



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2021-2025



## Dear Families, Staff, and Community Members,

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 an ambitious Strategic Planning process starting in March 2020 with the involvement of over two-thousand contributors representing students, staff, parents, community members, and alumni.

We are pleased to share the outcome of these efforts by presenting 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: Resilient, Effective Communicator, Creative Problem-Solver, Collaborative, Empathetic, Global Citizen and Lifelong Learner.

The competencies outlined in our Portrait of a Graduate illustrate a successful Winnetka Experience for our students and will prepare them to thrive as learners and leaders in the world. We are proud of our collaboration with New Trier High School and our alignment with their Portrait of a Graduate, supporting continuity for our students.

## STRATEGIC GOAL AREAS & STRATEGIES 2021-2025

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

- Intellectual Engagement and Motivation to Learn;
- Positive Culture and Well-Being;
- Local and National Leader in Progressive Education and Talent Development; and
- Financial Stewardship and Facility Improvements.

Each year of the Strategic Plan, the Administration will present the Board with an annual plan to advance the ambitious goals based on the most relevant data and context. This annual approach is best practice and allows for dynamic and adaptive planning.

We look forward to regularly communicating progress in all of these areas over the next four years. We trust that our school community will align with our collective efforts toward accomplishing our goals. Together, we are committed to providing a vibrant Winnetka Experience that supports every learner to reach their highest potential and ultimately make a meaningful difference in the world.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Trisha Kocanda**  
Superintendent

**Ms. Dawn Livingston**  
School Board President



# THE PILLARS OF PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

## Celebrating 100 Years of Progressive Education in The Winnetka Public Schools

Superintendent Carleton Washburne introduced Progressive Education to The Winnetka Public Schools when he arrived in the District just over 100 years ago. Washburne served as Superintendent from 1919 through 1943, transforming the student and educator experience during his tenure and making The Winnetka Public Schools a prominent, nationally recognized, public school system founded on the principles of John Dewey's Progressive Education.

Progressive Education has impacted thousands of students in Winnetka, inspired lifelong learning, and fostered a deep connection in the community that is still prevalent 100 years later. Personalized instruction, hands-on learning, and tending to the social and emotional needs of every student are now cornerstones of excellent schools across the country. Winnetka educators are actively engaged in continued education and recognized leaders in their field, publishing in scholarly journals and presenting at conferences across the country.

While we remain deeply rooted in our progressive philosophy, we are committed to advancing education to support a new generation of learners. In this spirit, we evolve our progressive practices to include the best of 21st century learning concepts, tools, and environments. The Winnetka Public Schools' Portrait of a Graduate guides our educators in cultivating the attributes to equip and empower our students to make a meaningful difference in the world.

### WHOLE CHILD

A child-centered approach to education that honors students' social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs.

### COMMUNITY

A collaborative, child-centered partnership amongst students, educators, staff, parents, and citizens of Winnetka.

### DEMOCRACY

A school environment that fosters mutual respect for others, promoting the values and skills necessary for students to become contributing members of a democratic and just society.

### PLAY

A developmental approach for children to explore and internalize what they are learning by formulating and testing their own ideas.

### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

An engaged learning process whereby students "learn by doing" and reflect on the experience.



# The Mission & Vision of The Winnetka Public Schools D36

## 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 ...

### LIFELONG LEARNER



#### ...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.

For more information visit [www.winnetka36.org](http://www.winnetka36.org)



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# STRATEGIC GOAL AREAS



STRATEGIC GOAL | ONE

# Intellectual Engagement & Motivation to Learn

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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.



