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## Strategic Planning Update: Mission, Vision, & Values

Winnetka has always taken great pride in the community's public schools. Educational practices and learning goals have evolved since the first school was established at the intersection of Maple Avenue and Elm Street in 1859, but the Village's commitment to preparing students for the future has not wavered.

The Strategic Planning process that is underway will clarify the District's mission and values, establish goals for the next five years, and ensure that students are well prepared for the 21st century. The framework for this initiative was created last fall. Input was solicited from the community, parents, staff, and students throughout the winter and spring via focus groups and surveys.

This feedback, along with historical data, was utilized to establish five pillars, or focus areas, for organizing the District's goals and implementation timeline. Each goal will include sub-goals and specific measures for successful completion. Strategic Planning goals will include mandated and ongoing projects and be aligned with the Board goals and the budget. The pillars are:

- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- ▶ Metrics and Reporting
- ▶ Operations
- ▶ Technology

District values were developed at the 2012 *Summer Institute: Defining our Identity as Public School Progressive Educators in the 21st Century*, to make certain that all decisions are made in the best interest of students. This work will continue throughout the fall. Staff members are working

in school-based teams with their principals to draft mission and vision statements that affirm these beliefs and define what the District will accomplish. The output from the five schools will be combined into a single set of statements that will be folded into the Strategic Plan. The foundational District values are:

- ▶ Reflection
- ▶ Life-long Inquiry
- ▶ Whole Child
- ▶ Civic Responsibility
- ▶ Student Voice
- ▶ Creativity and Innovation
- ▶ Collaboration
- ▶ Meaningful, Purposeful, and Experiential Learning

The Board is developing goals that reflect the District values, priority areas identified during the Strategic Planning process, administrative team goals, and ongoing District initiatives. Although the goals will not be formally presented until November 2012, work toward them has already begun. This

parallel path will ensure that all of the goals are met with time for reflection and refinement.

The Strategic Plan will be presented at the December 2012 Board meeting. It will be in place for five years with most of the significant work being completed in the first three years, leaving years four and five for reflection and refinement. You can read more about Strategic Planning on the District website at [www.winnetka36.org](http://www.winnetka36.org).



Winnetka's educational vision and commitment to students is being recognized at New York's Museum of Modern Art. This original Crow Island school chair is on loan from the Winnetka Historical Society and is included in their *Century of the Child* exhibit.

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The beginning of a school year is an exciting time for everyone. Staff and students are filled with anticipation and eager to begin teaching, learning, and building community. As a parent, I embrace the routine that the new school year brings, and as a Board member I look forward to building on the work that we began last year when Superintendent, Dr.

Thomas Hagerman, and CFO, Dr. Susan Pingitore, joined the District.

The Board continues to be committed to transparency and communication. Community members, parents, staff, and students submitted more than 600 pages of comments via the Strategic Planning survey and Board members reviewed all of them. We encourage you to continue providing feedback throughout the year either during the public comment portion of Board meetings or via email. Although we cannot engage in dialog during Board meetings, we value your thoughts and will add items to future Board agendas as necessary.

Last year, the Board established and achieved an ambitious set of goals. These goals and benchmarks were reported on electronically and at monthly Board meetings. During the 2012–2013 school year, when the Board goals will be aligned with Strategic Planning goals, these practices will continue.

As we embark on the next phase of this work, it is important to reflect on the work that was done last year and recognize that these six major goals and the 100+ supporting sub-goals could not have been met without the hard work of staff and the support of parents and the full Winnetka community.

This cooperation and financial support are what make The Winnetka Public Schools such a wonderful place for children to learn and grow.

## 2011–2012 Board Goal Recap

### Curriculum, Instruction, & Student Assessment

Continue to improve curriculum and instruction by focusing on assessment practices that inform instruction; curricula review processes that align learning expectations; and staff development that promotes consistent implementation.

The math, world language, and fine arts curriculums were in the midst of review last year. Staff development and assessment are included in the program revisions. Writing and differentiation continue to be focus areas.

### Metrics & Reporting

To establish key performance metrics that will measure individual student and cohort academic growth; financial transparency and efficiency; and student, parent, and staff satisfaction with programs and services.

Although Metrics and Reporting is a single goal, separate assessment systems are necessary to report on academic performance, finances, and satisfaction. Tools were selected and benchmarks were set during the 2011–2012 school year.

### Communication

Develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan that shares information with key stakeholders, including parents, community members, and the press, at a District, school, and classroom level.

Print and electronic communications were created and distributed according to the plan presented to the Board in August 2011.

### Human Resources

Continue to recruit, hire, develop, and retain the highest quality staff while attending to outstanding compliance issues and new evaluation mandates.

Policies and procedures were codified and presented to staff. Hiring procedures, compliance issues, evaluations, and training were addressed.

### Strategic Planning

To develop, adopt, and initiate a strategic planning process that ensures the long-term success of our high-quality instruction, programs, and services.

Strategic Planning began in Fall 2011 and is still underway. The plan will be presented in December 2012.

### Board Goal

Focus on student achievement, clear and targeted outcomes, policy development, and broad governance through improved Board interactions and informed decision-making.

Working in collaboration with the administrative team, the Board achieved these goals as evidenced by the other completed goals.

A complete list of 2011–2012 goals and their completion dates can be found on the District website in the June Board Packet.

Dana Crumley is the President of  
The Winnetka Public Schools Board



Every other year District 36 creates and hosts a Staff Summer Institute, underwritten by the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation, for the purpose of delving deeply into a specific area of staff development. This year over 80 staff members met to continue key learning around progressive

education practices and beliefs. A major theme that resulted from this work was the notion of how we would continue working together on various initiatives to complete our “incomplete canvas.” Over the course of those two days there were many rich conversations around our values as educators, and how we have, and will continue to, operationalize these at the classroom, school, and District levels.

Understanding that this dialogue would be a guiding theme for the year, I found myself actively seeking out other canvasses that would influence and impact this work. So, like many others, I was very excited to learn that the Roy Lichtenstein exhibit would be at the Art Institute of Chicago this summer. Although I have always enjoyed the whimsical nature of pop art, I didn’t actually know much about the artist or his technique.

As I wandered through the prolific and colorful exhibit one Saturday morning, I was struck by the number of children present. It was clear that the cartoonish characters and comic book feel had a wide appeal to young and old. I learned that this effect was achieved by Lichtenstein through the use of Ben-Day dots. For those of us who don’t remember that lesson from our art classes, Ben-Day dots are used in a printing process named after the illustrator and printer Benjamin Henry Day. Depending on the effect, color and optical illusion needed, Day used small, same-sized, colored dots spaced closely together, far apart, or overlapping to create the illusion of shadow, color, and dimension. The practical application was that Ben-Day dots could be used to inexpensively create secondary colors (like flesh tones in comic books) in a variety of print materials. Their appeal was that they were easily mass-produced, and people didn’t see or notice them.

Roy Lichtenstein’s art turned convention on its head. Instead of having the dots hide in the background and blend together, he magnified them, enlarging and exaggerating them, making them a central tenet in his work. Lichtenstein believed that the typical printing process idealized images, obscuring their realness, by hiding their essential building blocks. He understood that the constituent parts of an image are what gives it dimension and depth, and, in turn, meaning.

As I reflect on the past year and prepare for the year ahead, I am struck by some parallels between Lichtenstein’s artistic approach and how we have and continue to come together as a community of learners.

First, as the District 36 canvas, we represent a wide array of values, voices, and ideas. Each of these elements, or “dots,” contributes to the overall picture. How we bring these elements together, interact with one another and create common purpose, is, what has, and will continue to, define our current and future successes.

Lichtenstein also shows us that our work together is an organic process and that there are many means to reach our end. Although the dots are similar in size, shape, and color, they can be re-positioned again and again to achieve a host of different outcomes. Likewise, we can leverage our collective knowledge, skills, and experience in many different ways to ensure outstanding educational experiences and services for all of our students.

Finally, Lichtenstein took conventional ideas, innovated them, and, in so doing, created his own unique art form. In public education today, it is easy to feel that outside economic, political, and legal forces are changing the nature of effective teaching and learning. Lichtenstein challenges us to reframe our thinking and innovate with convention to give stronger voice to our values and beliefs. Winnetka has a rich history of, and dedication to, progressive education. Doing what we love to do, along with what we have to do, is sometimes a challenge, but it is one that we are uniquely equipped to handle.

As we complete our incomplete canvas, the final picture that will ultimately emerge will undoubtedly contain both a larger image of cohesion and unity, and, like Lichtenstein’s work, the Ben-Day dots of each individual’s contribution to the work we do each day on behalf of the children of Winnetka.

I look forward to partnering with all of you throughout the 2012-13 school year as we work to complete our incomplete canvas!

In service,

Dr. Thomas Hagerman  
*Superintendent*



Images © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

## STAR Assessment

In September 2012, The Winnetka Public Schools introduced STAR, a computerized assessment for reading and math. This assessment will be given to students in grades 3–8 in the fall, winter, and spring. Student growth will be measured by comparing the results over the course of the school year, and from year-to-year.

Beginning this year, administrator reviews will be based, in part, on annual student progress; STAR results will provide the data for that portion of their evaluations. Student progress will continue to be monitored in multiple ways, both quantitative and qualitative. This test is one of many pieces of information that will be used to measure student progress and inform instructional decisions.

The STAR assessment was selected after a year of thoughtful study because it is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and provides screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring data that supports District assessment goals. This type of computer-based test adapts to the ability level of the test-taker. Fewer questions have to be answered on a computer-adaptive test (versus a static multiple-choice test) for an accurate performance score to be determined.

The District is beginning to use a computer-based test before it becomes mandatory in 2014 so that students become familiar with the process. The total number of assessments in which students must participate over the course of the school year will be reduced as a result of this change.



## Staff Evaluations

The District has made substantial changes in the review process for all employee groups including administrators, teachers, and education support personnel. These changes are partially in response to the mandated requirements of Senate Bill 7, the Performance Evaluation Reform Act, and reflect the District's commitment to consistently high expectations.

Comprehensive rubrics for all three groups have been developed, and all employees will receive one of four summative ratings based on a number of factors, including a strong emphasis on student growth: "Excellent," "Proficient," "Needs Improvement," and "Unsatisfactory."

The School Board adopted a performance-based compensation philosophy based on this four-tiered summative rating system for all employees not covered by collective bargaining agreements at their August meeting.

Administrative reviews will also be based, in part, on student growth beginning this year. Student achievement will become a factor in teacher evaluations during the 2016–2017 school year.

These new assessments add objectivity to a previously more subjective practice, clear descriptions of professional excellence, and offer opportunities to align feedback with professional development and support. District administrators successfully completed extensive evaluation training (30–60 hours) in July and August 2012.

## Winnetka Educators are Leaders

Winnetka's students are the primary beneficiaries of the countless hours spent on curriculum development by District staff. Their peers are recognizing this leadership and innovation as well. Staff from The Winnetka Public Schools share their work at major educational conferences on a regular basis. These projects represent the efforts of many others who served on curriculum committees and participated in research projects.

### American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language

Alicia Shapiro-Rosenberg, Greeley School Spanish teacher, and Assistant Superintendent, Trisha Kocanda, will be sharing the podium with Nancy Rhodes from the Center for Applied Linguistics this November. Their presentation, *Best Practices for Elementary School Language Programs*, will focus on collaborative program redesign.

### Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

The Fine Arts Curriculum Review was the first District project completed within the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework. This model,

which focuses on student understanding of complex concepts, will be used for all future curriculum reviews. Betsy Gmitro, Crow Island School music teacher, Amy Markos, Carleton Washburne School drama teacher, and Trisha Kocanda will be presenting *UbD and Creative Artists: Using the Box to Think Out of the Box* in March 2013 at ASCD: Learn, Teach, Lead.

### Conference on English Leadership

*Focus on Feedback—One Township's Journey to Improve Writing Instruction* will be presented by Ed Zwirner, New Trier High School, and Trisha Kocanda, this November. The collaboration between the two districts and other township feeder schools, highlights effective strategies for providing feedback that encourages young writers to create strong, purposeful written work.

### American Alliance for Theatre and Education

Amy Markos, Carleton Washburne School drama teacher, presented *Powerless: A Superhero Drama Structure based on themes from the novel by Matthew Cody*, with Rives Collins from Northwestern University. The hands-on session engaged participants in a drama structure based on Cody's novel, *Powerless*, as developed for the students of The Skokie School last year.



## Measuring Our Progress

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is a metric used to gauge the performance of schools and school districts as a result of the federal law, No Child Left Behind. Performance on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) is the measurement tool used in Illinois. Data is disaggregated by school and by sub-group (race, students with disabilities, etc.) as part of the analysis.

All five of the Winnetka Public Schools and the District as a whole met AYP in both reading and math in 2012, including all recognized sub-groups. The District has met these student-growth goals every year since 2003 when Illinois modified school code to conform to the national *No Child Left Behind Act*.

AYP goals increase annually. This year the State goals for AYP required that 85% of students from all sub-groups meet or exceed state standards on the ISAT. The District accomplished this goal and remains in good standing with the State.

A revised Illinois assessment will be introduced during the 2014–2015 school year. This national computerized test is being developed by Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), and will be aligned with the Common Core Standards.

All student photos taken on the first day  
of the 2012–2013 school year.



The Winnetka Public Schools continue to be strong both academically and financially. Thanks to the commitment of the community, District 36 is able to offer an excellent education program responsive to the individual needs of learners.

My first year in the District has been both busy and productive. It is a pleasure to regularly visit the schools where I am continually impressed by the dedication to excellence exhibited by both certified and classified staff. For a “numbers person,” school visits help keep me grounded in what is most important in schools: teaching, learning, and providing the support our students need to be successful both now and in the future.

Over these months, I have spoken with Board members, residents, parents, and staff about their priorities and incorporated that feedback into our work in the Business Office. These conversations have been deep and meaningful as I get to know the community, its goals, and aspirations better.

As Chief Financial Officer (CFO) my role is to assure effective and efficient stewardship of the resources the community provides for our students. This view drives the decisions that I make each day.

This year, key initiatives include:

- ▶ Launching an online registration and fee payment system. The new paperless process is simpler and ensures that the most current student information is available to school nurses, teachers, and administrators prior to the first day of school.
- ▶ Working with the Human Resources Department to analyze staffing from a District perspective to continue the process of aligning student/staff ratios to all positions, including special education, fine arts, world language, and kinetic wellness, among others.
- ▶ Presenting the Board with an annual budget that reflects the District’s educational priorities, goals, and mission, and is aligned with the *Illinois Program Accounting Manual*.

During the 2012–2013 school year, I will be working with the administrative team to develop a financial plan to support the implementation of the District’s Strategic Plan, improving operational efficiencies, and developing vehicles to report financial information in ways that reflect the transparent and accountable process that is part of our work each and every day.

I thank the community for allowing me the opportunity to serve The Winnetka Public Schools.

Susan Pingitore is the CFO of The Winnetka Public Schools



# Curriculum Update

Trisha Kocanda



We constantly strive to improve through a cycle of reflection, innovation, and implementation. This cycle is particularly evident in the District approach to curriculum development. The Curriculum Review Cycle is a six-year plan that balances our initiatives and focuses our annual work. Each school year, all content areas are at different

stages in the cycle as shown below.

During the 2012–2013 school year, the District is implementing a revised Fine Arts curriculum. For the past two years, the art, drama, and music teachers have been revising learner outcomes based on research to align expectations across the District. Our main committee work this year involves math, language arts, and world language.

Math is in the second year of the cycle. Finalizing learner outcomes within each unit of study, and identifying new math materials are top priorities. Professional development will focus on differentiating for high-readiness (advanced) learners. Parents and students will notice content and material changes in the classroom next school year.

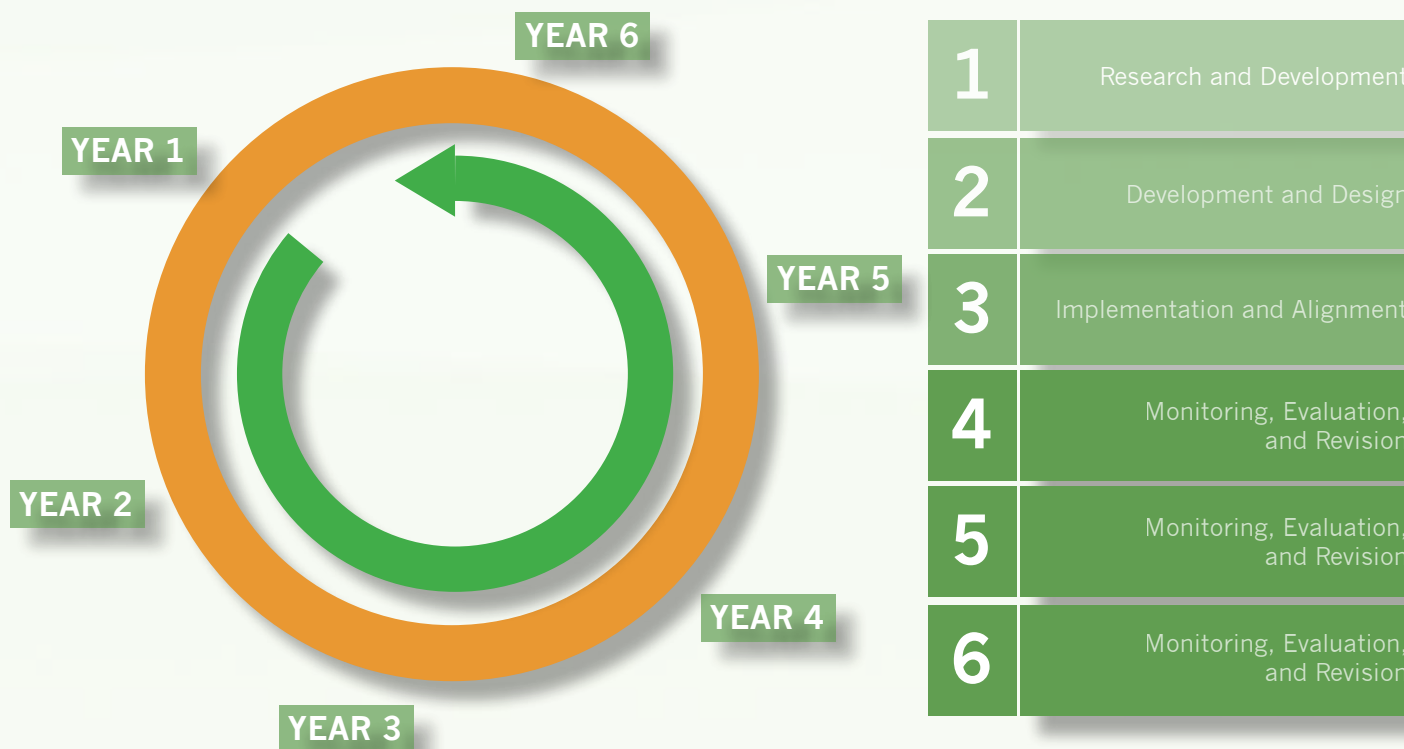
The Language Arts program is in the first year of the cycle. Due to new expectations outlined in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the recently implemented Language Arts curriculum requires an earlier-than-expected revision. We will carefully analyze the CCSS to identify our greatest areas of need and alignment and then draft learner outcomes for units of study. Our initial analysis shows that the CCSS have a stronger emphasis on informational text and increased reading volume demands. We will focus staff professional development in these areas this year.

The World Language program is in the third year of the cycle. The newly revised curriculum and schedule are being implemented at The Skokie School. Revised instructional units and schedules are being developed for the elementary schools for implementation in the 2013–2014 school year.

The Curriculum Department is also preparing to initiate the review process in the areas of science, kinetic wellness, and health in 2013–2014. Our Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program will also be reviewed as an outgrowth of the Strategic Plan. The continuous cycle of analysis and reflection drives our work, and inspires us to strive for the highest quality instructional programming for our students.

Trisha Kocanda is the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment at The Winnetka Public Schools

## The Curriculum Review Cycle





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## Public Safety in the Public Schools

Learning abounds in the Greeley School Resource Center, but students might have been surprised to see just who was doing that learning in August when the District 36 administrative team spent a morning with “Winnetka’s Finest” discussing crisis management and protocol.

Representatives from the Winnetka Police Department and Winnetka Fire Department joined forces to organize several tabletop scenarios that cross-functional teams of District personnel, firefighters, and police officers worked together to solve. These collaborations were learning opportunities as well as an opportunity for members of all three organizations to become acquainted. “Things, including emergencies, run smoothly when there are relationships,” said Winnetka Fire Chief, Alan Berkowsky.

The meeting was also a forum for highlighting proper emergency procedures and protocols, and discussing tactics including communication, transportation, and student dismissal. “Every challenge requires a unique collaborative solution,” noted Winnetka Chief of Police,

Patrick Kreis. “The cooperation between these three Village groups is incredible,” said Human Resources Director, Maureen Cheever, who has frequently worked with both the Fire and Police Departments during her tenure with the District.

Student safety is a priority for all three groups and the District has an extensive emergency plan. Additional details about emergency procedures will be shared with parents throughout the year.



Photo credit: Wolf Peddinghaus, Winnetka Fire Department