



WINTER 2022

LEARNERS

A Newsletter for the Winnetka Community of Learners



LAUNCHING OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025

The Winnetka Public Schools community has shared a deep commitment to Progressive Education for **over 100 years**. Our School Board, administrators, and staff are honored to continue our history of excellence by cultivating rich experiential learning opportunities and fostering the academic and social and emotional skills that our students need to thrive now and into the future. To further advance this important work, we embarked on a Strategic Planning process starting in March 2020 with the involvement of over **2,000 contributors** representing students, staff, parents, community members, and alumni.

The outcome of these efforts is the District's revised **Mission and Vision, Portrait of a Graduate, and Strategic Plan 2021- 2025**. Each of these elements is meant to propel us forward as follows:

MISSION

Communicates who we are and what we do in The Winnetka Public Schools.

VISION

Conveys our ambitious commitment for what we aspire to achieve as a District.

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

Outlines the unique characteristics, skill sets, and mindsets we strive to develop in every student over their time in the District.

STRATEGIC GOAL AREAS & STRATEGIES 2021-2025

Defines our Priority Areas for four Strategic Goals with accompanying strategies for the next four years.

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Visit our website at www.winnetka36.org.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

GROWTH & ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS

- In March/April 2021, we shifted from a half-day hybrid school day to a modified full-day for over 97% of students who chose to be in-person. This shift allowed the schools to prepare for a typical, full school day for **100%** of students for the 2021-2022 academic year.
- District Math, Reading, Writing, Social Studies, and Science units of study are regularly reviewed by grade-level teachers ensuring students stay on-track academically, minimizing the impact of unfinished learning due to the pandemic.
- Nationally normed MAP data (fall 2021) showed that grade cohorts performed on par with pre-pandemic levels of high achievement; grades 4-8 cohorts performed **at or above the 94th percentile** on reading and math.
- Student Social-Emotional health and wellness is monitored regularly by educators as well as via a nationally-normed Panorama SEL survey, with the majority of measured areas reaching the top, **80th-99th national percentile range** for students in grades 3-8.
- Increased articulation with New Trier High School department leaders and administrators in the midst of the pandemic ensures our graduates are effectively prepared for transition to high school.
- Early literacy skills, specific to phonemic awareness and phonics, are emphasized in Kindergarten and First grade, and supported by professional learning to implement the most current, research-based strategies.

DID YOU KNOW?!

One of the four Priority Goal Areas in our Strategic Plan 2021-2025 is "**Positive Culture and Well-Being**." A strategy the District is using to work toward this goal is promoting and educating our school community about wellness, and ensuring collaboration across schools around connection and belonging. The District partnered with Search Inside Yourself (SIY), a neuroscience-based emotional intelligence program developed at Google and operating in over **50 countries**. We are honored to be the **FIRST** school district committing all staff to SIY training, with the goal of increasing mindfulness, empathy, compassion, and overall emotional intelligence to foster collective thriving in our schools.



HEALTH & SAFETY (AS OF DECEMBER 2021)

- **97%** of our staff are fully vaccinated and all others comply with the District's weekly COVID-19 Testing Program.
- **98%** of the District's 12+ student population are fully vaccinated.
- Over **1,150** children, aged 5-11, participated in the New Trier Township public schools vaccination clinics in November and December.
- **17** outdoor tents are utilized on our schools' campuses to maximize outdoor learning.
- A COVID-19 Testing program, including SHIELD testing, is offered at no cost to the District.
- Due to multiple mitigation layers, there is no evidence of in-school transmission of COVID-19 since the pandemic began.





STRATEGIC PLAN

-AT A GLANCE-

2021-2025



STRATEGIC GOAL | ONE

Intellectual Engagement & Motivation to Learn

A key driver for academic success and in developing a mindset of lifelong learning is one's intellectual engagement and intrinsic motivation to learn. Real-world problem-solving will serve to foster high levels of student engagement and to support students with skills and tools to manage long-term, collaborative projects. Through differentiated instruction, students will demonstrate a keen sense of self efficacy and the ability to make a greater impact on the outside world.

- 1.1 Define and Implement** the arc of progressive hallmark experiences for each grade, exemplifying the Portrait of a Graduate. Inquiry-based learning projects will embed core academic content and reflect values of academic excellence, whole-child focus, and experiential learning.
- 1.2 Align** grade 5-8 practices (academic, extracurricular, advisory, etc.) across the Skokie and Washburne campuses to foster a cohesive student experience, preparing students for the transition to high school.
- 1.3 Assess and Recommend** grade 5-8 scheduling that supports inquiry-based, collaborative learning and inclusive school-wide programming.
- 1.4 Refine** Early Literacy (K-1) services, curriculum, resources, and instruction to improve readiness in reading and writing at later grades.
- 1.5 Embed** equitable and inclusive practices to differentiate learning experiences for all students to grow and achieve; ensure alignment with best-practice instruction, resources, and professional learning.
- 1.6 Define and Build** students' executive functioning skills in a K-8 progression: Organizing & Planning; Initiating Tasks and Staying Focused; Managing Emotions.



STRATEGIC GOAL | TWO

Positive Culture & Well Being

A culture of positive well-being amongst students, staff and community serves as a catalyst for continual growth. Relationships and understanding of others are prioritized to promote educational excellence, equity, and resilience. Understanding personal identities and self-awareness is used to facilitate better connections in an increasingly complex world.

- 2.1 Monitor** the implementation of, and assess the effectiveness of, the District's Social Emotional Learning practices in our schools and classrooms.
- 2.2 Promote** wellness for all stakeholders- students, staff, community- and ensure collaboration across schools around connection and belonging.
- 2.3 Nurture** a responsive and inclusive culture amongst students, staff and families that values diverse perspectives and cultivates community engagement.
- 2.4 Identify and Address** areas of stress for students and staff to maintain and improve a positive climate and culture.



STRATEGIC GOAL | THREE

Local & National Leader in Progressive Education & Talent Development

A commitment to respecting childhood and elevating progressive teaching, learning and innovation aides in the District's ability to serve as a lighthouse. Staff continually hone their practice, collaborate, and celebrate successes, building a regional and national network. Recruiting, developing, and retaining the highest-quality staff remains a priority. Ongoing communication with our parents and community builds trust and confidence in the District's progressive identity.

- 3.1 Advance** and lead the practice of Progressive Education and partner with innovative organizations.
- 3.2 Refine** Parent and Community educational programming and outreach based on feedback to meet their evolving needs.
- 3.3 Embed** Progressive principles and practices into professional learning programs, including new teacher mentorship.
- 3.4 Develop** a Profile of an Educator that not only illustrates what a successful practitioner looks like in Winnetka, but how the District will consistently provide professional support in order to ensure that illustration is possible.
- 3.5 Continue** to develop strategies for retention, engagement, and recruitment of the highest quality staff to remain competitive in an evolving workforce landscape.



STRATEGIC GOAL | FOUR

Financial Stewardship & Facility Improvements

An innovative and experiential environment enhances the quality of educational experience for the entire learning community and requires essential facility upgrades and investment in capital improvements. The District remains dedicated to the transparent use of taxpayer resources and respecting the investment in its community's schools.

- 4.1 Manage** short-term and long-term financial plans effectively, inclusive of collective bargaining agreements that align with Board's financial philosophy.
 - 4.2 Build** a system to collaborate with local governmental agencies to identify potential partnerships for service and financial efficiencies for taxpayers.
 - 4.3 Monitor** post-pandemic demographics and enrollment forecasting to ensure the District is well-informed for long-term planning, aligned with Cost-Per-Pupil growth targets.
 - 4.4 Advance** the Educational Master Facility Plan and determine the scope and timing of a potential referendum to address the current and emerging needs of our students' educational programming.
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MISSION

The Winnetka Public Schools is a community rooted in Progressive Education that honors the whole child, fosters creativity, inspires lifelong learning, and develops civic responsibility.

VISION

The Winnetka Public Schools community empowers every student to flourish in an inclusive, innovative, experiential environment. We support and challenge all learners to actively engage in continual growth and achievement to make a meaningful difference in the world.

THE DISTRICT'S 2021-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

A Winnetka Graduate is ...



...EMPATHETIC.

- Demonstrates awareness and understanding of others' perspectives, feelings, experiences, and cultures.
- Makes authentic connections with others. Shows fundamental regard for the dignity and value of every individual.



...RESILIENT.

- Demonstrates agility and adaptability when facing challenge or setbacks.
- Extends grace to self and others in a mindful, healthy manner.



...A GLOBAL CITIZEN.

- Values and embraces diversity through mutual respect.
- Contributes to the betterment of society through responsible civic engagement.
- Initiates action to solve problems that impact the community and world.



...AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR.

- Confidently articulates thoughts and ideas using oral, written, and nonverbal communication skills.
- Actively listens and evaluates perspectives and positions.



...A LIFELONG LEARNER.

- Engages with and applies rigorous academic content in meaningful ways.
- Intrinsically motivated to strive for personal growth and achievement.



...COLLABORATIVE.

- Honors, leverages, and recognizes the strengths of others to effectively build collective commitments or actions.
- Seeks feedback and makes valuable contributions.



...A CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVER.

- Challenges the status quo and seeks to curiously activate original and inventive thinking.
- Bravely takes risks and develops, organizes and manages new initiatives, and/or ventures.



FINANCIAL UPDATE

EDUCATIONAL MASTER FACILITY PLAN (EMFP) UPDATE

CRITICAL FACILITY WORK CONTINUES

The District continues to move forward with its EMFP by addressing crucial Health/Life Safety issues and maintenance needs at our aging school facilities. Currently in the second year of a three year plan, these projects are overseen by our new partners at the architecture firm of Perkins & Will.

In summer 2021, improvements were made at Greeley, Hubbard Woods, and The Skokie School including:

- Replacement of the historic chimney and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) hardware at Crow Island School.
- Fire safety updates, air handling units, piping replacement, flooring, and HVAC repairs made at Greeley School.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) hardware, door repair and replacement, fire safety egress, site work for drainage, brickwork, ventilation and exhaust repair, fire alarm replacement, air handling unit, and piping replacement at Hubbard Woods School.
- Water mitigation in the courtyard and plaster replacement in the historic auditorium at The Skokie School.

Check mailboxes in February for information and community input opportunities related to a new, downsized funding proposal to address critical facility repairs and upgrades at all five District schools.



Did you know?

As of December 2021, The Winnetka Public Schools is **debt free** due to the early payoff of capital bonds and refinancing decisions made by the District's School Board since 2013.

What does this mean to taxpayers?

Saved nearly \$10,000 in tax payments for the average \$1M homeowner from 2013 - 2025, that would have otherwise been taxed.

Did you know?

The Winnetka Public Schools is only **0.5% of school districts across the nation** that can claim a top rating of 'AAA' from Standard & Poor's Rating Services and 'Aaa' from Moody's Investors Service.

What does this mean to taxpayers?

These ratings allow the District to receive better interest rates on bonds, saving taxpayers when borrowing may be needed.

Did you know?

The Winnetka Public Schools received over **\$1.3M in CARES Act and FEMA funds** from the federal government to offset the \$2.9M of COVID-19 related District expenditures.

What does this mean to taxpayers?

The Federal Government funded 45% of COVID-19 related expenditures; the remaining 55% of COVID-19 related expenditures was paid from local fund balance. Most of the expenditures focused on keeping our students learning in-person during the pandemic.



To access the District's 2020 Financial Report, please visit our District website at www.winnetka36.org.



1235 Oak Street
Winnetka, IL 60093

Happy
New
Year



Greeley families gathered for an outdoor movie night on a fall evening.



Students from The Skokie School delivered cards to first responders on the 20th anniversary of 9/11.



District, Village and Police leadership collaborating on bike safety planning.

PARTNERING ON BEHALF OF OUR COMMUNITY

New Trier Township Vaccine Clinic

Over **1,150 children**, aged 5-11, participated in the New Trier Township public schools vaccination clinics in November and December 2021 with tremendous support from the Winnetka Park District, Police and Fire Departments.

Stormwater Management Agreement

This collaboration effort between the District, Village, and the Park District will utilize a portion of the Crow Island School campus for underground stormwater storage, conveyance, and water quality improvements. Engineering plans for the project are underway.

Bike Safety in the Village

The District partnered with the Winnetka Police Department and Village to raise awareness about bike and pedestrian safety, including a joint letter, signage, and video campaign.