

AUSD STRATEGIC PLAN



JUNE 20, 2023

AUSD

ALAMEDA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
EXCELLENCE & EQUITY FOR ALL STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to share with our community AUSD's first strategic plan since the 2010 Master Plan was produced 12 years ago.

Since that time, many conditions have changed, including AUSD's demographics and enrollment, the state's public education funding system, and a host of other academic standards, assessments, and reporting tools. As a community, staff and families alike, we face the complex task of building a school system that provides an engaging foundational education to all students and that can also provide differentiated support for individualized student needs. It's a very big challenge, but one undeniably worth pursuing.

We are also educating students in a social context that in recent years has witnessed heightened awareness of issues related to public health, politics, mental health, race and racism, climate, and countless other areas. In this context, it is important to remember that creating an affinity for learning should be our highest priority, because a student who has learned to love the process of learning itself will be better equipped to respond constructively to their ever-changing social environment and adapt and thrive in an economy that is anything but predictable.

Locally, we continue to share the struggle of many school districts when it comes to serving all of our students effectively. That is, we continue to see differences in outcomes and opportunities for students in our system, differences that correlate to factors like race, disability, and housing status. This pattern warrants both our sustained attention and a sustained effort to disrupt.

In light of all of this, we feel an imperative to focus and pursue system-wide upgrades and strategies that we hope will generate a collective positive impact for all of our students.

In developing this plan, we have focused on instruction, support, and AUSD operations through a lens of equity, pragmatism, and the long-term fiscal well-being of the district. Our goal has been to identify both the foundational program and supports that all of our students need and the changes we need to implement to meet those needs.

Some of those changes may seem like things we should already have, such as teacher collaboration, a full kindergarten day, and schedules that allow students to receive extra or specialized help without missing grade-level instruction. These are program components, however, that AUSD has not provided in the past and so will be new.

Still other changes may feel disruptive (such as changing programs or at least the funding for programs) in order to initially shore up the foundations of our programming at all schools. What's most important to understand is that all of these changes are meant to support students, staff, and families alike.

Key to the implementation of this plan is the role of our individual school sites, who will work with their school communities to integrate these goals into their annual site plans while considering the wide-ranging and sometimes varying needs of their respective students, staff, and families.

I encourage the members of our AUSD community to read through this summary of the report so that we can jointly understand our goals of providing the very best instruction and school cultures for our students. I also encourage families to learn about their own school's site plan by attending School Site Council meetings. This a terrific way to contribute to the plans and priorities of individual schools across our district.

Pasquale Scuderi
Superintendent

AUSD STRATEGIC PLAN

"I HAVE FOUND THAT EDUCATORS YEARN TO BE TOLD SOMETHING LIKE THIS: THERE WILL BE NO MORE INITIATIVES—AT LEAST FOR A TIME. INSTEAD, WE WILL FOCUS ONLY ON WHAT WILL HAVE AN IMMEDIATE AND DRAMATIC IMPACT ON LEARNING IN YOUR CLASSROOMS: ENSURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMMON, CONTENT-RICH CURRICULUM; GOOD LESSONS; AND PLENTY OF MEANINGFUL LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SUCH AS CLOSE READING, WRITING, AND DISCUSSION) ACROSS THE CURRICULUM."

-MIKE SCHMOKER,
"FOCUS: ELEVATING
THE ESSENTIALS TO
RADICALLY IMPROVE
STUDENT LEARNING"



VISION & MISSION

An early and key part of the Strategic Plan work was a revision of the district's Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles. The Board of Education adopted these revisions at its January 12, 2021 public meeting.



VISION

Each and every child is compassionate, confident, and feels successful, academically prepared, and able to make meaningful, positive impact in their lives, the lives of others, and the world around them.

MISSION

Alameda Unified School District is committed to upholding our community's core values of equity and excellence for every student by providing inclusive and safe conditions for learning that challenge and support every student to be culturally competent and prepared for college, career, and community participation.



GRADUATE PROFILE

In the fall of 2019, district staff, in consultation with a wide range of community members developed a "graduate profile" for AUSD. This profile outlines, at a high level, the characteristics, skills, and qualities we want AUSD students to acquire by the time they finish 12th grade.

AUSD's graduate profile has served as a "north star," or student-centered guide, during the development of the Strategic Plan and its accompanying focus areas, goals, and action plans.

More information is available on our [Graduate Profile web page](#).



**I KNOW MYSELF
AND WORK EFFECTIVELY
WITH OTHERS**

Emotionally Intelligent
Effective Collaborator

**I AM COLLEGE, CAREER,
AND LIFE READY**

Core Academics
Life and Professional Skills

**I BUILD COMMUNITY
THROUGH UNDERSTANDING
AND SERVICE**

Cultural Awareness
Civic Responsibility

**I SEEK OPPORTUNITIES
AND CHALLENGES
OF LEARNING**

Critical Thinker and Problem Solver
Ability to Stretch, Engage, and Persist



INTRODUCTION TO FOCUS AREAS, GOALS, AND ACTIONS

AUSD's Strategic Plan consists of three "focus areas," each of which includes three to four goals. Each of those goals, in turn, includes a series of concrete actions we will take to achieve the goals.

These focus areas, goals, and action steps were developed after significant engagement with staff, families, and the wider district community, including:

- Teachers
- School Administrators
- Students
- PTAs & PTA Council
- Office Managers
- School Site Councils
- Instructional Leadership Teams
- Equity Round Tables
- AUSD's Academic Committee
- District English Learner Advisory Committee
- Community Advisory Committee
- District Office Staff
- AUSD Managers



FOCUS AREAS

A large topic of concern and effort for the district.

GOALS

The desired outcomes of the focus areas, or what this will actually look like once implemented.

ACTIONS

The steps we are committing to in order to help achieve those goals.

Example:

Focus Area 1: "Strong Foundational Program for all Students."

Goal 1.2: "Our families, staff, and students are clear about what students are expected to learn."

Action step: "Share articulations/summaries of grade-level content standards to all TK-5 staff and families."



1

**STRONG FOUNDATIONAL
PROGRAM FOR ALL STUDENTS**

GOAL 1.1

Students' daily learning experiences are characterized by engagement, multiple ways of learning, and student discourse.

GOAL 1.2

Student learning is driven by grade-level standards and clear policies. Our families, staff, and students are clear about what they are expected to learn and the policies that support learning.

GOAL 1.3

Build relationships between families, students, and staff to ensure schools are supportive, inclusive, and safe environments that maximize learning.

Focus Area 1 may sound simple, but the very first step we need to take to ensure equitable access to high-quality instruction for all of our students is to create **a strong foundational program** across all of our school sites and classrooms. From that foundation, we can then build programs to provide differentiated instruction and supports for children with differentiated needs, including those with disabilities, those who are English learners, and those who traditionally have been underserved in the educational system.

What do we mean by “strong foundational program”? Our goal is to work together as a community to develop or refine:

- A clear and coherent curriculum (what students learn)
- Dynamic lessons that incorporate many different modes and models of instruction (how students learn)
- More purposeful reading, writing, and student discourse across all subject areas (how students talk about what they're learning)
- A clear and family-friendly articulation of our standards and instructional strategies (how families understand what their children are learning)

A good analogy for this is a house. Our current program is like a house that has some really nice rooms (i.e., school programs and services) but the foundation needs some cracks filled, some leveling, and some reinforcement. We want to strengthen the foundation of the district.

Focal Area 1 actions include (but are not limited to) re-establishing a full-day kindergarten at all sites, developing a common TK-5 literacy framework, and updating 6-12 homework and grading policies to ensure our practices are constructive, researched-based, and student-centered.

2

**SYSTEMS AND
STRUCTURES FOR
STUDENT SUPPORT**

GOAL 2.1

Every school and teacher provides the academic, social/emotional, and culturally responsive support each student needs.

GOAL 2.2

Educators have dedicated time to collaborate, learn, and grow in service of student learning.

GOAL 2.3

School teams consistently support outcomes for students.

GOAL 2.4

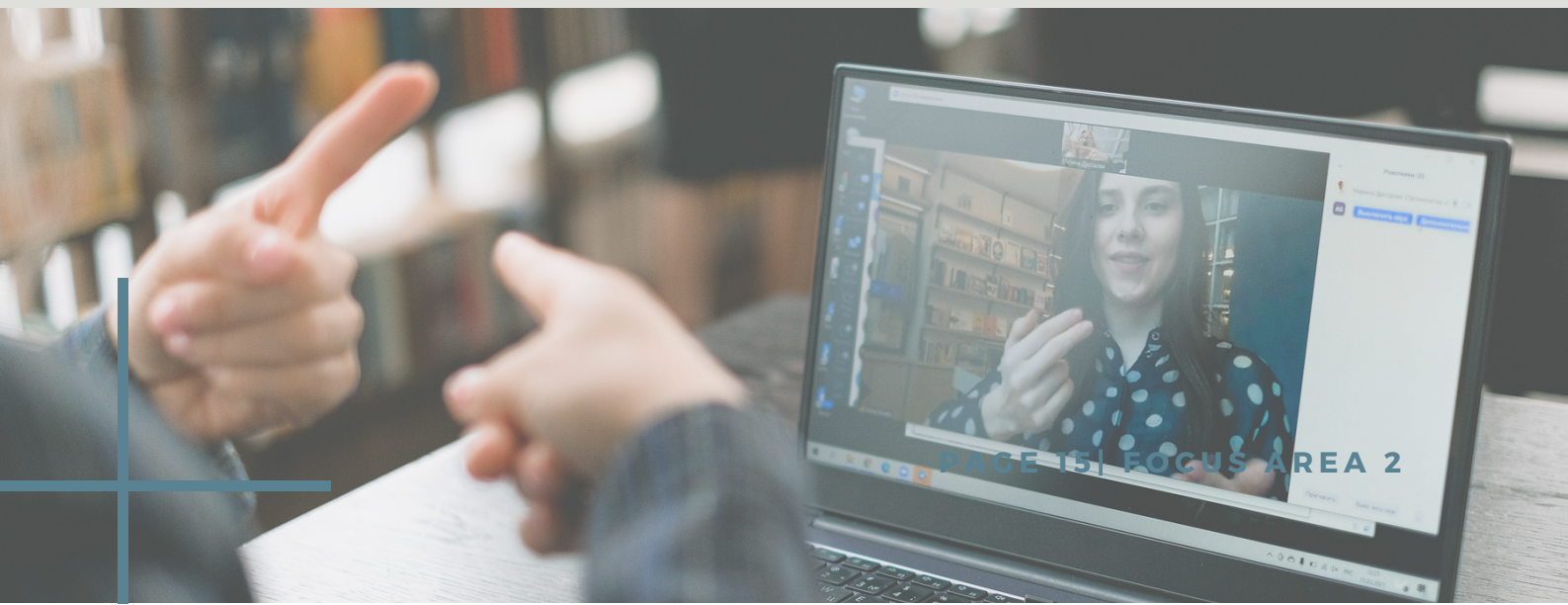
Schedules are strategically designed to create access to equitable learning opportunities and prioritize support for students who need it most.

Focus Area 2 concerns the development of **systems and structures** to support our students academically, socially, and emotionally, especially those who have been marginalized historically.

This includes providing teacher-led professional development and collaboration time so that our staff develop effective practices for supporting our students.

It also includes maximizing overall staffing at schools in order to provide greater access to counseling and teachers. One strategy for this will be the development of elementary schedules that allow our educators to provide extra support to students without pulling them out of their grade-level classes. This strategy also provides teachers with more time to consult and plan with each other on how best to support students.

To provide additional supports to African-American students, AUSD will pilot intensive mentoring at four schools in 2023-24 and is considering providing a specialized K-3 pathway specifically designed to help these students thrive in our schools.



ALAMEDA HIGH SCHOOL

3

RESOURCES, TALENT MANAGEMENT, AND COMMUNICATIONS

GOAL 3.1

Finance: Provide the long-term financial stability necessary to maintain core programming.

GOAL 3.2

Talent Management: Build a focused and diverse team where all positions are fully staffed with qualified personnel.

GOAL 3.3

Communications: Use accurate, transparent, and engaging communications across multiple channels to support AUSD's students, staff, and families.

Focus Area 3 concerns the maintenance and expansion of **resources, talent management, and communications** to further support Focus Area 1 (a strong foundational program) and Focus Area 2 (structures and systems of support).

Action areas for Focus Area 3 include:

- Assessing and improving hiring practices and AUSD's work climate
- Updating employee evaluation systems
- Providing our community with a layperson-friendly budget summary
- Exploring hiring incentives for special education staff
- Continued improvements in technology
- Articulating a district-wide communications plan
- Amplifying student voice
- Expanding AUSD's strategies for engaging historically underserved families

Each of the goals and actions in Focus Area 3 are aligned with the other two Strategic Plan focus areas.

MOVING FORWARD



With three focal areas, 10 goals, and more than three dozen action areas, the Strategic Plan needs to be seen as a long-term approach to building systems of support that allow all of our students to develop the characteristics outlined in our graduate profile. The plan should also be viewed as a “living document,” one that we will continually refine and adapt the plan as conditions change and we identify new needs, resources, and strategies.

Given that not all of the actions can be accomplished in, say, one or two years, staff have identified the priority actions for 2022-23 through 2025-26.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Implement full day kindergarten
- Common elementary schedules to support universal collaboration
- Provide mentors and advisors for our African-American students
- Revise AUSD's grading policies and practices
- Develop a common, engaging, and rigorous literacy framework for all elementary students

All of the work prioritized in the Strategic Plan is predicated on providing employee salaries allow us to retain and attract the very best educators possible and remain competitive with rising salaries in other districts in Alameda County.



FUNDING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

In order to fund the changes needed to provide an equitable education to students across our sites, AUSD staff have committed to a lengthy and thorough analysis of our budget. The primary goal is to find ways to restructure and reallocate funding to serve the greatest number of students. But staff have also focused, specifically, on supporting students and families who traditionally have benefited from the least resources and experienced the greatest access and opportunity gaps in our system.

Part of that work has included the identification of structural challenges and long-standing budgetary choices that may need to be adjusted in order to meet our district-wide goals. In other words, we want to have the flexibility to move away from funding choices we have been making because we have always made them if they no longer support our goals.

But much of the work rests on the acknowledgment that AUSD's funding remains limited for a number of reasons,

Those reasons include: 1) California's funding for public education has long been inadequate and unreliable; 2) Alameda does not generate enough property taxes to make AUSD a "basic aid district" – one that receives excess property taxes in addition to state funding; and 3) we have a comparatively lower percentage of students who are low income, English learners, or foster youth, which means we get less supplemental state funding than many neighboring districts.

As such, AUSD is highly dependent on local parcel taxes to provide the types of educational programs that the Alameda community values. Currently, our parcel taxes comprise 20 percent of our overall budget – 92% of which goes to salaries.

AUSD is deeply grateful for this community support and remains committed to directing its limited resources strategically, equitably, and transparently, as well as regularly engaging the community in the budget analysis and decision-making processes.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

AUSD's Strategic Plan is designed to provide supportive, effective instruction and environments for students, staff, and families. Members of the AUSD community can support the plan by:

- **Spreading the word** Tell others about the Strategic Plan so they understand AUSD's vision and goals!
- **Keeping us focused on our priorities** This is how complex systems improve and make a difference for students, particularly those who have not been equitably served in public education systems.
- **Staying informed** Reading the AUSD newsletter, following us on social media, and especially paying attention to your school's communications helps you better understand our organization's vision, goals, and strategies.
- **Getting involved** Family engagement is crucial to developing healthy, successful schools. See our "Ways to Get Involved" page for a list of ways to be a part of your school and/or district community.

APPENDIX 1: AUSD GUIDING PRINCIPLES

WE BELIEVE THERE IS
VALUE IN DIVERSITY,
AND THAT BY
PROVIDING
EQUITABLE
EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
ALL STUDENTS,
EVERYONE CAN
SUCCEED.

WE BELIEVE THAT
SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL,
AND MENTAL WELL-
BEING ARE CRUCIAL
TO THE SUCCESS OF
STUDENTS.
WE BELIEVE THAT
INEQUITIES EXIST
WITHIN OUR
CURRENT
EDUCATIONAL
SYSTEM AND THAT
IT IS OUR
RESPONSIBILITY TO
DIMINISH THEM.

WE BELIEVE THAT
STUDENTS DESERVE
THE OPPORTUNITY TO
EXPLORE AND
PURSUE THEIR
INTERESTS AND THAT
IT IS THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF
EMPLOYEES TO
SUPPORT THEM IN
THIS.

WE BELIEVE THAT
EDUCATION SHOULD
BE STUDENT-
CENTERED AND
FOCUSED ON THE
WHOLE CHILD.

WE BELIEVE THAT
STAFF AND
ADMINISTRATION
SHOULD WORK
ALONGSIDE
STAKEHOLDERS TO
ENSURE THAT
STUDENTS ARE BEING
GIVEN THE SERVICES
THEY NEED AND ARE
BEING CHALLENGED
APPROPRIATELY.

WE BELIEVE THAT
CLEAR AND
TRANSPARENT
COMMUNICATION
WITH OUR
COMMUNITIES IS
VITAL TO THE
SUCCESS OF
STUDENTS.

APPENDIX 2: GOAL SUMMARIES

AUSD's Strategic Plan consists of three "focus areas," each of which includes three to four goals. Each of those goals, in turn, includes a series of concrete actions we will take to achieve the goals over the next several years.

The following pages summarize these steps in nine high-priority areas. This work will be done in parallel with both the day-to-day operation of our school district and addressing any emerging needs and challenges over the coming years.







GRADING FOR EQUITY

2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Contracted with Crescendo Education; selected Cohort 1 of 20 secondary teachers to be trained in the pillars of GFE in the fall of 2023.	Select Cohort 2 of 20 secondary teachers participate in Action Research around equitable grading practices in the fall of 2024.	Select Cohort 3 of 20 secondary teachers participate in Action Research around equitable grading practices in the fall of 2024.	Begin PK-5 grading improvements, including convening a Report Card Committee, aligning report cards to AUSD priority standards, and ensuring that TK-1 report cards are developmentally appropriate.
Created GFE Workgroup for consultation and feedback	Continue regular meetings with the GFE Workgroup.		
Presented GFE pillars and goals, as well as recommended policy changes, to the Board of Education	Reflect on progress;; submit recommended grading policy changes to Board Policy Subcommittee and full Board.	Continue to keep Board of Education apprised of goals, progress, and necessary policy updates.	
Hosted community presentation on Grading for Equity featuring Joe Feldman	Give presentations on GFE to PTAs.		

SPECIAL EDUCATION

2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Engage in conversations with staff and families to explore the expansion of inclusion opportunities for students with IEPs.	Use data and interviews with students, staff, and families to learn more about their perceptions and understanding of the inclusion needs of students with IEPs.	Provide inclusion awareness training to teaching staff and site leaders. to Implement best practices at select schools.	Expand the implementation of inclusionary best practices to include additional schools.
Analyze current systems, practices, and processes related to the monitoring of compliance timelines.	Introduce and provide training to site leadership teams on the district's special education compliance and monitoring plan.	Refine implementation of the district's special education compliance and monitoring plan.	
Develop monthly listening sessions for families to learn about caregiver experiences researching and accessing AUSD's special education services.	Develop a Parent Resource Network at select schools.	Expand implementation of the Parent Resource Network to additional schools and refine practices.	
Study the new requirements that authorize the creation of an alternate pathway to a high school diploma for students with IEPs.	Update the board policy and courses to create alternate pathway to a high school diploma for students with IEPs.	Implement and refine the alternate diploma pathway to a high school diploma for students with IEPs.	




MENTORING & ADVISING FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS

2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Develop a mentoring and advising program for African-American and other students of color that provides academic, behavioral and family support.	Launch pilot mentoring program at four schools. Each advisor will have up to 20 students and will monitor their attendance and academic progress..	Continue implementation; make adjustments as needed.	
Integrate advisors into communities of practice to support their professional learning	Advisors attend school site meetings and coordinate with school site staff to coordinate support		
Partner with internal and external partners to provide support for students.	Expand awareness of existing programming and available resources through specific outreach /communications.		
	Develop an evaluation tool in collaboration with educational partners to solicit feedback on implementation of advisors.	Program evaluation and potential adjustments.	




DEVELOP TK-5 LITERACY FRAMEWORK

2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Draft elements 1-6 (of 18) of a new TK-5 Literacy Framework.	Draft elements 7-13 (of 18)	Draft elements 14-18.	Publish framework on teacher website. Continually update to ensure it represents current and research-based practices.
Solicit review and feedback on the literacy guidance, gaps, and needs from TK-2 educators on the Literacy Framework Committee (LFC).	Solicit feedback on literacy guidance, needs, and experiences from grades 3-5 educators on LFC as well as non-LFC teachers and principals,. Gather insights on AUSD literacy instruction from families and students, ensuring proportionate representation.		Design multi-year implementation plan,
	Provide differentiated TK-2 teacher professional learning on foundational literacy.		Update multi-year plan for professional learning, including assessment and alignment.
		Begin research for pilot and adoption of K-5 ELA curricula aligned with AUSD Literacy Framework.	Pilot and make adoption recommendation for K-5 ELA curricula.

COLLABORATION & STUDENT-CENTERED COMMON SCHEDULE

2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Agree on language and process for collaboration through collective bargaining	Implement first year of universal collaboration; create common rubric for collaboration across teams	Implement second year of universal collaboration; use a common rubric for collaboration	Teams continue to reflect an dplan using rubric and share their reflections via their SPSAs
Create elementary schedules with common literacy and student support blocks for each grade level to enable student support.	Implement elementary school scedules with common literacy and support blocks. Explore ways to support common math block	Implement elementary schedules that also include common math blocks	
Design new support structures to ensure the implementation of collaboration time	Develop teacher leader capacity to facilitate collaboration	Implment a differentiated support structure for teacher leaders to build their capacity to support collaboration	
	Explore traditional high school schedule that will allow students to take classes not offered at their home schools	Implement traditional high school schedule that allows juniors and seniors to take at least two classes not offered at their home school	
	Explore ways to incorporate advisory sections at secondary schools that allow students to access intervention and support.		Incorporate advisory sections at secondary schools


PRESCHOOL THROUGH 3RD GRADE ALIGNMENT

2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Board approval of expanding kindergarten schedule	Expand kindergarten day to 2:00 pm	Expand kindergarten day to 2:50 pm	Offer kindergarten transtion meeting for families at local preschools.
Convene a Full-Day Kindergarten Committee to develop appropriate practices	Refine learning goals for Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten		
Survey current kindergarten teachers to determine experience in full-day teaching, instructional focus, and curriculum use	Provide professional development for specialists who will be teaching kindergarten music, PE, and media	Offer developmentally appropriate PE, media, and music to kindergarteners..	
Convene a TK Community of Practice	Explore extension of TK day	Implement extension of TK day	
Complete Universal Pre-Kindergarten Planning and Implementation Plan (to qualify for state grant)	Explore a PD plan for preschool to include California Learning Foundations and Developmentally Appropriate Practices	Place preschool program at an elementary school; provide preschool teachers w/ profesional learning on early literacy framework; use student data to inform decisions about instructional strategies and interventions.	Review preschool daily schedules to identify opportunities for focused literacy and foundational reading skills

BUSINESS SERVICES & OPERATIONS

2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Develop a family-friendly budget guide			
Review budgets with site and department leaders bi-annually to help them keep track of spending			
Continue schedule for improvements in technology systems for students, staff, and families so as to improve accessibility, data security, and education.			
Sustain periodic analyses of state and local budgets and develop and communicate contingencies and options to district leadership and partners			
	Present options for managing expiration of revenue streams in June 2025 and June 2026.		
Continue to support design and construction of safe 21st-century learning environments for students and staff.			

TALENT MANAGEMENT

2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
<p>Create and implement HR Hiring Guide that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Equity Imperative Statement • Equity-focused interview questions 	<p>Review and modify HR Hiring Guide</p> 		
	<p>Design and create BIPOC Employee Focus Groups</p>	<p>Review and modify the BIPOC Employee Focus Groups</p>	<p>Implement feedback from the BIPOC Employee Focus Groups into HR Hiring Guide.</p>
<p>Explore recruitment of international teachers in light of statewide teacher shortages.</p>	<p>Implement recruitment of international teachers in light of statewide teacher shortages.</p>	<p>Review and modify recruitment of international teachers in light of statewide teacher shortages.</p> 	
	<p>Explore and address shortages in classified staffing in light of statewide staffing shortages</p> 		

COMMUNICATIONS

2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Create a comprehensive communications plan focused on supporting the Strategic Plan, increasing family awareness and engagement, and addressing current challenges facing the district.	Explore formalized system for families to give input, with an emphasis on historically marginalized families	Implement formalized system for families to give input, with an emphasis on historically marginalized families	
	Explore formalized system to feature student voice, including via internships and other partnerships	Implement formalized system to feature student voice, including via internships and other partnerships	
Create a distilled, public-facing version of the Strategic Plan to share with the AUSD community	Feature aspects of Strategic Plan via AUSD communications		
Work with Technology Services to launch new websites for AUSD and all schools that emphasize navigability and findability	Coach sites and departments on communications best practices to improve quality and consistency; continue finetuning website		