

## AGENDA



**Addison Central School District**

**ACSD Board**

**Board Meeting**

**Monday, September 11, 2023, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm**

**208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury VT & Virtual Connection**

*ACSD District Vision and Mission*

### **OUR VISION**

*Our vision is for all ACSD students to reach their full learning potential, have a sense of belonging in our schools, and enrich our community and the communities where they live in the future.*

### **OUR MISSION**

*Our mission is to provide high-quality, equitable, and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students.*

### **Link to join Webinar**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85152770641>

- |                                                                                                                   |                  |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------|
| A. Call to Order Upon Reaching A Quorum                                                                           | Barb Wilson      | 5 min  |
| 1. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators and Staff                                                        | Barb Wilson      | 5 min  |
| 2. Public Comment on Agenda Items                                                                                 | Barb Wilson      | 10 min |
| B. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of 8/28/2023                                                                 | Barb Wilson      | 5 min  |
| C. Approve ACSD Bills                                                                                             | James Malcom     | 5 min  |
| D. Report of Student Representative                                                                               | Eddie Fallis     | 5 min  |
| E. Report of the Superintendent                                                                                   | Tim Williams     |        |
| 1. Action: Faculty/Staff Appointments/Resignations                                                                |                  | 5 min  |
| a. Appoint Katie Prouty as a Intensive Needs Paraprofessional as a 1.0 FTE, Step 1, per the ESP Master Agreement. |                  |        |
| b. Appoint Connie Selleck as a Classroom Paraprofessional as a 1.0 FTE, Step 15, per the ESP Master Agreement.    |                  |        |
| 2. Action: Fuel and Propane Bids                                                                                  | Matthew Corrente | 5 min  |
| 3. Discussion of Strategic Plan with Equity Focus                                                                 |                  | 50 min |
| F. Report of the Chair                                                                                            | Barb Wilson      | 10 min |
| 1. Superintendent Search Update                                                                                   |                  |        |

2. New VT AOE Rules for School Boards
3. Middlebury Parks and Rec Representative
4. Addison Central SEPAC Representatives

G. Report of the Board

Barb Wilson 25 min

1. Communications & Engagement
2. Facilities
3. Finance
4. Negotiations
5. Policy
6. Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center Representatives
7. Middlebury Community Television Representative

Mary Heather Noble

Jason Chance

James Malcom

Steve Orzech

Suzanne Buck

Steve Orzech

Tricia Allen

Barb Wilson

H. Public Comment - Any Topic

Barb Wilson

I. Adjournment

Barb Wilson

Total Meeting Time: 2h 10m

\*Public Comment Guidelines:

Public comments are encouraged and welcome at each regular board meeting during the period designated for public comment. Comments are limited to three minutes per person. Citizens will be called to make their statement by the board chair. Public comments regarding personnel, students or legal matters will not be heard by the Board.

# MINUTES



## Addison Central School District

### ACSD Board

### Board Meeting

Monday, August 28, 2023, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury VT & Virtual Connection

### *ACSD District Vision and Mission*

#### **OUR VISION**

*Our vision is for all ACSD students to reach their full learning potential, have a sense of belonging in our schools, and enrich our community and the communities where they live in the future.*

#### **OUR MISSION**

*Our mission is to provide high-quality, equitable, and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students.*

### **In-Person Attendance**

Barbara Wilson; Brian Bauer; Courtney Krahn; Ellen Whelan-Wuest; Heather Crowley; James Malcolm; Jamie McCallum; Jason Chance; Joanna Doria; Mary Heather Noble; Matthew Corrente; Nicole Carter; Steve Orzech; Suzanne Buck; Tim Williams; Tricia Allen

### **Remote Attendance**

Ellie Romp; Lindsey Hescok

### **A. Call to Order Upon Reaching A Quorum**

Barb

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

#### **1. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators and Staff**

Barb 5 min

ACSD Staff and Administrators also present: Nicole Carter, Assistant Superintendent and

Director of Equity & Student Services; Courtney Krahn, Director of Teaching and Learning; Heather Crowley, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent; Matt Corrente, Director of Finance & Operations

Emily Blistein, ACSD Director of Communications and Engagement also present (remote).

Judy Sclair-Stein, consultant with McPherson & Jacobson also joined the meeting remotely for Agenda Item F, Superintendent Search.

2. Public Comment on the Agenda  
Items No public comment.

Barb 10  
min

- B. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of August 14, 2023  
Ellen Whelan-Wuest, Jason Chance, and James Malcolm abstained.  
Motion to approve the minutes of August 14, 2023.  
Move: Joanna Doria Second: Jamie McCallum Status: Passed

Barb 5  
min

C. Approve ACSD Bills<sup>Chip 5 min</sup>

James Malcolm presented a summary of the ACSD Bills, which were read on August 28, 2023:

General Fund: \$769,541.55

Payroll: \$886,736.26

Motion to approve and pay the ACSD Bills as presented.

Move: James Malcolm Second: Suzanne Buck Status: Passed

D. Report of the Superintendent Tim Williams 10 min

Tim Williams provided a recap of the Superintendent's Report included in the meeting materials. His plan is to include a report like this at the second Board meeting of every month, which will be included with the agenda and meeting materials. Highlights:

2023-24 School Year: Teachers and staff returned last week -- Tim thanked the Leadership

Team for helping the return go well. The following teachers/staff were recognized as Teacher/Staff of the Year: Lisa Maggio, MUMS; Christina Wadsworth, Weybridge Elementary School; Alex Cox, Ripton Elementary School; and Linda Barrett, Bridport Central School.

VT State Test Results: Preliminary student achievement results have been released by the State for the new standardized testing that was administered last spring. Results are not yet final, they expect to be official in December. Tim noted that the results are not yet meaningful until we know more contextual information and can see how other Districts have done as well.

Strategic Plan: This work will continue at the next September Board meeting so the Board can review, edit, and approve the Strategic Plan.

FY25 Budget: Matt Corrente has proposed the budget timeline, which was included in the last email update. The work on this will begin in the fall, with initial presentations to the Board in December.

Board questions: James Malcolm asked for clarification on when the State proficiency data will be finalized, and noted that the presentation of preliminary data is a bit confusing. Joanna Doria asked about the definitions of "Level 1" through "Level 4." Tim explained that they are essentially proficiency categories specified by the State. Levels 3 and 4 are considered "proficient" in terms of District accountability. Mary Heather Noble asked whether there has been any feedback from Teachers and Principals about this new testing tool. Courtney Krahn noted that the tests are quite different than SBACs, and that the practice tests were different than the official tests, so students had to adjust to that. They seemed to be administered smoothly from her observations. Ellen Whelan-Wuest asked about being able to compare historical data with the new information when it is presented. Tim noted that the State plans to provide some "crosswalk" data/information to help Districts understand the new results in the context of prior SBAC data.

#### E. Report of the Board

##### 1. Discussion: Committee Updates

Barb 10 min

James Malcolm reported that the Finance Committee has not yet met since the last update.

Steve Orzech reported that the Negotiations Committee is scheduled to meet on September 6th. They are preparing for negotiations, but the process does not officially begin until the Association requests it (usually a bit before contracts expire).

Jason Chance reported that the Facilities Committee has not yet met.

Suzanne Buck reported that the Policy Committee is currently reviewing 11 policies.

Mary Heather Noble reported that the Communications & Engagement Committee has completed its recommended edits for most of the Board pages on the new ACSD website. They were waiting for Board members to provide feedback on their edited Bios. She will give the edits to Emily Blistein to update the website, noting that the Facilities Master Plan portion of the website will not yet be edited until the Facilities Committee has an opportunity to discuss how they would like the information to be organized online. Mary Heather also reminded Board members to sign up for Back-to-School open house events at ACSD schools in September. The C&E Committee is preparing a few handouts to have at then Board tables.

##### 2. Work Plan Creation Discussion

Barb 10 min

Barb Wilson explained that the Executive Committee had discussed the formation of a Work Plan for the 2023-24 Academic Year, as a follow-up to the recommendation that had come from the Board retreat. She feels it will be most efficient for the Executive Committee to come up with a draft that the full Board can review. The idea is to plan out the Board's work so that it can be more intentional and proactive. It will be a living document. Mary Heather Noble suggested taking feedback from Board members to identify priority work topics for the work plan. Among the priorities to include in the work plan:

- Superintendent Search
- FY25 Budget planning
- Negotiations
- Identification & scheduling of Board Training
- Public Engagement around Budget
- Finalizing Strategic Plan/ Strategic Plan review
- Reviewing State Proficiency results (January 2024)
- Mandated Policy Review & required reporting

3. Call for 2 Volunteers to serve as Board Liaisons on the Addison Central Barb 5 min  
SEPAC

Barb Wilson explained that the Addison County Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) has established its bylaws, and is hoping to have 2 ACSD Board members serve as representatives in their regular meetings. Barb asked interested Board members to email her.

Joanna Doria asked about the time commitment. Mary Slosar, Co-Chair of the SEPAC, stated that the group is still trying to establish a regular meeting schedule, but meeting will likely be at least monthly.

James Malcolm asked a general question about the number of other Boards on which a few

ACSD Board representatives have membership -- The group identified Hannaford Career Center, Middlebury Parks & Rec, MCTV, and now the SEPAC. James Malcolm wondered how the Board could learn about the status/work of those other Boards on a more frequent basis. Tim Williams suggested adding this auxiliary Board updates to the regular Committee Updates on the agenda. James Malcolm also suggested having the information on those auxiliary Board members included on the website as well.

4. Board and Committee Meetings Barb 10 min

Barb Wilson returned to the group's prior discussion regarding the frequency/schedule of regular Board meetings. Based on the feedback and the

upcoming work related to the Superintendent Search, the Executive Committee believes that maintaining a 2x/month full Board meeting schedule is best. She is advising Committees to consider moving their meetings to Mondays if it works for committee members, but that Committee members may continue the schedule that works for them.

Barb did mention that if committee do meet right before regular Board meetings, they can look into ordering food so people don't have to do consecutive meetings without a meal.

## F. Superintendent Search

Barb 60 min

Barb Wilson introduced Judy Sclair-Stein of McPherson & Jacobson, who will be assisting the Board with its repeated search for the permanent Superintendent. Judy took time to receive feedback from each Board member re: their highest hopes for a new leader.

Judy then presented her agenda for the discussion:

- Plan for the Superintendent Search
- Review Criteria
- Finalize Timeline
- Review Posting
- Determine Advertising Venues

### 1. Review Criteria

Board members agreed that the updated position announcement with the qualifying criteria looks good.

### 2. Review Search Process/Steps and Finalize timeline

Board members agreed that the proposed timeline for the search looked good. The timeline:

August 28 -- Review & finalize process with the Board

August 31 -- Post Position

September 28 -- Close Date

October 18 -- Judy presents candidates to the Board. Select Finalists and Interview Questions

Week of November 13 -- Finalist Interviews, with Stakeholder Interviews

November 16 -- Board Debrief Session, Selection of new Superintendent

There was considerable discussion and emphasis on maintaining the confidentiality of candidates during the process to preserve the integrity of the hiring process. Tim Williams, Steve Orzech, and Suzanne Buck all assured the Board that this process worked very well for the Career Center. Judy Sclair-Stein emphasized the importance of both stakeholder feedback and confidentiality. This is the Board's decision. Joanna Doria and Ellen Whelan-Wuest noted the difference in process between this time and last -- particularly around releasing names of finalists. Barb Wilson and Mary Heather Noble emphasized the importance of having a confidential process that will encourage the best candidates to apply. Having Stakeholder groups participate in closed interview will provide the Board with important perspective/feedback on the candidates, but keeping the hiring process confidential will maintain the professionalism of the process. Mary Heather Noble noted that it is a personnel decision, and should not be treated as a political process.

### 3. Review and Finalize Brochure

The Board reviewed the hiring brochure that had been prepared for the last search -- and agreed that it is still good, pending a few key updates: timeline, mission/vision, etc.

### 4. Advertising Venues

Judy Sclair-Stein asked the Board to confirm which venues to advertise the position. She mentioned six total venues, including National, Vermont, and diversity-focused venues. The Board agreed to include all six in its search efforts.

Judy finalized with other important considerations:

- Board members and stakeholder group volunteers need to commit to the full interview process to see all candidates.
- Stakeholder groups are usually best capped at about 8 people.
- Judy is willing to be present at the Finalist interviews with Stakeholder groups so she can capture the feedback and present it to the Board -- but wants to be clear that this comes at an additional expense of \$1,000/day.

Suzanne Buck made a motion to hire Judy Sclair-Stein to be present for all Finalist Interviews at a cost of \$1,000/day to moderate stakeholder interviews, record and present stakeholder feedback to the Board, and moderate de-brief sessions with the Board. Steve Orzech seconded. Barb Wilson called a vote and the motion passed. Lindsey Hescock did not vote.

### G. Public Comment - Any Topic      Barb 10 min

No public comment.



## H. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Motion to adjourn.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Jamie McCallum Status: Passed

Total Meeting Time: 2h 20m

### \*Public Comment Guidelines:

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TO: ACSD Board  
FROM: Matthew Corrente, Director of Finance and Operations  
RE: 2023-24 Fuel and Propane Bids  
DATE: 9/6/2023

ACSD solicited bids for fuel oil and propane for the 2023-24 school year. Below is a summary of the results.

| Fuel Oil               |                        |                           |                |                    |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <u>Bidder</u>          | <u>Price over rack</u> | <u>Current rack price</u> | <u>Pre-buy</u> | <u>Fixed Price</u> |
| Champlain Valley Fuels | .10                    | 3.257                     | 3.08           | 3.13               |
| Mike's Fuels           | .25                    | 3.08                      | 3.28           | 3.33               |

| Propane          |                        |                           |                |                    |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <u>Bidder</u>    | <u>Price over rack</u> | <u>Current rack price</u> | <u>Pre-buy</u> | <u>Fixed Price</u> |
| Fyles Bros.      | .40                    | 0.895                     | 1.40           | 1.45               |
| Suburban Propane | .35                    | 1.055                     | n/a            | 1.58               |

Recommended Motion: Motion to award the Fuel Oil bid for 2023-24 to **Champlain Valley Fuels** at a fixed price rate of \$3.13 and the Propane bid for 2023-24 to **Fyles Bros.** at a fixed price rate of \$1.45.

# 9/6/23 Draft



Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham, Weybridge



## ADDISON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

# 2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This is the Addison Central School District (ACSD) new, equity-informed Strategic Plan designed to prioritize the success of every student. This Plan is the result of strategies and action steps developed in 2023 by the Addison Central School District (ACSD) Action Team to advance the ACSD School Board's three major strategic goals.

This Strategic Plan was developed with the understanding that the strategies and action steps will be implemented over the course of five years under the guidance of a district staff implementation team. The recommendations were informed from the 2021-2022 work of an Advisory Committee which was comprised of diverse community members, school community stakeholders, input and data collected to-date by the District, and the Action Team's own deliberations to find the actionable items that will have the greatest impact while addressing inequities within our district. Throughout this process, there have been many opportunities for students, families, staff, and community members (stakeholders) to help shape the direction of the Strategic Plan.

The pages below detail the foundational work of the ACSD Board which includes their newly drafted mission, vision and three strategic goals; the design and purpose of both the Advisory Committee for Equity and the Action Team; the detailed Strategies and Action steps for each Strategic Goal; a Glossary; and End Notes which offer additional context for this work.

You may find additional information on ACSD's Strategic Plan webpage:  
[www.acsdvt.org/district-link/strategic-plan](http://www.acsdvt.org/district-link/strategic-plan)

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# FOUNDATIONAL BOARD WORK

The ACSD Board adopted the following Mission and Vision statements, Equity Definition, and Strategic Goals on October 10, 2022. This work served as the foundation for the ACSD Action Team to develop strategies and action steps to meet the ACSD Board's strategic goals.

## Mission

Our mission is to provide high-quality, equitable, and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students.

## Vision

Our vision is for all ACSD students to reach their full learning potential, have a sense of belonging in our schools, and enrich our community and the communities where they live in the future.

## Strategic Goals

**BELONGING.** Everyone will feel safe, welcomed, and included in our schools and the district. Students and families will be able to engage with the school system in valuable ways.

**ACCESS.** ACSD will allocate resources to address students' needs across the district in equitable, sustainable, and fiscally responsible ways. ACSD will maintain infrastructure and facilities that support varied learning and successful outcomes for all of our students.

**SUCCESS.** ACSD's learning environment will inspire a passion for learning and value diverse identities and abilities, while preparing our students to make positive contributions to the community and beyond.

## Equity Definition

Educational equity means that our schools provide each student with a high-quality, universally designed, and culturally responsive curriculum. It also means students will be able to access programs and services that meet their needs. Our students succeed when we are responsive to their academic, social, and emotional wellbeing.

Educational equity means valuing various identities because diversity enriches our school community. This includes, but is not limited to, identities based on race, ethnicity, religion, family economics, class, geography, ability, language, sexual orientation, gender, immigration status, or initial proficiencies.

Educational equity requires ongoing efforts to identify, acknowledge, and disrupt inequitable practices in our district. It requires us to acknowledge our biases as individuals and as a district. We also must commit to making changes to address inequities to improve outcomes for all students.

ACSD adopted an equity policy (C29) in 2020, which includes a more detailed equity definition and implementation statement. The policy can be found on the district policy [website](#).

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# 2021-2022 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## DESIGN & PURPOSE

The Advisory Committee on Equity was comprised of students, parents, staff, administrators, and community members. Particular attention was given to selecting members who hold underrepresented identities (ex: Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+ folks, people living in poverty, people living with a disability, etc.). The committee had 13 members. 3 students, 2 parents/caregivers, 2 educators/staff, 4 community members at-large, 1 principal and the Director of Equity and Student Services.

The Advisory Committee was asked to advise ACSD in four ways:

- Help define equity in the planning process
- Advise how to better engage the community
- Provide input on what data should be collected by the district, and
- Work in partnership with the board and staff to develop priorities and then determine how to work towards those priorities.

## MEMBERS

Amanda Gomes, MUHS Student  
Addison Copeland, MUHS Student  
Abigail Sunderland, MUHS Student  
Christal Brown, parent MUMS  
Ruth Shattuck Bernstein, parent Shoreham and MUHS  
Liam Battjes-Greenwood, staff MUMS  
Claire Benjamin, staff Cornwall  
Christina Wadsworth, staff Weybridge  
Michael Little, parent MUMS  
Jessie Witscher, parent MUMS  
Alejandra Perez, parent Bridport and MUMS  
Esther Charlestin, Community Members/Elected Leader  
Justin Campbell, Principal MUHS  
Nicole Carter, Director Equity and Student Services



Co-chair's Esther Charlestin & Amanda Gomes, MUHS '23

## STAFF & CONSULTANTS

Emily Blistein, Director of Communications and Engagement  
Emma Mulvaney-Stanak, Consultant  
Lisa Ryan, Advising Consultant

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# STRATEGIC PLAN ACTION TEAM

## DESIGN

The ACSD Action Team was comprised of students, parents, staff, administrators, and community members. Particular attention was given to selecting members who hold underrepresented identities (ex: Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+ folks, people living in poverty, people living with a disability, etc.). The committee had 15 members; 4 students, 3 parents/caregivers, 3 educators/staff, 1 principal, the Director of Equity and Student Services, Director of Finance and Operations, and Director of Teaching and Learning.

The ACSD School Board and school district tasked the Action Team with:

- Reviewing the work of the Advisory Committee, district data, and inviting other stakeholders in to advise on where ACSD is doing well and where we are falling short to meet the diverse needs of our community.
- Drafting strategies and action steps that identify the greatest leverage points that ACSD can act upon to meet the Board's strategic goals and vision/mission (adopted October 2022), while using the District's equity definition as a lens in their analysis.
- Sharing draft recommendations with the ACSD Board for consideration and approval.

## MEMBERS

Alixis Williams, 9th grade student MUHS  
Aislynn McGill, 10th grade student MUHS  
Camila Blanco, 12th grade student MUHS  
Chad Fredette, 12th grade student MUHS  
Samantha Paine, parent Shoreham and MUHS  
Jess Vennable-Novak, parent Mary Hogan  
Linda January, parent Bridport  
Ben Long, MUHS math teacher and parent  
Kelly Landwehr, Lead Nurse and parent  
Meg Baker, Pre-K Coordinator and parent  
Bjarki Sears, Principal Salisbury School  
Esther Charlestin, MUMS Dean of Culture and Climate  
Nicole Carter, Director of Equity and Student Services  
Caitlin Steele, Asst. Superintendent of Teaching and Learning  
Matthew Corrente, Director of Finance and Operations



Co-chair's Samantha Paine & Camila Blanco, MUHS '23

## STAFF & CONSULTANTS

Emily Blistein, Director of Communications and Engagement  
Emma Mulvaney-Stanak, Consultant  
Lisa Ryan, Advising Consultant



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## PROCESS

The Team met from January 2023-June 2023. ACSD hired consultant Emma Mulvaney-Stanak of EMStrategies to plan and guide their work. The Team began by establishing norms, agreements, and electing co-chairs (one student and one adult) to help serve as leaders and liaisons to the District. The group then began to review the work of the 2022 ACSD Advisory Committee and ACSD board. They also reviewed data and input collected to-date by the district through surveys and community meetings. The Team began to create an initial list of strategies and action steps from their analysis that aligned with the Board's strategic goals. Additional stakeholders were identified to help identify gaps in knowledge and insights in how the District could deepen its work to address inequities. Those stakeholder groups included numerous school and community members with a perspective and/or lived or professional experience on:

- Current resource allocation within the district
- Poverty and socioeconomics
- Marginalized identities
- Special education and students living with disabilities

The Team deliberated on the additional feedback received from stakeholders and refined its recommendations. They used an equity rubric planning tool to help identify strategies and action steps that would leverage the biggest impact on existing inequities while engaging as much of the school community as possible.

Throughout the Team's work, the group worked to intentionally design meetings and ways to engage participants with best practices for youth-adult partnerships. This included holding youth advisory meetings where youth were in the majority to help advise the ACSD consultant and staff on ways to continually improve our work together.

Minutes from each of the Team's meetings can be found on the District's strategic plan webpage. These documents include a summary of who met with the Team from various stakeholder community groups.

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# [RECOMMENDED] STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

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**Goal 1: Belonging** - Everyone will feel safe, welcomed, and included in our schools and the district. Students and families will be able to engage with the school system in valuable ways.

**Strategy 1: Build a system for universal wellbeing, positive culture, and a sense of belonging based on evidence-based practices that support youth.**

*Action Steps:*

1. Expand learning opportunities outside of school by prioritizing JEDI (Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) education for all school community members in partnership with JEDI education professionals.
2. Create restorative communities, proactive practices, and policies by implementing a human-centered versus rules-centered system of conflict resolution for the entire school community.
3. Create student-centered systems where staff intentionally check-in with students and use tools such as affinity spaces to promote student well-being. Provide staff training to promote student connection. Encourage students' agency to develop these systems and tools.
4. Ensure all school spaces and experiences are welcoming and create a sense of belonging to marginalized school community members—students, staff, families, and community. Invite marginalized community members to inform how to create these spaces and experiences.

**Strategy 2: Elevate and prioritize students' mental health.**

*Action Steps:*

1. Starting in PreK, develop appropriate understanding of mental health among students. Offer differentiated mental health support based on students' needs.
2. Train teachers and staff to help identify students that may need mental health support. Include teachers and staff in support plans.
3. Support staff to understand, support, and celebrate the diverse make-up of the ACSO community. Design support systems that are culturally responsive to our community.
4. Recognize that mental health for the majority of students is most supported by choosing to implement approaches to learning that provide students with strong and consistent relationships.
5. Prioritize age appropriate sensory, movement, outdoor time, and creative experiences into the school day from PreK to graduation.

**Strategy 3: Put students who traditionally and historically experience marginalization first when engaging in decision making and planning.**

*Action Steps:*

1. Amplify and celebrate student voice and experiences, especially diverse and historically marginalized students.
2. When there is a district or school-wide decision to be made, use an equity rubric<sup>1</sup> to examine if the decision benefits marginalized students/school community members. Ensure it does not contribute to inequities experienced by marginalized people.
3. Provide and match families with support needed to negotiate the school systems. Consider family mentors, advocates or liaisons, parent advocacy groups, and district welcome resources.

**Goal 2: Access** - ACSD will allocate resources to address students' needs across the district in equitable, sustainable, and fiscally responsible ways. ACSD will maintain infrastructure and facilities that support varied learning and successful outcomes for all of our students.

**Strategy 1: Create Data-informed, equity-based resource allocation systems.**

*Action Steps:*

1. Fiscal Management Systems.
  - a. Create an equity-informed budget<sup>2</sup> preK-12 by using weights and other metrics to factor in small schools and equity needs of students by researching other districts' approaches.
  - b. Identify and remedy inequitable approaches to accessing resources within schools.
  - c. If students are not able to access the services they need in their elementary school, consider a criteria-informed, equity-informed school placement<sup>3</sup> at another school within the district.
  - d. Optimize resource access and allocation to move the district towards a more unified and "one community" structure and culture.
  - e. Create an equity-based rubric<sup>5</sup> for assessing the district's programs and systems.
2. Equitable Staffing
  - a. Develop a strategic staffing model among the schools. Look at recruitment and retention strategies for staff, especially during challenging times.
  - b. Provide students with access to medical services by having at least a minimum of one full time nurse at each school and adequate medical and support staffing.<sup>6</sup>
  - c. Look at positions (ex: mental health) that need to be paid on a different scale than teachers to more effectively recruit and retain.
  - d. Diversify educator and staff workforce. Specifically, hire BIPOC teachers and administrators and understand the importance of all youth/families seeing BIPOC educators/leaders.
  - e. Create a hiring process that uses an equity lens, accounts for implicit bias in hiring, and prioritizes skills/expertise among applicants' inclusion/equity knowledge and practices.
  - f. Be transparent about the logic, funding sources, and school-level and district-level decision making process behind staffing levels in each school. Use equity rubric<sup>7</sup> in these decisions.
  - g. Wrap equity into staff supervision and evaluation systems.

**Strategy 2: Collect, analyze, and report on resource allocation data<sup>8</sup>**

*Action Steps:*

1. Collect data necessary to inform equity-based decisions in the district and align decision making based on data.
2. Prepare an annual report to the Board. Specifically address initiatives and feedback on initiatives for:
  - a. School Buildings
  - b. Staffing
  - c. Marginalized identities
  - d. Poverty
  - e. Special Education
  - f. PreK
  - g. After School
3. Integrate data into fiscal management and staffing systems.
4. Analyze system responsiveness and favor those that are quick and responsive, vs. sluggish, especially related to addressing issues of harm and inequity, but also special education (efficient response), mental health. Minimize red tape.
5. Include an Equity Narrative in the Budget Book detailing historical process, annual intentional progress, budget effects, and next year goals.
6. Evaluate and address whether our after school and preK programs meet community needs. Address equity gaps in collaboration with community partners.

**Goal 3: Success** - ACSD's learning environment will inspire a passion for learning and value diverse identities and abilities, while preparing our students to make positive contributions to the community and beyond.

**Strategy 1: Identify and address systemic barriers that affect student success in every classroom due to but not limited to, primary language spoken, socioeconomic status, disability status, or marginalized identities.**

*Action Steps:*

1. Leverage staff knowledge and skill to support general education teachers to adapt and strengthen lesson plans and investigate inconsistencies in classrooms.
2. Use modeling to better anticipate students' needs for accommodations in learning, address inconsistencies in the referral process for special education, and reduce the stigma for special education students.
3. Increase accessibility of curriculum by using evidence-based tools and strategies most effective for all students regardless of ability.

**Strategy 2: Build capacity for culturally responsive practices by bringing in voices to help diversify the curriculum, facilitate difficult or courageous conversations, and put diverse resources into the community.**

*Action Steps:*

1. Offer role-appropriate professional development for teachers, staff, and administrators that creates a responsive and inclusive environment. Add more family education and provide them resources about diversity and culturally responsive communities.
2. Improve and use year-round diverse curriculum content that reflects different cultures, marginalized identities, and socio-economic privilege. Offer curriculum in inclusive, safe, and engaging ways for all students, especially for students with marginalized identities. Create a consistency in curriculum between schools. Seek and incorporate student feedback on curriculum improvements. Incorporate state's new District Quality Standards and Education Quality Reviews from AOE (Act 1, 2019).
3. Create accountability for all staff based on their role and responsibilities in the district in creating an inclusive and responsive environment.

**Strategy 3: Provide multiple pathways for students that are equally dynamic and celebrated to assure student success.**

*Action Steps:*

- Establish consistent grading practices, allowing for effective analysis of fairness and equity in assessment.
- Continue to value and enhance celebrating student success beyond traditionally celebrated high achievements in sports, grades, and college placement.
- Ensure all pathways are seen and valued as equally viable and vibrant options beginning in elementary school. This includes access to outdoor time, unified arts subjects, and alternative learning environments.
- Make flexible pathways, including early college, more accessible to students during the transition to the start of high school.
- Better utilize the Hannaford Career Center and introduce it to families and students before high school.

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# GLOSSARY

**Affinity Space:** An affinity space is a physical or virtual space intended to be free of bias, conflict, criticism, or potentially threatening actions, ideas, or conversations. The purpose of an affinity space is to provide a positive, affirming environment for groups, often those who feel marginalized, to come together and engage in open and honest dialogues.

**Bias:** A form of prejudice that results from our need to quickly classify individuals into categories.

**Cultural Competency:** Cultural competency involves an ability to increase one's awareness about personal biases, assumptions, attitudes and worldviews; specific knowledge of cultures, history, worldviews, languages, and diverse experiences; and a repertoire of skills that allow one to effectively intervene in personal and professional domains.

**Equity:** The fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is necessary to provide equal opportunities to all groups. Also, see ACSD's educational equity definition on page 2 of this report.

**Equity Rubric:** A comprehensive tool with a series of categories, questions, and/or criteria to help people better understand equity and make decisions that result in more equitable outcomes.

**Flexible Pathways:** Flexible Pathways are any combination of high-quality expanded learning opportunities, including academic and experiential components, which build and assess attainment of identified proficiencies and lead to secondary school completion, civic engagement and postsecondary readiness. Flexible pathways allow students to apply their knowledge and skills to tasks of personal interest as part of the personalized learning planning process.

**Implicit Bias:** Negative associations expressed automatically that people unknowingly hold and affect our understanding, actions and decisions; also known as unconscious or hidden bias.

**Inclusion:** Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

**Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (JEDI):** A more detailed summary of the ways aspects of diversity and equity work together. Justice refers to a goal of vision for social change that requires redressing past inequities. Equity refers to a practice where people receive resources they need to participate in society. Diversity is the difference between people, things, and experiences. Inclusion is the practice of valuing unique experiences and contributions people have to offer.

**Marginalization:** A social process by which individuals or groups are (intentionally or unintentionally) distanced from access to power and resources and constructed as insignificant, peripheral, or less valuable/privileged to a community or "mainstream" society. This term describes a social process, so as not to imply a lack of agency. Examples of marginalized groups include, but are by no means limited to, groups excluded due to race, religion, political or cultural group, age, gender, or financial status.

**Multicultural Competency:** A process of embracing diversity and learning about people from other cultural backgrounds. The key element to becoming more culturally competent is respect for the ways that others live in and organize the world and an openness to learn from them.

**Restorative Practices:** Restorative practices are used in schools to foster an equitable and positive school culture. Restorative practices focus on strengthening relationships and connections between individuals, both youth and adults, in a school community. Restorative practices offer schools an alternative to traditional disciplinary actions that center on punishment for misbehavior and breaking rules.



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# END NOTES

1. ACSD is still developing its understanding and consistent use of equity as a concept across the district. This includes understanding how to use tools that help address inequities and proactively move the district towards more equitable outcomes. Rubrics are often used in public education settings. The Team recommends ACSD seek additional resources and models from other districts or professionals to find a **decision making equity rubric** that works well for ACSD's size and capacity. The Team's objective is for the district to consistently use a rubric tool by district and building leaders when making decisions and have it be well understood by those who use it.
2. **Equity based budgeting** is a concept ACSD should seek additional resources, models, and case studies to learn how such tools are used effectively. The Team learned the Burlington School District uses an equity based budgeting process, which may be a useful reference point. The Team recommends using weights and metrics as part of the calculations to inform such a budget. The group did not have the expertise or time to explore these concepts in more detail. However, they suggest looking to the State of Vermont education funding weights formulas to begin to understand how weights could be developed to fit ACSD's needs. The team's objective is to encourage the board to move away from per pupil budgeting that does not account for the unique needs of individual students who may need more resources to be successful (Goal 2). The group also encourages the board to challenge concepts of "zero sum" thinking where funding one new initiative would directly mean another initiative would be cut or initiatives are set up to compete against each other. Building a budget committed to student access and equity requires analyzing the budget across all budget items so the district can prioritize what needs to be funded to meet the strategic plan goals. It will also allow the district to identify new areas where additional revenue can be raised in creative ways.
3. The group's objective is to encourage the district to be clear and consistent with school placement criteria it would use to allow students to be placed in schools other than the school in their town. The group also noted there are many reasons why a student would benefit from school placement ranging from special education services, language access, students living between multiple households, and experiences of harassment/bullying. The Team encourages the district to examine its current school placement criteria and other school district placement models to find the best approach. They also encourage the district to be careful not to create criteria that would create more inequity for a student/family such as unmet transportation needs.
4. The group observed schools within the district act very independently of each other which contributes to a lack of **community and continuity** throughout the district. The group encourages the board and district to consider the multiple ways the district can work to unify programs, systems, and approaches to delivering education separate from school consolidation. In particular, things such as joint fundraising across elementary schools for student activities and/or a consistent staffing model between schools would begin to address inequities between schools. Other efforts, such as one athletic team name across the district and efforts to bring elementary classes together for projects, can support more successful transitions for students between elementary and middle school. The Team wanted to note that ACSD's continued conversation about **school consolidation** and the needs of small schools may present conflicting approaches for how to advance equity based decision making, especially related to budgeting resources. The Team did not have the time to adequately explore the question of consolidation and there are conflicting opinions among the group (and larger community) on whether the district should pursue it. However, the Team did agree the board and district should proactively dialogue about consolidation with the school community, as it is a critical part of how ACSD defines equitable outcomes for its students.
5. See decision making equity rubric endnote.
6. The Team made this recommendation based on stakeholder feedback on the critical physical and mental well-being of students. The Team recognizes staffing levels in small schools can be a challenging balance. The group encourages the district to examine how equity based budgeting and challenging "zero sum" thinking can reimagine how past staffing decisions often are made, e.g. one new position means the loss of a pre-existing position. Also, there was some disagreement about the recommendation of a minimum full time nurse at every school among the group due to concerns about negative impacts on other staff positions being cut.
7. See decision making equity rubric endnote.
8. When conducting assessments and analyzing data, the Team recommends the district use culturally competent and equity-informed practices. This includes using a variety of tools to collect data and feedback from the school community.

DRAFT

# **Addison Central School District Action Team Final Recommendations and Report August 2023**

The Addison Central School District (ACSD) Action Team offers the following final report, including recommended strategies and action steps to advance the ACSD school board's three major strategic goals. We developed these strategies and action steps with the intention of implementing them over the course of five years under the guidance of a district staff implementation team. The recommendations are informed from the prior work of an Advisory Committee comprised of diverse community members, a several-month series of meetings of the full Action Team and invitations to school community stakeholders, reviewing input and data collected to-date by the district, and our own deliberations to find the actionable items that will have the greatest impact while addressing inequities within our district. The Team also offers a short list of actions that we identified in our work that advance the district's goals and can be implemented immediately and with minimal cost or system redesign. Thank you for engaging a diverse team of our school community to develop these recommendations for our community.

## **BACKGROUND & PROCESS**

### **ACSD Strategic Plan 2022-2023 Overview**

The Addison Central School District (ACSD) is currently designing a new, equity-informed strategic plan that will prioritize the success of every student. The final strategic plan is anticipated to be reviewed and approved by the ACSD school board in the early fall of 2023. There have been many opportunities for students, families, staff, and community members (stakeholders) to help shape the direction of a strategic plan. You may find additional information on the timeline, initial work by the 2022 ACSD Advisory Committee on Equity, and work completed to date on the district's [strategic plan webpage](#).

### **ACSD Strategic Plan Action Team**

The ACSD Action Team was comprised of students, parents, staff, administrators, and community members. Particular attention was given to selecting members who hold underrepresented identities (ex: Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+ folks, people living in poverty, people living with a disability, etc.). The committee had 15 members. 4 students, 3 parents/caregivers, 3 educators/staff, 1 principal and the Director of Equity and Student Services, Director of Finance and Operations and Director of Teaching and Learning.

The ACSD School Board and school district tasked the Action Team with:

- Reviewing the work of the Advisory committee, district data, and inviting other stakeholders in to advise on where ACSD is doing well and where we are falling short to meet the diverse needs of our community.
- Drafting strategies and action steps that identify the greatest leverage points that ACSD can act upon to meet the [Board's strategic goals and vision/mission \(adopted October 2022\)](#), while using the district's equity definition as a lens in their analysis.
- Sharing draft recommendations with the ACSD Board for consideration and approval.

### **ACSD Action Team Process**

The Team met from January 2023-June 2023. ACSD hired consultant Emma Mulvaney-Stanak of EMStrategies to plan and guide the committee's work. The Team first began by forming as a



group and electing co-chairs (one student and one adult) to help serve as leaders and liaisons to the district. The group then began to review the work of the 2022 ACSD Advisory Committee and ACSD board. They also reviewed data and input collected to-date by the district through surveys and community meetings. The Team began to create an initial list of strategies and action steps from their analysis that aligned with the three primary goals. Additional stakeholders were identified to help explore gaps in knowledge and insights in how the district could deepen its work to address inequities within the topic areas of the three goals. Those stakeholder groups included school community members with a perspective and/or lived or professional experience on:

- Current resource allocation within the district
- Poverty and socioeconomics
- Marginalized identities
- Special education and students living with disabilities

The Team spent the final three meetings deliberating on the additional feedback received from stakeholders and refining its recommendations. They used an [equity rubric](#) planning tool to help identify strategies and action steps that would leverage the biggest impact on existing inequities while engaging as much of the school community as possible.

Throughout the Team's work, the group worked to intentionally design meetings and ways to engage participants with best practices for youth-adult partnerships. This included holding youth advisory meetings where youth were in the majority to help advise the ACSD consultant and staff on ways to continually improve our work together.

Minutes from each of the Team's meetings can be found on the district's [strategic plan webpage](#). These documents include a summary of who met with the Team from various stakeholder community groups.

### **ACTION TEAM MEMBERS**

Alixis Williams, 9th grade student MUHS  
Aislynn McGill, 10th grade student MUHS  
Camila Blanco, 12th grade student MUHS  
Chad Fredette, 12th grade student MUHS  
Samantha Paine, parent Shoreham and MUHS  
Jess Vennable-Novak, parent Mary Hogan  
Linda January, parent Bridport  
Ben Long, MUHS math teacher and parent  
Kelly Landwehr, Lead Nurse and parent  
Meg Baker, Pre-K Coordinator and parent  
Bjarki Sears, Principal Salisbury School  
Esther Charlestin, MUMS Dean of Culture and Climate  
Nicole Carter, Director of Equity and Student Services  
Caitlin Steele, Asst. Superintendent of Teaching and Learning  
Matthew Corrente, Director of Finance and Operations  
*Staff + Consultants*  
Emily Blistein, Director of Communications and Engagement  
Emma Mulvaney-Stanak, Consultant  
Lisa Ryan, Advising Consultant

### **Vision and Mission Statements (Updated October 2022)**

Our vision is for all ACSD students to reach their full learning potential, have a sense of belonging in our schools, and enrich our community and the communities where they live in the future.

Our mission is to provide high-quality, equitable, and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students.

### **ACSD Equity Definition (Adopted October 2022)**

Educational equity means that our schools provide each student with a high-quality, universally designed, and culturally responsive curriculum. It also means students will be able to access programs and services that meet their needs. Our students succeed when we are responsive to their academic, social, and emotional wellbeing.

Educational equity means valuing various identities because diversity enriches our school community. This includes, but is not limited to, identities based on race, ethnicity, religion, family economics, class, geography, ability, language, sexual orientation, gender, immigration status, or initial proficiencies.

Educational equity requires ongoing efforts to identify, acknowledge, and disrupt inequitable practices in our district. It requires us to acknowledge our biases as individuals and as a district. We also must commit to making changes to address inequities to improve outcomes for all students.

ACSD adopted an equity policy (C29) in 2020, which includes a more detailed equity definition and implementation statement. The policy can be found on the district policy [website](#).

### **ACSD Board Strategic Goals (Adopted October 2022)**

- ***BELONGING.*** Everyone will feel safe, welcomed, and included in our schools and the district. Students and families will be able to engage with the school system in valuable ways.
- ***ACCESS.*** ACSD will allocate resources to address students' needs across the district in equitable, sustainable, and fiscally responsible ways. ACSD will maintain infrastructure and facilities that support varied learning and successful outcomes for all of our students.
- ***SUCCESS.*** ACSD's learning environment will inspire a passion for learning and value diverse identities and abilities, while preparing our students to make positive contributions to the community and beyond.

## RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

**Goal 1: *[Belonging]* Everyone will feel safe, welcomed, and included in our schools and the district. Students and families will be able to engage with the school system in valuable ways.**

**Strategy 1:** Build a system for universal wellbeing, positive culture, and a sense of belonging based on evidence-based practices that support youth.

**Action Steps:**

- A. Expand learning opportunities outside of school by prioritizing JEDI (Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) education for all school community members in partnership with JEDI education professionals.
- B. Create restorative communities, proactive practices, and policies by implementing a human-centered versus rules-centered system of conflict resolution for the entire school community.
- C. Create student-centered systems where staff intentionally check-in with students and use tools such as affinity spaces to promote student well-being. Provide staff training to promote student connection. Encourage students' agency to develop these systems and tools.
- D. Ensure all school spaces and experiences are welcoming and create a sense of belonging to marginalized school community members—students, staff, families, and community. Invite marginalized community members to inform how to create these spaces and experiences.

**Strategy 2:** Elevate and prioritize students' mental health.

**Action Steps:**

- A. Starting in PreK, develop appropriate understanding of mental health among students. Offer differentiated mental health support based on students' needs.
- B. Train teachers and staff to help identify students that may need mental health support. Include teachers and staff in support plans.
- C. Support staff to understand, support, and celebrate the diverse make-up of the ACSD community. Designing support systems that are culturally responsive to our community.
- D. Recognize that mental health for the majority of students is most supported by choosing to implement approaches to learning that provide students with strong and consistent relationships.
- E. Prioritize age appropriate sensory, movement, outdoor time, and creative experiences, into the school day from PreK to graduation.

**Strategy 3:** Put students who traditionally and historically experience marginalization first when engaging in decision making and planning.

**Action Steps:**

- A. Amplify and celebrate student voice and experiences, especially diverse and historically marginalized students.

- B. When there is a district or school-wide decision to be made, use an equity rubric<sup>1</sup> to examine if the decision benefits marginalized students/school community members. Ensure it does not contribute to inequities experienced by marginalized people.
  - C. Provide and match families with support needed to negotiate the school systems. Consider family mentors, advocates or liaisons, parent advocacy groups, and district welcome resources.
- 

**Goal 2: [Access] ACSD will allocate resources to address students' needs across the district in equitable, sustainable, and fiscally responsible ways. ACSD will maintain infrastructure and facilities that support varied learning and successful outcomes for all of our students.**

**Strategy 1:** Create Data-informed, equity-based resource allocation systems.

**Action Steps:**

- A. *Fiscal Management Systems.*
  - a. Create an equity-informed budget<sup>2</sup> preK-12 by using weights and other metrics to factor in small schools and equity needs of students by researching other district's approaches.
  - b. Identify and remedy inequitable approaches to accessing resources within schools.

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<sup>1</sup>ACSD is still developing its understanding and consistent use of equity as a concept across the district. This includes understanding how to use tools that help address inequities and proactively move the district towards more equitable outcomes. Rubrics are often used in public education settings. The Team recommends ACSD seek additional resources and models from other districts or professionals to find a **decision making equity rubric** that works well for ACSD's size and capacity. The Team's objective is for the district to consistently use a rubric tool by district and building leaders when making decisions and have it be well understood by those who use it.

<sup>2</sup> **Equity based budgeting** is a concept ACSD should seek additional resources, models, and case studies to learn how such tools are used effectively. The Team learned the Burlington School District uses an equity based budgeting process, which may be a useful reference point. The Team recommends using weights and metrics as part of the calculations to inform such a budget. The group did not have the expertise or time to explore these concepts in more detail. However, they suggest looking to the State of Vermont education funding weights formulas to begin to understand how weights could be developed to fit ACSD's needs. The team's objective is to encourage the board to move away from per pupil budgeting that does not account for the unique needs of individual students who may need more resources to be successful (Goal 2). The group also encourages the board to challenge concepts of "zero sum" thinking where funding one new initiative would directly mean another initiative would be cut or initiatives are set up to compete against each other. Building a budget committed to student access and equity requires analyzing the budget across all budget items so the district can prioritize what needs to be funded to meet the strategic plan goals. It will also allow the district to identify new areas where additional revenue can be raised in creative ways.

- c. If students are not able to access the services they need in their elementary school, consider a criteria-informed, equity-informed school placement<sup>3</sup> at another school within the district.
- d. Optimize resource access and allocation to move the district towards a more unified and “one community” structure<sup>4</sup> and culture.
- e. Create an equity-based rubric<sup>5</sup> for assessing the district’s programs and systems.

#### **B. Equitable Staffing**

- a. Develop a strategic staffing model among the schools. Look at recruitment and retention strategies for staff, especially during challenging times.
- b. Provide students with access to medical services by having at least a minimum of one full time nurse at each school and adequate medical and support staffing.<sup>6</sup>
- c. Look at positions (ex: mental health) that need to be paid on a different scale than teachers to more effectively recruit and retain.
- d. Diversify educator and staff workforce. Specifically, hire BIPOC teachers and administrators and understand the importance of all youth/families seeing BIPOC educators/leaders.

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<sup>3</sup> The group’s objective is to encourage the district to be clear and consistent with **school placement** criteria it would use to allow students to be placed in schools other than the school in their town. The group also noted there are many reasons why a student would benefit from school placement ranging from special education services, language access, students living between multiple households, and experiences of harassment/bullying. The Team encourages the district to examine its current school placement criteria and other school district placement models to find the best approach. They also encourage the district to be careful not to create criteria that would create more inequity for a student/family such as unmet transportation needs.

<sup>4</sup> The group observed schools within the district act very independently of each other which contributes to a lack of **community and continuity** throughout the district. The group encourages the board and district to consider the multiple ways the district can work to unify programs, systems, and approaches to delivering education separate from school consolidation. In particular, things such as joint fundraising across elementary schools for student activities and/or a consistent staffing model between schools would begin to address inequities between schools. Other efforts, such as one athletic team name across the district and efforts to bring elementary classes together for projects, can support more successful transitions for students between elementary and middle school.

The Team wanted to note that ACSD’s continued conversation about **school consolidation** and the needs of small schools may present conflicting approaches for how to advance equity based decision making, especially related to budgeting resources. The Team did not have the time to adequately explore the question of consolidation and there are conflicting opinions among the group (and larger community) on whether the district should pursue it. However, the Team did agree the board and district should proactively dialogue about consolidation with the school community, as it is a critical part of how ACSD defines equitable outcomes for its students.

<sup>5</sup> See decision making equity rubric footnote.

<sup>6</sup> The Team made this recommendation based on stakeholder feedback on the critical physical and mental well-being of students. The Team recognizes staffing levels in small schools can be a challenging balance. The group encourages the district to examine how equity based budgeting and challenging “zero sum” thinking can reimagine how past staffing decisions often are made, e.g. one new position means the loss of a pre-existing position. Also, there was some disagreement about the recommendation of a minimum full time nurse at every school among the group due to concerns about negative impacts on other staff positions being cut.

- e. Create a hiring process that uses an equity lens, accounts for implicit bias in hiring, and prioritizes skills/expertise among applicants' inclusion/equity knowledge and practices.
- f. Be transparent about the logic, funding sources, and school-level and district-level decision making process behind staffing levels in each school. Use equity rubric<sup>7</sup> in these decisions.
- g. Wrap equity into staff supervision and evaluation systems.

**Strategy 2:** Collect, analyze, and report on resource allocation data.<sup>8</sup>

**Action Steps:**

- A. Collect data necessary to inform equity-based decisions in the district and align decision making based on data.
- B. Prepare an annual report to the Board. Specifically address initiatives and feedback on initiatives for:
  - a. School Buildings
  - b. Staffing
  - c. Marginalized identities
  - d. Poverty
  - e. Special Education
  - f. PreK
  - g. After School
- C. Integrate data into fiscal management and staffing systems.
- D. Analyze system responsiveness and favor those that are quick and responsive, vs. sluggish, especially related to addressing issues of harm and inequity, but also special education (efficient response), mental health. Minimize red tape.
- E. Include an Equity Narrative in the Budget Book detailing historical process, annual intentional progress, budget effects, and next year goals.
- F. Evaluate and address whether our after school and preK programs meet community needs. Address equity gaps in collaboration with community partners.

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**Goal 3: [Success] ACSD's learning environment will inspire a passion for learning and value diverse identities and abilities, while preparing our students to make positive contributions to the community and beyond.**

**Strategy 1:** Identify and address systemic barriers that affect student success in every classroom due to but not limited to, primary language spoken, socioeconomic status, disability status, or marginalized identities.

**Action Steps:**

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<sup>7</sup> See decision making equity rubric footnote.

<sup>8</sup> When conducting assessments and analyzing data, the Team recommends the district use culturally competent and equity-informed practices. This includes using a variety of tools to collect data and feedback from the school community.

- A. Leverage staff knowledge and skill to support general education teachers to adapt and strengthen lesson plans and investigate inconsistencies in classrooms.
- B. Use modeling to better anticipate students' needs for accommodations in learning, address inconsistencies in the referral process for special education, and reduce the stigma for special education students.
- C. Increase accessibility of curriculum by using evidence-based tools and strategies most effective for all students regardless of ability.

**Strategy 2:** Build capacity for culturally responsive practices by bringing in voices to help diversify the curriculum, facilitate difficult or courageous conversations, and put diverse resources into the community.

**Action Steps:**

- A. Offer role-appropriate professional development for teachers, staff, and administrators that creates a responsive and inclusive environment. Add more family education and provide them resources about diversity and culturally responsive communities.
- B. Improve and use year-round diverse curriculum content that reflects different cultures, marginalized identities, and socio-economic privilege. Offer curriculum in inclusive, safe, and engaging ways for all students, especially for students with marginalized identities. Create a consistency in curriculum between schools. Seek and incorporate student feedback on curriculum improvements. Incorporate state's new District Quality Standards and Education Quality Reviews from AOE (Act 1, 2019).
- C. Create accountability for all staff based on their role and responsibilities in the district in creating an inclusive and responsive environment.

**Strategy 3:** Provide multiple pathways for students that are equally dynamic and celebrated to assure student success.

**Action Step:**

- A. Establish consistent grading practices, allowing for effective analysis of fairness and equity in assessment.
- B. Continue to value and enhance celebrating student success beyond traditionally celebrated high achievements in sports, grades, and college placement.
- C. Ensure all pathways are seen and valued as equally viable and vibrant options beginning in elementary school. This includes access to outdoor time, unified arts subjects, and alternative learning environments.
- D. Make flexible pathways, including early college, more accessible to students during the transition to the start of high school.
- E. Better utilize the career center and introduce it to families and students before high school.

**RECOMMENDED PRACTICES TO CONTINUE OR IMPLEMENT**

The Action Team heard several ideas and feedback from the school community for practices that should be continued, strengthened or implemented. Some of these suggestions are more immediate steps the district is already doing or could implement without requiring significant investment or system changes. These recommendations will better support multilingual families where English is not the primary language and/or where literacy is limited, families experiencing poverty, and families with students with disabilities. The Action Team narrowed the list of suggestions to the following:

1. Use a variety of proactive engagement tools with families, staff, and students, including surveys, texting, virtual meeting options, and flexible meeting times.
2. Use a variety of tools including texting, email, phone and written communication, to communicate regular updates that are short, direct and use plain language.
3. Continue to provide economic support to students who need it to participate in activities such as sports, music, etc., and systemize it across the district to create consistency and equitable access.



## **Glossary of Terms Used**

**Affinity Space:** An affinity space is a physical or virtual space intended to be free of bias, conflict, criticism, or potentially threatening actions, ideas, or conversations. The purpose of an affinity space is to provide a positive, affirming environment for groups, often those who feel marginalized, to come together and engage in open and honest dialogues.<sup>9</sup>

**Bias:** A form of prejudice that results from our need to quickly classify individuals into categories.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> University of Southern California, Diversity, Access, and Equity Affinity Space

<sup>10</sup> University of Washington, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Glossary, 2023.

<https://environment.uw.edu/about/diversity-equity-inclusion/tools-and-additional-resources/glossary-dei-concepts/>

<sup>11</sup> University of California Davis, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Glossary, 2023.

<https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/dei-resources/glossary>

<sup>12</sup> University of Washington.

<sup>13</sup> Agency of Education, Flexible Pathways Resource Handout, 2023.

[https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-plp-what-are-flexible-pathways\\_0.pdf](https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-plp-what-are-flexible-pathways_0.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> University of Washington.

<sup>15</sup> Racial Equity Tools, Glossary, 2023. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>

**Justice, diversity, equity, inclusion (JEDI):** A more detailed summary of the ways aspects of diversity and equity work together. Justice refers to a goal of vision for social change that requires redressing past inequities. Equity refers to a practice where people receive resources they need to participate in society. Diversity is the difference between people, things, and experiences. Inclusion is the practice of valuing unique experiences and contributions people have to offer.<sup>16</sup>

**Marginalization:** A social process by which individuals or groups are (intentionally or unintentionally) distanced from access to power and resources and constructed as insignificant, peripheral, or less valuable/privileged to a community or “mainstream” society. This term describes a social process, so as not to imply a lack of agency. Examples of marginalized groups include, but are by no means limited to, groups excluded due to race, religion, political or cultural group, age, gender, or financial status.<sup>17</sup>

**Multicultural Competency:** A process of embracing diversity and learning about people from other cultural backgrounds. The key element to becoming more culturally competent is respect for the ways that others live in and organize the world and an openness to learn from them.<sup>18</sup>

**Restorative Practices:** Restorative practices are used in schools to foster an equitable and positive school culture. Restorative practices focus on strengthening relationships and connections between individuals, both youth and adults, in a school community. Restorative practices offer schools an alternative to traditional disciplinary actions that center on punishment for misbehavior and breaking rules.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio, JEDI Frequently Asked Questions, 2023.

<https://www.diversitycenterneohio.org/jedi-frequently-asked-questions/>.

<sup>17</sup> Racial Equity Tools, Glossary, 2023. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>

<sup>18</sup> University of Washington.

<sup>19</sup> Designing for Equity in Next Gen Learning, Restorative Practices in Schools, 2023.

<https://www.nextgenlearning.org/equity-toolkit/school-culture>

# *ACSD Strategic Plan Board Discussion*

Strategic Plan for Equity 2023



# Roles and Responsibilities

## Advisory Committee

**Role:** Parents, students, administrators, and staff who represent the needs of the ACSD community with an emphasis on traditionally underrepresented identities. Responsible for high-level identification of equity issues to address in the strategic plan priorities. Serve as ambassadors to engage the community to engage in the process. Offer recommendations to the board.

**Responsibility:** Deliberate and analyze the data collected and identify where more data is needed. Invite the community to engage at key points in the process.

**Work Product:** Draft recommended areas to be considered by the board for the strategic plan goals and TOA.

## Board

**Role:** Oversight and creation of the 2022 strategic plan goals and theory of action (TOA).

**Responsibility:** Take recommendations from the Advisory Committee and distill recommendations into foundational priorities. Review ACSD mission and vision statements to update and align where necessary with goals and theory of action for strategic plan. Set goals, priorities, and TOA for strategic plan. Engage community through public meetings to seek feedback on goals and TOA before making a final determination.

**Work Product:** Draft and finalize a mission, vision, and actionable goals for ACSD.

## ACSD School Community

**Role:** Students, ACSD staff, parents and caregivers who participate in surveys, conversations, focus groups, and provide feedback throughout timeline.

**Responsibility:** Offers feedback and perspectives to help Advisory Committee, board and Action Teams identify areas of focus, actionable goals, and useful strategies to build an equitable learning experience for all ACSD students, especially minoritized students.

## Staff

**Role:** Creation of strategic plan and execution of the strategic plan goals, priorities, and TOA.

**Responsibility:** Operational planning and on-the-ground support of the Advisory Committee and strategic plan process. Facilitate stages of strategic plan process, coordinate with consultant, provide ACSD information needed to advisory committee and board for deliberations. Design and recruit action team members. Implement strategies and planning steps and timeline necessary to achieve strategic plan goals. Form a Strategic Plan Action Team to set the mission, vision, and priorities.

**Work Product:** Creates updates for the community and board. Monitors plan to offer needed adjustments along the way to meet goals.

# Roles and Responsibilities

## Board

**Role:** Oversight and creation of the 2022 strategic plan goals and theory of action (TOA).

**Responsibility:** Take recommendations from the Advisory Committee and distill recommendations into foundational priorities. Review ACSD mission and vision statements to update and align where necessary with goals and theory of action for strategic plan. Set goals, priorities, and TOA for strategic plan. Engage community through public meetings to seek feedback on goals and TOA before making a final determination.

**Work Product:** Draft and finalize a mission, vision, and actionable goals for ACSD.



### September - October 2022:

9.12.23 Board Retreat  
9.26.23 Board Meeting  
10.5.23 Board Meeting  
2 working group meetings  
Passed to Action Team



### August-September 2023:

Final review and approval

# *Updates since August 14, 2023 Board Meeting*

New draft of strategic plan document includes:

- Additional background/context of the strategic planning development process
- Corrected typos and updated formal program names

The new draft does not include additional examples under more action steps as the Action Team's work is completed. This could be work by the staff implementation team.

All strategic plan development work, meeting minutes, and additional available on ACSD website.

### *3 Discussion Items*

1. Clarify intent/direction of certain points in the draft strategic plan based on points raised Aug 14th:
  - a. equitable budgeting, funding, and staffing/facility and integration with ACSD facilities master plan
  - b. use of data for assessment of progress
  - c. school placement
2. Provide guidance to staff on what the Board needs in order to assess progress and timing of assessment
3. Identify the Board's work within the strategic plan to lead/complete.  
Ex: policy development

# *#1 Clarifications to Draft Strategic Plan*

1. Equitable budgeting, funding, and staffing/facility and integration with ACSD facilities master plan  
(Goal 2, Strategy 1, Action Step 1 a, b, d and Strategy 2, Action Step 5)
2. Use of data for assessment of progress (Goal 2, Strategy 2, Action Step 1, 3)
3. School placement (Goal 2, Strategy 1, Action Step 1c)

*Is the current wording in line with the board's intent?*

*Is the current wording clear and understandable?*

*If not, is there additional wording needed to clarify intent and/or to provide direction to implementation team that should be made?*



## *#2 Board Assessment of Strategic Plan*

*What information do you need to know the strategic plan is on track to advance the district's 3 goals?*

*How will you measure impact, especially with a commitment to equity?*

*What is the best time for the board to assess progress given board member terms and turnover?*

## *#3 Board's Work to Advance the Strategic Plan*

*What areas of the strategic plan require board action and involvement based on the board's role to create policy and oversight of district?  
What are the obvious topics/areas?*

*How will the board identify what to work on this year and how will it coordinate that work with the implementation team's "year one" work?*

# *Next Steps*



**September 2023** Board reviews Action Team recommendations and approves final strategic plan including goals, strategies and action steps.

**August-October 2023** ACSD staff work with new interim Superintendent, staff, and relevant stakeholders to create an implementation plan of strategic plan. Plan will include action steps timelines, benchmarks, and evaluation points. Implementation team begins its work to map out year one. Team includes principals and ACSD directors.

**TBD 2024.** First report and assessment of strategic plan progress.

## New VT AOE Rules Related to Board Governance (Effective July 1, 2025)

New VT AOE Rules were recently published that include several Governance Quality Standards that will impact how we operate as a board. The rules go into effect in July 2025, which is a way off, however, this dovetails nicely with the board governance work we've started to discuss at our recent trainings/retreat and with the Governance Core book that we have all read.

On August 31<sup>st</sup>, the VSBA hosted a webinar intended to inform school board members of the changes that are coming. Provided below are the links to the webinar and the materials that they provided.

1. The [video of the webinar](#) is about 1 hour long
2. [Presentation](#)
3. [Governance Quality Standards](#)
4. [Governance Quality Standards Self-Assessment](#)

The Governance Quality Standards section that applies to school boards is in Section 113 (pp 6-8). I strongly encourage each of you to listen to the hour webinar that VSBA hosted last Thursday for some background. I believe this will be helpful as we engage in work plan discussions in the near future.

Respectively Submitted,

Barbara Wilson, Chair  
ACSD Board