



Community Engagement Report for Strasburg School District 31J



Fall 2023

Table of Contents

Background.....3

Definition and Purpose of Strategic Planning....3

Strategic Planning: Process and Timeline.....4

Engagement Strategies Employed.....6

Engagement Key Findings.....9

Next Step: Strategic Direction.....22

About the Consultants.....22





Background

Strasburg School District 31J is developing a community-driven strategic plan to guide District efforts over the next several years. The plan will help the District identify their priorities, set goals, and determine how they can best allocate their resources to support student learning and success.

The community's input is essential in this process. This Engagement Report outlines the input received from Strasburg 31J families, staff, students, and community members about what's working well and what could be improved in the school district. This feedback will be central to the work of the Strategic Planning Committee and will help them develop a plan that reflects the needs and priorities of the Strasburg 31J community.

Together, the District can develop a strategic plan that supports their students and positions the school district for success. Thank you for engaging in this process that will help the school district improve student outcomes, allocate precious resources, and strengthen the community.

Definition and Purpose of Strategic Planning

A strategic plan is a roadmap to the district's future. A strategic planning process is a systematic approach used by school districts to identify priorities, set goals, and determine how to allocate resources to achieve those goals over the next several years.



Strasburg 31J's Strategic Plan Mission: To empower the community to chart a path to the future that will accelerate the process of change so that all of Strasburg 31J's students will develop into responsible and productive members of society, who are empowered to achieve their full potential.

Strasburg 31J's Strategic Plan Vision: Enhance the thriving Strasburg community through a collective roadmap that ensures the next generation of leaders and citizens educated through Strasburg School District 31J graduate prepared to succeed in life.

Strategic Planning: Process and Timeline

Strategic Planning Process and Timeline

The strategic planning model provides a five-year framework for decision-making that builds upon the shared vision and values held by the community. The specific phases empower leaders with critical information and strategies to bring decisions into focus.

The actions identified by the Strasburg 31J Board of Education and District leadership that are important to ensure a successful strategic planning process are described below.

Establish a process that:

- Is intentionally inclusive & community-driven
- Utilizes enthusiastic communication
- Emphasizes transparency
- Follows a framework

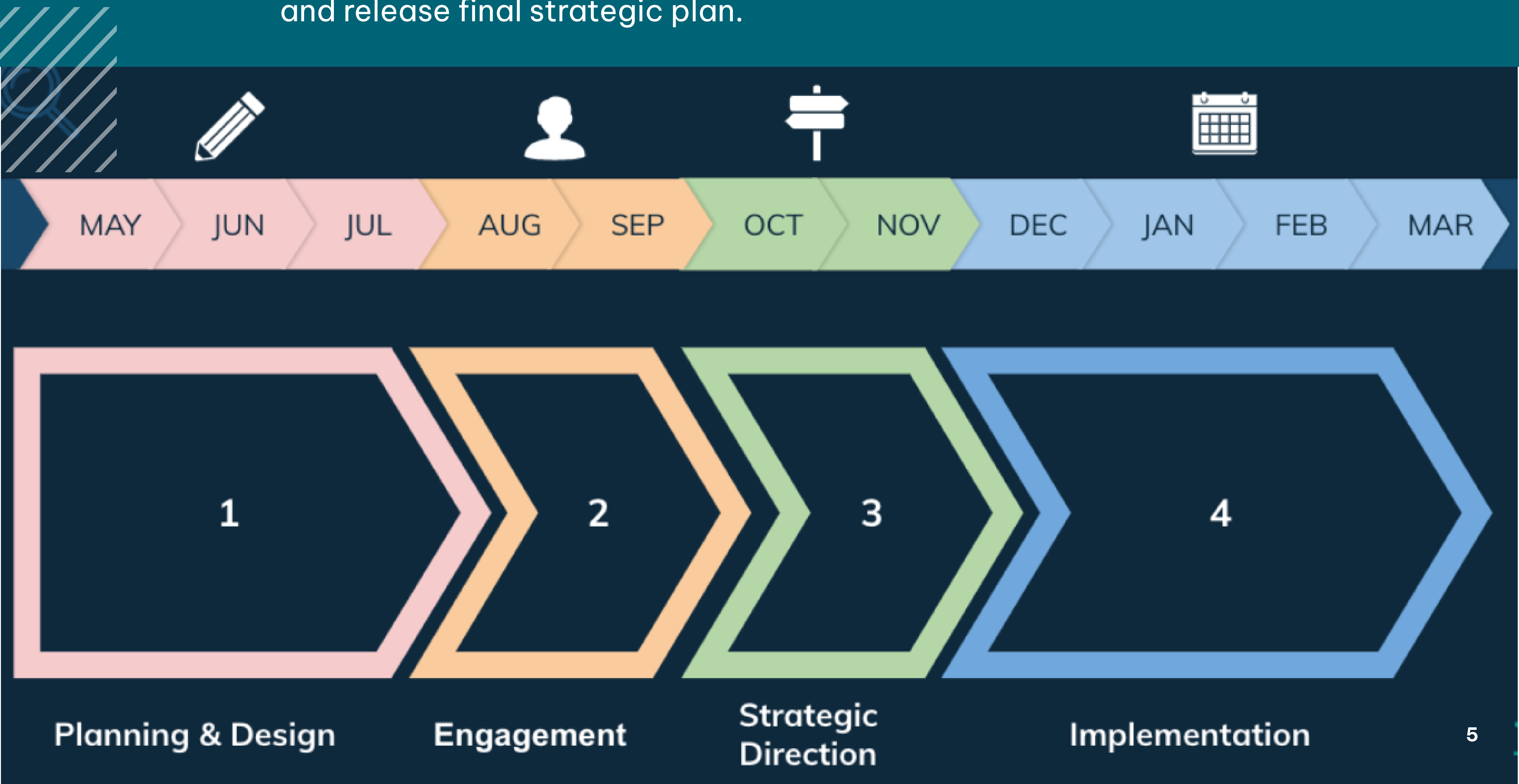
This process will result in:

- A shared vision for Strasburg School District 31J
- A plan that is actionable, clear, and perpetual
- Measurable goals



Four Phases of Strategic Planning

- Phase 1: Planning & Design**
Purpose – Establish relationships with the entire project team, establish a common understanding of the approach, and confirm the project goals.
Deliverables: Launched community interest survey and finalized project plan.
- Phase 2: Engagement**
Purpose – Develop an environmental assessment reflecting the perceptions of the school district and community in order to inform the strategic direction.
Deliverables: Launched community survey, conducted focus groups, and drafted the Engagement Report.
- Phase 3: Strategic Direction**
Purpose – Answer questions – “where does the District want to be in five years?” and “how do we get there?”
Deliverables: Meet with the Strategic Planning Committee, create Profile of a Learner, and develop strategic priorities.
- Phase 4: Implementation**
Purpose – Create an implementation plan and successfully launch the plan.
Deliverables: Meet with Champion Teams, develop Implementation Plan, and release final strategic plan.





Engagement Strategies Employed

As part of the Strasburg 31J community-driven strategic planning process, it is essential to collect feedback from stakeholders to inform the environmental assessment. We utilized focus groups to connect with representative samples of various stakeholders who have an interest in the success of Strasburg 31J. Examples of these stakeholder groups included Strasburg 31J students, families, staff, and community members. Listening to these stakeholders' perspectives regarding their needs and what benefits the organization should produce helps inform the strategic planning process.

The Engagement Phase of the work included a variety of stakeholder engagement opportunities that were held with an emphasis on answering: ***What are the hopes, aspirations, and dreams for our students in Strasburg School District 31J?***

Stakeholder feedback was collected in a variety of ways.



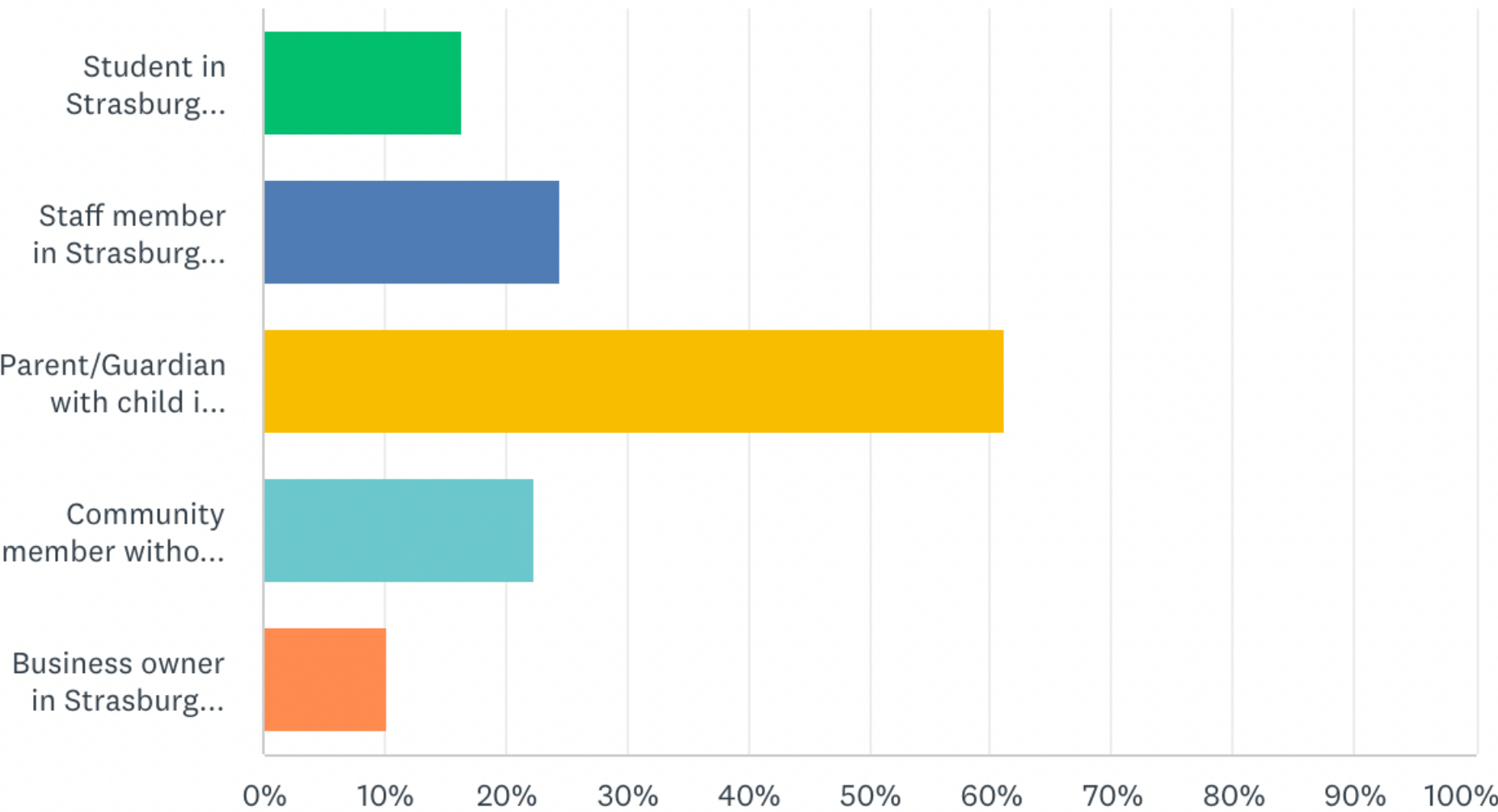
Engagement Strategies

Description

Interest Survey

Please indicate your stakeholder group [select all that apply]

Answered: 98 Skipped: 14



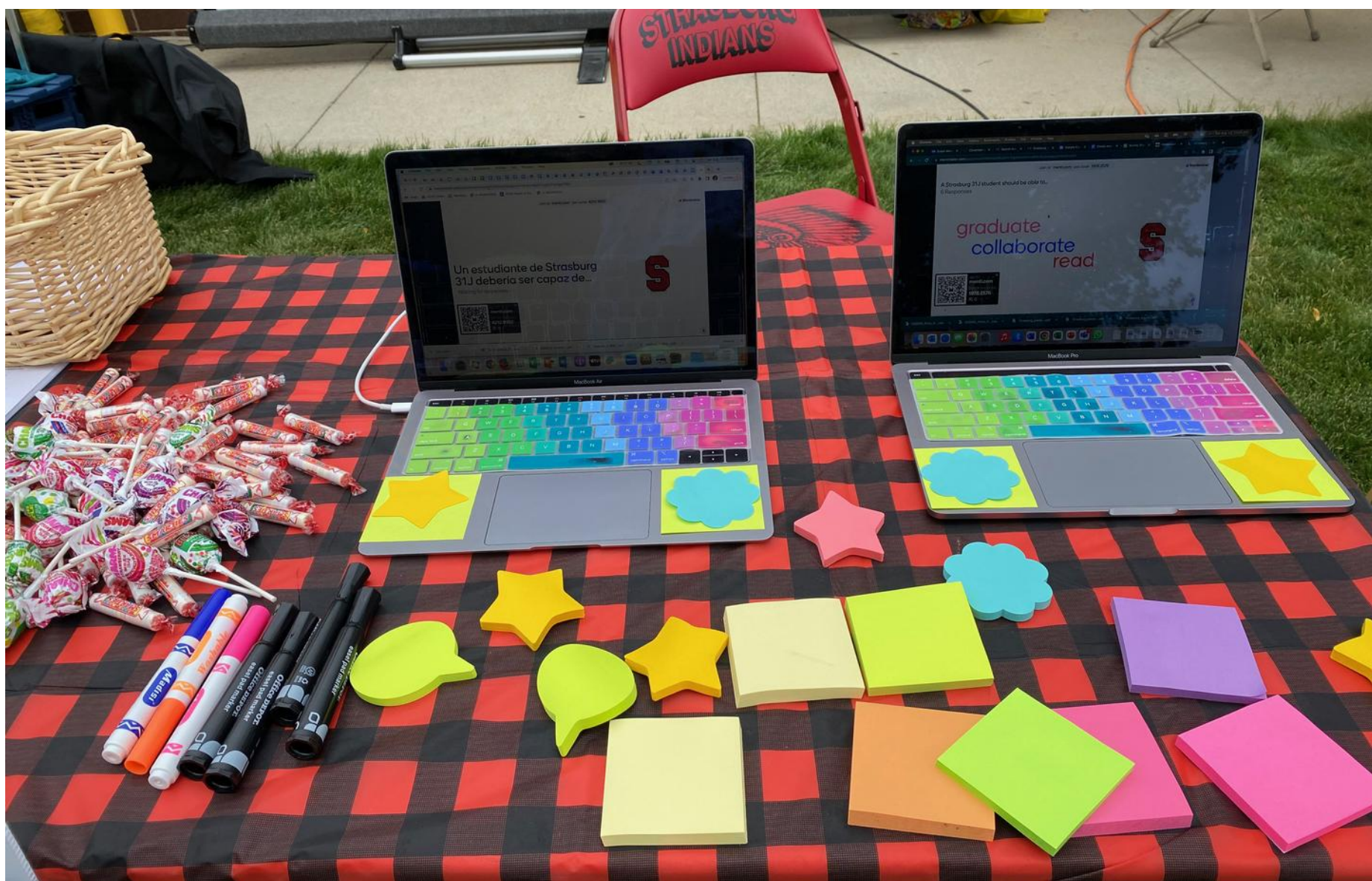
The interest survey launched in May 2023 and was posted for approximately three months, receiving **112 responses**. All interested respondents were invited to participate in a focus group based on their stakeholder group – students, families, community, school and district staff – for further discussion about the community-driven Strasburg 31J strategic plan.

Presentation at Staff Kick-off Meeting



The community-driven strategic planning process was presented to all staff at the beginning of year kick-off meeting in August 2023. Feedback was collected from **96 staff** that resulted in **1,370 responses/comments** on the strategic plan and on key skills and mindsets necessary in a rapidly changing and complex world.

Strasburg Hometown Days



The consultants established booths at Hometown Days to solicit feedback from the public and to encourage participation in the community-driven strategic planning process. Feedback received will be utilized by the Strategic Planning Committee.



Engagement Strategies

Description

Community Survey



16 Focus and Engagement Groups



Data Dive Meeting with School Leadership



The community survey launched in August 2023 and was posted for approximately two and a half months, receiving **117 responses**. Informational posters and paper copies of the community survey were made available at schools and throughout the community (Senior Center, a local business, and a church). The results of the community survey are analyzed and summarized further in this report under “Engagement Key Findings”.

The consultants hosted **16 focus and engagement groups** with **158 stakeholders** across the District in September 2023. Families, students, staff, and community members participated in these focus groups that were intentionally designed for approximately eight to ten participants each and purposefully maintained participant anonymity.

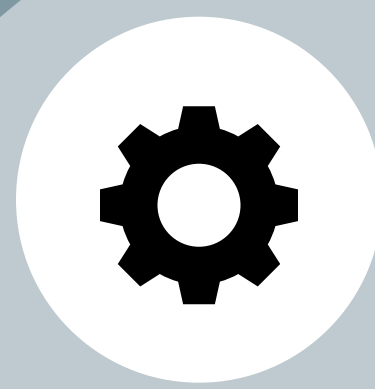
The consultants facilitated a data dive meeting with school leaders in September 2023. Leadership reviewed demographic, attendance, and enrollment data, in addition to preliminary achievement data. Key data points were summarized by school level and trends were identified for the Strategic Planning Committee.

Engagement Key Findings



Identifying Themes

After collecting feedback from stakeholders using the various engagement strategies described above, common threads and recurring themes began to emerge. These themes became the guiding principles that illuminated the hopes, aspirations, and dreams of the community.



Synthesizing Key Themes

Synthesizing key themes that emerged through the various engagement strategies allowed us to represent the distilled wisdom of the community's stakeholders. This synthesis reveals the heart and soul of the community's wishes for Strasburg 31J.



Reviewing Themes w/ Strategic Planning Committee

These synthesized key themes will serve as the cornerstone of the Strategic Planning Committee as they offer a comprehensive understanding of the community's collective voice and will guide the Strategic Planning Committee's prioritization work.

The following summaries based on key questions asked using each of the engagement strategies represents a synthesis of the comments.



What hopes, aspirations, dreams do you have for our community?

In summary, the hopes and aspirations for the Strasburg 31J community revolve around maintaining its small-town character, ensuring safety and inclusivity, enhancing education and infrastructure, fostering unity and support, and achieving balanced growth while respecting community values. These aspirations reflect the collective desire of community members to ***create a thriving and harmonious place to live.***

Preserving Small-Town Feel: Many respondents express a strong desire to maintain the small-town atmosphere of Strasburg. They believe that small communities foster close-knit relationships, neighborly support, and a sense of belonging.

Safety and Inclusivity: Safety and inclusivity are recurring themes. Community members hope for a safe and welcoming environment where people of diverse backgrounds are treated fairly and where everyone can live in peace and harmony.

Education and Schools: Several respondents mention the importance of education and schools. They aspire to see schools grow to accommodate the increasing community population while maintaining excellence in education. Some express interest in hands-on learning opportunities and the preservation of educational traditions.

Community Development: Community development and infrastructure improvements are highlighted, including the desire for more public spaces, a community pool, and a library. Some hope for the creation of recreational facilities to support youth activities.

Unity and Support: Many respondents hope for a strong sense of community unity and mutual support, where residents come together to help one another. They emphasize the importance of community values and traditions.

Respect and Fairness: Fairness and mutual respect among community members are important aspirations. Some respondents mention the need for inclusivity and fairness, particularly in addressing issues related to diversity.

Economic Growth: Economic growth is on the minds of some community members. They hope for the expansion of local businesses and employment opportunities to benefit residents, including youth.

Arts and Culture: Several respondents express an interest in promoting the arts, such as drama and music programs, to bring the community together and provide opportunities for self-expression.

Community Engagement: Many hope for continued community engagement and involvement, where residents have a say in decisions affecting the community and are well-informed about those decisions.

Infrastructure Improvements: Infrastructure improvements, including sidewalks and recreational facilities, are mentioned as important for community growth and well-being.

Balanced Growth: Balancing growth with the preservation of small-town values and traditions is a common theme. Community members desire growth that aligns with their values and respects the history of the area.

Respectful Dialogue: Some respondents emphasize the importance of respectful and open dialogue within the community, particularly when addressing contentious topics like school schedules.

What hopes, aspirations, dreams do you have for our students in Strasburg 31J?

The hopes and aspirations for Strasburg 31J students revolve around providing a ***safe, inclusive, and high-quality education*** that prepares them for the challenges of adulthood while instilling values of ***respect, responsibility, and a strong sense of civic pride and responsibility*** towards their country. The community values the development of ***well-rounded individuals*** who are equipped to succeed in various ***postsecondary pathways***.

Quality Education: Respondents express a strong commitment to high-quality education, both in terms of academic standards and behavioral expectations. They want students to excel academically and behaviorally.

Safety: Safety is a paramount concern, encompassing not only physical safety but also emotional and mental well-being. Families and community members want students to feel safe at all times, both within the school environment and in their interactions with peers.

Character Development: Many respondents emphasize the importance of building model citizens who are respectful and responsible.

Resource Availability: There is a desire for students to have access to resources that help them reach their fullest potential. This includes maintaining small class sizes, providing ample staff support, and ensuring that students have the tools they need to succeed academically.

Extracurricular Opportunities: There is a desire to expand extracurricular opportunities for students, including arts programs (drama, music), sports (soccer, football), and career exploration.

Balanced Growth: While emphasizing the importance of academic achievement, respondents also want students to learn essential life skills, including financial literacy and home economics, to prepare them for the challenges of real life.

Inclusivity: Inclusivity is a recurring theme, with a desire to recognize and support all students, including those with special needs, and to teach students respect, tolerance, and the value of diversity.

Welcoming Schools and Anti-Bullying: Addressing bullying and creating a safe environment for all students is a priority for some respondents. They want measures in place to prevent bullying in various settings, including hallways and locker rooms.

Preparation for the Future: Many respondents hope to see students well-prepared for their post-high school plans, whether it be college, trade school, the workforce, or the military. They emphasize the importance of practical life skills.

Community Engagement: The community's engagement with the school district is seen as vital, and respondents hope for open communication and collaboration between families, educators, and administrators.

Arts and Culture: Promoting the arts and culture within the school, including drama, music, and arts programs, is important to some respondents. They hope for the construction of facilities like an auditorium to support these programs.

Balance Between Rigor and Support: Many respondents express a desire for a balanced approach to education that challenges students while also providing the support and resources they need to succeed.

Exposure to a Variety of Subjects: Some respondents hope that students are exposed to a variety of subjects and career paths, including trades, to help them discover their passions and potential career options.

Positive Role Models: They want teachers and staff to serve as positive role models, supporting and inspiring students as they pursue their dreams.

What are the core values that Strasburg 31J should prioritize to meet all students' needs?

The core values that should be prioritized in the school district encompass a mix of ***traditional values, character development, academic excellence, safety, inclusion, transparency,*** and a focus on preparing students for both ***academic success*** and ***real-world challenges***. These values reflect the diverse perspectives and priorities within the community.

Respect and Kindness: Respect, both for oneself and others, along with kindness and empathy, are repeatedly mentioned as fundamental values that the school district should prioritize.

Integrity and Honesty: Integrity, honesty, and accountability in both educators and students are highly valued.

Academic Achievement: Many respondents emphasize the importance of academic achievement, rigorous curriculum, and high standards for both students and staff.

Safety: Ensuring a safe learning environment for all students and addressing issues such as drug use and student safety are top priorities.

Transparency and Communication: Open and transparent communication between the district, families, and the community is highlighted as a core value.

Equal Opportunity and Diversity: Prioritization of providing equal opportunities and embracing diversity among students, regardless of their varied backgrounds, is seen as essential.

Teaching Life Skills: Several respondents stress the importance of teaching practical life skills, including financial literacy, home economics, and shop classes.

Family and Community: Values related to family, community, and nurturing a sense of belonging are mentioned, as well as the importance of involving families in the educational process.

Traditional Values: For some respondents, traditional values, including religious teachings, and patriotism, including respect for the flag and the national anthem, hold significant importance.

Accountability and Responsibility: Holding both students and staff accountable for their actions and instilling a sense of responsibility is considered vital.

Empathy and Compassion: Empathy and compassion for others, especially those who are different or struggling, are viewed as crucial values to prioritize.

Individualized Education: Providing education tailored to individual learning styles and needs in order to ensure every student's success.

Continuous Learning: Encouraging a love of learning, curiosity, and a commitment to lifelong learning is seen as important for students.

Hard Work: The value of hard work, determination, and perseverance is frequently mentioned.

Civility and Respectful Behavior: Promoting civil behavior, respect, and avoiding disruptive behavior within the school environment is emphasized.

How has the world changed and how will it continue to change? What societal and social impacts have changed and will continue to impact our youth?

The world's changes are multifaceted, ranging from *technology-driven shifts* to *evolving societal values and political influences*. Educators, families, and communities face the challenge of preparing students to navigate these changes while ensuring their safety, mental health, and a balanced education that includes critical thinking and empathy. *Balancing these considerations is crucial in addressing the complex landscape of modern education.*

Technology and Information Access: The advent of technology, especially the internet and social media, has significantly impacted education and the lives of students. It has brought access to vast amounts of information but also raises concerns about screen time, cyberbullying, and the need for digital literacy.

Political and Social Influences: Respondents express concerns about the influence of politics and societal changes on education. There are mentions of bans on certain books, political agendas, and the desire for a balanced and unbiased education that includes diverse perspectives and historical accuracy.

Safety and Mental Health: Safety, both online and offline, is a recurring concern. The impact of social media on mental health, cyberbullying, and the need for teaching with an understanding of how trauma can affect learning and behavior, are highlighted.

Political Correctness: Some respondents express concerns about political correctness and its impact on educational content and free expression.

Traditional Values: Some respondents express concerns about the erosion of traditional values and the desire to preserve a more innocent and childhood-focused education.

Racial and Social Justice Movements: The impact of movements like "Me Too" and "Woke Culture" on education and societal awareness is acknowledged.

Changing Social Values: Changes in societal values and cultural acceptance, including LGBTQ+ issues and the changing understanding of gender identity, are noted. Respondents emphasize the importance of teaching empathy, respect, and acceptance of diversity.

Parenting and Accountability: There is a perception that parenting styles have changed, with concerns about permissiveness and a lack of accountability for students' actions.

Teacher Compensation and Resources: Respondents stress the importance of adequately compensating teachers and providing resources for professional development, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teacher Shortages: Respondents note teacher shortages and the need for recruitment and retention efforts.

Critical Thinking: The need for critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities is emphasized, along with a desire for education to focus on the basics while also preparing students for a rapidly changing world.

Media and News: The influence of media, news, and information processing is seen as significant, with concerns about the spread of misinformation and the importance of media literacy.

Historical Education: Concerns about the erasure of history and the importance of teaching historical accuracy are mentioned.

Education Funding: Issues related to education funding, underfunding of schools, and the impact on learning outcomes are highlighted.

Accountability and Responsibility: The importance of personal responsibility, accountability, and addressing students' individual needs is emphasized.

Civic Engagement: Encouraging civic engagement, critical citizenship, and informed participation in democracy is seen as important for students.

Empowerment of Youth: Youth empowerment, advocacy, and students' ability to voice their opinions and concerns are recognized as impactful forces.



What skills and mindsets are necessary for students to be career and postsecondary ready in a rapidly changing and complex world?

In summary, respondents emphasize the need for a well-rounded education that includes not only **academic skills** but also **practical life skills, essential interpersonal skills, and a mindset** that embraces **adaptability** and **continuous learning**. **Career exploration, financial literacy, and the development of character and communication skills** are also key components of preparing students for a rapidly changing world.

Financial Literacy: Many respondents emphasize the importance of teaching students financial literacy skills. This includes understanding finances, taxes, mortgages, and budgeting, which are essential for navigating the real world. Respondents also stress the importance of students having a realistic understanding of the local economy and the cost of living in their state.

Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Critical thinking skills and the ability to solve real-life problems are highlighted as crucial. Encouraging out-of-the-box thinking and analytical skills prepares students to face complex challenges.

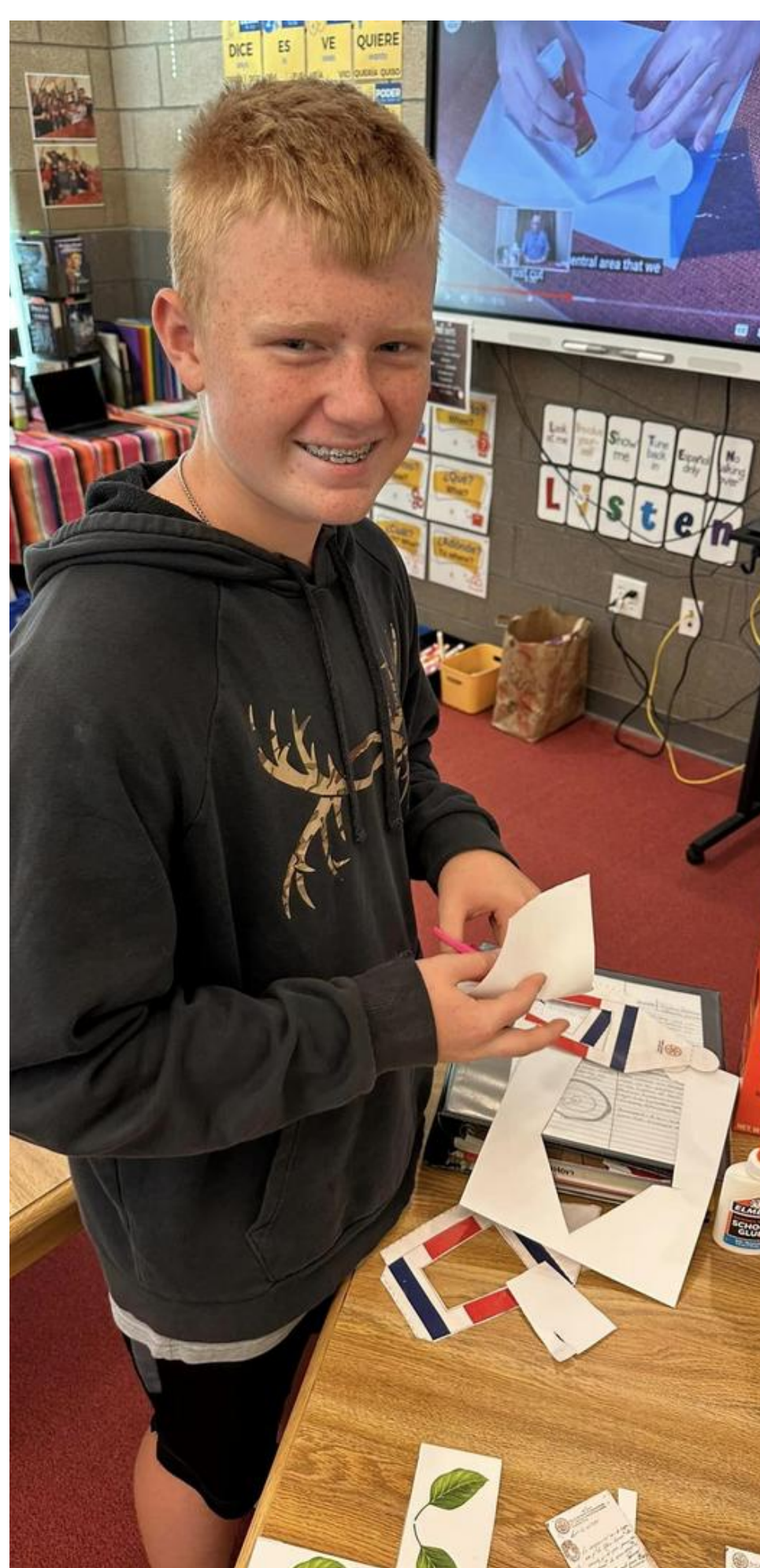
Open-Mindedness and Adaptability: Being open to change and understanding that new doesn't always mean better are important mindsets. Adaptability to evolving circumstances and technologies is seen as essential.

Career Exploration: Students should be exposed to various career options and pathways. They need to see a clear path to their chosen careers and understand the relevance of their current education.

Essential Interpersonal Skills: Skills like emotional awareness, stress management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making, are considered vital for students to thrive in a complex world.

Communication Skills: Effective communication, both written and verbal, is seen as essential for success in any career or postsecondary endeavor.

Accountability and Responsibility: Students should learn accountability for their actions and understand the difference between right and wrong. Taking responsibility for their choices and actions is crucial.



Life Skills: Respondents stress the importance of teaching practical life skills such as cooking, cleaning, sewing, and time management.

Technology and Computer Science: In an increasingly digital world, technology and computer science skills are considered essential. Proficiency in technology is highlighted as a key requirement for various careers.

Trade Skills: Trade skills and hands-on education are emphasized. These skills can lead to successful careers and should be promoted alongside traditional college pathways.

Resilience and Perseverance: The ability to bounce back from failures and persevere in the face of challenges is seen as a critical mindset for success.

Character Education: Building good character, including qualities like respect, responsibility, and honesty, is considered important for students' personal and professional development.

Collaboration and Social Skills: Learning to work with people they don't necessarily agree with and developing strong interpersonal skills are recognized as valuable.

Coping with Change: Given the rapid pace of change, students need to learn how to cope with change and uncertainty effectively.

Career Exploration Opportunities: Providing opportunities for students to explore various career paths, including through job shadowing and interaction with professionals, is suggested.

Preparation for Non-College Paths: The importance of preparing students for non-college paths, such as trade schools or directly entering the workforce, is highlighted.

Growth Mindset: Encouraging a growth mindset where students believe in their ability to learn and improve over time is seen as crucial.

Multilingualism: Learning multiple languages is considered valuable in an increasingly interconnected world.

Work Ethic: Developing a strong work ethic and understanding one's own worth are seen as key to success.



When thinking about Strasburg 31J students, what advantages do our students have?

Overall, the advantages mentioned in the survey responses revolve around the close-knit nature of the **community**, **caring educators**, **access to education and extracurricular opportunities**, and a strong sense of **pride and support** from the community.

Community and Rural Setting

- **Small Community:** Many respondents emphasize the benefits of growing up in a small community. Students have the advantage of close-knit relationships, a sense of belonging, and strong community support.
- **Community Support:** The district's students enjoy strong support from the local community. This support extends to both education and extracurricular activities.
- **Rural Setting:** The rural setting of the district is seen as an advantage, offering a sense of community, access to agricultural education, and a closer connection to nature.
- **Pride in the Community:** Students and the community take pride in their district and hold themselves to high standards.
- **Proximity to Metropolitan Area:** Being close enough to a metropolitan area is an advantage, providing access to resources without being overwhelmed by city life.

Educators and District Leadership

- **Caring and Dedicated Teachers:** Teachers in the district are often praised for their sincerity, dedication, and genuine care for students. Smaller class sizes allow for more personalized attention.
- **Willingness to Adapt:** The district administration is willing to adapt to changing times and educational needs.
- **Opportunities for Building Relationships:** Smaller class sizes and a tight-knit community allow for strong relationships to develop between students and teachers.
- **Diversity and Values:** The district maintains a sense of diversity and is appreciated for retaining traditional values, such as love of our community.

Access to Education and Opportunities

- **Rigorous Education:** The district is recognized for its rigorous education standards, which challenge students academically.
- **Safety and Sense of Belonging:** Students feel safe at school and have a strong sense of belonging. The close relationships between students and teachers contribute to this feeling of security.
- **Access to Extracurricular Activities:** Smaller schools often provide more opportunities for students to participate in various clubs and sports, and these opportunities are generally more accessible to all students.
- **Access to Specials:** Some students have access to special classes, which is unique in the area.
- **Access to Technical and College Education:** Students have access to some technical school programs and opportunities to get a head start on their college careers through partnerships with higher education institutions.
- **Scholarship Opportunities:** The district offers sports programs that provide students with scholarship opportunities, including wrestling, track, football, and softball.

Family Engagement

- **Family Involvement:** Families in the district are engaged and supportive of their children's education. This high level of involvement in the district contributes to the overall success of students.



When thinking about Strasburg 31J students, what perceived barriers do our students have?

These perceived barriers reflect the complex challenges faced by educators, students, and the community in a smaller, rural school district. Identifying and addressing these barriers is crucial to providing an equitable and enriching educational experience for all students.

Educational Resources and Opportunities

- **Availability of Educators:** The district faces challenges in hiring and retaining teachers, which may lead to overworked existing teachers and potential gaps in educational quality.
- **Limited Course Offerings:** Fewer elective courses are offered due to the smaller school sizes, making it more difficult to expose students to diverse subjects and career paths.
- **Access to College Prep and Advanced Classes:** Fewer advanced and college prep courses are available based on the size of the school district, which may affect students' preparedness for competitive college admissions.
- **Resource Constraints:** Limited funding and resources can impact the district's ability to provide a wide range of educational opportunities and support services.
- **Transportation Issues:** Some students may face barriers in accessing school and community events due to transportation needs for those living outside of town.

Cultural, Political and Societal Influences

- **Changing Demographics:** Changing demographics, including more multilingual learners and families, can pose challenges for educators in providing adequate support.
- **Polarized Rhetoric and Unconscious Bias:** The broader societal influences of polarized rhetoric and unconscious biases can affect interactions and perceptions within the school community.
- **Lack of Exposure to Diversity:** Smaller communities may offer limited exposure to diversity, potentially limiting students' understanding of different cultures and backgrounds.
- **Political Issues:** Some respondents expressed concerns about political influences impacting students' experiences, including questions about pronouns and consultation on preferred pronouns.
- **Bias and Stereotypes:** There were mentions of racial biases and stereotypes, which can affect interactions and attitudes within the school community.

Extracurricular and Enrichment Opportunities

- **Limited Extracurricular Activities:** Smaller schools may offer fewer extracurricular activities and sports opportunities, impacting students' overall development.
- **Lack of Arts and Vocational Programs:** Some respondents mentioned a lack of resources for arts and vocational programs, including access to an auditorium, which could limit students' exposure to these areas.

Community and Societal Issues

- **Impact of City Growth:** The influx of residents from larger cities and urban areas can affect students' mindsets and bring new challenges.
- **Social Media and Outside Distractions:** Excessive use of social media and external distractions can divert students' attention from their education.
- **Bullying and Behavioral Issues:** Instances of bullying and behavioral problems were mentioned, with concerns about the school's response and the need for justice.
- **Mental Health and Well-Being:** Limited access to mental health resources in the county was identified as a barrier affecting students' well-being.

Limited Exposure to Real-World Experiences

- **Limited Exposure to Careers:** Some students may lack exposure to a wide variety of career paths, and the opportunities available in smaller schools may not match those in larger districts.
- **Real-World Preparedness:** Concerns about students' preparedness for the real world and their ability to thrive beyond the small town setting were mentioned.

What are the three biggest strengths of Strasburg 31J School District?

These strengths collectively demonstrate the district's commitment to:

- *providing a quality education,*
- *fostering a sense of community, and*
- *prioritizing the safety and well-being of its students.*

They serve as a foundation for continued growth and success in the future.

Educational Excellence

- **Dedicated Teachers:** Respondents repeatedly mentioned that teachers and staff in the district are passionate about their students' success and strive to provide quality education.
- **Commitment to Student Learning:** The district is recognized for its high expectations for students, rigorous curriculum, and an emphasis on academic excellence.
- **Small Class Sizes:** Smaller class sizes enable more personalized attention and meaningful relationships between teachers and students, enhancing the learning experience.
- **Updated Facilities:** Some respondents appreciated the recent renovations and updates to school facilities, enhancing the learning environment.
- **Supportive Leadership:** Strong leadership at the district and school levels was acknowledged as a driving force behind the district's strengths.

Community Involvement and Support

- **Strong Sense of Community:** Many respondents appreciate the close-knit community within the district, emphasizing that everyone knows each other and works together for the betterment of the students.
- **Parent Involvement:** The involvement of families in their children's education was highlighted as a strength, demonstrating a collaborative effort between schools and families.
- **Community Pride:** A sense of pride in the school district and its accomplishments was evident, fostering a positive atmosphere for students and staff.
- **Community Engagement:** The district actively engages the community through surveys, facility tours, and events, creating a holistic learning experience.
- **Location:** The district's location, being in a small town with familiar faces, was seen as advantageous for education and community cohesion.

Safety and Well-Being

- **Commitment to Safety:** The district has implemented safety measures such as ID checks and improved security infrastructure, demonstrating a commitment to the safety and well-being of students.
- **Student Inclusion:** Inclusion and diversity were mentioned as strengths, reflecting an effort to create an inclusive environment for all students.
- **Progressive Thinking:** The district was recognized for its progressive thinking in areas such as curriculum development and safety protocols.



What are the three biggest areas to enhance for Strasburg 31J School District?

These identified areas of enhancement collectively address the need for a well-rounded and inclusive ***educational environment, improved facilities*** to accommodate student growth, and ***enhanced mental health and student support services***. Addressing these areas will contribute to the overall improvement and success of the district.

Educational Enhancement

- **Curriculum Re-evaluation:** Many respondents emphasized the need for a non-biased and well-rounded curriculum that promotes critical thinking, inclusivity, and diversity. There is a desire to ensure that the curriculum is free from political biases.
- **Teacher Recruitment and Retention:** A recurring concern is the need to attract and retain highly qualified teachers. This includes offering competitive salaries, support for professional development, and creating a positive working environment.
- **Increased Academic Offerings:** Respondents called for more academic offerings, including vocational programs, to provide students with diverse learning opportunities and better prepare them for future careers and higher education.

Infrastructure and Facilities Improvement

- **Drama and Arts Facilities:** There is a strong desire for dedicated facilities for drama and arts programs, including an auditorium. The lack of such spaces was identified as an issue hindering these programs' growth.
- **Additional Space for Student Growth:** With the district's increasing student population, there is a need for more classroom space, improved parking, and upgraded facilities to accommodate the growing needs of students and staff.
- **Transportation and Busing:** Some respondents expressed concerns about bus routes and transportation safety, indicating that this area requires attention.

Mental Health and Student Support

- **Mental Health Resources:** Several respondents highlighted the importance of improving mental health resources within the district. This includes strategies to support students' emotional well-being and provide resources for those struggling with behavioral issues.
- **Behavioral Support:** Respondents called for increased support for students with behavioral issues, with an emphasis on interventions and assistance for students on the autism spectrum.
- **Outreach and Integration:** The district was encouraged to enhance outreach to marginalized communities and adopt progressive discipline practices to ensure all students receive the support they need.



Let's dream: What should be done to make our district the 'ideal district' for ALL students in our community?

These survey results reflect a wide range of perspectives and priorities within the community, emphasizing *the need for a comprehensive and inclusive approach* to improve the district for all students. Prioritizing these suggestions would require careful planning, collaboration with various stakeholders, and resource allocation. Addressing these areas comprehensively will contribute to the overall success and well-being of the district's students, teachers, and community members.

Educational Programs

- **Life Skills Education:** Respondents also stress the importance of teaching practical life skills such as gardening, financial literacy (e.g., paying taxes), and car ownership. This would empower students with essential knowledge for adulthood.
- **Advanced Education Opportunities:** There's a desire for more advanced education opportunities to challenge high-achieving students, as well as provide extra support for those who need it. This includes programs that go beyond the standard curriculum.
- **Agricultural Education:** Given the community's agricultural context, some respondents advocate for an Agriculture Program to connect students with the local industry.
- **Diverse Education:** Calls for an education system that respects diversity and teaches history accurately and inclusively.
- **Vocational Programs:** Suggestions include vocational programs, internships, and partnerships with local businesses to prepare students for careers.
- **Mentorship and Individualized Learning:** Suggestions include mentorship programs, trade school opportunities, and personalized education plans to cater to each student's strengths and weaknesses.
- **Fine Arts and Performing Arts:** Respondents highlight the need for a dedicated auditorium and performing arts programs in the district, while placing a stronger focus on fine arts programs, including music, band, and theater arts, with dedicated teachers, to provide students with equal opportunities in these areas.
- **Curriculum:** Ensuring that curricula are transparent, unbiased, and age-appropriate, with clear communication to families about what is being taught and why.
- **Career and Technical Education:** Expanding vocational and technical education programs to offer students more diverse learning opportunities, including technology-focused subjects like coding, robotics, and cybersecurity.

Increased Student Resources

- **Mental Health Support:** Many respondents emphasize the need for increased mental health support for students. This includes teaching students coping skills, providing assistance when needed, and fostering a culture of love and friendship in schools.
- **Community Support:** Many respondents desire stronger ties between the school district and local businesses, with potential internships and educational partnerships.
- **Safety and Security:** Ensuring secure and safe schools is a top priority, with suggestions for regular safety drills, preparedness for emergencies, and collaboration with local law enforcement and county resources.

Student and Community Engagement

- **Involvement in School Decisions:** Many respondents want students to have a voice in school district decisions. This would include opportunities for students to participate in the decision-making process.
- **Empowerment and Support:** The importance of empowering and supporting students in setting and achieving their goals is highlighted, in addition to promoting diversity and inclusion within the district.
- **Communication and Transparency:** Streamlining and improving communication channels to reduce message overload and ensure that critical information reaches families and the community effectively. Ensuring transparency, communication, and responsiveness to the needs and concerns of families and the community.
- **Community Engagement:** Building a sense of community and encouraging involvement in school activities, such as sports, is a recurring theme.

Infrastructure & Facility Improvements

- **Facility and Staff Expansion:** There is a consistent call for more resources, including larger campuses with state-of-the-art facilities, more staff to accommodate growth, and well-maintained infrastructure.
- **Infrastructure Improvement:** Some respondents mention the need for better road access, air conditioning, bathrooms on the football field, and facility upgrades.
- **Swimming Pool / Sport Facilities:** Some respondents express a desire for a swimming pool and expanded physical education options, including a better stadium and additional gym space for elementary students.

Financial Planning and Sustainability

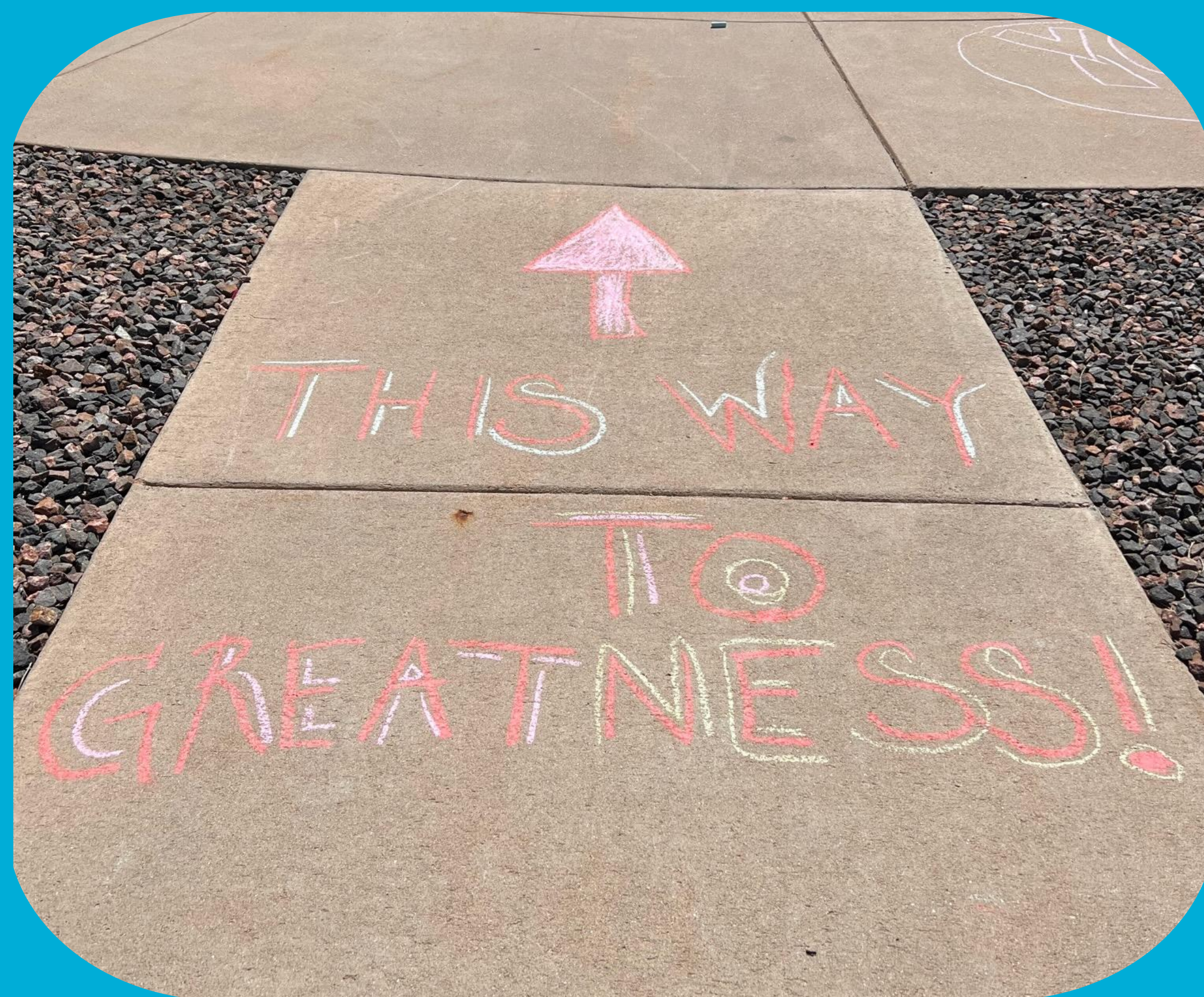
- **Financial Planning:** The need for financial sourcing through endowments or alternative funding methods to ensure the district's financial stability and ability to provide quality education.
- **Teacher Support and Compensation:** There's an emphasis on compensating teachers appropriately, including competitive compensation and benefits to recruit and retain skilled teachers and staff. Additionally, investing in teacher housing would make it easier for educators to live within the district.



Strategic Direction

Moving forward, the strategic direction phase will leverage the work conducted during the engagement phase with a goal of answering the primary strategic planning questions of: “where does Strasburg 31J want to be in five years?” and “how do we get there?”. The Strategic Planning Committee will meet over two full-day sessions to focus on:

- Renewing the Vision / Mission
- Creating Core Values / Beliefs
- Developing the Profile of a Learner
- Analyzing Underlying Contradictions
- Identifying Strategic Priorities



The Strategic Planning Committee will consist of about 25 individuals selected by the strategic planning consultants based on meeting the purpose, goals, and outcomes of the strategic planning process. The group will be representative of the Strasburg community and will include key staff members who will be responsible for implementing the strategic plan operationally.

The culmination of this work will result in a strategic plan that defines the desired future state of the district based on considerable research, extensive input from a variety of stakeholders, and consensus on the vision and mission of Strasburg 31J.

About the Consultants

Susan Meek

Susan Meek Consulting, LLC

Susan is an executive-level professional with experience in nonprofits, government, and private industry with a primary focus on operations, communications, and governance in the education sector in Colorado. She received her MBA in Business Economics and Public Policy from George Washington University.



Cheri Wrench

Wrench Consulting, LLC

Cheri is a visionary, bilingual education executive certified in Prosci change management with 20+ years' experience in K-12 education and 5+ years' experience in consulting. She received her International MBA from the University of Denver and her Distinguished Principal Certificate of Completion from the Relay Graduate School of Education.

