Essential Question:

What does the strategic planning process look like? The Introduction offers an overview to district leaders of what the strategic planning process looks like. It clarifies district and CEC roles and responsibilities. The Introduction is usually one-half day in person. It can be done virtually in a two and one-half hour session using zoom. Ideally it is done 6 weeks prior to the start of the process. The audience usually includes the superintendent, Cabinet, a board representative, Union representative(s) and sometimes a parent/community representative.

Outcomes/ Agenda:

What are the components of the strategic plan process?
What does the schedule look like?
What is the critical work that has to be done before the process starts?
What is the critical work that has to be done after plan approval?
Why do many strategic plans fail? Why is Living the Plan more important that having a Plan?
What have been recent changes to CEC's process?
What documents are available to assist a District communicate the strategic planning process to its stakeholders prior to the start?
How does the District select its strategic plan team? Who selects?

"It is good to have an end to journey toward;
but it is the journey that matters in the end."
Ursula K. LeGuin 1999

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Selecting the Strategic Plan Team

1/3 Staff … 1/3 Parent and Community … 1/3 Management
Students (Six Table Teams- with 6-7-or 8 at a Mixed Stakeholder Table)

Stakeholder Group	Number	Suggested Selection
Board of Education	2	Board
Superintendent	1	Superintendent
Key members of the Superintendent's Cabinet	2-3	Superintendent
Building Leadership	2-3 per level: elementary, middle, high	Principals
Union Leadership	1 per organization (Certified staff, Support staff, etc.)	Union(s)
Parent Organization Leadership	1-2 from all Parent Organizations	Parent Council or Superintendent and Board
Family Representatives	1 per school or, depending on district size, 3-4 from elementary, 3-4 from middle, and 3-4 from high school	Parent Teacher Organization
Community Representatives	3-5	Superintendent and Board
School Representatives	1 per school or, depending on district size, 3-4 from elementary, 3-4 from middle, and 3-4 from high school	School Leadership Teams
Student Representatives in K-12 districts	6	Student Council

The responsibilities of the planning team members include:

- Attend all meetings of the planning team.
- Prepare for each meeting by reading materials aligned to each agenda.
- Conduct a data SWOT analysis of the district by reviewing key data indicators and measures to determine the district's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Develop a shared understanding of the needs of stakeholder groups through a review of an environmental scan or stakeholder satisfaction data.
- Explore educational, demographic, political, economic, social, and technological impacts on the future of the district.
- Explore research-based, effective practices of high performing districts.
- Review and revise the district's shared mission, vision, values/commitments and goal.
- Provide suggestions for indicators and measures for long-range goals to define district success.
- Identify key strategy gaps that identify what the district needs to do differently to improve its results over the duration of the plan.
- Present a draft of the plan for stakeholder review and input.
- Revise and finalize the draft of the plan based on stakeholder review and input.
- Recommend the strategic plan to the superintendent.
- Learn about the responsibilities to live the Plan

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Selecting the Core/Editing Team

Stakeholder Group	Number	Suggested Selection
Board of Education	1	Board
Superintendent	1	Superintendent
Key member of the Superintendent's Cabinet	1	Superintendent
Staff Leadership	2	Staff
Parent Organization Leadership	1	Parent Council or Superintendent and Board

The responsibilities of the core/editing team members include:

- Be members of the strategic planning team and assume all responsibilities expected of team members.
- Review the Data Retreat Findings Report drafted by the facilitator and provide feedback individually and virtually following the Data Retreat
- Review the Vision Retreat Findings Report drafted by the facilitator and provide feedback individually and virtually following the Vision Retreat
- Review the Setting Direction Retreat Findings Report drafted by the facilitator and provide feedback individually and virtually following the Setting Direction Retreat.

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Data Preparation

Essential Question:

What work needs to be done by the District in preparation for the Data Retreat? The District Preparation meeting is a half day and provides an opportunity to those giving District Data Reports at the Data Retreat an overview of their roles and responsibilities in preparing reports to the strategic plan team to familiarize them with key performance data indicators that describe past and present district performance. This preparation can be done virtually upon request. There would be one one-hour general session and one one-hour individual session for each team of presenters for each of the three reports:

The Three District Performance Reports: Developing a shared knowledge and understanding of District Performance: What is working and what is not working? What needs celebrating? What needs attention?	
Student Learning Performance: Student Growth and Achievement Data 40 minutes	

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District Culture: Learning, Leading and Teaching Environment 40 minutes	
District Resources: Finances, Facilities, Operations and Technology 40 minutes	

Report Requirements:
- Identification of Key Performance Indicators
- Data Charts, Graphs, other formats for each indicator
- Trend, Comparative and Cohort Data
- 30-minute report maximum
- 10-minute interaction maximum
- PowerPoint
- Handout
- Suggestions for time preparation
- Suggestions for sharing and feedback from one another

Environmental Scan

"Environmental Scanning" is a business term used to help leaders survey the landscape of competitors, customers and new innovations for products and services. The district should be looking for opportunities to make a difference in the lives they lead and in those who come into contact with the company. **What are the ideas and perceptions of stakeholders and influencers that can shape the future of the organization through better preparation today?**

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There are key questions about the future that will assist the strategic plan team receive some initial input and feedback from the stakeholders they represent as well as trends in education.

1. A primary source of an environmental scan is often found in perceptions of stakeholders: student, families, staff, community.
2. A secondary source of an environmental scan is often found in the workplace, careers, global trends and needs.
3. A final source of an environmental scan is often found in shifts in the educational profession- impacts that are making a difference as we look to improving both teaching and learning.

Environmental scanning is most effective when it becomes a part of the culture or "mind-set" of the organization as a whole. The value of feedback and expert participation as well as staff participation is formalized in a "read and review" process. Such a process supports the mind-set orientation of environmental scanning as a decentralized and legitimate activity within the organizational climate. Environmental scanning is a continuous, systematic alertness to the external environment in a way that helps build an understanding of what sort of future the educational community wishes to create/

The well-prepared leader is one who pays attention to the signs present in the culture. A scan of these signs would include a review of the economic, social and judicial changes that would impact the business. A leader should review any signs of new things that will impact their business or how they do business at the local, national and international levels.

CEC offers districts a number of ideas as to how to collect environmental scan data prior to the strategic planning effort. These ideas are great to announce the process. These ideas include virtual and non-virtual ideas as to how to collect data and information to assist the strategic plan team prepare for its work. Environmental scan data reminds the strategic plan team of their role to not only bring forward their ideas, but to represent those not on the team.

Strategic Management System

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Strategic Plans Developed with CEC as a Partner are embedded in the Strategic Management System developed by the Strategy Management Group's Scorecard Institute. CEC Facilitators of this process have been certified through their process. This system is based on being able to answer two essential questions:

- **Are we doing things RIGHT as an organization?**
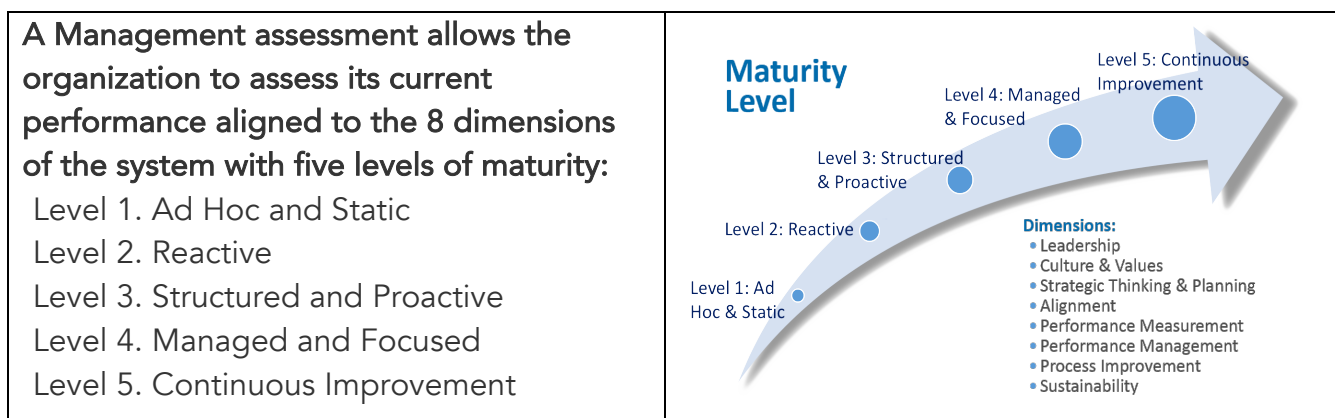- **Are we doing the RIGHT things as an organization?**

The first is operational, the second strategic.

This system further allows an organization to assess the growth and performance aligned to the dimensions of the strategic management system. It further allows the organization to benchmark its performance across districts or central office departments within a district to learn from one another to accelerate action and build capacity.

It recognizes that the return on investment of establishing a strategic plan rests on the organization's ability to execute strategic to get better results.

The Strategic Management System is built around five most important factors to successfully execute strategy

1. An **accountability model** must be clearly defined and embraced for each element of the strategy.
2. The organization-wide **strategy must be effectively cascaded down into the business units, support functions, teams and individuals down through the organization.**
3. **Adequate resources (time, budget, skills and capacities**) must be available.
4. Managing change on a consistent and professional basis is vital. **Change management is the primary responsibility of the executive leadership team.**
5. Establishing a **performance culture** is a fundamental requirement for effective implementation and a frequent failure point in many strategic planning and management processes

A Management assessment allows the organization to assess its current performance aligned to the 8 dimensions of the system with five levels of maturity:
  Level 1. Ad Hoc and Static
  Level 2. Reactive
  Level 3. Structured and Proactive
  Level 4. Managed and Focused
  Level 5. Continuous Improvement

Maturity Level

Level 1: Ad Hoc & Static
Level 2: Reactive
Level 3: Structured & Proactive
Level 4: Managed & Focused
Level 5: Continuous Improvement

Dimensions:
- Leadership
- Culture & Values
- Strategic Thinking & Planning
- Alignment
- Performance Measurement
- Performance Management
- Process Improvement
- Sustainability

The eight dimensions listed in the figure above define the components of the management system. Strategic Thinking and Planning are one of the dimensions.
We begin our process by assisting the organization assess its strategic management system.

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Orientation

Essential Question:

Who is in the room and what are we charged to do? The Orientation is for team members to get to know one another. It is an opportunity to be familiar with the strategic plan process. It is an opportunity to review commitments plan team members must make.

Outcomes: The Orientation is an opportunity for the strategic plan team to learn of their roles and responsibilities. It is a chance to begin to develop relationships with plan team members.	
- Learn who is on the strategic plan team. - Learn about the strategic plan process. - Learn about roles and responsibilities of the strategic plan team. - Learn about roles and responsibilities of the core team. - Learn about the strategic plan that has been in existence for the past several years. - Preview another district's strategic plan.	

Time Allocation:

Two Hours (usually in the evening from 6:00-8:00 p.m.).

Product:

The Orientation Meeting paints the "Picture" of the Strategic Planning process so that all team members have a shared understanding of the process and their roles and responsibilities in helping the district set clear direction for the future.

District Responsibilities:

- The district assists in following the process to select members of both the strategic plan and core teams.
- The district prepares a short report summarizing the state of the current strategic plan.
- The district ensures that all plan team members understand the importance of attending all team meetings.

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Data Retreat

Essential Question:

Where are we now? How would you describe what is working and what needs attention in the past and present? What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as described by data, information, and perceptions? What does the data picture look like today?

Outcomes: The Data Retreat provides an opportunity for the Strategic Plan Team to review the following data sources:

- Results of the Environmental Scan/System Assessment
- Academic/Achievement/Learning data
- Human Resource/Personnel data
- Learning Environment data
- Social/Emotional Student data
- Demographic data (student and community)
- Financial data (district)
- Satisfaction/Climate data (student, family, staff, community) such as the 5Essentials

Note: Trend, comparative, and cohort data are optimal, where possible.

Time Allocation:
6 hours (usually from 8:00-3:00 p.m. during the workday.) Usually, it is 1-3 weeks following the Orientation Meeting.

Product:
The Data Retreat allows the Strategic Plan Team to know strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and to capture baseline data so a new vision can be established. The SWOT describes the current state of the district and answers the question, *"Where are we now?"*

The SWOT is then shared with stakeholder groups between the Data Retreat and the Vision Retreat to solicit feedback. The feedback is reviewed at the next meeting of the team.

District Responsibilities:
The district assists CEC in collecting and organizing the feedback from stakeholders for the plan team review of the Environmental Scan data.
The district organizes and presents data reports. Each report is approximately 40 minutes:

- Academic Data: Student growth and achievement
- Learning and Working Environment: Culture and climate
- Resources: Financial, Facilities, Operations and Technology

Community Engagement

Essential Question:

Do internal and external stakeholders believe we are on the right track? What do you think about the draft SWOT analysis? What suggestions do you have to improve the draft materials? Do you believe this plan will help the district reach its mission and vision?

Outcomes: Community engagement provides an opportunity for the Strategic Plan Team to reflect on their work and ensure they are on the right track in representing the beliefs and feelings of the internal and external communities through the following:

- Staff engagement sessions
- Parent and community engagement sessions
- Student focus groups (if selected)
- Specially designed surveys to gather feedback from internal and external stakeholders
- Neutral third-party survey analysis
- Summarizing reports for the strategic plan team
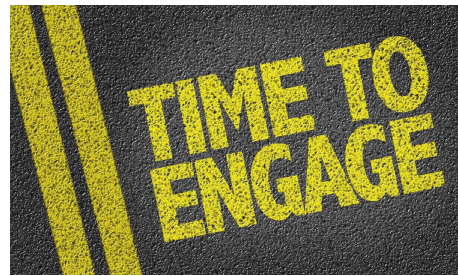
Time Allocation for Engagement Sessions:

6 hours (usually a session lasts no more than 1.5 hours but to save the district money, a staff session is held in the afternoon typically at around 3 p.m. and a community session in the evening somewhere between 6-7:30 p.m.) Usually this occurs 1-2 weeks following the Data Retreat. A survey also is offered for those unable to make engagement sessions.

Time Allocation for Draft Plan Survey:

A survey is completed following the Setting Direction Retreat as well. This usually occurs 1-2 weeks after the Setting Direction Retreat and is typically open at least one week.

Product:

After the community engagement and first survey, a report is created on the findings that is used by the plan team during the first hour of the Vision Retreat to make changes to the SWOT.

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After the second survey, a report is created on the findings that is used by the plan team during the Final Meeting of the Team to make changes to the draft strategic plan.

District Responsibilities: The district promotes the community engagement sessions and the surveys. The district reviews the reports prior to being shared with the public to ensure interpretation of district-specific information was correctly represented.

	Top Ten Reasons for Using CEC's Strategic Planning Process
Number	**Reason**
10	One page plan with supporting documents keeps it "big and simple."
9	Sets clear focus and priorities. Sets direction for operational action planning.
8	Sets direction for operational action planning. Identifies strategies for improvement.
7	Defines commitments and non-negotiables. Establishes what we all need to do well together.
6	Based on a clear understanding of the data system that provides evidence of what is working and what needs attention.
5	Based on a vision for the future that is reflective of research-based practices.
4	Determines gaps between current performance (where we are) and preferred future performance (where we want to be).

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3	Includes stakeholder participation to ensure collaboration and ownership.
2	Defines how we measure success through goals, indicators, measures and targets.
1	Ensures a process that brings the plan to life once approved through alignment with leader and teacher performance evaluations, meeting agenda, and progress monitoring and reporting dashboard system.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change

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the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." -Margaret Meade

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