



Educate. Inspire. Empower.

Strategic Theme: Academic Excellence

School District of Clayton • Strategic Plan 2013-2018 • Updated August 29, 2018

Strategic Plan Components



The table below illustrates the main components of a strategic plan and the timeline in which they have and will be developed.

	Strategic Plan Components	Description
Approved by the BOE in November 2013	Strategic Themes	<p><u>WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?</u></p> <p>Strategic Themes are broad, overarching key areas of focus that have been identified as priorities to achieve our mission and vision. The Environmental (SWOT) Analysis identified the “so what” of the District’s current situation; the Strategic Themes are the “now what” because they are broad in scope and set the strategic directions for moving forward. They provide the trajectory to achieve the District’s mission and vision. Strategic Themes are sometimes referred to as “pillars of excellence.”</p>
	Objectives	<p><u>WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO GET THERE?</u></p> <p>Objectives are identified for each Strategic Theme (or key area of focus) and are designed to focus the work in that area. Objectives are specific, measurable statements of what will be done to achieve each theme. Objectives are achieved through work plans, which delineate who will do what by when, and include targets and measurements of success or desired outcomes, called performance indicators. The best objectives are SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-limited.</p>
	Indicators	<p><u>HOW WILL WE KNOW WE HAVE ACHIEVED SUCCESS?</u></p> <p>Indicators are the targets and measures that will be used to determine if the District is successful in achieving its objectives. These statements represent the desired end-state for each objective. Performance indicators are stated in such a way that success should be clearly recognized. They will also be used for monitoring and reporting progress toward the achievement of objectives. Each indicator has a starting point (benchmark) and a stretch point (target).</p>
Presented to the BOE in August 2014	Initiatives	<p><u>HOW MIGHT WE GET THERE?</u></p> <p>Initiatives are the statements of major approach or method of attaining strategic themes and objectives and resolving specific issues. Major initiatives describe a general approach or method; they don’t describe specific activities or projects. Specific action steps will be detailed in building and District plans.</p>
	Action Steps	<p><u>HOW WILL WE GET THERE?</u></p> <p>Building and Department Plans identify the action steps that will be taken at the building and department level to achieve the stated objectives. Specific student data will be used to generate building plans.</p>
	Administrator	<p><u>WHO WILL GUIDE THE WORK?</u></p> <p>Responsible Administrator is the administrator or administrators designated to guide the work associated with a specific objective.</p>

Strategic Themes



The District's strategic plan is organized around four* Strategic Themes. These key areas of focus have been identified as priorities to achieve the District's mission and vision.

Strategic Themes	Description
Academic Excellence	We will promote excellence in learning experiences and outcomes, fostering intellectual and personal development for each student.
Teacher and Administrator Excellence	We will attract and retain high-quality, diverse teachers and administrators and encourage career-long growth and development to foster a culture that positively impacts student learning.
Growth and Development of the Whole Child	We will foster students' intellectual and personal development by supporting their physical, social and emotional well-being.
Resource Management	We will be prudent stewards of our resources through rigorous planning and budgeting and by working to enhance community, public and private support.

***Innovation** was originally included as a fifth strategic theme until nearly the end of the strategic planning process. The Steering Committee and retreat participants identified innovation as an important area of focus for the District over the next three-to-five years but struggled with how to include innovation into the strategic plan. After numerous discussions and revisions, and in order to provide more direct focus to the work of the strategic plan, it was determined that the elements of innovation should be incorporated into the initiatives and building-level plans for each theme instead of included as a stand alone theme. Initiatives and building plans have been developed to include creative and sustainable approaches to enhance our work, challenge assumptions and promote strategies to advance student learning and success by:

- using best practices in technology to support learning,
- providing opportunities for research and project-based experiential and creative learning and
- integrating community and extracurricular educational opportunities.

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Much of the work during the 2017-2018 school year in the area of academic excellence centered on continuing to refine systems to better identify, track and report individual student progress. Data profiles of students have been put into place to track individual student data to help inform instruction. During the summer, departments continued to populate the District curriculum housing format and to refine curriculum.

Objective 1. Ensure challenging academic experiences that result in identifiable and continuous growth in reading and writing.

- 80% of eighth-grade students achieved college and career readiness benchmarks on the Reading ASPIRE assessment. (The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a grade of B or higher, or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher, in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses.)
- 65.4% of 10th-grade students achieved college and career readiness benchmarks on the Reading ASPIRE assessment.
- 89.3% of eighth-grade students achieved college and career readiness benchmarks on the English ASPIRE assessment.
- 88% of 10th-grade students achieved college and career readiness benchmarks on the English ASPIRE assessment.
- Elementary teachers participated in content professional development that focused on collected reading data in the classroom through accountable talk, reading conferences and classroom assessments tied to the K-5 learning standards.
- First- through fifth-grade teams worked together, and with their literacy coaches, to score District writing assessments to increase inter-rater reliability on the District writing assessments, making the scores more valuable in assessing growth of individual students.
- Some classroom teachers participated in building-level training, and some “side by side administration,” of the “Teachers College Benchmark” as part of the a continued examination of our reading assessments.
- Elementary reading specialists piloted the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System and found the results to be more helpful and specific than the DRA2.

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- K-5 teachers continued to refine lessons and assessments to align with specific standards of focus by unit as documented during 2017 summer curriculum writing.
- CHS implemented a yearlong senior English course to replace the semester electives to assure a senior English experience that includes critical reading and writing curriculum for all students not enrolled in AP courses. Our shared texts included *Hamlet* and *Handmaid's Tale*, which are currently being taught in AP Lit, as well as *Between the World and Me*.
- After careful consideration, the CHS English department recommended that the junior level class Topics and Themes not be offered during the 2017-2018 school year. We added two cotaught classes at the junior level – one cotaught by a special educator and the other by a reading specialist.

Next Steps

- We will suspend the use of the DRA2 in favor of the Teachers College Benchmark as part of our continued examination of reading assessment.
- Elementary classroom teacher will pilot the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System.
- K-12 teams will continue to examine student works as teams to assure like-experiences and expectations.

Objective 2. Ensure challenging academic experiences that result in identifiable and continuous growth in math.

- 73.1% of eighth-grade students achieved college and career readiness benchmarks on the Mathematics ASPIRE assessment.
- 62.2% of 10th-grade students achieved college and career readiness benchmarks on the Mathematics ASPIRE assessment.
- 55.6% of students District-wide in grades 3-7 achieved a minimum of one year's growth in mathematics as measured by the NWEA-MAP. (In July 2015, the norms for NWEA-MAP changed.)

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- Teachers at the secondary level analyzed assessment documents to ensure students are being held to mastery of essential algebra skills at each point in the progression. Curriculum writing work was completed to ensure these skills are being taught and tested accordingly throughout the college prep progression.
- Elementary and secondary teachers participated in professional development around the alignment of major curriculum topics as well as to share language and assessment expectations of these topics.
- Secondary teachers participated in professional development around the use of technology to increase student engagement, empowerment and progress monitoring.

Next Steps

- Use of pre-assessment and NWEA data for flexible grouping among K-5 students.
- Differentiate through targeted mini lessons in K-5 small groups.
- Use of low floor high ceiling anchor tasks to engage all K-5 learners.
- Rethink the structure of our lessons for students in grades 6-8 by leading with a challenging situation and backfilling with the skills necessary to reach a solution.
- Increase the use of NWEA data to develop lessons that meet 9-12 students at their instructional level and move them to expected mastery.
- Teachers will provide students with greater opportunities for problem solving with an emphasis on richer tasks and conversations.
- All teachers will participate in best practices around metacognition.

Objective 3. Ensure curriculum identifies the content, knowledge and skills students are expected to master and is aligned vertically, grade-to-grade and PK-12.

- Development of learning progressions in math in counting and cardinality, addition and subtraction, multiplication and division. (K-5)

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- Professional learning in math around learning progressions and their role in instruction and student learning.
- Work to identify and mitigate overlaps and gaps in the taught content in math 6-12.
- Align content in Career and Technical Education courses between Wydown Middle School and Clayton High School.
- Working to incorporate more student choice within courses.
- Alignment of Health course content between Wydown Middle School and Clayton High School.
- EL teachers increasing collaboration with classroom teachers to help differentiate and to focus EL instruction more closely on academic language and vocabulary.
- Exploring the use of digital portfolios to maintain a longitudinal view of the learning of EL students.
- Exit goals have been developed in each of the fine arts courses. These goals allow for a clearly articulated K-12 curriculum.
- Last year, historical thinking skills (comparison, change and continuity over time, causation, contextualization) for grades 4-7 with Dr. Burke; this year, the same historical thinking skills in grades 8-10 for vertical alignment.
- Historical thinking skills aligned within both ninth and 10th grade. They are now included in each unit outline. These identified skills that are then part of the assessment
- Sixth grade team worked on review items for end of fifth grade - created new review at beginning of year (two weeks) to align with fifth grade and horizontally within sixth grade
- Fourth grade team updated assessments last summer on history and government units and aligned more consistently between the three buildings
- Elementary leadership team developed a writing rubric for grades K-5 that articulates writing standards for each grade level across genres.
- Secondary literacy teachers participated in professional development sessions focusing on critical thinking within the reading curriculum to identify essentials at each grade level.
- Secondary teachers continue to examine shared reading as a 6-12 experience to identify both gaps and redundancies in both content and critical thinking opportunities to build a richer vertical experience. Grade level teams at sixth, eighth, ninth, 10th and 11th grades are piloting new choice titles based on needs we have identified through this study.

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- The development of common assessments for the new course, College Prep. English IV, permitted our examination of skill-mastery of all seniors enrolled in the college prep. sequence, as opposed to the assessments from the previous elective selections. As a result, we revisited research and presentation skills in our 9-12 sequence.
- Ninth-grade teachers rewrote the “Persuasive Speech” to better align with the demands of the senior class.

Next Steps

- Review most recent changes to the curriculum to ensure that we are being responsive to new skills and knowledge students are exposed to in previous grades.

Objective 4. Ensure integration of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (S.T.E.M.) education by emphasizing student engagement in inquiry, logical reasoning, collaboration and investigation throughout our curricula PK-12.

- STEM committees share long-range goals.
- Developed calculator competencies for sixth through eighth grade and an electronic resource for teachers to house TI-Nspire activities that can be used for investigating, practicing or enriching student learning objectives.
- Continue curriculum alignment between math and science to share the teaching of topics and generate common language to use with students around these topics.
- Continued development of a computer science sequence from seventh through 12th grade.
- Final phase of roll out of a new technology integration plan including a significant increase in the fleet of student devices in the schools PK-12.
- Anchor task development in math to allow for inquiry, reasoning, collaboration and investigation.
- Continued practice of STEM Day for all 5th graders in the District in partnership with Clayton High School.

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Next Steps

- Rethinking how to incorporate Discovery type activities into the general curriculum.
- Using the learning from John Spencer and Empower to give students more agency in their learning.