

Notes from 3/26 Strategic Planning Forum & Synthesis

Lever #1 - Human Resources

Lever #2 - Data Literacy

Lever #3 - Staff Capacity

Lever #4 - Principal Capacity

Lever #5 - Parental Support

Family and Community Engagement

| Key Challenges | Corresponding Lever |
|--|--|
| Challenge - Attendance, Communication Improvement - Letters, Robo Calls, Phone Calls, Meetings, Attendance Workshops Strategy - Workshops (Attendance, personal development) | Lever 5 - Parental Support |
| Challenge - Parent Coordinators not at all locations Improvement - Staffing to support families Strategy - Shared staff between smaller buildings with equity | Lever 5 - Parental Support |
| Challenge - Translation Improvement - Inclusivity Strategy - Staffing to support at events | Lever 5 - Parental Support |
| Challenge - Parent Involvement Improvement - More advertisement at community events (i.e. sports, recreation) Strategy - Survey parents | Lever 5 - Parental Support and Lever 2 - Data Literacy |
| Challenge - Over-reliance on crisis support Improvement - Strategic/proactive engagement with families Strategy - Build department capacity to support parents in navigating existing services and systems | |

Lever #1 - Human Resources

Lever #2 - Data Literacy

Lever #3 - Staff Capacity

Lever #4 - Principal Capacity

Lever #5 - Parental Support

HR

| Key Challenges | Corresponding Lever |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Challenge - Market competitive salaries Improvement - Align salaries to similar districts and industries Strategy - Gather data and create a scale to reach competitiveness over time | Lever 1 |
| Challenge - Hiring process needs to be more efficient and timely Improvement - Improve communication with candidate as well as with the individual holding up the PTF Strategy - Digital PTFs and documents tracked to speed up process | Lever 1 |
| Challenge - Few PD opportunities for staff Improvement - to provide access to latest labor market research/best practices Strategy - Research/ provide funding for HR professional organizations to access PD | Lever 3 and Lever 2 |
| Challenge - Staffing (Better screening and retention); Attitude (Staff sets the tone), Dated knowledge Improvement - Professional development (hiring staff) and training in general Strategy - Incentives, staff involvement/stakeholders | Lever 1, Lever 2, Lever 3, Lever 4 |

Lever #1 - Human Resources

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Lever #3 - Staff Capacity

Lever #4 - Principal Capacity

Lever #5 - Parental Support

Finance & Business Operations

| Key Challenges | Corresponding Lever |
|--|---------------------------|
| Challenge - Lack of alignment between school budgets, finance/business and facility Improvement - Increase communication between the above stakeholders Strategy - Google form data was collected to assist with the alignment above | Lever 2 and Lever 4 |
| Challenge - Financial literacy, budget limits Improvement - More transparency, better communication (more flyers) Strategy - Workshops (Community Forums) | Lever 2 |
| Challenge - Timely processing of PTFs, requisitions and POs Improvement - Go digital Strategy - Acquire a platform that has the capacity for digital signatures and tracking movements | Lever 2, Lever 3, Lever 4 |
| Challenge - No service-level agreements Improvement - Create timeline to address needs. Timely responses and processes Strategy - Develop a SOP to address timely processing of documents, requests and inquiries | |

Lever #1 - Human Resources
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Academics

| Key Challenges | Corresponding Lever |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Challenge - Staff capacity/limitations; content expertise Improvement - PD and accountable practice Strategy - Goal planning / Needs Assessment | Lever 3 |
| Challenge - Rubric (observation) does not reflect practice/expectation Tool - Change observation tool Strategy - Develop tool to reflect/align with District needs and goals | Lever 3 |
| Challenge - Scaling success between schools Improvement - Identify exemplar schools and model classrooms across the district Strategy - Partner exemplars with lower performing schools | Lever 3 |
| Challenge - Language barrier, dated materials, lack of preparation Improvement - Adapt to community (make relatable) Strategy - Better materials, Better communication | Lever 1, Lever 2, Lever 3, Lever 5 |

Lever #1 - Human Resources

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Lever #5 - Parental Support

Gifted and Talented

| Key Challenges | Corresponding Lever |
|--|---------------------------|
| Challenge - Not all parents aware of application timeline Improvement - Public ads/Campaign to improve awareness Strategy - Using social media, advertisement platforms, and track website traction during that time | Lever 5 |
| Challenge - Identification of possible candidates for program Improvement - Multiple measures and early identification screening Strategy - Flexibility with identifying students | Lever 2 |
| Challenge - Better use of CoGAT data Improvement - Use that data to expand early talent in grades K-2 Strategy - Universal Screening/PD | Lever 2, Lever 3, Lever 4 |
| Challenge - Lack of opportunity Improvement - Extend capacity (offer to more students on different levels) Strategy - Flyers, Communication, advertisement | Lever 2, Lever 3, Lever 5 |

Synthesis of Key Challenges and Improvements by Lever:

- **Lever #1 - Human Resources:** The primary challenges revolve around **attracting and retaining talent**. This includes the need for **market-competitive salaries**, a more **efficient and timely hiring process**, and increased **professional development opportunities** for staff to stay current with best practices. There's also a concern about **staff screening and retention**, **staff attitude**, and **dated knowledge**. Improvements suggested focus on salary alignment, streamlined digital processes, funding for HR professional development, and incentives for staff involvement.
- **Lever #2 - Data Literacy:** A significant theme is the need to **improve data utilization for decision-making and communication**. Challenges include a **lack of alignment between budgets and needs**, **limited financial literacy**, and inefficiencies in processing administrative documents. There's also a desire to use data more effectively for **parental engagement** (surveys) and **identifying gifted students**. Improvements focus on increased communication, transparency (workshops, flyers), and adopting digital platforms for document management and tracking.
- **Lever #3 - Staff Capacity:** This lever encompasses concerns about **staff limitations and content expertise**, the need for **professional development and accountable practices**, and **scaling successful practices** across schools. The current **observation rubric** is seen as not accurately reflecting practice. Improvements suggested involve goal planning, needs assessments, developing a more relevant observation tool, and creating partnerships between high and low-performing schools.
- **Lever #4 - Principal Capacity:** While not as explicitly detailed as other levers, principal capacity is interwoven with **budget alignment** and the need for **effective data utilization**. The forum suggests that principals play a key role in fostering better communication and implementing new strategies.
- **Lever #5 - Parental Support:** A major focus is on enhancing **family and community engagement**. Key challenges include **attendance issues**, **communication gaps**, the **lack of parent coordinators in all locations**, **translation needs**, and **low parent involvement**. There's also an over-reliance on **crisis support** rather than proactive engagement. Improvements aim at better communication methods (letters, robocalls, meetings, workshops), equitable staffing of parent coordinators, language support at events, increased advertisement at community events, surveying parents, and building departmental capacity for proactive family support. The Gifted and Talented section also highlights challenges in **parent awareness of application timelines**.

Common Themes:

- **Communication is Key:** Across all levers, a lack of clear, consistent, and timely communication is a recurring challenge. This applies to communication with parents, potential hires, staff regarding professional development, and between different departments (finance, schools, facilities).
- **Need for Efficiency and Modernization:** Outdated processes, particularly in HR and finance (paper-based PTFs, requisitions), are hindering efficiency. There's a strong desire to leverage digital tools and platforms to streamline workflows.

- **Equity and Access:** Ensuring equitable access to resources and support is a significant concern. This is evident in the discussion about shared parent coordinators, translation services, and expanding opportunities for gifted students across all levels.
- **Data-Informed Decision Making:** While data is collected, there's a recognized need to improve data literacy and utilize data more effectively to inform strategies, allocate resources, and measure the impact of initiatives.
- **Professional Development and Growth:** Investing in the ongoing learning and development of all staff (teachers, principals, HR, etc.) is seen as crucial for addressing capacity limitations, improving practice, and retaining talent.
- **Community and Family Engagement as Integral:** There's a clear understanding that student success is linked to strong partnerships with families and the community. Efforts to improve communication, involvement, and support for families are prioritized.

Recommendations:

Based on the forum feedback, here are some recommendations aligned with the identified levers:

- **Human Resources:**
 - Conduct a comprehensive salary analysis to develop a phased plan for achieving market competitiveness.
 - Implement a fully digital and transparent hiring process with clear communication timelines for candidates and PTF approvers.
 - Allocate dedicated funding for staff professional development, including memberships in relevant professional organizations and access to current research.
 - Develop strategies for improved staff screening during hiring and implement mentorship or induction programs to support retention.
 - Establish clear expectations for staff attitude and foster a positive school climate through professional development and recognition programs.
- **Data Literacy:**
 - Develop and deliver training on financial literacy and budget processes for school-level staff and the community.
 - Implement a user-friendly digital platform for managing budgets, PTFs, requisitions, and POs with tracking and digital signature capabilities.
 - Establish clear protocols and service-level agreements (SLAs) for processing administrative documents and responding to inquiries.
 - Design and implement surveys to gather meaningful data on parental needs and engagement.
 - Provide professional development on effectively using student data (including CoGAT) for instructional decisions and identifying potential gifted learners.
- **Staff Capacity:**
 - Conduct thorough needs assessments to identify specific areas for professional development aligned with district goals and individual school needs.

- Invest in high-quality, ongoing professional development focused on content expertise, effective instructional practices, and culturally responsive teaching.
- Revise the observation rubric to ensure it accurately reflects district expectations and provides meaningful feedback for growth.
- Establish a system for identifying and sharing best practices across schools, including opportunities for peer observation and collaboration between exemplar and developing schools.
- **Principal Capacity:**
 - Provide principals with professional development focused on financial management, data-driven decision-making, and effective communication strategies.
 - Foster opportunities for principals to collaborate and share successful strategies for school improvement and community engagement.
- **Parental Support:**
 - Develop a comprehensive communication plan utilizing multiple channels (letters, robocalls, digital platforms, community events) to ensure parents receive timely and relevant information in their preferred language.
 - Strategically allocate parent coordinator positions based on school needs and consider shared staffing models for smaller buildings to ensure equitable support.
 - Fund and train staff to provide translation services at school events and ensure key documents are available in multiple languages.
 - Increase outreach and advertisement of school events at community gatherings (sports, recreation) to enhance parent involvement.
 - Develop the capacity of the family engagement department to proactively support families in navigating school and community resources, reducing reliance on crisis intervention.
 - Implement targeted communication strategies (social media, website) to increase parental awareness of Gifted and Talented program application timelines and identification processes.

Next Steps:

1. **Prioritize and Categorize:** Review the synthesized information and recommendations, categorizing them by short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals. Prioritize actions based on their potential impact and feasibility.
2. **Develop Actionable Plans with Timelines and Metrics:** For each prioritized recommendation, develop a detailed action plan outlining specific steps, responsible parties, timelines, and measurable outcomes.
3. **Resource Allocation:** Identify the necessary resources (financial, human, technological) required to implement the strategic plan and allocate them accordingly.
4. **Communication and Feedback:** Regularly communicate progress on the strategic plan to the community and provide opportunities for ongoing feedback and adjustments.
5. **Pilot and Evaluate:** Consider piloting new strategies in a few schools before full-scale implementation to assess their effectiveness and make necessary modifications.

6. **Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish a system for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the strategic plan's impact on student outcomes, staff satisfaction, and community engagement. This data should inform future adjustments and improvements.

Based on the feedback provided in the survey, here's a focus for a new vision and mission statements:

Overarching Focus:

The new vision and mission should center on **holistic student development** and **community empowerment**, moving beyond solely academic rigor to encompass social, emotional, and practical life skills. There's a strong emphasis on preparing students for a future that requires critical thinking, adaptability, and community engagement.

Key Elements for the New Mission Statement:

- **Whole Child Development**
- **Preparation for Future Success**
- **Equity and Access**
- **Clarity and Understandability**
- **Action-Oriented (Implicit)**

In summary:

The new mission should focus on the "what we do": Nurturing the holistic development of every student, equipping them with the critical skills and knowledge necessary for future success and engaged citizenship.

The new vision should focus on the "future we aspire to": A vibrant and inclusive school community where empowered students have diverse opportunities to learn, grow, and thrive, supported by strong partnerships with families and the wider community.