



ST. HELENS SCHOOL DISTRICT



Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026



Presented by St.
Helens School District
Staff, Community
Volunteers, Scot
Stockwell, Stacey
Mendoza, and
Colonna Education
Consulting Services



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Dear St. Helens School District Families and Friends,

As with most everything, the pandemic has significantly impacted our Strategic Planning Process. Interacting directly with our community to determine their wants and needs is a critical part of any successful Strategic Plan. We began in the spring of 2021, only to find that the pandemic created too much of a barrier to truly engage with our community. In the fall of 2022, we restarted our process by reviewing the data we collected in 2021 and merging it with new surveys, empathy interviews, and listening sessions conducted by the school district. Completing our Strategic Plan for implementation as we put the impact of the pandemic behind us positions the district well for continued success.

While gathering community feedback, the committee heard the desire to address the learning loss created by the pandemic and improve academics across the board. Our community expects the St. Helens School District to take measurable actions to support students at all levels and provide meaningful career education experiences. In addition, our community wants all children to feel a sense of belonging and be free to express themselves without being influenced by political agendas.

The feedback the committee received about what was going well was encouraging, yet what needed improvement to meet the needs of all children in our community was powerful. The Core Values that came from this work: Achievement, Belonging, and Community are the true keys to student success. The challenge is for the district to identify the correct goals and strategies to make our community vision a reality: St. Helens School District inspires all students to learn, connect, and commit to a thriving future.

The St. Helens Strategic Plan is a three-year endeavor designed to be reviewed annually and adjusted to keep our work focused on the hopes and dreams our community has for our students. In this document, you will find the goals along with measurable performance indicators to monitor progress toward achieving our goals and, ultimately, our vision for all students. Progress will be shared with the board on a regular basis by specific district leaders to maintain accountability. The Strategic Plan is the map for which all future decisions will be decided.

Over the next three years, we will continue to gather feedback to inform our work and guide the strategic planning process. We believe partnering with our families and community is the only way to fully reach our vision for our children. Please contact your teachers, administrators, board members, and central office teams to share ideas and ask questions.

It is with great appreciation for our community's ongoing support and trust that I present to you our Strategic Plan. Together we will continue to build a school district where everyone feels they have a place and belong.



Scot Stockwell
Superintendent



MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

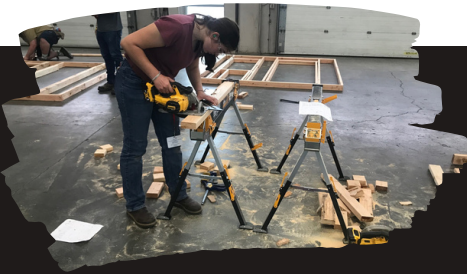
Shirley Brock	District Director of Teaching & Learning
Ben Bruhn	Teacher at Plymouth High School
Jerome Colonna	Consultant
Catherine Contreras	Teacher at St. Helens Middle School
Matt Doyle	District Director of Academic Programs
Anderson DuBoise	Coach for REAP Inc.
Shanna Duggan	City of St. Helens Parks and Recreation Manager
Rosa Gonzalez	District Family Resource Center Liasion
Jamie Griffin	Faith-Based Liasion/Yankton Community Fellowship
Cris Gwilliam	Principal at St. Helens Middle School
Chris Hawkins	Classified Staff Union President/Custodian
Ron Hernley	Principal at Plymouth High School
Dr. Neha Hertzog	St. Helens High School Social Worker
Alan Holinbeck	Columbia County Historical Society/SHMS Athletic Director
Mark Jackson	Executive Director of REAP Inc.
Ed Leader	District Director of Technology
Payton Mauldin	Student at St. Helens High School
Keith Meeuwsen	Certified Staff Union President/SHHS Teacher
Stacey Mendoza	District Director of Communications
Jared Plahn	District Director of Facilities
Lucie Polvogt	Student at St. Helens High School
Jessica Seay	District Director of Fiscal Services
Scot Stockwell	District Superintendent
Lori Thompson	District Director of Student Services
Lisa Tyler	District Director of Teaching & Learning
Jennifer Vanderschuere	Principal at Columbia City Elementary School
Dr. Katy Wagner	Principal at St. Helens High School

MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT IMPLEMENTATION WORK GROUP

Nicole Andrehsen	Teacher at Columbia City Elementary
Martine Barnett	Principal at Lewis & Clark Elementary
Shirley Brock	District Director of Teaching & Learning
Jessica Blount	Teacher at St. Helens High School
Jerome Colonna	Consultant
Catherine Contreras	Teacher at St. Helens Middle School
Matt Doyle	Director of Academic Programs
Roger Fink	Principal at McBride Elementary
Jamie Griffin	Faith-Based Liasion/Yankton Community Fellowship
Kendra Griffin	Teacher at McBride Elementary
Cris Gwilliam	Principal at St. Helens Middle School
Chris Hawkins	Classified Staff Union President/Custodian
Martin Hehman	Interim Administrator
Alan Holinbeck	Columbia County Historical Society/SHMS Athletic Director
Stacey Mendoza	District Director of Communications
Pete Moshinsky	District Director of Human Resources
Krista Mosley	Teacher at Lewis & Clark Elementary
Scot Stockwell	District Superintendent
Lori Thompson	District Director of Student Services
Lisa Tyler	District Director of Teaching & Learning
Jennifer Vanderschuere	Principal at Columbia City Elementary School
Brooke Vilante	Interim Administrator
Dr. Katy Wagner	Principal at St. Helens High School

Process Used for Strategic Plan Development

Originating from Superintendent Stockwell and the St. Helens School District Board members' decision to undertake a comprehensive, districtwide improvement process, the strategic planning work began in January 2021. The developed multi-year strategic plan will become operational in July 2023 and is scheduled to continue through the end of the 2025-26 school year. The St. Helens School District contracted with Jerome Colonna of Colonna Education Consulting Services to facilitate the overall strategic planning process.



The first step was to put a representative District Strategic Planning Team in place. This twenty-seven member team held seven five-hour meetings that started on April 23, 2021, and finished on May 2, 2023. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, work on the strategic plan was paused from May 2021 until January 2023. The initial task was to identify trends documented in the St. Helens School District Strategic Plan Survey Report to help guide the team on improvements. The six survey questions targeted district strengths, what major improvements should be made, what the district's core values should be, how the district can better serve all students, how St. Helens School District can better connect with its community, and a final open question inviting any other comments.

The District Strategic Planning Team completed its work after creating the strategic goals. Then, Superintendent Stockwell appointed a second group comprised of twenty-three members, the District Implementation Work Group, to provide the five remaining parts of the plan:

- Refine the goal statements
- Identify performance indicators for each goal
- Select measurements for each performance indicator
- Suggest accountability/monitoring guidelines
- Designate tasks to be completed in the first school year (2023-2024) of the multi-year plan.



The second group completed its work during a seven-hour meeting on May 11, 2023. After this meeting, the plan's first draft was written by Strategic Planning Consultant Jerome Colonna, formatted by District Director of Communications Stacey Mendoza, and edited by Superintendent Scot Stockwell. The first draft was presented to St. Helens School District Board members, the District Strategic Planning Team, and the District Implementation Work Group during a three-hour meeting held on June 1, 2023. Modifications were made to the draft plan based on the collective suggestions received. Final edits were made and the plan was professionally printed by the St. Helens School District. It was approved by the St. Helens School District Board at their June 28, 2023, meeting. The completed document along with the previously mentioned survey report, has links on the front page of the district website. Presentations are scheduled for August through December in each district school and with various representative groups throughout the greater St. Helens School District community.

A Brief Introduction to the St. Helens School District

The City of St. Helens is located 30 miles north of Portland. The school district boundaries encompass the communities of St. Helens, Columbia City, Yankton, Deer Island, and Warren. It serves approximately 2,800 students within six on-campus school sites and one virtual school option for students. The racial makeup of the student population is 77% Caucasian, 12% Hispanic, 7% Multi-racial, 1% Native American, 1% African American, 0.4% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 0.6% Asian. The staff is comprised of 172 classified (support) staff, 179 licensed educators, and 15 district administrators.





The surrounding region has several industries that provide a stable economic base for the community and its public schools. Small and large acreage home sites are available for families who want the rural way of life and easy access to the Portland metro area. Many parents/guardians commute to work in or near Portland daily to enjoy the lifestyle of a smaller semi-rural area.



St. Helens is located beside the Columbia River, which features ample recreational activities such as fishing for salmon, sturgeon, and steelhead trout while also offering many other outstanding water sports activities. Magnificent Oregon beaches are located just one and a half hours to the west, while skiing and various winter sports are only one and a half hours to the east on Mount Hood. The breathtaking Columbia River Gorge and the Oregon high desert are well within a day's trip from St. Helens.



The district's high school athletic programs are in the 4A-1 Cowapa League, and the drama, band, and choir departments have placed first in state competitions several times. In addition, St. Helens High School offers some of the most comprehensive college and career readiness programs in the state.



The St. Helens School District has passed three back-to-back school bonds, which have allowed the district to build a new middle school, a new options high school, and renovate the current high school. This has added 21st-century learning opportunities for students and improved safety and security for students and staff.



The district truly invests in its students, from it's Early Childhood programs to high school graduation and beyond.



Strategic Plan Components at a Glance

CORE VALUES

The St. Helens School District is Committed to:

Achievement	Belonging	Community
Ensuring academic growth, life skills development, and continuous improvement.	Welcoming, honoring, and integrating diverse perspectives and individuals.	Cultivating meaningful partnerships, effective communication, and sincere compassion.

TAGLINE

Learn,
Connect,
Commit

VISION STATEMENT

St. Helens School District inspires all students to learn, connect, and commit to a thriving future.

MISSION STATEMENT

Strengthening
Our Community
Through
Exceptional
Schools

STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 1: Student Success

Every student is prepared through a variety of learning options to successfully transition to their next meaningful step, preschool through high school and beyond.

Goal 2: Inclusive Culture

Create an inclusive and positive culture that promotes a safe and connected learning environment for all.

Goal 3: High-Quality Instruction

Identify and prioritize quality classroom instruction by investing in staff to reinforce student-centered best practices.

District Core Values

St. Helens School District's core values represent the ethics and ideals that form the foundation of its everyday culture. Agreed-upon core values are the basis on which the district's work should be performed and how employees and volunteers are expected to conduct themselves. The District Strategic Planning Team and survey respondents identified several core values and beliefs. However, the three listed below were determined to be so essential that they will be systematized, district-wide, over the three-year period the strategic plan is carried out. Even in Oregon's ever-changing economic and political landscapes, these three core values should stay constant and influence all aspects of the St. Helens School District's people, purpose, and passion. They represent the compass by which the district wants to navigate its mission, follow its vision, achieve strategic goals, measure progress, utilize resources, hire staff, and make major decisions. The district wants to be guided and deeply influenced by these values each day in everything it does.

After discussions in portions of all seven meetings, the District Strategic Planning Team members selected the core values listed below. The St. Helens School District Strategic Plan Survey Report, completed in January 2023, was a tool that guided the work of the District Strategic Planning Team used at each of its meetings.

St. Helens School District is Committed to:

Achievement

Ensuring academic growth, life skills development, and continuous improvement.

Belonging

Welcoming, honoring, and integrating diverse perspectives and individuals.

Community

Cultivating meaningful partnerships, effective communication, and sincere compassion.





District Mission Statement

A mission statement identifies the purpose of an organization, why it was founded, and why it exists. The statement below clearly communicates what has heart and meaning in the St. Helens School District. It is easy to understand, it is memorable, and it captures the district's culture in six carefully selected words. The St. Helens School District mission statement was built from the many survey responses in the St. Helens Strategic Plan Survey Report and the new district core values. The St. Helens School District's mission statement is:

Strengthening Our Community Through Exceptional Schools

District Vision Statement

St. Helens School District's vision statement is a concise description of what the district wants to focus on during the next three school years (2023-2026). The purpose of this vision is to inspire, energize, and motivate all parts of the organization. It is intended to serve as a guide for current major action and key future decisions. The statement focuses on the district's most hopeful, successful, and ideal future. It is not about what is already in place or what might easily be implemented. The words challenge the status quo and influence significant districtwide systemic changes. Like the district's tagline, it is designed to say a lot in just a few words. While the sentence does not indicate how St. Helens School District will achieve its strategic goals, it does set a definite direction for the overall continuous improvement process.

The planning team selected conceptual ideas and wording for the new vision statement from the St. Helens School District Strategic Plan Survey Report, the new district core values, and the slightly-edited mission statement. The St. Helens School District's vision statement is:

St. Helens School District inspires all students to learn,
connect, and commit to a thriving future.



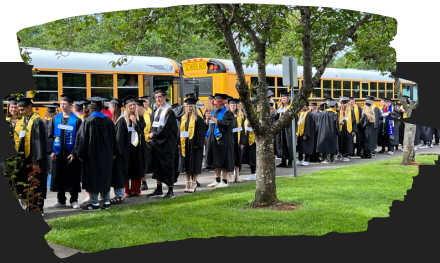
District Tagline

Created at the end of the Strategic Planning process, the district tagline is intended as a message of hope to every student in the St. Helens School District.

Our hope is that this tagline will be memorable and positive and communicate our intent for our students with just three simple words.

Learn, Connect, Commit





District Strategic Goals, Performance Indicators, and Measures

Strategic Goals

A successful organization must have challenging goals and achieve them on time. Without strategic goals, many organizations experience a lack of focus and direction. Goals provide benchmarks so accomplishments can be measured. Goal-setting was the most important part of St. Helens School District's overall strategic plan development. The District Strategic Planning Team limited the number of goals to only three to ensure a tight focus and resources will be aligned with actions to drive the district vision. An emphasis was placed on selecting a few challenging improvements and doing them really well. The goals were formed from and are connected to the new district's core values, mission statement, vision statement, and tagline. The key function of these three strategic goals is to guide the achievement of the district's vision through the end of the 2026 school year. The Strategic Planning process prioritizes what is most meaningful and important for our students, staff, and community.

Performance Indicators

Each strategic goal has three performance indicators. Performance indicators break goal achievement efforts down into manageable units and represent steps in their implementation. They are key tasks selected to accomplish the goals. Identifying the right performance indicators is a proven way to measure what progress is being made toward achieving a specific strategic goal. Without a series of measurable performance indicators, the strategic plan would most likely fail, and the district would not have precise data to determine at what level it is achieving its goals. Performance indicator progress is the most important segment of the plan to report to St. Helens School District constituents, especially school board members.

Measures

To gain success, the strategic plan has to be specifically monitored so that periodically each performance indicator can be accurately assessed. The measures are composed of quantitative and qualitative factors which gauge progress. They not only show progress or lack thereof; they also provide a tool to determine if adjustments to the goals, indicators, measures, or dedicated resources should be considered.

First year of the St. Helens School District Strategic Plan (2023-2024)

It is important to note that for each district strategic goal only year 1 (2023-24) performance indicators and the measurements for each performance indicator are listed below.

Goal 1. Student Success - Lisa Tyler Every student is prepared through a variety of learning options to successfully transition to their next meaningful step, preschool through high school and beyond.	
Performance Indicator 1A: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify and evaluate the tools and practices currently supporting the district's multi-tiered system of support programs.	Measure 1A: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Compile a list of existing tools and practices at each district school by January 31, 2024.
Performance Indicator 1B: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Create cohesive and consistent structures for our district's multi-tiered system of support programs.	Measure 1B: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Create a multi-tiered system of support/response to intervention (RTI) document that identifies our tiered levels of support for intervention and enrichment by May 31, 2024.
Performance Indicator 1C: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify resources that support Essential Standards and Skills.	Measure 1C: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher teams will select a course or subject and identify Essential Standards and Skills by June 30, 2024.

First year of the St. Helens School District Strategic Plan (2023-2024) (continued)

Goal 2. Inclusive Culture - Lori Thompson Create an inclusive and positive culture that promotes a safe and connected learning environment for all.	
Performance Indicator 2A: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and support a district equity team with staff member representation from each district school. 	Measure 2A: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By September 29, 2023, all schools will have representation of licensed and classified staff on a district equity team that will schedule and attend monthly meetings throughout the 2023-24 school year.
Performance Indicator 2B: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify systems and programs that will support students and staff in an inclusive school culture. 	Measure 2B: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By the end of February 2024, information and data will be collected on school belonging and safety. On or before June 1, 2024, each district school will have developed a list of programs, practices, policies, and tools that support a sense of belonging.
Performance Indicator 2C: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and evaluate all school and district student and family handbooks by use of a trauma-informed and equity lens to support proactive and culturally responsive district practices. 	Measure 2C: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By October 31, 2023, the new district equity team will partner with each school handbook committee to evaluate their current handbooks based on the new district equity lens. On or before June 1, 2024, revised handbooks will be shared with students and families.

First year of the St. Helens School District Strategic Plan (2023-2024) (continued)

Goal 3. High-Quality Instruction - Pete Moshinsky

Identify and prioritize high-quality classroom instruction by investing in staff to reinforce student-centered best practices.

Performance Indicator 3A:

- Identify high-quality practices within the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership Instructional Framework to strengthen Tier 1 core instruction.

Measure 3A:

- Prior to pre-service days, August 28 and 29, 2023, the district and school administrators will create and lead a districtwide professional development program.
- During pre-service, all staff will participate in professional development focused on the purpose, structure, and process of the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership Instructional Framework.

Performance Indicator 3B:

- Establish a Professional Development structure and focus that drives student-centered best practices.

Measure 3B:

- Draft an annual PD schedule with clear attendance and expectations for certified and classified staff members by August 20, 2023.
- By September 30, 2023, each school will collaboratively determine the yearly focus of PD that will drive student-centered best practices which are research-based and directly connected to the 5D+ Instructional Framework.

Performance Indicator 3C:

- Reinforce the implementation of student-centered best practices as detailed by the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership Instructional Framework.

Measure 3C:

- District and school administrators will support teachers with a targeted feedback cycle by conducting at least one learning walk per month.
- By October 20, 2023, all staff will identify one professional goal that aligns with a domain of the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership Instructional Framework.

Implementation and Accountability

It is unfortunate, but most strategic plans do not achieve their stated goals. According to research in the field, only about 20% of all public and private sector plans are fully implemented on time. Accountability measures must be put in place to ensure implementation steadily progresses. During the implementation process, it is essential to monitor the success and challenges of the goals, performance indicators, and related metrics. Periodically it may be necessary to retool the plan and its assumptions if any element is not progressing satisfactorily. It is important to remember creating a written strategic plan is the easy part in comparison to the difficulty of achieving district goals through the implementation of the performance indicators and meeting their metrics.



This plan was created to be successful. The following list is a combination of suggestions from the literature, District Implementation Work Group, and consultant that can assist the St. Helens School District to meet its strategic goals by the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

- During the next three school years, the plan involves new responsibilities and a significant number of additional resources, district leadership must determine what it is currently doing now that it could stop doing once strategic plan implementation starts. These difficult decisions will allow more effort, staff, and funding to move toward strategic goal implementation and hence on-time achievement.
- It is suggested that the board hold Superintendent Stockwell accountable for demonstrating districtwide, measurable progress on the overall strategic plan. He should hold individuals in charge of specific strategic goals and performance indicators accountable to gain measurable progress for the individual goal and/or the performance indicators they lead.
- This plan needs to be carefully reviewed and modified as necessary on or before mid-May of each school year (starting in May 2024). A Strategic Plan Oversight Committee should be formed to take on this responsibility. It is recommended that Superintendent Stockwell, at least one board member, and multiple, but not all members of the District Strategic Planning Team and the District Implementation Work Group, be participants on the committee.



- The early communication of the plan should include influential teachers, classified staff, and District Strategic Planning Team and District Implementation Work Group members in partnership with school board members and administrators.
- The St. Helens School District General Fund Budget must be aligned with the plan's resource needs prior to each new year of the plan.
- It is recommended at each school that time be periodically used during individual grade and subject matter professional learning community meetings to discuss strategic plan progress. The findings could then be reported out to all school faculty, then to the Strategic Plan Oversight Committee, and on to board members.
- Ideally, the district needs to carry out actions based on specific strategies detailed in the plan and be responsible for comprehensively collecting and analyzing data to measure progress. Board members should receive periodic (every four months is recommended) progress report presentations that include the following information for each of the nine performance indicators:
 1. The amount of progress made since the last report based on measures specific to each indicator.
 2. The challenges encountered with facilities, technology, funding, professional development, policy changes, etc.
 3. Recommendations for possible modifications of performance indicators, measures, and/or strategic goals.
 4. An outline of planned activities from the date of the most current report up to when the next report will be presented.



5. Create a rubric for each performance indicator metric that is shown in a visual form.
6. It is recommended that each quarterly progress report be posted on the school district website, shared with media, and communicated to constituents. In addition, include the K-12 Essential Standards and Skills.



7. Provide dedicated time for teacher Professional Learning Communities (PLC) that focuses on the implementation of the strategic plan. Also, for classified staff, put their expected professional development time for the strategic plan on Wednesday early release days.
8. To assist with staff buy-in, explain the why and how the performance indicators and measures were selected so all staff can clearly understand their roles and responsibilities in the overall strategic plan's implementation.
9. In order to ensure alignment with the strategic goals, make it a priority to keep all the instructional coaches so they can work collaboratively with individual teachers and teacher teams.





Appreciation, Thank You, and Conclusions

A well-deserved thank you goes to all those who contributed to the April 2021 through June 2023 process involved in creating this three-year strategic plan. Also included are the many individuals who participated in the district survey. A special thank you goes to District Director of Communications Stacey Mendoza, members of the District Strategic Planning Team, and the District Implementation Work Group. This multi-year improvement plan would not have been accomplished without the commitment from the St. Helens School District Board of Directors and Superintendent Stockwell's desire to invest the time, energy, and necessary resources for this comprehensive, districtwide improvement process.

The report provides a combination of new core values, a renewed view of the district's future, and a set of challenging goals for prioritized improvements. It communicates clarity for the forward direction of the district by aligning the St. Helens School District Board of Directors with Superintendent Stockwell and each of the district schools. The alignment will strengthen over time through widespread agreement on the new vision and as progress is being made on the three strategic goals. Implemented with fidelity, the strategic plan can result in additional use of long-term perspectives, greater productivity, clearer communication, improved decision-making, and more efficient use of resources. In addition, it can attract more students, potential employees, and outside funding for the district.

This strategic plan provides a focused direction for what the St. Helens School District wants to become and how it can get there over the next three school years.

