

Kenilworth School District 38

# Strategic Plan 2022–2027









Through an integrated system of teaching and learning and a culture of care, we support the academic achievement and social-emotional well-being of all students.







Dear Joseph Sears Community,

The Joseph Sears School is a special place. We are excited to present the Joseph Sears School (Kenilworth District 38) 2022–27 Strategic Plan with the vision of making it even better. While the framework and goals are the culmination of a series of recent Board of Education directed sessions, this five-year roadmap is the culmination of several years of discussion, benchmarking, audits, and collaboration. Key areas of focus have included academic programming, District policies, facilities, security, sustainability, and equity.

Central to these efforts is the vision of actualizing our *Portrait of* a Sears Graduate. This portrait, and our Four Cornerstones of Responsibility, Kindness, Honesty & Respect, underpin a desire to answer three essential questions:

- 1. What is most important for our students to know and be able to do?
- 2. How can the Joseph Sears School best develop these outcomes?
- 3. How do we measure success?

What has been most exciting about these conversations is the obvious pride that all stakeholders have for the Joseph Sears School. At the same time, there is a clear understanding that we must better leverage our robust human and financial resources toward continuous improvement to prepare students as citizen leaders in education, career, and life.

This ambitious plan, defined by six key pillars, will only be realized through the continued collaboration and support of our community in conjunction with a positive, vibrant school culture. This is a "living document" and your continued input and constructive engagement is critical to success.

The Joseph Sears School, steeped in tradition, has been consistently admired for its excellence. With your partnership, we will build on this legacy for the betterment of our children and the world they will inherit

Catherine Donegan Superintendent, District 38

William Graham President. Board of Education



# **INDEPENDENT AUDITS**

# **Educational Audit (2018–2019)**

Lisa Leali, Chief Education Officer

Prepared by the administrative cabinet to capture insights into the school's history and current reality, this information informed goal setting and work around accomplishing long-range goals identified in the strategic plan. Existing documentation, personal conversations and interactions, focused stakeholder interviews, and professional observations drove recommendations guided by education experience and best practices.

# **Sustainability Audit (Fall 2019)**

Wold Architects and Engineers

Data gathering, evaluation, and recommendations were completed for Kenilworth District 38 and structured into categories based on three pillars of sustainability to help align activities, subject matter, achievements, and objectives with common sustainability goals.

# **Technology Audit (Fall 2020)** Dyopath

A review of the current environment and technology roadmap to bridge the gap between the current state and future needs led to a final report including prioritized recommendations, timelines, product and solution options, and cost estimates.

# **Safety and Security Audit (Spring 2021)**

Paul Timm, Facility Engineering Associate

This review of the school's physical security posture provided assessment and recommendations for improving deterrence, detection, delay, and response strategies. A door hardware manufacturer also provided an architectural opening audit in conjunction with the FEA security assessment.

# **Equity Audit (Spring 2022)**

Ivette Dubiel, Systemic Educational Equity

A wide range of disaggregated data was reviewed and focus groups with staff, students, and parents, guardians, and caretakers were performed to critically examine strengths and areas needing improvement. This initiative paid particular attention to historically marginalized groups and identities. The report provided comprehensive analysis of findings and research-informed next steps.



# STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

# **Strategic Planning Resources From the** 2018–2019 School Year and Earlier

- Kenilworth School District 38 Vision, Mission, Values, and Strategic Goals
- The Joseph Sears School Educational Philosophy

### **Strategic Plans**

- KSD38 Strategic Plan 2022–2027
- KSD38 Strategic Plan 2018–2019

# **Portrait of a Sears Graduate (2019)**

An advisory committee of administrators, staff, and parents developed the Portrait of a Sears Graduate, approved and adopted by the Board of Education in 2019. The portrait includes four transdisciplinary student outcomes: Fearless Learner, Creative Thinker, Courageous Advocate, and Compassionate Citizen.

# **Master Facilities Visioning Sessions** (March 2020)

David Stephen, New Vista Design

Including teacher leaders, community leaders, and students.

# **Achieving Our Future-Ready Learning Goals Workshops (February 2021)**

David Stephen, New Vista Design

Input was gathered from team coordinators and curriculum leaders.

# **Achieving Our Future-Ready Learning** Goals Multi-Year Plan (2021–2023)

A pre-strategic, multi-year plan to begin achieving the future-ready learning goals established in the master facilities visioning session in March 2020. This plan was integrated into the strategic plan process in summer 2023.

## **Master Facilities Plan (2021)**

Adopted by the Board of Education building and finance committee.

## **SWOT Analysis (October 2021)**

Completed by the Board of Education: Evan Lukasik, President; Bill Graham, Vice President; Mia Casey-Sachs, Secretary; Paul Anderson; Ashish Kaura; Lisa Metzger-Mugg; and Steve Potter.



# ALL STUDENTS. OUR STUDENTS.

# SEARS GRADUATE

In recent years, The Joseph Sears School has moved further toward our goal of continuous improvement. We are excited to formalize these ongoing initiatives in a five-year strategic plan that will soon be shared with the community.

Designed to provide a clear and realistic roadmap for all parties, this living strategic plan will be actualized by the board as they stay true to the timeline and ensure that we consistently support students' ability to meet the vision defined in our Portrait of a Sears Graduate.

This portrait strives to develop four characteristics in all students: Fearless Learner, Creative Thinker, Courageous Advocate, and Compassionate Citizen. Developed by a representative advisory group and approved by the board in 2019, this portrait, what the four characteristics represent for students, and how we help students successfully achieve them continue to crystallize.

Since this past October, we have collaborated with students, community members, and staff to research and define model characteristics and create developmentally appropriate success criteria and performance indicators. For example, a Fearless Learner is described as:

Sears graduates understand the process, seek and embrace the opportunities, and persevere through the challenges of learning something new.

A Sears graduate believes their knowledge, expertise, and skills can develop through effort,



and that new learning is essential to advance and achieve. They are looking for opportunities to demonstrate their confidence, motivation, curiosity, and perseverance.

Once complete, these indicators and criteria will be combined with our academic priority standards to shape student educational experiences for years to come. The Portrait of a Sears Graduate will provide direction to the programs and structures we need to implement, the actions we need to take, and the resources we need to employ to achieve these inspiring student outcomes. In conjunction with the five-year strategic plan, all focus will be directed toward this agreed-upon vision.

# THE DEFINITION OF THE PORTRAIT OF A SEA



Sears graduates understand the process, seek and embrace the opportunities, and persevere through the challenges of learning something new.

A Sears graduate believes their knowledge, expertise, and skills can develop through effort, and that new learning is essential to advance and achieve. They are looking for **opportunities** to demonstrate their confidence, motivation, curiosity, and perseverance.



Sears graduates are passionate and innovative thinkers.

A Sears graduate believes that challenging existing boundaries and being imaginative will empower them to discover new ideas. They are looking for opportunities to demonstrate their creativity, collaboration, innovation, and open-mindedness.



# A LOOK AT EDUCATION TERMINOLOGY

Many of the terms used in this document have specific meanings within the education space and are key to the way we approach learning at The Joseph Sears School.

Adaptive schools or professional learning communities:

These terms refer to how teachers themselves learn to teach, lead, and continually improve our school as the world around us changes.

Collective efficacy: A shared belief that a school's staff can have a positive impact on student achievement despite other influences in the students' lives that might challenge their success.

Equitable learning: Equitable schools are places that enable everyone to participate fully in learning and where educators ensure each child is afforded the necessary opportunities to thrive.

Integrated system of teaching and learning: A systematic approach to teaching and assessing student learning, then adjusting programming for individuals or groups until all students have mastered the standards.

Multi-tiered system of support: A complex, data-driven framework that evaluates students' learning experiences and program effectiveness as well as helping to identify groups and individuals who may need additional instruction.

# RS GRADUATE



Sears graduates better their communities by being kind and compassionate.

A Sears graduate believes in being kind and caring to oneself and others and that they are part of a connected community.

They are looking for opportunities to demonstrate their inclusivity, self-awareness, social-awareness, and empathy.



Sears graduates demonstrate empathy by advocating for themselves and others.

A Sears graduate believes in the well-being of themselves, others, and the community and that their individual and collective actions have influence and impact. **They are** looking for opportunities to demonstrate their bravery, be communicative, problem-solve, and take action.



Professional collaborative structures: These systems around teacher collaboration extend successful teaching practices across grade levels and subject areas to ensure consistent application of standards and curricula.

ctices: Demonstrated to reduce the frequency of behavior incidents, restorative strategies center on treating people with respect, resolving personal conflict, repairing harm, and healing relationships.

Social-emotional learning: The process of developing the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are vital for achieving in school, work, and life. Research suggests that fostering social-emotional development may be foundational to academic success.

Student collaborative learning: A team-based approach that promotes student interaction and shared responsibility for academic achievement. Students tend to reflect more on their ideas, learn to articulate them better, and have a greater understanding of what they've learned.



Ongoing academic success requires a common curriculum by grade and subject area that can also be tailored to each individual or student group. Adhering to curriculum standards allows us to measure academic achievement and growth over time, but we also leave room for teaching and learning practices to be refined based on measurable results and empirical feedback.

## **GOAL**

Provide a student-centered education rooted in best practices and quality learning experiences to drive academic achievement for all.

- 1. Draw upon Portrait of a Sears Graduate characteristics, student performance indicators, and success criteria, to guide academic and extracurricular programming.
- 2. Articulate and implement a standards-based, integrated system of teaching and learning in all content areas to establish a guaranteed, viable curriculum for all students.
- 3. Create a multi-tiered system of support structure to respond to individual students' needs.
- 4. Provide collaborative structures and professional development for staff to facilitate conversations around student learning and well-being. While this has always been the norm across District 38, this enhanced programming has proven critical for ongoing student success.

### **ACTION PLAN 2022-2023**

- Define Portrait of a Sears Graduate characteristics, including student performance indicators and success criteria, based on learning from 2022–23 stakeholder sessions.
- Institute a five-year curriculum review cycle
  to ensure ongoing alignment with the Portrait of a
  Sears Graduate and state and national standards.
- 3. Implement 2022-2023 curricular evaluations:
  - · Social Studies
  - Math
  - PE/Health
  - · Applied Arts
- 4. **Deploy individual-student, problem-solving software,** eduCLIMBER, to reinforce the multitiered system of support framework.
  - Use eduCLIMBER smartFORM revisions to support student problem solving
  - Refine the problem-solving process for identifying and responding to student academic and social-emotional needs.

- 5. Provide professional development to support our teachers in creating collaborative, studentcentered learning environments that support and employ:
  - · Integrated systems of teaching and learning
  - Professional collaborative structures based on adaptive schools and professional learning communities
  - Student collaborative structures and strategies

"The Academic Achievement Committee has been diving into The Integrated System of Teaching and Learning! The committee shared six presentations on this topic to our staff members during our Early Release Days on Tuesdays. I am extremely excited to align the priority standards vertically and horizontally for each grade, and subject area. As each curriculum renewal takes place, these priority standards will guide us in choosing curriculum, resources, and assessment tools rooted in best practices and current research. Our committee is devoted to fostering the growth of all students to achieve the *Portrait of a Sears Graduate."* 







"The Whole Child Committee has been working together this year to implement our Social Emotional Learning curriculum, and I have been lucky to be a part of the Kindergarten Caring Community. It has truly been a wonderful experience. In our morning circle, we face each other and take turns listening and engaging in conversations which fosters a feeling of being seen, heard, respected, supported, and valued, which in turn creates community belonging. I have seen the benefit in the classroom as students have developed strong communication skills and positive peer relationships. These are important life-long skills for ALL OUR students here and beyond their years at Sears."

**—MICHELLE HARRADINE** 

Supporting the whole child begins with a welcoming environment in which students are able to learn and grow. Our curriculum and additional programs such as extracurricular activities, clubs, and athletics focus on behavior norms, skills, and expectations, as well as helping students develop social skills and learn to interact successfully in school and society.

# **GOAL**

Establish a safe, kind, inclusive learning community that promotes the socialemotional well-being of all students.

### **STRATEGY**

- 1. Deliver a junior kindergarten through grade 8, schoolwide social-emotional learning curriculum.
- 2. Ensure consistent behavior expectations and restorative and disciplinary practices throughout the school, from junior kindergarten through grade 8.
- 3. Leverage metrics and develop a survey to track student well-being.
- 4. Articulate and promote a message of community and belonging.

# ACTION PLAN 2022-2023

- 1. Implement the Caring School
  Community program, year one of a
  three-year social-emotional learning
  curriculum.
- 2. **Evaluate CHAMPS,** a classroom routine and behavior expectation system, for alignment with the Caring School Community program.
- 3. Develop, teach, and reinforce consistent expectations for behavior in common areas, including hallways, restrooms, lunch areas, recess, etc.
- 4. Design and implement consistent restorative practice strategies around behavioral incidents and responses
- 5. **Evaluate current systems,** structures, and programming through an annual equity action plan.



Investing in our teachers' professional development equips them to meet students' needs across a range of important areas—conveying a culture of care, developing a harmonized curriculum, interpreting student data and establishing a welcoming classroom environment. Our ultimate objective is to develop collective efficacy and skills that further our vision and strategic plan goals for the benefit of students.

### GOAL

Foster a professional community that attracts, develops, and retains a diverse staff of studentcentered, continuous learners.

- 1. Foster an inclusive school culture and climate for all students, staff, and the community.
- 2. Provide a quality staff development program aligned with our stated vision.
- 3. Develop and implement an effective substituteteacher strategy and policy.
- 4. Cultivate shared decision-making structures to strengthen staff engagement.
- 5. Utilize a teacher evaluation system that reflects the school's beliefs and identity to support the Portrait of a Sears Graduate.
- 6. Continue our commitment to attracting and retaining the best talent.

# **ACTION PLAN 2022-2023**

- Create and implement a professional development plan that incorporates Tuesday early release, institute days, and targeted professional programming to explore:
  - Equity
  - · Social-emotional learning
  - · Behavior
  - · Integrated system of teaching and learning
  - · Effective teaching strategies
  - Operationalizing the Portrait of Sears Graduate concept
  - Professional learning communities
  - CHAMPS routine and behavior expectation system
  - Caring school community
  - · Co-teaching and inclusion
  - · Safety and security
  - · Adaptive schools for leaders
  - · Learning environment for flexible space
- 2. Develop a baseline understanding of substitute teacher usage and need
- 3. Create and implement a systemic committee and teacher-leader structure
- 4. Provide professional relationship-building opportunities for staff-to-staff, staff-to-admin, staff-to-BoE, staff- and admin-to-community engagement
- Create and implement a teacher evaluation program that reinforces all strategic goals to support the *Portrait of a Sears Graduate*
- 6. Review and select a state-approved culture survey



"The Staff Development & Retention
Committee has worked to provide
meaningful opportunities to foster positive
and caring relationships amongst all facets
of the Sears community. We have done this
through maintaining valued traditions as
well as creating new experiences based
on relevant feedback. We look forward to
continuing to examine and analyze the
process of creating community on behalf
of our students in order to enrich the
schoolhouse."

—TRACEY MCDOWELL







learned a lot about the importance of choosing the right furniture for each space and the impact that it can have on teaching and learning. I am excited to see the new spaces enhance the collaborative and innovative learning environment throughout the schoolhouse. The team conducted research, surveyed students and staff, and visited the furniture showroom to inform the purposeful creation of guidelines for our new learning spaces. The guidelines that the group generated identified two main areas that influenced the selection of the furniture. The committee looked at the characteristics of our students and needs of our learning space."

**—ROSS CABIN** 



# LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Joseph Sears School has implemented a multi-stage Master Facilities Plan that envisions open, flexible learning spaces and utilization of enhanced technology. Building on this foundation, the Learning Environment focus area concentrates on strengthening physical safety and security standards as well as operationalizing facilities and capital improvements through a planned review schedule.

### GOAL

Build a safe, supportive, innovative learning environment that encourages all students and staff to work together toward shared goals.

## **STRATEGY**

- 1. Provide flexible learning spaces that foster collaborative student experiences.
- 2. Embed instructional technology resources to leverage educational outcomes.
- 3. Implement sustainability best practices toward schoolwide global stewardship.

## **ACTION PLAN 2022-2023**

- 1. Produce and utilize elementary learning environment guidelines that will inform the choice of classroom and hub spaces' furniture and fixtures (adoption year two of five)
- 2. Provide ongoing support for the Master Facilities Plan Phases I and II and development of Phase III
- 3. Generate a rolling five-year facilities action
- 4. Create a rolling three-year technology plan utilizing past technology audits
- 5. Integrate student-centered sustainability initiatives in the applied arts curriculum
- 6. Complete safety audit action items and enact ongoing safety review and assessment
- 7. Develop and conduct a sustainability survey to inform and prioritize initiatives



Our community offers exceptional talent and expertise that can be leveraged to maximize the Sears experience. Partnerships will further embed us within the community, support our teachers and learners, and potentially assist in optimizing our finances.

## **GOAL**

Cultivate trusting relationships that advance objectives for our students, school, and community and elevate the Sears experience.

- 1. Deliver a clear, consistent message to all stakeholders through a strategic plan and supporting materials.
- 2. Foster an inclusive school culture and climate for all students, staff, and community that emphasizes opportunities to connect, inform, engage, and partner.
- 3. Provide a quality parent education program centered on academic achievement and socialemotional well-being topics.
- 4. Cultivate shared decision-making structures and opportunities for families to give input into engagement initiatives.
- 5. Enrich programs and expertise through township, county, state, and national efforts.

### **ACTION PLAN 2022-2023**

- Collaborate on strategic goal areas with JSSPVA, Village of Kenilworth, Kenilworth Park District, Diversity, Equity and Belonging (DEB) Committee, Parent and Community as Agency Committee, and Parent and Community Partnership Committee
- Develop a communication and event plan for parent engagement and to foster a greater sense of community among all stakeholders
- Provide parent engagement opportunities
  across the Caring School Community, academics,
  technology, and creation of the Portrait of a Sears
  Graduate characteristics.
- Continue strong partnerships with Kenilworth, New Trier Township, Cook County and other entities.
- Review and select a state-approved culture survey and consider supplementary measures such as requesting timely feedback after registration, back to school, parent-teacher conferences, report cards, and other events or processes.



"Through the Stakeholder Partnerships committee we collaborated as parents, teachers, and administration, to provide learning opportunities for families and staff to create a culture of care. One of the speakers had many practical parenting strategies that will help build resilience in our children so that they can effectively manage stress now and in the future. It was a fantastic evening and I walked away with ideas on how to support my students with social, emotional and behavioral challenges. We look forward to working together to bring more programming to our community."

—TOULA SIDERIS

# ARTNERSHIPS





plan is designed to inform the allocation of taxpayer dollars to educational initiatives, operational expenses, and investment in long-term physical and technical infrastructure over the next five years. Oversight of reserve balances and cash flow remains paramount, as does ensuring that ongoing board discussions of tax levy needs are facilitated by timely, relevant data and benchmarking against peer districts.

### GOAL

Assure that taxpayer dollars fund student-centered, high-return programs and invest in a safe, healthy, future-focused environment.

- 1. Create a transparent budget that reflects disciplined spending, supports the mission and goals of this strategic plan, and justifies the monetary resources committed.
- 2. Refine budget priorities and consider ways to minimize redundancy through collaboration with community agencies.
- 3. Maintain budgetary and financial processes and policies that are compliant and consistent with state and local guidelines and educational best practices.

- 1. Collaborate with New Trier Township on shared services.
- 2. Continue utilizing zero-based budgeting in annual forecasting.
- 3. Provide administrative presentations and periodic updates on financial and budgetary alignment with this strategic plan
- 4. Conduct cost/benefit analysis of Master Facilities Plan Phase III related to budgeting, financial health, and tax levy requirements
- 5. Develop a dashboard highlighting key financial and operational metrics, as well as statistical metrics outlined in the Focus Areas of this plan, to assist leadership, staff, and community stakeholders in tracking progress.



# PERFORMANCE **METRICS**

### **Academic Achievement Metrics**

## aimswebPlus (K-2)

80% or more of students Meet or Exceed in spring early literacy

80% or more of students Meet or Exceed in spring early numeracy

### MAP Achievement (2-8)

All grade-level Spring Achievement Percentiles are 95% or higher

#### MAP Growth (2-8)

60% of students will Meet or Exceed individual growth targets in reading and math

### MAP Conditional Growth Index (ultimate goal 60% or above) (2-8)

65% average math conditional growth percentile

35% average reading conditional growth percentile

Return to Exemplary rating in the annual ISBE Report Card

#### Illinois Assessment of Readiness (3-8)

70% of students Meet or Exceed in English language arts

75% of students Meet or Exceed in math

90% of students Meet or Exceed in science (5, 8)

60% Student growth percentile on Illinois Assessment of Readiness Math and Reading

# Establish baseline data for number of students receiving interventions and enrichment opportunities

### **5Essentials Framework**

Ambitious Instruction is scored at 60/Strong

### **Whole Child Approach Metrics**

Complete annual equity action plan

Establish baseline data for the number of students participating in athletic and extracurricular programs provided by the school and parents' volunteer association, JSSPVA

Establish baseline data for the number of discipline referrals

Establish baseline data for the number of students on a behavior plan

Establish baseline data for the number of students receiving social work

# **BESS Screening**

80% or more of students will report a Normal Risk in the winter screening

80% or more of teachers will report a Normal Risk for their students in the winter screening

# Attendance Data—less than 10% chronic absenteeism

#### **5Essentials Framework**

Supportive Environment is scored at 80/Very Strong

# **Staff Development and Retention Metrics**

Complete annual equity action plan

Baseline data on external and internal substitute coverage by category (professional development, meetings, personal days, sick days, etc.)

Hours of professional development administered—every teacher receives a minimum of:

63 hours for Tuesday in-service

30 hours for institute days

Baseline data on the number of opportunities for engagement (staff-to-staff, staff-to-admin, staff-to-BoE, staff- and admin-to-community)

### **5Essentials Framework**

Collaborative Teachers is scored at 40/Neutral

Effective Leaders is scored at 20/Weak

# **Learning Environment Metrics**

Complete annual equity action plan

Establish baseline sustainability metrics

### **5Essentials Framework**

Supportive Environment: Safety is scored at 98/Very Strong

# **Stakeholder Partnerships Metrics**

Complete annual equity action plan

# Establish baseline data for attendance at parent engagement events

Number of attendees at parent engagement events

Number of parents at parent-teacher conferences

Number of parents who volunteer

### Establish baseline data for engagement with partnership entities

### **5Essentials Framework**

Involved Families is scored at 70/Strong

Establish baseline data for response rates to event- and process-focused feedback opportunities

# **Fiscal Alignment Metrics**

Establish an operating reserve guideline of 40% of the annual budget

Conduct an annual assessment of operating efficiency to include comparative benchmarking of cost, tax levy, and academic achievement with peer North Shore schools.

Review and update the five-year Master Facilities Plan every two years.

Maintain facilities in a safe and high-quality manner consistent with the Master Facilities Plan

Thank you to the many committee members and even more stakeholders and community members who have contributed to this exciting, forward-looking strategic plan.

# **Staff Development and Retention**

Kate Donegan, Administrator

Courtney Dinkel Bill Gordon Tracey McDowell Cathleen Sheridan Rachel White

### **Academic Achievement**

Dr. Stephanie Helfand and Martin Heffner, Administrators

Jim Beavin
Kristie Cerniglia
Tatiana Pliego Cordero
Allison Drew
Erica Garcia
Jason Hahnstadt
Samantha Hamilton
Lisa Lehman Hunt
Emily Macklin
Cathy Quigley
Barb Rodriguez
Jeff Rosen
Jessica Singer
Jennifer Willis

#### **Whole Child**

Sophie Leventhal and Carrie De La Cruz, Administrators

Jennifer Arra Karolina Bajkowska Nancy Economou Jennifer Garza Michelle Harradine Hilary Harvey Laurie Sahn

## **Stakeholder Partnerships**

Martin Heffner, Administrator

Lynette Bromiel Nancy Economou William Gordon Alison Lopuszynski Toula Sideris

# **Learning Environment**

Nathan McBride, Administrator

Ross Cabin Judi Conaghan Spencer Frie Margo Parkes Laura Romisher John Scheidt Anne Trueman

### **Fiscal Alignment**

Dr. Joe Bailey, Administrator

**Building and Finance Committee** 

