

HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



June, 2017

Strategic Planning Report

Hamilton Community Schools Board of Education
Vision, Mission, & District Goals

Hamilton Community Schools

STRATEGIC PLANNING REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Hamilton Community Schools Board of Education conducted a strategic planning process in early 2017. Acknowledging the changing local, regional, and global realities faced by graduates, the board wanted to review its vision and mission statements, as well as update district goals.

THE PROCESS

The board met for 15 hours over two days in February and March. During that time, they participated in several activities designed to increase their collective understanding of the realities and challenges facing today's students and the district's role in preparing them for success. In addition to the unique individual perspective each board member brought to the dialog, these activities fostered a collegial understanding of these challenges. Included were:

- **Economic Contextual Scan:** Board members reviewed several articles, videos, and reports detailing the changing economic and career realities today's graduates face. National, state, and regional data were reviewed to give board members a comprehensive look at how the world of work is changing, the knowledge and skill demands of employers (nationally and locally), and the prognosis for future employment.
- **Education Contextual Scan:** Board members reviewed a brief history of Michigan's public education system, including how the current structure was intentionally designed to produce workers for a manufacturing economy. In addition, board members read articles about high performing school district design and Charles Schwahn & Beatrice McGarvey's book *Inevitable: Mass customized Learning/Learning in the Age of Empowerment*. Board members also reviewed progress on prior district goals, current district performance data, and feedback from former graduates.
- **Community Feedback (Fishbowl) Sessions:** Board members listened as four groups of district/community stakeholders described their experiences, concerns, accolades, and suggestions for the district. Administrator, parent, teacher, and student groups of approximately 15 participants each responded to questions in facilitated sessions, giving board members the opportunity to absorb these unique perspectives on the current and future work of the district.



- **Vision & Mission Statement Review & Revision:** With an agreed upon definition for vision and mission statements and their purpose in guiding district decision making at every level, and considering the economic and education contextual scans and community feedback, the board reviewed the district's current Vision & Mission Statements. Based upon that review, the board made changes to both statements.
- **Goal Development:** With new Vision & Mission Statements drafted, the board brainstormed "district level" goals that would insure the district was delivering its mission and driving toward realization of its vision. District administrators will be tasked with developing the objectives, strategies, and tactics to transform these goals into day-to-day decision making and action. The board categorized these goals in two ways: (1) a functional grouping (Teaching & Learning, Finance & Operations, Community Relations, Other) and (2) based on their potential impact on achieving the vision balanced with their impact on district resources. The latter review provides perspective on timing and strategy.
- **Communication Plan:** The board approved a communication plan to inform all stakeholders about the new Vision & Mission Statements and district goals and to better understand possible obstacles to achieving them.



VISION

A vision statement defines the optimal future state of the district ten or more years in the future. A vision statement should be memorable and motivational and all district staff should be able to articulate the key tenets of the Vision Statement. School districts have a built in, tangible, real-world point of reference for imagining a district's future because it can imagine this year's kindergartners as they graduate 12 years from now. With the following prompt: **This year's kindergartners will graduate in 2029. Describe the district the year they graduate**, the board brainstormed, discussed, and debated several elements for a revised vision statement.



Two key terms highlighted the revision: *each* and *thrive*.

In revising the statement to include these terms, the board affirmed its commitment to serving *each* student, regardless of circumstance, and instilling in each graduate the knowledge and skills to *thrive* in a rapidly changing environment.

The new Vision Statement is:

Equipped with superior academic, career, and life management skills, each Hamilton graduate has the knowledge and motivation to thrive.

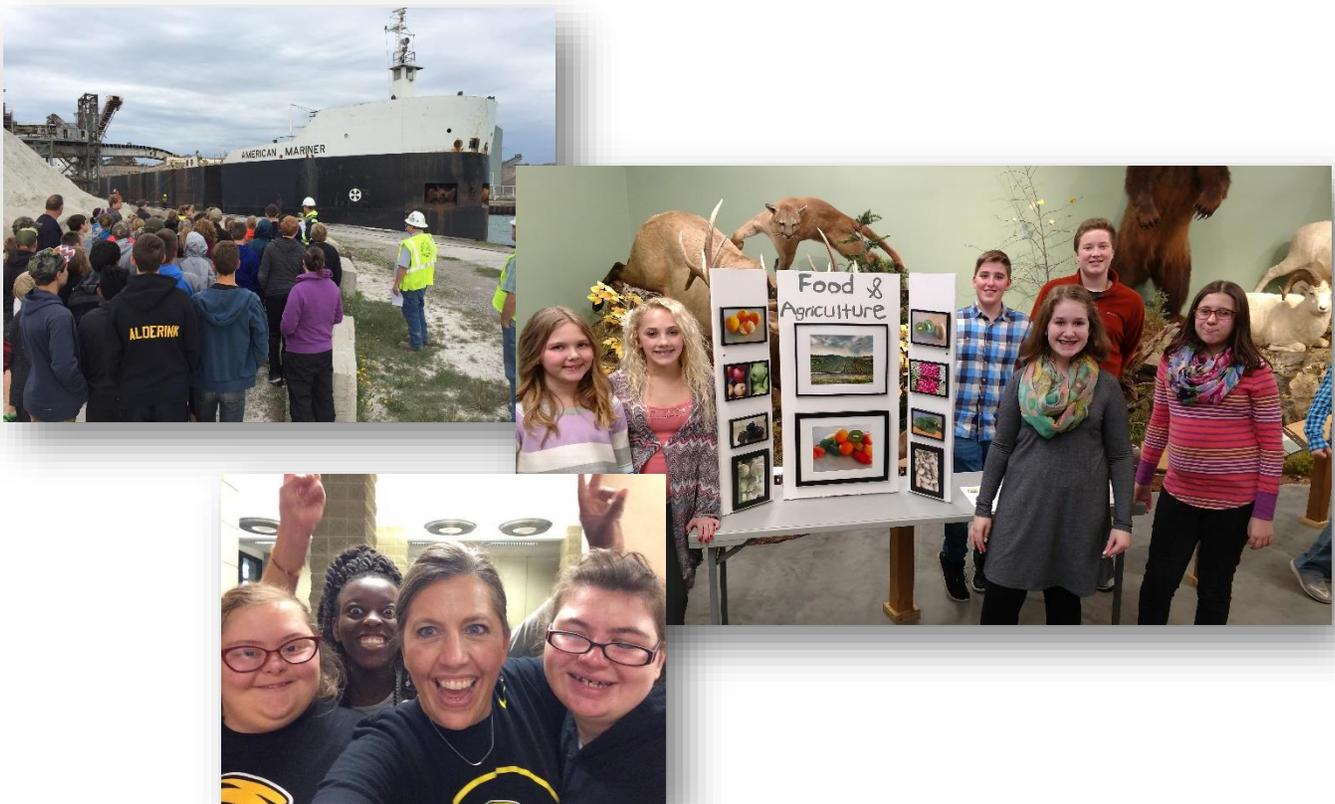
MISSION

A mission statement defines the purpose of the district: what it does, who it does it for, and how it does it. It describes the district's unique function in the community. Compared to a vision statement, it reflects the current, or short term, work of the district. Again, district staff should be able to articulate the key tenets of the district's Mission Statement.

In their brainstorming and discussions, board members wanted to both honor the long-standing partnership between the district, parents, and the community while at the same time definitively stating the district's desire to move quickly to a more individualized and real-world educational experience for learners. It's also important to note the board in its discussions didn't limit the definition of "learner" to students, but rather expanded it to all learners including staff, parents, and community members as needed or desired.

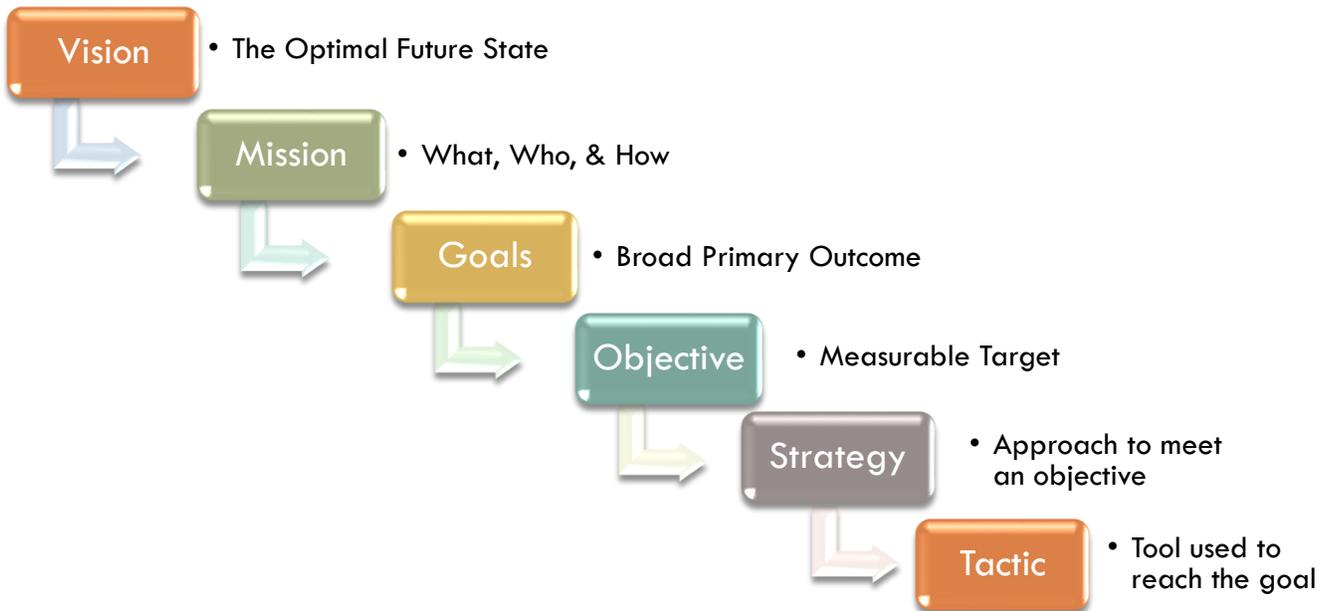
The new Mission Statement is:

In partnership with the community, we educate each learner to maximize personal potential. Through individualized instruction, students explore their interests, link their learning to the real world, and build the academic, social, and career skills necessary for life-long learning and success.



DISTRICT GOALS

The board established 13 district goals intended to drive the district towards its vision. These goals, while broad in nature, provide the district a framework for choosing shorter term goals, objectives, strategies and tactics. The board-established goals are necessarily lofty and forward thinking and will require significant input from all district stakeholders to shape the day-to-day decisions and actions that will facilitate movement toward the vision.



The district goals are formatted in two ways in this report. The first is a simple grouping by functional area and mirrors previous goal groupings. The board was also asked, however, to consider the potential impact of each goal on achieving the vision as well as the goal's potential impact on district resources. Resources were defined as time, money, culture, and current competencies. When considered and sorted this way, it's easier to see which goals will require additional planning and implementation time as well as their strategic importance to realizing the vision.



District Goals: Functional Grouping

Teaching & Learning

1. Further develop a dynamic teaching and learning environment where students and teachers, in school and throughout the community, facilitate learning and share their knowledge with each other.
2. Individualize instruction for each student based on each student's unique needs and interests.
3. Develop a robust social-emotional support system for teachers, parents, and students by expanding teacher and parent prevention and intervention skills as well as student coping skills.
4. All Hamilton students graduate and they graduate with the academic skills necessary for life-long success.
5. All Hamilton students graduate with the career and life skills necessary to be informed consumers, skillful & productive workers and active citizens.
6. Explore flexible calendar and schedule options; assess stakeholder readiness.



Finance & Operations

7. Maintain a balanced budget.
8. Develop a long-term facility and budget plan that builds capacity for infrastructure and program expansion and changes.

Community Relations

9. Design and implement a comprehensive communication plan; leverage technology to provide “one stop” stakeholder access to all district information and a vehicle for community questions.
10. Develop and implement business partnerships offering HCS students opportunities for real-world career exploration and skill building.
11. Assess community support systems and community learning interests and needs; develop and implement a plan to connect these resources throughout the school and community for the benefit of all learners.
12. Develop opportunities for parents to provide HCS educators and administrators solicited and unsolicited feedback in direct, safe, and non-threatening ways.

Other

13. Restore and build mutual trust with all stakeholders.

District Goals: Impact Grouping

Shorter Term Goals

Higher Impact on Vision/Lower Impact on Resources

- Further develop a dynamic teaching and learning environment where students and teachers, in school and throughout the community, facilitate learning and share their knowledge with each other. (T/L #1)
- Restore and build mutual trust with all stakeholders. (Other #13)

Lower Impact on Vision/Lower Impact on Resources

- Explore flexible calendar and schedule options; assess stakeholder readiness. (T/L #6)
- Develop opportunities for parents to provide HCS educators and administrators solicited and unsolicited feedback in direct, safe, and non-threatening ways. (CR #12)

Longer Term Goals

Higher Impact on Vision/Higher Impact on Resources

- Individualize instruction for each student based on each student's unique needs and interests. (T/L #2)
- Develop a robust social-emotional support system for teachers, parents, and students by expanding teacher and parent prevention and intervention skills as well as student coping skills. (T/L #3)
- All Hamilton students graduate and they graduate with the academic skills necessary for life-long success. (T/L #4)
- All Hamilton students graduate with the career and life skills necessary to be informed consumers, skillful and productive workers and active citizens. (T/L #5)
- Design and implement a comprehensive communication plan; leverage technology to provide "one stop" stakeholder access to all district information and a vehicle for community questions. (CR #9)
- Develop and implement business partnerships offering HCS students opportunities for real-world career exploration and skill building. (CR #10)
- Assess community support systems and community learning interests and needs; develop and implement a plan to connect these resources throughout the school and community for the benefit of all learners. (CR #11)

Lower Impact on Vision/Higher Impact on Resources

- Maintain a balanced budget. (F/O #7)
- Develop a long-term facility and budget plan that builds capacity for infrastructure and program expansion and changes. (F/O #8)



T/L: Teaching & Learning, F/O: Finance & Operations, CR: Community Relations

COMMUNICATING THE PLAN

The Board of Education, along with the superintendent and administrative team, understand that any strategic plan's success is subject to the understanding and acceptance of stakeholders. While feedback from key stakeholder groups was integrated into the planning process, the work must be "aired" with the community to enroll others in the intent and scope of the work and understand any concerns or cautions with specific elements of the work. Communication, like the strategic planning process itself, will flow from the inside out. The school superintendent, in concert with the district administrative team, is responsible for implementing the communication and engagement effort. Key elements include:

- Presentation to the Board/Community (Spring, 2017)
- Meetings with all staff (Spring/Summer 2017)
- Mechanism for parent/community feedback via web survey and/or community meetings (Summer/Fall 2017)

Board members will make themselves available at stakeholder meetings as their schedule allows.

Feedback from these efforts will be assessed and reported to the board in the fall of 2017. While the intent of the communication and engagement plan is not to substantively change the vision, mission, or goals developed by the board, the feedback will assist the district in anticipating key obstacles, responding to concerns, prioritizing the work, and anticipating resources for successful implementation.

Ongoing communication with all stakeholders will continue to be important in the near and long term. A portion of the district's website will focus on the strategic goals of the district, key objectives, and progress toward realizing the goals. The administrative team will recommend and the board will approve key performance metrics for each goal.

Progress on goals will be reported to the board and community bi-annually at regularly scheduled board of education meetings, with the superintendent and administrative team primarily responsible for the update along with staff and students as appropriate.



HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS: STRATEGIC PLAN AT A GLANCE:

Vision: *Equipped with superior academic, career, and life management skills, each Hamilton graduate has the knowledge and motivation to thrive.*

Mission: *In partnership with the community, we educate each learner to maximize personal potential. Through individualized instruction, students explore their interests, link their learning to the real world, and build the academic, social, and career skills necessary for life-long learning and success.*

District Goals:

Teaching & Learning

1. *Further develop a dynamic teaching and learning environment where students and teachers, in school and throughout the community, facilitate learning and share their knowledge with each other.*
2. *Individualize instruction for each student based on each student's unique needs and interests.*
3. *Develop a robust social-emotional support system for teachers, parents, and students by expanding teacher and parent prevention and intervention skills as well as students coping skills.*
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Finance & Operations

7. *Maintain a balanced budget.*
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Other

13. *Restore and build mutual trust with all stakeholders.*