

# MINOOKA ELEMENTARY DISTRICT 201

## VISION RETREAT

*Location: Village Hall*

*Date: April 25, 2018*

*Time: 8:30-3:30*

### Participant Handout

The Vision Retreat provides an opportunity for the strategic plan team to develop a shared understanding of the current mission, vision, core values and strategic themes and build upon those ideas to move the district forward in answering the question, *“Where do we want to be five years from now that is different than where we are today and how will we get from where we are to where we want to be?”*

The Vision/Setting Direction Retreat offers an opportunity for the plan tem to review the components of a continuous improvement framework based on research best practices and benchmark where the district is in relationship to those practices.

The outcome of the morning is for the plan team to describe a clear vision for the future through a product known as a Preferred Future Statement. The outcome for the afternoon is for the plan team to verify Long-range Goals and Measures and Prioritize the Strategies that need most attention to move the district toward continuous improvement. The product of the day will be a DRAFT of the Strategic Plan.

### Common Vocabulary

<b>Mission</b>	The district’s purpose described in the language of the business, including who is served and what products, programs and serves are provided to customers and stakeholders.
<b>Vision</b>	A vivid, emotionally inspiring, time-specific picture of a future to which the organization aspires. A description of how the district will look, sound and feel differently that it is today.
<b>Vision Result</b>	An achievable stretch target identified in order to measure the success of an organization’s vision statement. Sometimes this is referred to as a Preferred Future Statement
<b>Core Values</b>	The district’s beliefs and principles that articulate the culture of the organization. These are the standards that describe how employees and the organization are expected to behave internally and externally. They serve as the basis for decision-making and influence actions in everyday situations.
<b>Goal</b>	Long-range goals provide clarity in what the district hopes to achieve throughout the duration of the strategic plan timeline. They foster a results orientation and help close They help identify the targets and timelines that enable a staff to answer the question, “How will we know if all of this is making a difference?”
<b>Strategy</b>	Strategies are the actions required to guide plans to move the organization from where it is to where it wants to be. <i>Strategies are gaps that currently are not yielding the results that are necessary and if addressed would present the most probable return on the investment of time, people and other resources. Strategies must be few in number and comprehensive in action.</i>

## Toward a Strategic Foundation:

**MISSION:** The mission pillar asked the question, “WHY?” More specifically, it asks “Why do we Exist?” The intent of this question is to help reach agreement regarding the fundamental purpose of the organization. This clarity of purpose can help establish priorities and becomes an important factor to guide decisions.” Your mission statement is the best vehicle to get the word out about the “why” and the “wow” behind your district. In truth, your mission statement is no less important than your business plan. It needs to explain — eloquently, succinctly, and passionately — the core reasons for your existence. Your mission statement should inspire others to want to know more about your ideas, helping to position your district in the marketplace and to fuel growth. (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many, *Learning By Doing*, Second Edition: Solution-Tree, 2010)

### A mission:

- Tells a story, in a few words that defines why the organization exists.
- Describes the core purpose of the organization that is persistent over time.
- Answers the following questions: Why does this organization serve and how are the served? What is the organizational purpose?
- Incorporates features of the organization that highlight its uniqueness and define its purpose.
- Helps define why the organization exists.
- Focuses on satisfying customer needs.
- Take the form of: “Our mission is to provide (what) to (whom) in order to (provide what benefit) while (maintaining what values).

### Criteria for evaluating a mission statement:

- ✓ Is it clear and understandable?
- ✓ Is it brief enough for most people to remember and say in one breath?
- ✓ Does it clearly specify the school’s fundamental purpose?
- ✓ Does it have a primary focus on a single strategic thrust (such as learning)?
- ✓ Does it reflect the distinctive competence and culture of this school?
- ✓ Is it broad enough to allow flexibility in implementation, but not so broad as to create lack of focus?
- ✓ Will it help school personnel, parents, and community members make decisions?
- ✓ Is it energizing and compelling? Does it motivate and inspire employee commitment?
- ✓ Does it say what you want your district to be remembered for?

**VISION:** The vision pillar asks “What?”—that is, “What must we become in order to accomplish our fundamental purpose?” In pursuing this question, the district attempts to create a compelling, attractive, realistic future that describes what they hope their district will become. Vision provides a sense of direction and a basis for assessing both the currently reality of the district and potential strategies, programs, and procedures to improve upon that reality. There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile and achievable vision of the future that is widely shared. (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many, *Learning By Doing*, Second Edition: Solution-Tree, 2010)

### **A vision:**

- Describes where the organization wants to be, typically three to five year in the future. Focuses on the district's "North Star."
- Vividly captures the organization's "picture of the future".
- Is brief and easy to understand and communicates a message that is emotionally inspiring, to create a passion to contribute to the organization's future success.
- It is audacious and takes you way beyond where you are to the "mountain top."
- It builds on core competencies. It give employees a larger sense of purpose so they see themselves as building a cathedral instead of laying stomes.
- The vision takes the form of "Our vision is to become (achieve, improve, etc.) by (date)."

### **Criteria for evaluating a vision statement:**

- ✓ Does it manifest our mission?
- ✓ Is it concise and compelling?
- ✓ Is it inspirational?
- ✓ Does it communicate promise?
- ✓ Does it create an image of something that cannot be seen today, but is possible tomorrow?
- ✓ Does it focus on ends not means?
- ✓ Does it manifest the mission and values?

**CORE VALUES:** The third pillar of the foundation, the values pillar identifies our beliefs and then clarifies those beliefs through collective commitments. It asks, "How must we behave to create the district that will achieve our purpose?" In answering the question, educators shift from offering philosophical musings on mission or the shared hopes for the district of the future to making commitments to act in certain ways. Clarity guides the individual work of each member and outlines how each person can contribute to the improvement initiative. Policy manuals and directives are replaced by commitments and covenants. Clarifying collective commitments is one of the most important strategies in building a PLC. (adapted from DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many, *Learning By Doing*, Second Edition: Solution-Tree, 2010)

### **Core Values:**

- Describe what the organization stands for in the context of its mission and vision.
- Guiding principles, defining the code of conduct and behavior that is expected of all employees.
- Provide ethical guidelines for decision-making and daily conduct.
- Are aligned with organization vision, mission and culture.
- Should be described in vivid behavioral terms.
- Are represented in a phrase but not a sentence or paragraph.
- Should not include more than 5-7 so they can be memorable.
- Supports mission and vision.

### **Criteria for evaluating a value/ commitment statements:**

- ✓ Does it manifest our mission and vision?
- ✓ Is it compelling and based on a belief we would not compromise?

- ✓ Is it a guiding principle that guides behaviors and actions?
- ✓ Is it clear and easy to understand?
- ✓ Does it create an unwavering and unchanging guide?
- ✓ Is it something we will hold each other responsible and accountable for our actions?
- ✓ Is it something we would want future staff members to support?
- ✓ Does it have a commitment to describe what we would do to move the belief to action?

**ACTIVITY ONE: Feedback Review of Data Retreat SWOT from Stakeholders: Identify the top ten strengths, top ten weaknesses, top ten opportunities and top ten threats by examining the SWOT analysis from the Data Retreat and any feedback from stakeholders.**

<b>Feedback Review of the Data Retreat SWOT Analysis</b>	
<b>DRAFT SWOT ANALYSIS</b>	<b>REVISED SWOT ANALYSIS</b>
<p><b>Strengths:</b> What do we consider to be our strengths? What advantages do we have? What do others say our strengths are?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student achievement in grades 3-8 above state average on PARCC state assessment</li> <li>• Students demonstrating growth on MAP assessment from fall to winter in all grades K-8</li> <li>• High quality staff</li> <li>• 91% teacher retention rate</li> <li>• Loyalty and Pride among staff</li> <li>• 95% Student attendance rate</li> <li>• Thriving Pre-School and Primary Center Programming</li> <li>• Social-emotional supports for students</li> <li>• Technology</li> <li>• Variety of extra programs and activities for students</li> <li>• History of fiscal transparency and responsibility</li> <li>• Operational per pupil expenditure lower than neighboring districts</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Weaknesses:</b> What do we consider to be our weaknesses? What are we most criticized for or receive the most complaints about? What do we seem to have a hard time doing well?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of students demonstrating readiness on PARCC and MAP assessments</li> <li>• Achievement gaps among subgroup student populations</li> <li>• Additional support for struggling students</li> <li>• Program Coherence: Curriculum implementation and consistencies among schools</li> <li>• Teacher collaboration and collective responsibility</li> <li>• Internal communication</li> <li>• Data analysis and progress monitoring</li> <li>• Lack of space at the primary center, intermediate school, and junior high school</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger class sizes in the upper grades</li> <li>• Variance among schools on state 5Essentials Survey</li> <li>• Parent engagement and communication</li> <li>• Lack of parent participation in state 5Essentials Survey</li> <li>• Debt management escalating</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Opportunities:</b> What opportunities for improvement do we know about, but have not addressed? Where with a little work could we change a weakness into a strength?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridge the relationship between the elementary district and the high school district</li> <li>• Better satisfaction survey data, analysis, reporting, and action</li> <li>• Continued integration and expansion of use of technology</li> <li>• Increase financial resources/failed referendum/ community financial support</li> <li>• Other Community support and relationships/Working with local business and other agencies</li> <li>• Staff diversity</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Threats:</b> Who or what threatens us the most? What challenges are coming that we must respond to? What might block our progress?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State funding uncertainty</li> <li>• State unfunded mandates</li> <li>• Competitive salaries and benefits</li> <li>• Changes in state assessment</li> <li>• Teacher Pensions</li> <li>• Student enrollment increases</li> </ul>	

**Activity Two:** Investigate a Preferred Future: Electronically learn about some schools/districts who are inventing the future. *Answer the question: What can we envision as to how the district should look, sound and feel 5-10 years from now to make it a better place to learn and work?*

## Vision Retreat Investigation

You are about to explore an electronic site to learn about a 21<sup>st</sup> century approach to teaching and learning. ***The purpose of the investigation is to stimulate strategic plan team thinking about a new district mission and vision that will incorporate ideas and concepts not currently in place. It will help the team describe a Preferred Future.*** The purpose of this investigation is NOT to find a site we most would like to emulate. We will be looking across all investigations to create the District hybrid mission and vision. Some of the sites are public school sites, some are magnet programs or charters within a district, a few are private school sites. The sites were selected from ten possibilities by the district leadership and the facilitator.

Within the sites are opportunities to learn about the vision of each program. You can learn about the features of the site to assist you in completing your answers to the essential questions of the investigation. All investigations are focused on the same set of essential questions. You will find: video clips (view the clips), icons for further information (click on the icon), history about the origin of the program, information about a network of similar schools across the country focusing on the same concepts, etc.

**District Role:** The facilitator selected four sites listed below for the Vision Investigation activity. Participants will be assigned to investigate one site. This document includes all five sites to be investigation.

**Step One:** Find the site assigned to you. Locate the site on this document.

**Step Two:** Complete the Homework Assignment for your site investigation before coming to the retreat. You will notice the investigation is broken into two parts: Homework and Continue the Investigation at the Vision Retreat. Take some notes.

### **(Steps Three through Five are done at the Vision Retreat)**

**Step Three:** At the retreat you will work with a partner to continue your investigation. You will: Spend 5 minutes sharing your notes from the Homework activity

- Form pairs or triads to begin your investigation
- Share one laptop, I Pad, etc. (Please bring one if you can)
- Assign your three sets of investigation questions to each pair or triad

Spend 30 minutes continuing your investigation. Take some notes. Try to find information that aligns to your set of questions.

**Step Four:** Pick out the key ideas from your investigation you want to share with others. Spend 10 minutes identifying the key ideas.

**Step Five:** Arrange the ideas on a poster to tell your story. Be creative, use cut out materials, shapes, markers, tape, sticky glue, etc. to create your poster. Spend 15 minutes creating your poster.

**Step Six:** Spend 10 minutes preparing a presenter to tell the site story.

**Step Seven:** Rotate every 10 minutes to learn about the investigation of another site. Take notes to use in a future vision writing activity.

## Stonefields School, New Zealand (Visible Learning)

The Elementary School's learning philosophy rests on the four key vision principles - Building Learning Capacity, Collaborating, Making Meaning and Break Through. This elementary school sets the foundation for readying students for middle and high school. It is a great source for districts interested in K-12 articulation. The focus on developing learners' capacity to thrive in tricky situations - knowing what to do when they don't know what to do - is valued highly. Teachers explicitly teach learners strategies to get out of 'I'm stuck' situations. Being stuck is celebrated and harnessed as an opportunity to build each individual's learning capacity.

### Homework Assignment:

View the video clip: Embracing and Realizing Future Learning Opportunities  
<http://www.stonefields.school.nz/>

Take a virtual tour

<https://sites.google.com/a/stonefields.school.nz/the-collaborative/resources>

### Further Investigation at the Vision Retreat:

Learn about the school's four vision principles. View the three student video clips.  
<http://www.stonefields.school.nz/page/Vision/>

Learn about the school's philosophy of learning and how it keeps learning visible and aligned to student ownership. View the four clips about learning.  
<http://www.stonefields.school.nz/page/Learning/>

Check out the resources

- The learning process
- Learner qualities
- Defining our leadership work
- Value and Mindsets
- The Learning Pit

<https://sites.google.com/a/stonefields.school.nz/the-collaborative/resources-1>

Click on the works below each graphic



## **ALT Schools:**

ALTSchools have been building a K-8 laboratory and technology-enabled network to empower and connect families, students, and teachers. The network has expanded across San Francisco, Palo Alto and New York City. In partnership with educators, a technology and design team has created a platform to personal learning and streamline school operations. Schools range in size from 30 to 100 students and offer mixed-aged learning environments focused on project-based learning experiences focused on developing the whole child.

## **Homework:**

Read about the history of ALT Schools

<https://www.altschool.com/about/about>

View a video clip about a day in the life of an ALT middle school student

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8ZrUuZjsow>

## **Further Investigation at the Vision Retreat:**

Learn about their values:

<https://www.altschool.com/about/about>

Read about their curricular approach

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/altschool-cdn/info/AltSchool+Curricular+Approach.pdf>

Read about their results:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/altschool-cdn/info/AltSchool+2016+Benefit+Corporation+Report.pdf>

Learn about their personalized approach

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iCJxEZSWbE>

Read about the Technology Guide

[https://s3.amazonaws.com/altschool-cdn/info/AltSchool\\_Classroom\\_Technology\\_Guide\\_2017-18.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/altschool-cdn/info/AltSchool_Classroom_Technology_Guide_2017-18.pdf)

## **XQ The Super School Project: High Schools that Matter**

We began with XQ: The Super School Project, a competition inviting America to reimagine high school. People across the country self-assembled into teams and started a movement to transform high school education in their areas. We started XQ because we believe our nation's young people cannot wait any longer for our educational system to change. America's public high school system was founded to ensure that all high school students have access to a free, high-quality education that prepares them for college, career and life.

### **Homework:**

View the video clip: The Future of Our Schools: An Urgency for change

<https://xqsuperschool.org/>

Learn about XQ Learner Goals, XQ Learner Outcome Areas and XQ Design Principles

<https://xqsuperschool.org/xq-schools/xq-learner-goals>

### **Further Investigation at the Vision Retreat:**

Visit one of the Super Schools in Iowa

<https://xqsuperschool.org/xq-schools/iowa-big>

Learn about Chicago's Go Through Project

<https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/>

Download the Mythbusters about what matters in high schools and college success

[https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/UChiToThrough\\_Mythbusters\\_vWeb.pdf](https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/UChiToThrough_Mythbusters_vWeb.pdf)

Learn about what students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century need to learn and know

[https://assets.contentful.com/35eubtuv0bcm/5LaYOaSQw04MeA8aeKqOW6/85810f9d4c45ba52f40732a7f143542d/XQ\\_Knowledge\\_Module\\_01\\_-\\_Students\\_in\\_the\\_21st\\_Century.pdf](https://assets.contentful.com/35eubtuv0bcm/5LaYOaSQw04MeA8aeKqOW6/85810f9d4c45ba52f40732a7f143542d/XQ_Knowledge_Module_01_-_Students_in_the_21st_Century.pdf)

## New Tech Network

New Tech Network is a partner for school change. Schools can inspire and engage all students. Teachers can offer relevant and authentic learning experiences in all subjects. Students can develop skills essential for both college and career, in addition to mastering academics. As a leading design partner for comprehensive school change, New Tech Network has proven public schools can accomplish all of these aspirations. We do not operate schools; instead, we work with districts and communities throughout the country to transform schools into innovative learning environments. At New Tech Network, our partnerships with schools drive everything we do. Together we are transforming teaching and learning around the country. Our shared vision for student success – college and career readiness for all students – has a very specific meaning in the Network. What we mean is that every graduate of a New Tech school leaves aware, eligible and prepared to pursue postsecondary education or training.

Since 2010, we have nearly quadrupled the number of schools with graduating classes in diverse socio-economic demographics. We are proud of our high 4-year high school graduation, college enrollment, and college persistence rates.

### Homework:

What is the New Tech Network:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4pISRkvHZ0>

A Glimpse of a Project

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n96oFoRh-Sg>

### Continue the Investigation at the Vision Retreat:

Learn about a self-directed learner

<https://newtechnetwork.org/resources/student-profile-self-directed-learner/>

Download the Impact Report

[https://32dkl02ezpk0qcqvqmlx19lk-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017 Annual Data Report r12 spreads sm.pdf](https://32dkl02ezpk0qcqvqmlx19lk-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017_Annual_Data_Report_r12_spreads_sm.pdf)

See the New Tech Network examples at all levels- elementary, middle and high

New Tech Network Schools (samples – there are a plethora of schools on their website):

- Elementary School - [http://www.wintonwoods.org/school\\_home.aspx?schoolID=4](http://www.wintonwoods.org/school_home.aspx?schoolID=4)
- Elementary School – VIDEO <https://newtechnetwork.org/resources/washington-discovery-academy/>
- Middle School - [https://www.fwcs.k12.in.us/schools/school\\_pages.php?school=0118](https://www.fwcs.k12.in.us/schools/school_pages.php?school=0118)
- High School - [http://napahigh.nvusd.org/cms/page\\_view?d=x&piid=&vpid=1490609348521](http://napahigh.nvusd.org/cms/page_view?d=x&piid=&vpid=1490609348521)
- High School – VIDEO <https://newtechnetwork.org/resources/welcome-sioux-falls-new-tech-high-school>

# Investigation Questions

Group	Questions
One	<p><i>What are students doing that excites and inspires you?</i></p> <p><i>What are teachers doing that excites and inspires you?</i></p> <p><i>How might you define responsibility and accountability?</i></p>
Two	<p><i>What does the structure look like that intrigues you: schedule, time, day, year?</i></p> <p><i>How might you define: use of space and learning opportunities anywhere, anytime, anyplace?</i></p> <p><i>How might you define: Use of Technological Tools?</i></p>
Three	<p><i>How might you define: Curriculum?</i></p> <p><i>How might you define: Assessment and Student Success?</i></p> <p><i>What words describe the mission and vision of the site you investigated? Do they have core values? What are they?</i></p>

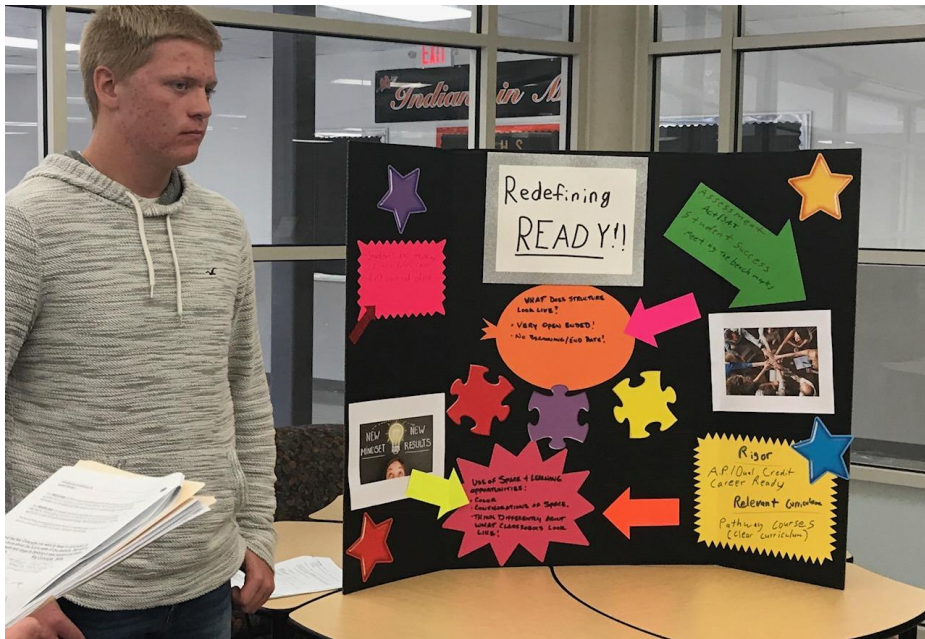
# POSTER GUIDELINES

Tell the story of your investigation through pictures and words.

Answer the question:

What was the most compelling ideas you learned about this investigation that you *hope the district will learn more about through its strategic planning efforts?*

Answer the investigation questions to tell your story:



**Record the Key Concepts you want to keep in mind when to begin to think about the future state of the districts. We will use these concepts and ideas to develop a new mission and vision**

<b>Investigation</b>	<b>Key Concepts: Notes</b>
<b>Stonefields</b>	
<b>ALT Schools</b>	
<b>New Tech</b>	
<b>High Schools that Matter</b>	

**Activity Three:** Draft a Preferred Future Statement: Use the information from the articles you read, the investigation information that inspired you, and your own hopes and dreams to craft a new district mission, vision, and core value statement.

**Key Questions to Consider:**

1. How do you define student success?
2. What is the overarching statement of that success?
3. What are the components that contribute to that success?
4. How can you communicate what that would look like so you can reflect in the future on where you are in achieving your vision? How can this become a shared vision.

## Writing a Good Preferred Future Statement

**Current Mission and Vision Statement:**

**Mission:** To provide each child in the community with a safe, caring learning environment that addresses the educational needs and potential of each student in a manner than encourages lifelong learning.

**Criteria for evaluating a mission statement:**

- Is it clear and understandable?
- Is it brief enough for most people to remember and say in one breath?
- Does it clearly specify fundamental purpose?
- Does it have a primary focus on a single strategic thrust (such as learning)?
- Does it reflect the distinctive competence and culture of the district?
- Does it create focus?
- Is it energizing and compelling?

**Vision:**

Minooka CCDS 201 values:

- An environment that encourages successful life-long learners
- The development of character in each child
- Educated children/students that are independent and critical thinkers
- Fiscal responsibility
- High quality and affordable education
- Diversity and respect for each individual stakeholder

**Criteria for evaluating a vision statement:**

- Does it manifest our mission? Does it paint a mental image you desire?
- Is it concise and compelling?
- Is it inspirational? Does it reflect passion and commitment?
- Does it communicate promise for the future?
- Does it create an image of something that cannot be seen today, but is possible tomorrow?
- Does it focus on ends not means?
- Does it define success?
- Does it use present or future tense?
- Does it use clear, concise language that all stakeholders can understand?

**Key Questions to Consider:**

5. How do you define student success?
6. What is the overarching statement of that success?
7. What are the components that contribute to that success?
8. How can you communicate what that would look like so you can reflect in the future on where you are in achieving your vision? How can this become a shared vision?

**Current Values Statement:**

While the district has never identified formal value statements, these values are taken from policy and current district philosophy of standing committees.

- Respect
- Diversity
- Quality
- Responsibility
- Critical Thinking
- Character
- Life-long learning
- Independent learners

**Criteria for evaluating a value/commitment statements:**

- Does it manifest our mission and vision?
- Is it compelling and based on a belief we would not compromise?
- Is it a guiding principle that guides behaviors and actions?
- Is it clear and easy to understand?
- Does it create an unwavering and unchanging guide?
- Is it something we will hold each other responsible and accountable for our actions?
- Is it something we would want future staff members to support?
- Does it have a commitment to describe what we would do to move the belief to action?
- Is it energizing and compelling



CRITERIA	DRAFT
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## Strategic Foundation or Preferred Future

<b>Mission Statement: Our Core Purpose</b> Why do we exist?	<b>Vision Statement: Our Preferred Future</b> Where are we headed?
<b>Core Values: How we act and behave</b> What do we stand for?	<b>Vision Description: What will it look like</b> How will we know when we are there?