

## School District

### School District Mission, Values, Vision and Strategic Direction

#### I. Purpose

This policy sets forth the school district's mission, and direction to reach the core purpose of the district.

#### II. General Statement of Policy

The school district will have an active mission statement. The mission statement will be based on the values of the community, direct any change effort, and be the basis on which decisions are made. The school board, on behalf of and with participation by the community, will seek a consensus among its members regarding the district's mission and values, as well as the strategic vision and strategic direction.

The district's mission statement and strategic plan will be available to the public on the district's website.

#### III. Mission

The school district's mission is its core purpose as an organization – its reason for being.

The mission of the Edina Public Schools, working in partnership with the family and the community, is to educate all individuals to be responsible, lifelong learners who possess the skills, knowledge, creativity, sense of self-worth, and ethical values necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing, culturally diverse, global society.

#### IV. Values

The school district's values guide its choices and actions, assess the rightness of its path and journey, and shape how it acts with students, the public and each other. Students, employees, school board members, volunteers, families and community members are to dedicate themselves to the following standards:

- We Care
  - Compassion: Helping others
  - Appreciation of Diversity: Understanding, respecting and embracing all people
- We Share
  - Responsibility: Being accountable
  - Commitment: Keeping promises

- We Dare
  - Integrity: Doing the right thing
  - Courage: Meeting challenges

## V. Strategic Vision and Strategic Directions (Appendix I)

The purpose of the school district's strategic efforts is to provide the community with a compelling education plan for the district's future. The planning efforts develop and refine the structures, systems, procedures and practices required to measure, assess and continuously improve the management of resources, programs and services for all learners of the community.

The district will review and update the strategic vision and directions of the district every three to five years. This strategic planning will be a comprehensive study directed by the school board and district leadership seeking input and engagement from the administrators, staff, parents/guardians, community and students.

The strategic vision is the compelling picture of the district's educational future bringing the mission to an attainable stage in the continuous improvement process. The strategic directions are the focused application of the district's resources, time, talent, finances and facilities through continuous improvement in the educational programs, services and activities. Each strategic direction will have an identified structural rubric to measure the district's progress in reaching the identified direction (see Appendix I).

The strategic vision and directions will include a structure of measured accountability and a process for goal alignment within the district. The superintendent shall report annually on the progress of the district's strategic plan and present the district action initiatives to advance the plan for the upcoming year.

## VI. Review

The school board will review the school district's mission and values every two years, especially when members of the board change. The school board will conduct a comprehensive review of the mission, including the values, strategic vision, and strategic directions, every three to five years.

### Legal References:

Minn. Rule Parts 3501.0010-3501.0180

Minn. Rule Parts 3501.0200-3501.0270

Minn. Stat § 120B.11 (School District Process for Reviewing Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Achievement)

### Policy

adopted: 10/22/07

amended: 09/29/09

Revised: 10/21/13

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 273

Edina, Minnesota



## Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015 - Overview

*The Mission of the Edina Public Schools, working in partnership with the family and the community, is to educate all individuals to be responsible, lifelong learners who possess the skills, knowledge, creativity, self-worth, and ethical values necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing, culturally diverse, global society.*

Core Strategy	Key Descriptions of Core Strategy Implemented Leading to District Vision			Vision 2015
<b>A. Personalized Learning Experiences for ALL Students by</b>	<i>Welcoming, belonging and learning for each and every student and family that compels and energizes ownership of learning</i>	<i>Measured growth and high achievement for each and every student without predictable links to race and income</i>	<i>Life Skills development for students and staff of Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and Cultural Competence</i>	<b>Edina Public Schools will continue to be among the premier school districts both nationally and internationally.</b>  <b>Our high expectations in academics, arts, extracurricular activities and community involvement best prepare each learner to achieve success in college, career and life.</b>
<b>B. Coherent and Comprehensive Educational Program by</b>	<i>Maximizing our resources – time, talent, finances, and facilities – to best serve our learners and community</i>	<i>Relevant, valued and flexible choices meeting the needs of students, families, staff and community</i>	<i>Intentional relationships and communications serving to make known the district traditions and subtle gateways to student learning experiences and success</i>	
<b>C. Effective and Valued District Partnerships with</b>	<i>High levels of partnership and collaboration among all employees, administration and the School Board with shared ownership of our performance and innovation</i>	<i>Community and business organizations sharing resources to support the mission of the district.</i>	<i>Effective and responsible communication by and among all members of our school community</i>	

### Core Values

*Guiding Our Choices and Actions*

- We Care** through our Compassion in helping others with what they need as a part of who we are and Appreciation of Diversity by understanding, respecting and embracing all people
- We Share** through our Responsibility by being accountable for my work, interactions and relationships and Commitment in keeping the promises we make to self and others
- We Dare** through our Integrity by doing the right thing at the right time even when no one is watching and Courage by meeting challenge in the midst of easier ways out and doubt

## **Personalized Learning in Edina Public Schools**

### ***Position on Personalized Learning –***

Edina Public Schools believes students must play an active role in what, when, where and how they learn to reach their full potential and be prepared for the dynamic world that awaits them. In order to allow all students to progressively advance ownership of their learning, Edina Public Schools will partner with families and the community to develop customized learning pathways that promote success for all students. By instilling a personalized learning philosophy throughout the organization, Edina Public Schools will be able to achieve its mission of educating all learners with the skills they need to thrive in a rapidly changing, culturally diverse, global society.

### ***Definition of Personalized Learning –***

In Edina Public Schools, personalization affords the learner a degree of voice and choice about what is learned, when it is learned, and how it is learned. Personalization assists learners in identifying paths to master the highest standards possible by encouraging flexibility in learning with regard to time, place, pace and path. It places high value on learner-focused relationships, stimulating growth from dependent to independent learning as a student progresses through their educational experience in Edina Public Schools.

### ***Edina Public Schools Believes Personalized Learning –***

- MOTIVATES STUDENTS to follow their interests and TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THEIR LEARNING to their full potential
- ENCOURAGES FLEXIBILITY in when, where and how students learn
- REDEFINES THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER to that of a facilitator of learning rather than a deliverer of knowledge, both at the individual instructor level and as part of a collaborative professional team
- FOSTERS RELATIONSHIPS focused on individual learner needs among students, teachers and families
- PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES for families and the community to ENGAGE WITH AND PROMOTE LEARNING both inside and outside the classroom
- MODIFIES LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES to continually challenge learners and encourage academic growth, while keeping success within reach

### ***Background on Personalized Learning in Edina Public Schools –***

As schools approached the 21<sup>st</sup> century, scholars turned their discussions to what core skills and literacies all students must have to be successful, not only for post-secondary educational experiences, but also for career readiness and life. However, the traditional, factory model of schools, especially in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century era of standardized testing, limits individual student growth, emphasizing content over comprehension. Achievement and opportunity gaps persist, and the perception of U.S schools “falling behind” their global peers remains common in the public rhetoric.

In recent years, a common theme has emerged that stresses the need to individualize instruction for each student such that learning is the constant, and all other factors – including time, space, talent and funding – are variables to support learning.

Edina Public Schools (EPS) has long subscribed to the importance of ensuring every learner has the opportunity to succeed.

- DISTRICT MISSION - *The mission of the Edina Public Schools, working in partnership with the family and the community, is to educate all individuals and be responsible, lifelong learners who possess the*

## Personalized Learning in Edina Public Schools

*skills, knowledge, creativity, sense of self-worth, and ethical values necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing, culturally diverse, global society.*

- The District's Mission Statement, developed in 1989, articulates a commitment to ensuring every learner has the skills needed to be successful in a global society. In 2013, that mission statement was summarized by three key words that drive the district's strategic work – *All for All*. That is, ALL staff, families and community members must work together to ensure success for ALL learners.
- CHOICE – Edina Public Schools has a tradition of providing choice for families to identify educational programs that best meet the needs of individual learners (e.g. Continuous Progress, Language Immersion, middle school exploratory options, depth and variety of high school course offerings, and numerous extra-curricular and co-curricular opportunities). With the advancement of personalized learning, the district continues to evaluate not only additional programs and services that can be implemented, but also individual pathways that will further serve to promote choice for students and families.

As part of its strategic planning process for many years, the district has held at its core the importance of personalizing the learning experience for each student.

- 2007-12 STRATEGIC PLAN – Several initiatives were implemented to help advance an understanding of personalizing education for students (e.g. literacy and math interventions, expanded student support services, Response to Intervention (RtI), data coaches to help teachers better use student data to influence their instructions, technologies to help monitor student data).
  - In the spring of 2010, the district's articulated a working definition of personalized learning focused on the use of data to drive instruction, cultivation of relationships between home and school, and flexibly responding to student needs.
  - Success was seen with such initiatives, and pilot programs began to be systemically implemented across the district
- 2012-15 STRATEGIC PLAN – With the update of the district's strategic plan to develop the Next Generation of Edina Public Schools, additional emphasis on the need to individualize learning for all students was identified as a core strategy. Like many districts in the U.S., Edina Public Schools is attempting to shift the focus from a curriculum/instruction-centered mindset to one that is student focused, centering all resources on learning as the constant.
  - In the spring of 2013, the district updated its definition of personalized learning to include an appreciation of students progressively taking more ownership of their learning and an understanding that learning can occur anywhere, anytime, at any pace.
  - As a result of the work of strategic initiatives of the Next Generation of Edina Public Schools plan, as well as ongoing research into personalized learning studies across the country and around the world, the district refined its definition of personalized learning as a core belief aligned with its All for All mission.

## **Racial Equity & Cultural Competence in Edina Public Schools**

### ***Position on Racial Equity & Cultural Competence –***

Edina Public Schools is committed to looking at all district work and initiatives through a lens of racial equity so that all learners have the skills, opportunities and access to experiences that will help them reach their full potential and achieve success. Edina Public Schools will partner with families and the community to gain a better understanding of and eliminate barriers rooted in racial constructs and cultural misunderstandings that can interfere with a student's learning or reduce his/her willingness to persist academically. By applying this lens of racial equity and cultural understanding to all teaching and learning experiences, Edina Public Schools will be able to achieve its mission of educating all learners with the skills they need to thrive in a rapidly changing, culturally diverse, global society.

### ***Definition of Racial Equity & Cultural Competence –***

In Edina Public Schools, all learners will have access to rigorous and challenging learning opportunities, which lead to measured growth and high achievement without predictable links to race, culture or ethnicity. Learners will acquire an awareness of their own cultural identity and value racial, cultural and ethnic diversities so as to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds.

### ***Edina Public Schools Believes Racial Equity & Cultural Competence –***

- PROMOTE HEALTHY SCHOOL CLIMATES, providing the best opportunity for learners to be culturally aware as they interact with a diverse society
- ESTABLISH HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL LEARNERS, integrating high quality, rigorous and relevant curriculum that reflects the diversity of the student population, which in turn best prepares each learner to achieve success in college, career and life
- ERASE BARRIERS that impede all students from being successful and instead honor beliefs and practices that support the district's All for All mission to ensure each student is able to achieve at the highest level possible.

### ***Edina Public Schools Racial Equity Plan –***

A combination of professional development, community conversations, and engagement are critical to addressing racial inequities as well as achievement and opportunity gaps. Edina Public Schools acknowledges that complex societal and historical factors contribute to inequities within our organization. Nonetheless, Edina Public Schools is committed to addressing and overcoming inequities at all levels to ensure learners have the skills, opportunities and access to experiences that will help them achieve success.

The district's [\*All for All Plan\*](#), developed in 2013, advances strategic initiatives that focus on growth and achievement for each and every student, *without predictable links to race or income*. The plan focuses on action strategies around five central "gap" areas<sup>1</sup> – belief, leadership, preparation, teaching & learning, and time. Each area will include specific strategies and actions that engage and incorporate diverse voices and perspectives, and will approach success through a lens of racial equity and cultural competence.

In addition, in order to interrupt systems that perpetuate inequities, Edina Public Schools is committed to:

- Inviting and including representative voices to help examine issues and find adaptive solutions that look beyond one-time, situational fixes to addressing root causes and systemic barriers;
- Developing the personal, professional and organizations skills and knowledge of employees to enable them to address inequities; and
- Eliminating practices that result in predictably lower academic achievement for any student group compared to their peers.

## Racial Equity & Cultural Competence in Edina Public Schools

### ***Background on Racial Equity in Edina Public Schools –***

In 1989, Edina Public Schools included in its mission statement the focus on ensuring all learners have the skills necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing, culturally diverse, global society. The mission statement articulates a long-standing belief by the Edina Public Schools community to ensure equitable access and opportunities for all learners and the importance of global competence. Since 2007, Edina Public Schools has made a concerted effort to move beyond standard diversity training to educating staff on racial equity and cultural competence. By incorporating teachings from various consultants, academic literature, and best practice research, and by engaging and listening to the voices of whom it serves, Edina Public Schools is committed to ongoing professional learning for staff, students and families so that its All for All mission can be realized.

Over the last several decades there has been a significant change with respect to racial, cultural, religious and other dimensions of identity in this society. This shift is occurring on a national, state and local level. In Edina Public Schools, demographic data show a considerable increase in the percentage of students of color enrolled – including a 10% increase in the last ten years – with projections indicating continued growth in racial diversity in the district in the future. This local demographic shift stresses the urgency to which Edina Public Schools must not only assess and enhance the delivery of instruction, but more importantly the need to better understand the changing world of today and tomorrow.

Edina Public Schools views these changes as an opportunity to not only better engage our families of color, but also to engage all staff, students and families in ways that better prepare all learners for a rapidly changing, culturally diverse, global society. There is a need for the district to be more intentional in seeking out and including all voices, especially those that have traditionally been underrepresented, in the ongoing work of Edina Public Schools.

In addition, the district acknowledges the reality that while Edina Public Schools continues to be among the top performing districts in Minnesota and across the country in terms of overall academic achievement, there exists a race-based achievement gap not unlike other districts in the region. Edina Public Schools has seen some recent gains in narrowing the gap in reading through the implementation of intentional instructional strategies, such as Response to Intervention. However, as evidenced in numerous scholarly works in the last decade, the gap cannot be closed through educational programs or instructional strategies alone. There must be a shift in how all district employees approach their work, both individually and professionally. It is imperative that attention be focused on both students and adults at the individual learner level. As Dr. Chezare A. Warren noted in a recent blog post for the Graduate School of Education at University of Pennsylvania, we must get better at “learning the student.”<sup>2</sup> That is, educators must put what they think and believe about a student, especially a student of color, aside and learn who the student really is from his/her perspective.

Only by applying a lens of racial equity to all district work and focusing on personalizing learning opportunities for all students, will Edina Public Schools and the community it serves truly advance its core mission of All for All – all stakeholders working together for the success of all learners.

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<sup>1</sup> Hassan, J. & Mahmoud, E. (2011). *A crisis in our community: Closing the five education gaps*. Minneapolis, MN: Headwaters Foundation for Justice.

<sup>2</sup> Warren. (2012, August 10). *Rethinking Culturally Responsive Pedagogy* [Web log post]. Retrieved from [http://www.gse.upenn.edu/equity/blog/rethinking\\_culturally](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/equity/blog/rethinking_culturally)