Continuous Improvement*
- Equity*

**MISSION:**  
Through the expertise of an engaged staff, the [redacted] provides a relevant education in a safe, caring environment to prepare each student for success in life.

Appendix A: Strategic Plan 6

# Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan Overview 2019-20



## Strategic Plan Focus Areas

The strategic plan outlines goals, strategies and action plans across three strategic focus areas: Academics, Business, and Community (Students, Staff, Parents & Members). Overall goals of each strategic focus area are listed below along with indicators of success.

Academics	Business	Community Students	Community Staff	Community Parents & Members
<p><b>GOAL:</b> develop and enhance quality educational/instructional programs to improve overall and individual student academic performance</p> <p><b>INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:</b> assessment performance, survey data, observation data, applicable Missouri School Improvement (MSIP) measures, compliance measures</p>	<p><b>GOAL:</b> proactively and responsibly manage district growth, finances, and support services to improve student achievement</p> <p><b>INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:</b> survey data, observation data, fund balances, non-academic performance data, bonding capacity, bond rating</p>	<p><b>GOAL:</b> provide each student with a relevant education in a safe and caring environment</p> <p><b>INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:</b> safe and caring performance data, survey data</p>	<p><b>GOAL:</b> attract, retain, and develop a high quality staff</p> <p><b>INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:</b> survey data, staff performance</p>	<p><b>GOAL:</b> improve internal and external stakeholder communication, involvement, and partnership</p> <p><b>INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:</b> survey data, engagement/communication performance data</p>

## Work System and Key Processes

The work system considers Academics processes as its core processes, which are central to our District's Vision, Mission, and Values. Academic processes include Curriculum and Instruction, Tiered Support Services, and Assessment. Our key supporting Business processes (Facilities and Operations, Information Management and Technology, and Business Services) and key supporting Community processes (Student Services, Professional Development, Human Resources, and Communications and Public Relations) support the success of our Academic processes. Providing the foundation for all processes is our District's Quality Continuous Improvement framework.

Each key process has identified improvement focus areas, which ultimately define our District's Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan (CSIP) for the next 2-5 years depending on the complexity of implementation. These focus areas by key process are outlined on the following page.



## Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan Overview 2019-20

### Key Process Improvement Focus Areas

Each key process in our Work System and each school has identified one or more improvement action focus areas based on their results and annual SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities for Improvement, and Threats) analysis. These improvement action focus areas will be implemented over the course of this year and possibly multiple years depending on the scope of the improvement actions. Each of these are part of our District's Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan, as well as the individual key process and school strategic improvement plans which are monitored throughout the year using a Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycle.

Key Process	Improvement Focus Areas
<b>Curriculum and Instruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructional Framework</li> <li>Success Ready Pathways</li> </ul>
<b>Tiered Support Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Social and Emotional Support (Trauma, Behavior, Bully Prevention, Suicide Prevention, Mental Health)</li> <li>Tier 2 Interventions</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement Teams (Data Teams)</li> <li>Key Results Dashboard</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities and Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long-Range Facility Planning</li> <li>Comprehensive School Safety Planning</li> <li>Capital Improvement Planning</li> </ul>
<b>Information Management and Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long-Range Technology Planning</li> <li>Customer Service Improvement</li> <li>Process Development</li> </ul>
<b>Business Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget Process (Monitoring, 5-Year Projections)</li> <li>Staff Process Accountability</li> <li>Cross-Departmental Collaboration for Financial Processes</li> </ul>
<b>Student Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extra-Curricular/Co-Curricular Selection Processes</li> <li>K-12 Comprehensive Approach for Student Opportunities</li> <li>Attendance and Discipline Processes</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Job-embedded Professional Development (Topic Studies, Instructional Cohorts, Classified Professional Development)</li> <li>Teacher Mentoring/Onboarding</li> <li>Instructional Technology</li> </ul>
<b>Human Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff Improvement Cycles (Administrator Performance Improvement Cycle (APIC), Educator Performance Improvement Cycle (EPIC), Classified Performance Improvement Cycle (CPIC))</li> <li>Staff Leadership Development</li> <li>Human Resources Branding/Recruiting</li> </ul>
<b>Communications and Public Relations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff Communication Strategy</li> <li>District Brand/Reputation Enhancement</li> <li>Community Engagement and Involvement Systems (Parent Education, Stakeholder Feedback, Customer Service)</li> </ul>



Appendix A: Strategic Plan 7

# FOCUS AREA 1: STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE

Govern the Local Education Agency (LEA) District in an efficient and effective manner providing leadership and representation to benefit the students, staff and patrons of the district.



## GOAL 1

Foster student success, workforce excellence, resource excellence and organizational efficiency and family/community engagement by establishing, monitoring and adapting an effective strategic plan.



### OBJECTIVE A

Ensure continuous improvement in student performance, academic programming and instructional practices using data-driven analysis.



### OBJECTIVE B

Maximize financial resources in support of strategic plan goals.



### OBJECTIVE C

Promote and support workforce excellence.



### OBJECTIVE D

Ensure effective communication with all district staff, families and community.

FOCUS AREA 1:  
STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE

## FOCUS AREA 1: STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE

Govern the Local Education Agency (LEA) District in an efficient and effective manner providing leadership and representation to benefit the students, staff and patrons of the district.



### GOAL 2

Govern the school district in a collaborative manner that leads to a positive impact on student success, effective operations and an efficient organizational structure.



#### OBJECTIVE A

Routinely review all district policies and administrative procedures to promote student success and district effectiveness.



#### OBJECTIVE B

Develop and apply collaborative leadership throughout the district.



#### OBJECTIVE C

Improve governance and leadership effectiveness through targeted professional development and educational opportunities aligned to district goals.

## FOCUS AREA 1: STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE

Govern the Local Education Agency (LEA) District in an efficient and effective manner providing leadership and representation to benefit the students, staff and patrons of the district.



### GOAL 3

Foster a safe, caring and inclusive culture where all feel valued and supported by creating a model environment in which to work and promote student success.



#### OBJECTIVE A

Create a culture of wellness for students, staff and community that encourages the health of the whole person.



#### OBJECTIVE B

Advance the implementation of cultural competency as an integral step to promoting student success, family engagement and staff fellowship.



#### OBJECTIVE C

Continue district focus on safety/security throughout all buildings and facilities.



#### OBJECTIVE D

Continue to build a school culture that is responsive and welcoming to students, staff, families and the community.

## FOCUS AREA 2: STUDENT SUCCESS

Develop and enhance quality educational/instructional programs to improve performance and enable students to meet their personal academic and career goals



### GOAL 1

Students will demonstrate academic achievement as measured by identified targets at the early childhood, elementary, secondary and district levels.



#### OBJECTIVE A

The district will ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum in all contents and all levels.



#### OBJECTIVE B

The district will increase kindergarten readiness through quality early learning experiences that best promote a child's growth.



#### OBJECTIVE C

Student achievement data throughout the District will demonstrate growth as evidenced through analysis of state and district achievement data as well as the Annual Performance Review (APR).

## FOCUS AREA 2: STUDENT SUCCESS

Develop and enhance quality educational/instructional programs to improve performance and enable students to meet their personal academic and career goals



### GOAL 2

Ensure diversified learning experiences that celebrate personal growth, prepare students for college and/or the workforce and promote lifelong learning.



### OBJECTIVE A

Increase opportunities for participation in learning experiences that prepare students for college and/or career through the attainment of Market Value Assets that include opportunities to earn college credit, Industry Recognized Credentials, authentic work experiences and scholarships.



### OBJECTIVE B

Provide programming that increases student efficacy and connectedness to school, the community and the world around them.

# FOCUS AREA 3: WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE

Recruit, attract, develop and retain highly qualified staff to carry out the LEA/District mission, goals and objectives.



**GOAL 1**  
Attract and retain quality staff while increasing gender and ethnic diversity one percent each year.



**OBJECTIVE A**  
Provide staff with a competitive salary when compared to regional school districts.



**OBJECTIVE B**  
Provide a competitive benefit package compared to regional school districts.



**OBJECTIVE C**  
Promote a teacher preparation program and other learning opportunities available to students interested in pursuing educational careers.



**OBJECTIVE D**  
Recruit diverse and highly qualified staff members.



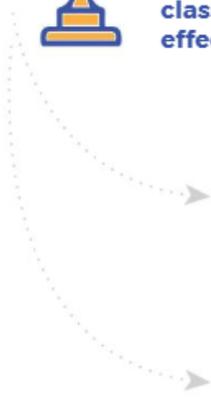
## FOCUS AREA 3: **WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE**

Recruit, attract, develop and retain highly qualified staff to carry out the LEA/District mission, goals and objectives.



### **GOAL 2**

**Create a culture of employee empowerment to provide each student access to a qualified and effective teacher in every classroom, an effective principal in every school and an effective employee in every position.**



### **OBJECTIVE A**

**Develop a systemic diversity training plan for all staff.**



### **OBJECTIVE B**

**Provide opportunities to address professional learning in collaboration with other departments.**



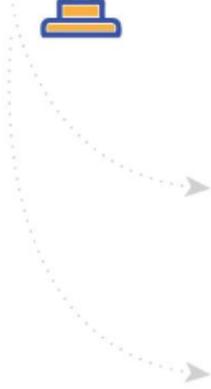
FOCUS AREA 3:  
**WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE**

## FOCUS AREA 3: **WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE**

Recruit, attract, develop and retain highly qualified staff to carry out the LEA/District mission, goals and objectives.



**GOAL 3**  
Provide professional development opportunities for all staff members.



**OBJECTIVE A**  
Provide ongoing professional development for certificated staff members.



**OBJECTIVE B**  
Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for classified staff members.

## FOCUS AREA 4: RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Provide and maintain appropriate instructional resources, support services and functional safe facilities.



### GOAL 1

Develop the annual budget and the long-range financial plan to align available resources with the priorities identified in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan.



#### OBJECTIVE A

Plan and prepare an annual budget in compliance with Missouri statutes and Board of Education policies to ensure financial resources to effectively support a quality educational program leading to student success.



#### OBJECTIVE B

Develop and implement long-range financial plans to maintain fiscal strength during changes in district-wide enrollment, and support improvements and upgrades necessary to promote increased student achievement.



#### OBJECTIVE C

Enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness to ensure financial stability and demonstrate fiscal accountability to stakeholders.

FOCUS AREA 4:  
RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND  
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

## FOCUS AREA 4: RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Provide and maintain appropriate instructional resources, support services and functional safe facilities.



### GOAL 2

Develop, implement and assess a comprehensive strategy to provide exemplary safe facilities, transportation and nutrition services to facilitate increased student achievement.



#### OBJECTIVE A

Provide facilities conducive to learning which are energy efficient, adequate in size, clean, well maintained, safe and appropriate to house the educational programs of the district.



#### OBJECTIVE B

Provide safe and efficient student transportation to and from school, and co-curricular activities, in compliance with Missouri statutes, regulations and local board policy.



#### OBJECTIVE C

Provide a nutritionally balanced breakfast and lunch to all students each day in accordance with Federal and State Child Nutrition Program regulations and guidelines.

FOCUS AREA 4:  
RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND  
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

## FOCUS AREA 4: RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Provide and maintain appropriate instructional resources, support services and functional safe facilities.



### GOAL 3

Maintain and improve technology resources and infrastructure to support instructional programs and administrative systems for staff and students.



#### OBJECTIVE A

Provide adequate and equitable access to instructional technology resources that include technology hardware and digital resources.



#### OBJECTIVE B

Provide administrative systems to allow for high quality data and secure data access.



#### OBJECTIVE C

Provide a high level of technical support and a robust, secure network for staff and student use.



#### OBJECTIVE D

Provide support for efficient, safe and effective schools and ancillary facilities.

FOCUS AREA 4:  
RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND  
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

# FOCUS AREA 5: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Promote, facilitate and enhance parent, student and community involvement in LEA District educational programs.



## GOAL 1

Provide timely, consistent and relevant communication to staff, students, parents and community members in a variety of forms.



### OBJECTIVE A

Effectively utilize emerging technologies to communicate with stakeholders.



### OBJECTIVE B

Improve internal district communication efforts.



### OBJECTIVE C

Identify our district brand then build and promote it.

FOCUS AREA 5:  
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY  
INVOLVEMENT

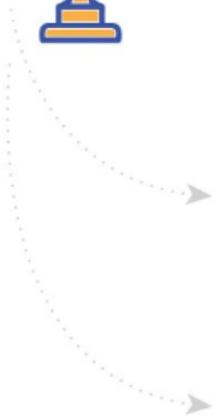
## FOCUS AREA 5: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Promote, facilitate and enhance parent, student and community involvement in LEA District educational programs.



### GOAL 2

Provide an inclusive environment to encourage stakeholder participation in students' academics and activities.



### OBJECTIVE A

Provide opportunities for families and patrons to interact at building and district levels.



### OBJECTIVE B

Support and promote businesses and organizational partnerships across the district and throughout the community.

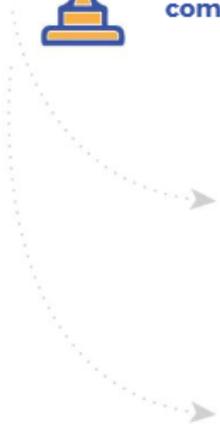
# FOCUS AREA 5: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Promote, facilitate and enhance parent, student and community involvement in LEA District educational programs.



### GOAL 3

Improve the quality of customer service internally in the School District to help create a culture of community pride and trust in our schools.



### OBJECTIVE A

Work to establish a “We Are | | ” culture.



### OBJECTIVE B

Work as a high performing organization whose employees respect and value all stakeholders.

**Appendix A: Strategic Plan 8 (Webpage)**

## **Strategic Plan (CSIP 2021) 2016-2021**

### **Our Mission**

We operate a public school district dedicated to educating every student, every day.



### **Our Vision**

We are determined to be the best model of student success, whose graduates are prepared to excel in a complex world.

### **Our Values**

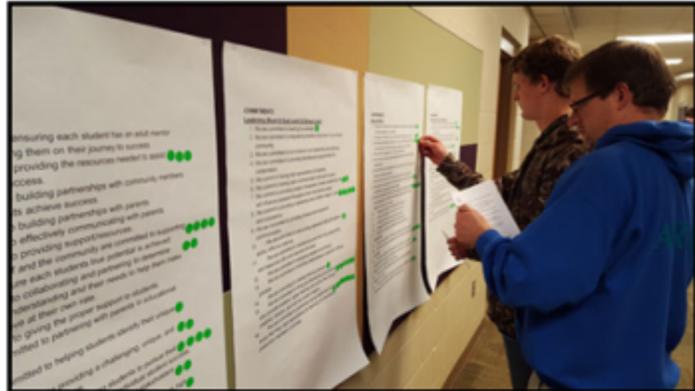
These values are introduced at home and reinforced at school.

- Integrity
- Respect
- Self-discipline
- Responsibility
- Citizenship
- Leadership

## The Development of our Five-Year Strategic Plan

We engaged our community in a strategic planning process in January and February of 2016. From the input of key community stakeholders, we crafted a five-year strategic plan we call CSIP 2021.

Missouri public schools each have a comprehensive school improvement plan, or CSIP. This latest version of our CSIP, or strategic plan, will guide us through the year 2021.



## Strategic Initiative 2021: PERSONALIZED LEARNING

**We will provide a meaningful education that prepares each student for his or her future.**

Our Five-Year Vision for Personalized Learning emphasizes three key components. We will achieve Personalized Learning through learning experiences that blend traditional, research-based classroom approaches, with digital tools that foster collaborative partnerships between teachers, parents, and students.

1. Competency-Based Learning
2. Flexible Learning Environment
3. Student-Centered Learning

**Our Five-year Strategic Plan (CSIP 2021) contains five goals. The wording of these five goals describes our desired future state.**

**Strategic Initiative 2021: PERSONALIZED LEARNING**

We will provide a meaningful education that prepares each student for his or her future.

**Team Member Goal:**

We will develop the skills of our team members to improve student success.

**Climate Goal:**

We will provide a learning environment that is safe, positive, respectful, and welcoming.



**Financial Management Goal:**

We will manage growth, finances, and support services proactively and responsibly.

**Community Relations Goal:**

We will increase family and community involvement in our schools and district, and will effectively communicate internally and externally

Strategic Plan 9

# Strategic Framework

## Relentless Pursuit of Excellence



### GOAL 1 High Academic Expectations for All



Every student will be challenged and supported through tiers of instruction by all staff to achieve a high standard of academic performance and growth.



#### Priority Outcome

- Standards-Based Instruction: Provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum to ensure that all students are on or above grade-level.

#### Initiatives

- Implementation and utilization of curriculum and assessment software.
- Focused instruction on priority standards in all content areas.
- Delivery of professional development related to standards-based instruction.



#### Priority Outcome

- Student Engagement: Ensure learning where students are active participants through relevant, rigorous, research-based instructional practices.

#### Initiatives

- Utilize research-based student engagement strategies for learning environments.
- Develop and incorporate a systems-wide common vocabulary for student engagement.
- Delivery of professional development related to student engagement.

#### Priority Outcome

- Professional Learning Communities: Establish a systemic, collective, data-driven culture with a focus on learning for all.

#### Initiatives

- Ensure learning for all students by focusing on the four Professional Learning Communities questions.
- Systematize Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) interventions in response to student data.
- Delivery of professional development related to professional learning communities.



# Strategic Framework

## Relentless Pursuit of Excellence



### GOAL 3 Human Capital



The district will attract, develop, engage and retain high quality talent.

#### Priority Outcome

- Leadership: Develop leaders with skills to identify, select, lead and hold their teams accountable.

#### Initiatives

- Define expectations of a leader and provide professional development.
- Assess and redefine the performance appraisal instruments and processes for leadership.
- Implement and maintain accountability structures.



#### Priority Outcome

- Recruitment, Selection and Development: Recruit, hire, develop and retain a diverse and premier work force, becoming the destination district for the best educational professionals.

#### Initiatives

- Enhance and refine recruitment plan to increase applicant pool reflective of a diverse work force.
- Continually improve selection processes through implementation of efficient recruitment instruments and methods.
- Develop and maintain work force retention and succession practices.

#### Priority Outcome

- Compensation and Benefit Alignment: Evaluate and enhance offerings to ensure competitiveness and support strategic initiatives.

#### Initiatives

- Ongoing market assessments of compensation and benefit practices and offerings.
- Continue to enhance communication of district benefits for recruitment, onboarding and retention of talent.
- Develop and sustain a culture of health and well-being.



# Strategic Framework

## Relentless Pursuit of Excellence



### GOAL 4 Effective Systems and Prioritized Resources



All systems and resources will be aligned based on organizational data to achieve strategic initiatives. Improve efficiency (productivity, cost, etc.) while also making decisions (including resource allocations) that are grounded in strategic data and academic direction.

#### Priority Outcome

- Facilities and Infrastructure: Ensure the existence of safe, well-maintained school facilities and technology infrastructures which support student learning.

#### Initiatives

- Continually review and enhance site-based safety and security assessments.
- Align the strategic facilities plan to support the Portrait of a Graduate.
- Development and maintain sustainable technology systems to support the International Society for Technology and Education Standards (ISTE) and other applicable industry standards.



#### Priority Outcome

- Budget: Implement budgets and enhance fiscal efficiencies to support strategic and academic priorities.

#### Initiatives

- Maintain a program and initiative inventory.
- Implement and utilize program-based budgeting processes to support student learning.
- Align and adjust budget priorities in order to support strategic initiatives.



#### Priority Outcome

- Communications: Utilize communication systems for a range of purposes to inform, instruct, and motivate all stakeholders.

#### Initiatives

- Streamline and maintain the communications processes utilized throughout the district.
- Inform stakeholders regarding progress toward achieving strategic initiatives.
- Enhance stakeholder engagement through a variety of mediums.



## Relentless Pursuit of Excellence

This strategic plan challenges us, as a community, to embrace **BOLD GOALS** for every child in [REDACTED]. It is driven by our deep **BELIEF** in our students' abilities and by their own **ASPIRATIONS** for their future.



Social Emotional Learning

100% of students report positive teacher to student relationships



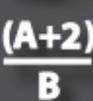
Mental Health Wellness

100% of students report having strong emotional regulation in order to stay calm and seek help when things go wrong



Grade Level Reading

All third-graders will read on grade level



Success in Algebra

All ninth-graders will pass Algebra



High School Graduation

100% percent graduation rates



Market Value Assets

100% of graduates will graduate with at least one Market Value Asset defined as industry-valued and recognized skills acquired in high school that create a more seamless transition from school to postsecondary education and/or the work place.

Market Value Assets Opportunities:

- Work Based Learning Experiences
- College Credit
- Regionally Vetted Industry-Recognized Credentials
- Entrepreneurial Experiences

## Belief Statements

### Student learning is our calling and our responsibility.

- *Every child can learn.*
- *Strong public schools recognize the family is the first teacher, and both the school and the family have an ongoing obligation to support continuous learning.*
- *Strong public schools are places that engage students in learning.*
- *Strong public schools are places that develop and stimulate students' curiosity and creativity.*

### There are significant societal benefits of public schooling.

- *Strong public schools prepare students for life beyond high school.*
- *Strong public schools are vital to a strong community and vibrant democracy.*
- *Strong public schools provide a unique place where people interact with others from different social and economic backgrounds, building respect for diversity in our society.*
- *Strong public schools value cultural, religious and ethnic differences in people.*
- *Strong public schools value diverse ideas.*

### Continuous and demonstrable systemic improvement is the primary way an organization meets its mission and vision.

- *The most effective learning occurs when each child's educational needs are frequently assessed and action is taken based on that assessment.*
- *Strong public schools are accountable to the public for their performance.*
- *Continuous improvement demands that public schools regularly use data to guide change and improvement.*

## Belief Statements

Operational excellence and fiscal integrity are hallmarks of efficient and exemplary organizations.

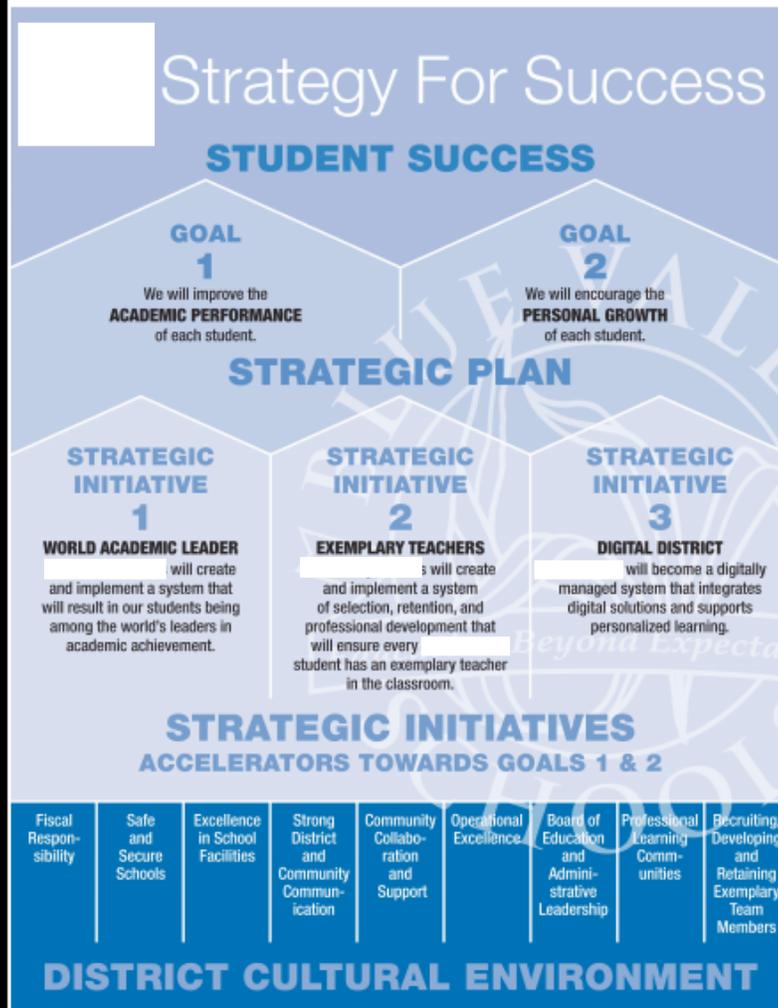
- *A safe, orderly and comfortable environment is essential to learning.*
- *A rigorous, relevant and viable curriculum is needed for effective learning for all students.*
- *Strong public schools provide continuous development of their teachers and other staff.*
- *Strong public schools have a shared vision, clear goals and a commitment to collaboration for learning improvement.*
- *Strong public schools skillfully use modern technology as an essential tool for learning.*
- *Strong public schools are fiscally responsible, always seeking more effective and efficient uses of their resources.*
- *Highly effective organizations have the right people in the correct positions, have the courage to confront the brutal facts of an organization, are committed to a common purpose, and possess the discipline to maintain a course toward that purpose.*
- *Effective leaders listen carefully, anticipate future needs, work constantly to engage others in leadership initiatives to shape necessary changes, and are led by principles of personal humility and professional will.*

Strong partnerships between school and community serve to create outstanding learning environments for students.

- *Strong public schools are made even stronger by community collaboration and support. Likewise, communities are made stronger by outstanding public schools.*
- *Schools are part of a bigger system and must participate in ongoing articulation and alignment of district-wide expectations.*

# Theory of Practice

*A theory of practice is a broad approach toward completing an objective or solving a problem. A theory of practice is not a course of action, but instead acts as a conceptual organizer to move an institution toward results.*



Vision 2020  
Strategic Plan

# Strategic Plan

## Goal One

*The School District has made tremendous gains over the past five years as a result of the strategic plan and a unified focus on student achievement. This strategy seeks to continue and advance the excellence set over the past five years.*

### **We will improve the Academic Performance of each student**

Measurements:

*Evidence that students can meet and exceed state learning standards.*

- Kansas Assessment Program (KAP)
- Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

*Evidence that students are college and career ready.*

- ACT college readiness benchmarks
- AP results for subpopulations
- Percent of students taking an AP course while in high school
- Percent of graduates who return for a second year of college

*Evidence that the District is academically competitive on an international level.*

- OECD Test for High Schools/PISA

Vision 2020  
Strategic Plan

## Strategic Plan

### Goal Two

*At the Strategic Planning forum, one of the primary hopes articulated by the district's parent community was that the plan continues its focus on the personal and social responsibility of our students, as well as a focus on student well-being.*

#### **We will encourage the Personal Growth of each student**

Measurements:

*Evidence that*                      *students are connected to their school and community.*

- Overall performance results of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students on the virtues quiz
- Number of presidential voluntary service award recipients
- Number of diversity professional development modules developed and implemented
- Number of school learning plans with a student well-being component addressing diversity and cultural competence

*Evidence that*                      *students develop the skills and mindsets for success.*

- School Well-being Plans identify and address the well-being needs of students
- Demonstrable evidence provided by schools of student attainment in the areas of executive functioning skills such as collaboration, interpersonal skills, independence, resiliency, and perseverance

*Evidence that*                      *explores opportunities that improve and support the educational program.*

- Reports produced as a result of evaluation and benchmarking activities
- Implementation of the Educational Technology Plan

# Strategic Plan

## Strategic Initiative One

**We will create and implement a system that will result in our students being among the world's leaders in academic achievement.**

Strategies:

- Curriculum & Instruction: Increase the quality of the instructional program and the resources that support classroom instruction.
- Assessment: Deepen the use of data and data analysis in order to improve the instructional program and address identified student needs.
- College and Career Readiness: Assure that every student exits [redacted] prepared to successfully enter college or career.
- Special Programs: Increase student educational options through exploration of high quality, research-based programs designed to increase student performance levels while meeting specific needs.

# Strategic Plan

## Strategic Initiative Three

**We will become a digitally managed system that integrates digital solutions and supports personalized learning**

Strategies:

- Digital Communication & Collaboration: Implement a web based platform to host and manage processes, data, and systems.
- Process Digitization: Move existing paper and manual processes to digital based work flows. Develop measurable metrics and data points to enhance efficiency.
- Cloud Services: Explore implementation of Cloud services to allow better use of our internal infrastructure.
- Curriculum Development, Management and Delivery: Provide tools and support to manage digital content, curriculum, and assessment.
- Content Portals and Adaptive Learning: Develop platforms and frameworks to deliver digital content, curriculum, and assessment tools to a variety of devices and users that are integrated with our learning environment and student data systems.
- Student Data Presentation and Security: Identify student data sources to consolidate systems for analysis and data driven decision making.
- Digital Identity and Student Data Privacy: Develop appropriate policies, guidelines, and systems to ensure student data privacy and identity within all systems that store and manage student related data.