



**ECRA Group**  
Education | Consulting | Research | Analytics



2015-2019

# Strategic Plan

Skokie/Morton Grove School District 69

Revised and Presented to the Board of Education on September 15, 2015

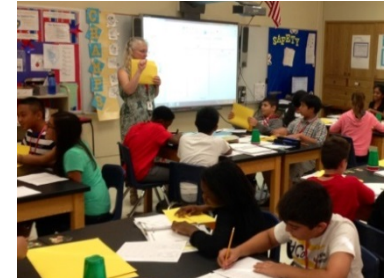
# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. Background

Skokie/Morton Grove School District 69 (the “District”) is a preK-8 school district that serves approximately 1,800 students. Located north of Chicago, students reside in the villages of Skokie and Morton Grove. The community prides itself on its diversity. Seventy-five languages are spoken by District students.

In order to continue improving the quality of education and services provided by the District, and with a profound sense of commitment to the District’s school community, the Board of Education has undertaken a thorough approach to future planning. During the 2014-2015 school year, the District partnered with ECRA Group, Inc. (“ECRA”) to develop a strategic plan to document the current state of the District and determine a future direction based on stakeholder values through rigorous research methodology and statistical analysis.

The strategic planning process included extensive outreach with stakeholders invited to participate in both focus groups and surveys. Board of Education, parent, employee, community, and student input provided the base data that shaped the District 69 Strategic Plan. The strategic plan is intended to provide a framework for future decision making that builds upon a common mission, vision, and guiding principles held by the District community.





## B. District Facts

### Facts about District 69

#### Our Schools

##### Grade-Level Centers

Madison Elementary School  
Edison Elementary School  
Lincoln Junior High School

#### Our Students

##### Race/Ethnicity\*

36% White  
28% Asian/Pacific Islander  
19% Hispanic  
12% Black  
6% Multiracial

##### Demographics

56% Low Income  
12% With Disabilities  
19% English Learners

#### Our Staff

##### 116 Full-Time Teachers

66% Teachers with Master's Degrees  
91% Teacher Retention Rate

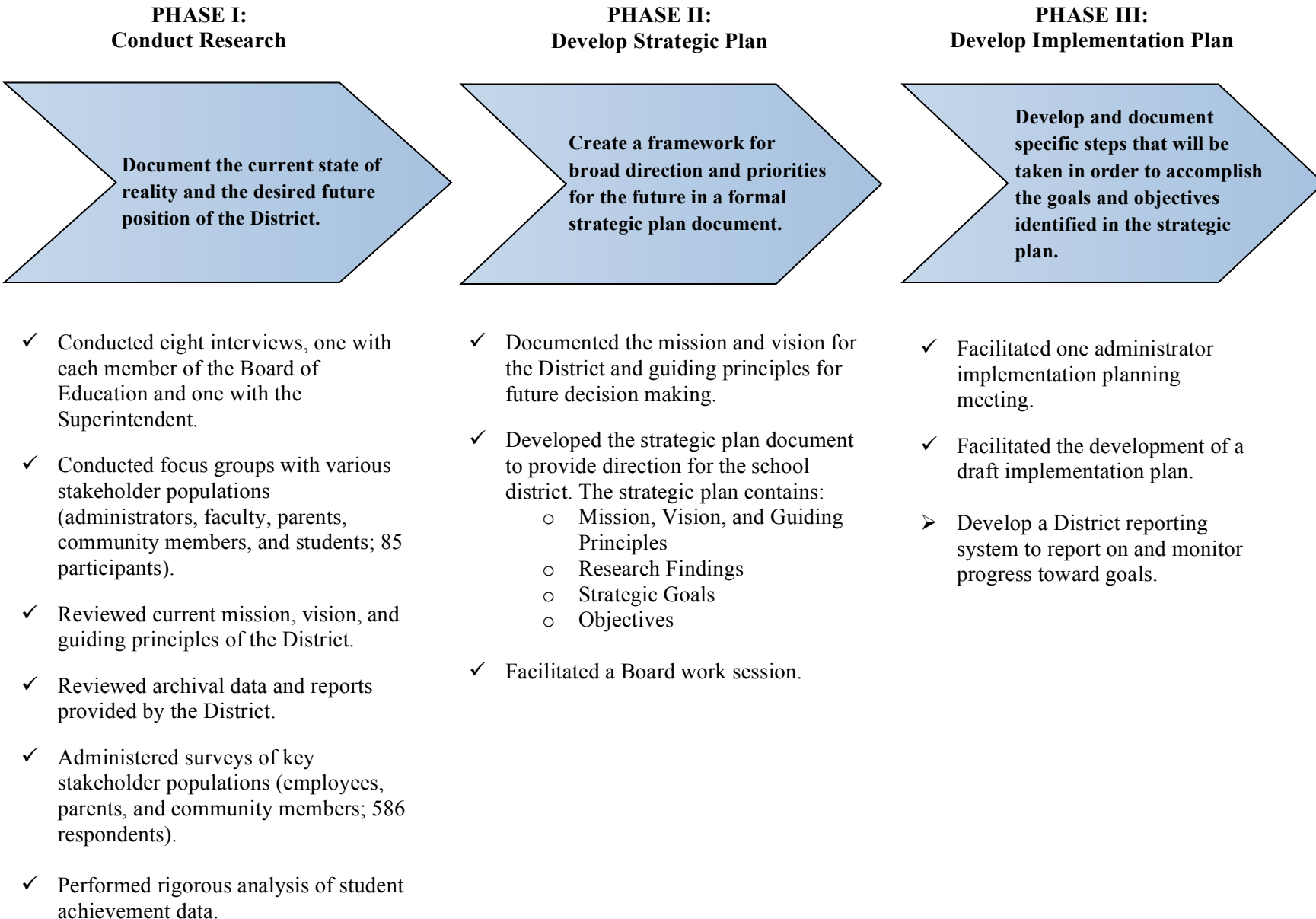
##### Pupil-Teacher Ratio

18 Pupils per Teacher

*\* Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.*

Stats – Page 5 of Annual Report

## C. The Strategic Planning Process



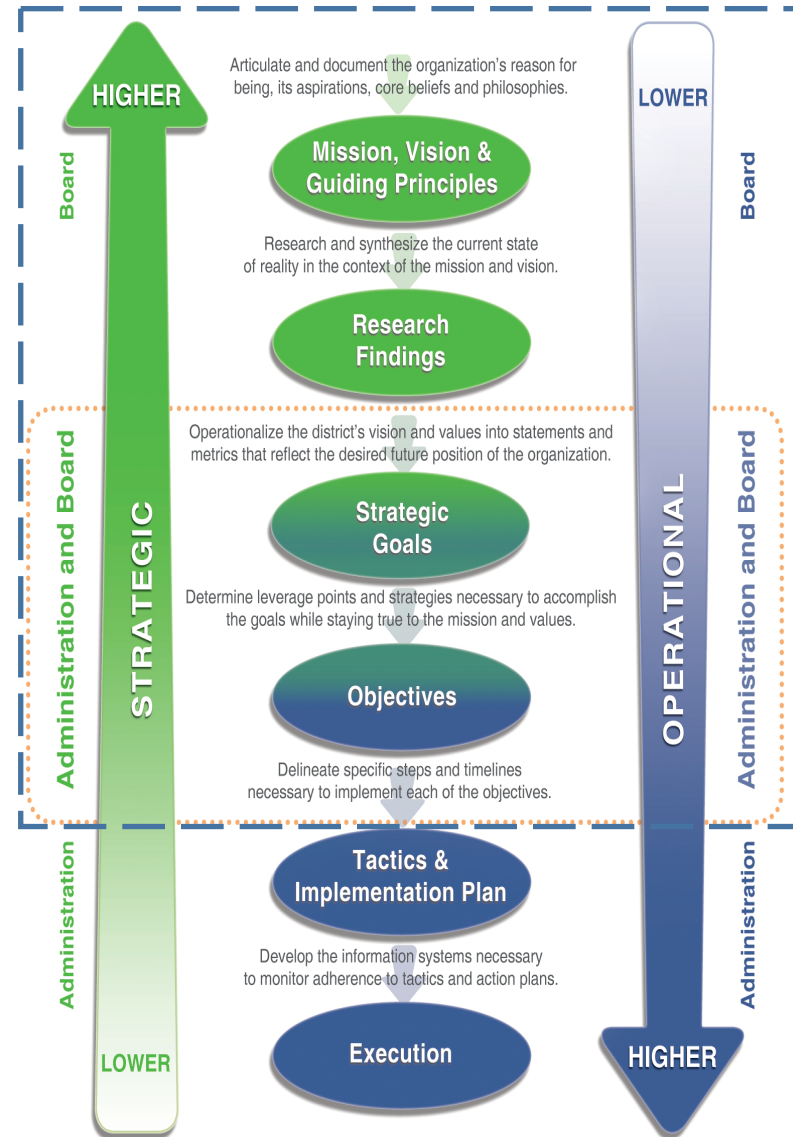
## D. Structure of This Report

The model to the right is a visual representation of the strategic planning model used in the District's strategic planning process. To this point, the Board of Education, along with other District stakeholder groups, in partnership with ECRA, have participated in a process aimed at identifying strategic goals and objectives designed to achieve the desired future position of the District.

The strategic plan document contains the first four components that represent Phases I and II. The mission was reviewed and a vision for the future and guiding principles for decision making emerged. Data were collected and synthesized in the context of the District's mission, vision, and guiding principles and articulated into research findings. Strategic goals were extracted from the research findings with consideration for the vision and guiding principles. Finally, a process aimed at understanding the strategic goals and the current state of reality resulted in the development of a set of objectives to accomplish the goals.

Moving forward, an implementation plan will be developed. As the model suggests, it is the role of the administration to develop the tactics and implementation plan to accomplish the objectives and determine how the plan will be executed.

Contained in this document is an overview of the research, data sources, data synthesis, and research findings that went into the development of the strategic plan. The document also contains components of the strategic plan itself, as detailed in Phase II, including Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles, Research Findings, Strategic Goals, and Objectives.



## E. Definitions

The following definitions provide context for the components of the strategic plan.

**Mission, Vision, & Guiding Principles:** the organization's reason for being, its aspirations, core beliefs, and philosophies.

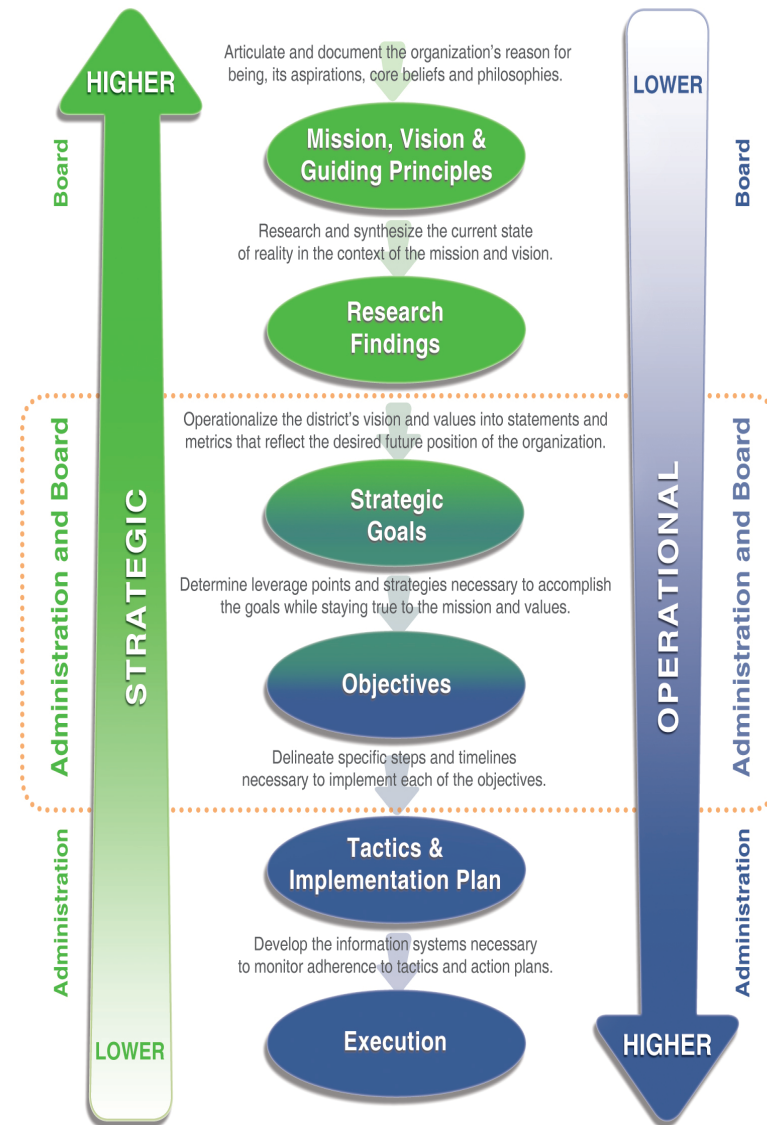
**Research Findings:** the current state of reality in the context of the mission and vision.

**Strategic Goals:** broad, long-term aims that operationalize the District's mission and vision into general intentions that reflect the desired future position of the organization.

**Objectives:** tangible leverage points and strategies necessary to accomplish the strategic goals while staying true to the mission, vision, and guiding principles.

**Tactics & Implementation Plan:** specific steps and timelines necessary to implement each of the objectives.

**Execution:** the information systems necessary to monitor adherence to the tactics and implementation plans.



## II. RESEARCH FINDINGS

### A. Data Sources

The following tables show the data sources ECRA used to develop the components of the District 69 Strategic Plan.

<b>Archival Reports*</b>
Skokie/Morton Grove School District 69 2013-2014 Annual Report
Board Policy Manual: School District 69 – Skokie/Morton Grove (Adopted March 2012)
2014-2015 Rising Star Continuous Improvement Goals
Intergovernmental Agreement Concerning Classrooms First Consolidation (Adopted August 2014)
Skokie SD 69: School District Financial Profile (Fiscal Year 2013)

\* Archival data was provided by the District.

<b>Interviews and Focus Groups**</b>
Board Members
Administrators, Faculty, and Staff Members
Parents
Community Members
Students

\*\* Ninety-three stakeholders participated in either an interview or focus group.

<b>ECRA Surveys***</b>
Administrators, Faculty, and Staff Members
Parents
Community Members

\*\*\* Five hundred eighty-six stakeholders completed the survey.

<b>Student Achievement Data</b>
2014 Illinois Report Card data
2010-2014 Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT) data
2010-2014 Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data
2010-2014 AIMSweb data



## B. Research Findings

In Phase I of the strategic planning process, data were collected through structured interviews with the Superintendent and each Board of Education member, as well as focus groups with community members, parents, employees, and middle school students. In addition, electronic surveys were made available to the District community, parents, and employees.

Once data were collected, ECRA rigorously analyzed, synthesized, and triangulated the data to identify recurring themes and trends that are reflected in the research findings. The guiding principles, strategic goals, and objectives contained in this report were developed based on these findings.

### Global Findings

The District is dedicated to preparing all students for college and career success. Stakeholders desire increased rigor and appropriate challenge through differentiated instruction. District stakeholders would like an emphasis on curricular alignment with the high school district and student achievement competitive with surrounding elementary districts. There is an interest in expanding gifted programs, while continuing to provide exceptional programs for students identified for ELL and special education services. Additional opportunities for co-curricular and extracurricular activities are deemed vital for student engagement and social and emotional learning.

Communication must be enhanced and transparency increased. Employees desire greater involvement in decisions that affect their immediate work environment, including the opportunity to participate in the planning and prioritization of initiatives. Parents and community members value current District partnerships with community organizations, which provide support and resources for students and their families.

To accomplish their vision for the future, stakeholders recognize the importance of hiring and retaining quality educators. Continued fiscal health is necessary to fund the stakeholders' vision for the future. Employees, parents, and the community expect the District to prioritize classroom instruction when making funding decisions. There have been recent facility updates, but additional renovations and expansions are necessary to ensure appropriate classroom space for the desired learning environment and programs.





Findings are structured below around the four areas that emerged during the research phase of the strategic planning process: student achievement, learning environment, communication & community engagement, and resource management. The summary of research findings can be found in a separate document titled *Strategic Plan Supporting Evidence*.

## **Student Achievement**

Sixty-one percent of students met or exceeded state standards on ISAT during the 2013-2014 school year. When compared to similar districts across the state, District 69 students exceeded expectations in reading. Students in some grades grew more academically in math than historically observed in the District, while students in other grades grew less academically in reading than expected based on local historical trends. Student academic growth is consistent regardless of demographic factors, such as income status. Academic growth among lower performing subgroups is not sufficient to eliminate achievement gaps.

Sixty-six percent of stakeholders favorably rate the quality of education in the District. Parents and community members want each student to be appropriately challenged and held to high academic standards. Stakeholders view differentiated instruction as a means for the District to provide challenging instruction to its diverse student body.

Perceptions of the quality of the English/Language Arts and math programs are directly related to stakeholders' perceptions of overall quality. Parents appreciate the District's willingness to implement cutting-edge programs and techniques. Stakeholders recognize the District for quality ELL programs and special education services. Seventy-two and 77 percent of stakeholders respectively rate the quality of the ELL program and special education services favorably. In open-ended survey responses, some parents express concern that students are underidentified for special education services.

Stakeholders believe in gifted education and are concerned students with high aptitude are not appropriately challenged. Thirty-six percent of stakeholders favorably rate the quality of the District's program for talented and gifted students. Stakeholders value science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs. Additional investments in STEM are a priority for stakeholders.



## **Learning Environment**

District teachers are highly qualified and well respected by stakeholders. Sixty-six percent of teachers hold a master's degree, compared to 58 percent across the state. Eighty-nine percent of stakeholders agree teachers provide quality instruction to students. Parents, teachers, and students desire smaller class sizes. Employees request additional resources and support from administrators to create an environment that encourages innovation and allows for greater teacher autonomy. Teachers and administrators report the need for the development of greater trust among employees.

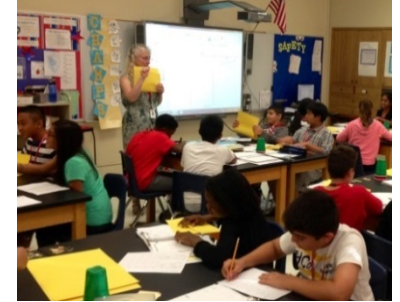
Providing a safe environment for students and employees is rated as the highest priority by 71 percent of stakeholders. Eighty percent of stakeholders agree District schools are safe, and stakeholders recognize there have been recent safety upgrades to schools. Parents are concerned about behavior disruptions in the classroom and what they perceive as overly strict disciplinary policies. Stakeholders also express the need for more co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Stakeholders believe the learning environment is enhanced through the integration of social and emotional learning.

## **Communication & Community Engagement**

Fifty-six percent of parents agree there is transparent communication in the District, while 27 percent of employees agree with the same statement. There is a desire for more communication and follow through regarding initiatives. The District's diversity is considered a strength yet creates unique challenges for the District. Stakeholders appreciate the District's focus on building partnerships with community organizations to provide additional services for students and their families in order to enhance the community as a whole.

## **Resource Management**

District leaders have prioritized fiscal health in recent years and have received high ratings from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for their financial management. The District per pupil instructional and operational expenditures are comparable to similar districts throughout Illinois. Stakeholders want to see a direct impact on student learning as a result of expenditures. Parents, employees, and community members are less supportive of increasing administrative positions. Continuing to hire and retain quality teachers is ranked highest priority by 75 percent of stakeholders. Teacher and administrator retention is a concern. Seventy-five percent of parents and employees agree facilities are well maintained. At the same time, additional classroom, hallway, and instructional space is desired. Stakeholders report a need for specific types of instructional spaces to accommodate fine arts and STEM programs.



### III. MISSION, VISION, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#### A. Mission Statement

A mission statement is a statement of the overall purpose of an organization. The mission should say what you do, for whom you do it, and the benefit. The following mission statement was adopted by the Board of Education based on stakeholder input.

**District 69 Mission Statement**

Engage each child's passions to achieve educational excellence and  
foster positive character development.  
Excellence, Passion, Character

#### B. Vision Statement

Based on the research and findings that emerged through the strategic planning process, the following vision statement was developed and adopted by the Board of Education to reflect the preferred future of District 69. Vision statements describe how the future will look if the organization achieves its ultimate aims.

**District 69 Vision Statement**

Engaging students to be successful lifelong learners within a vibrant and thriving community.

## C. Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are the beliefs that set the foundation for how an organization will operate. The principles are accepted guidelines that capture the District's values and priorities and provide direction for employees as they go about their daily work. The following guiding principles were adopted by the Board of Education, based on stakeholder input, as a collective set of beliefs and values to guide the District's future planning and decision making.

### **District 69 Guiding Principles**

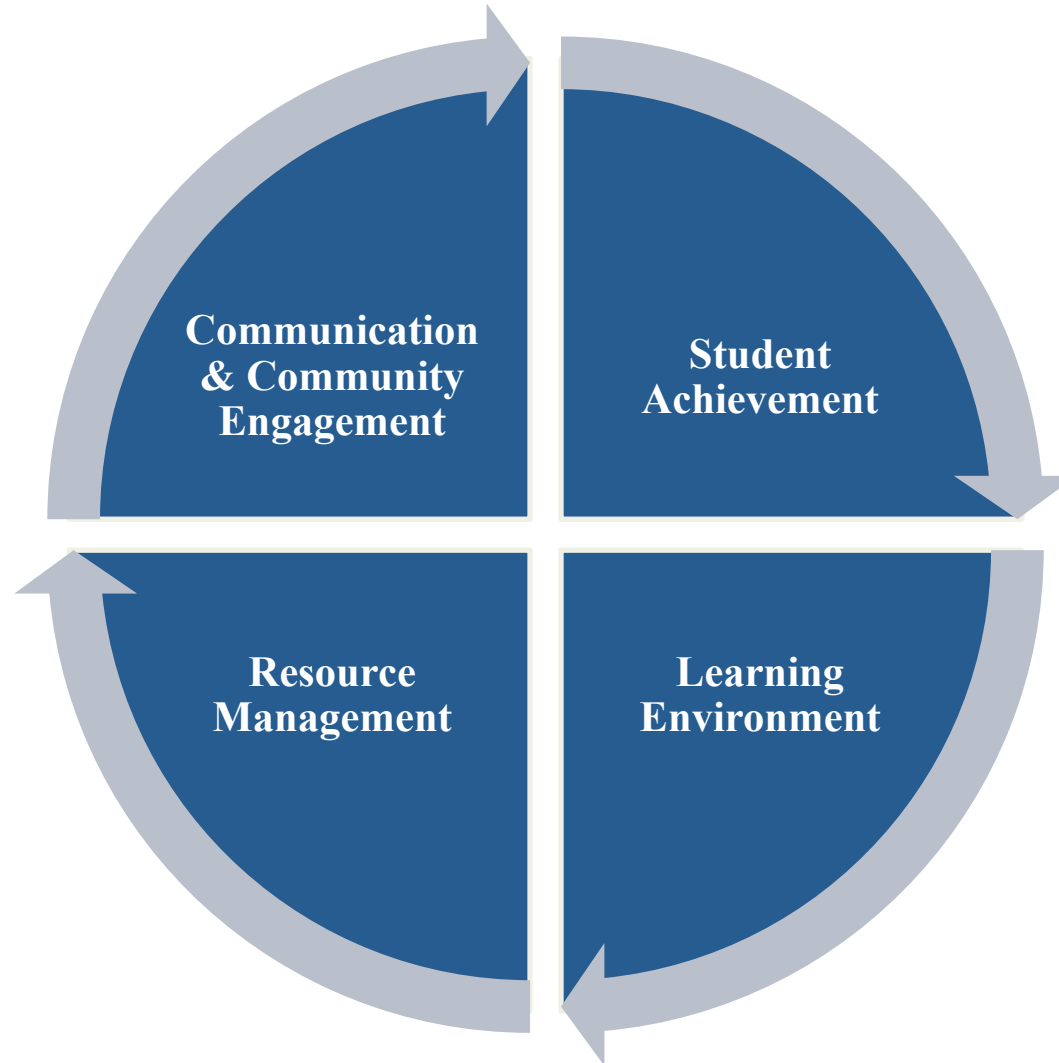
We believe:

- Students are the focus of all District processes.
- All students can achieve high school, college, and career readiness with appropriate rigor, quality instruction, and differentiated instruction.
- A well-rounded education incorporates the fine arts, STEM, Humanities (ELA & SS) and extracurricular programs to engage students, inspire creativity, and support social development.
- Diversity expands one's worldview and prepares students for success in a global society.
- Fostering respect, participation, innovation, and the highest ethical standards of conduct are essential.
- A positive learning environment is one in which students and employees feel physically and emotionally safe.
- Fiscal health and appropriate resources are essential to build District capacity and expand programs, services, and opportunities in support of student learning.
- Community partnerships enrich the school community.
- Collaboration and transparency improve educational decision making.
- Educators are our greatest strength.



## IV. STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal areas in this section are adopted based on the themes that emerged throughout the strategic planning process. The four areas that the Board approved are student achievement, learning environment, resource management, and communication and community engagement.



## Student Achievement

Improving individual growth and mastery through a challenging and rigorous curriculum to support academic success

### Overall Goal:

Ensure high standards and college/career readiness for every student by developing K-12 aligned curricula, assessments, and programming.

### Objectives:

Review, revise, and expand the STEM curriculum.

Review, revise, and expand the humanities (ELA & social studies) curriculum.

Provide appropriate instruction to address the needs of advanced learners, ELL, and special education students.

## Learning Environment

Engaging students and employees in a learning focused environment

### Overall Goal:

Create a culture of trust, respect, and support among the school community.

### Objectives:

Provide age-appropriate co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities.

Align district and building practices, policies, and procedures with students' social-emotional needs.

Maintain a safe learning environment.

Provide appropriate instructional time and resources to support curriculum.

## Resource Management

Efficiently and effectively allocating district resources

### Overall Goal:

Align resources with strategic plan priorities while maintaining the District's long-term financial stability.

### Objectives:

Attract, develop and retain high quality staff.

Develop a long-range facility plan to support the educational programming.

Develop a structure to evaluate strategic plan programs based on their impact on student learning.

## Communication & Community Engagement

Cultivating stakeholder collaboration and building community

### Overall Goal:

Improve two-way communication among the school community.

### Objectives:

Provide opportunities for stakeholder input and feedback

Develop and maintain opportunities to engage families in student learning.

Develop and maintain collaborative relationships with businesses and community organizations.

Celebrate the successes of District 69.

## V. NEXT STEPS

The administrative team will create an implementation plan, which will include finalizing the objectives as well as assigning actions, metrics, timelines, resources, and a person responsible for monitoring progress toward the strategic goals.

- A revised Strategic Plan was presented to the Board of Education on September 15, 2015
- A Committee of the Whole Meeting was scheduled for October XX, 2015 to finalize the Strategic Plan revisions, review the draft 4-year implementation plan, and review the 2015-16 goals and measures.
- A draft 4-year implementation plan and 2015-16 goals and measures will be presented at the October 20, 2015 Board of Education meeting.
- The Advanced Learning Program (ALP) Learning Team will be launched in October, following a presentation to the Board of Education on October 20, 2015.
- The 2015-16 goals and measures will be presented at the November 17, 2015 Board of Education Meeting.