Pine-Richland School District
Strategic Plan
Glossary of Terms*

*The following terms are directly related to the Pine-Richland Strategic Plan. The definitions and descriptions were developed locally to provide insight and explanation into the overall plan, categories of focus, long-term goals, and short-term action plans.

Alternate Funding - refers to revenue that falls outside of the primary sources of local real estate, earned income tax, state subsidy, and federal support. Examples of alternate funding includes revenue from grants, advertising, gifts, donations, sponsorships, earned income tax credits, and foundation support.

Assessment - any project, test, performance task or assignment designed to provide information about student learning. Assessment can occur at different points in the learning experience and results may be used for different reasons. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are the big three areas of educational programming.

> **Summative -** assessment given at the end of instruction and possibly even at the end of a semester or year to determine achievement levels
> **Formative -** assessment during instruction to provide feedback about learning and help the teacher adjust the instructional approach
> **Diagnostic -** assessment often given prior to instruction according to specific criteria to determine individual student learning needs
> **Benchmark -** assessment according to specific standards to determine likelihood of proficiency against grade level standards

Budget/Communications Center - a section of the Pine-Richland School District website that is continually updated with information about the budget process and timelines. It includes a series of documents and resources designed to promote an understanding of the district's financial position.

Categories - the organizational framework for the Pine-Richland Strategic Plan. The five major categories include: Teaching & Learning; Student Services & Programs; Finance & Operations; Workforce Development; and Communication & Stakeholder Engagement.

Communication & Stakeholder Engagement - a category of the Pine-Richland Strategic Plan that focuses on communication methods (one-way and two-way), monitors satisfaction and engagement, and helps ensure that the district receives varied feedback (see stakeholder).

Comprehensive Plan - a series of reports and documents required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education that include a district profile, special education plan, induction plan, professional education plan, gifted education plan, and an academic standards/assessment plan.

Continuous Improvement - a growth mindset and set of methods designed to promote incremental improvement. The “Plan - Do - Study - Act” cycle is one example of a continuous improvement strategy.

Common Planning - a scheduling concept designed to provide a common time within the school day for a specified set of teachers to collaborate. For example, the middle school teams have a common planning period each day to discuss strategies for students and consider cross-curricular activities.

Communication Matrix - a document developed through the Director of Communications that summarizes the approach to communication. Categories include: method; audience; content; person responsible; frequency; and direction. For example, monthly PTO meetings are used at the individual building level for face-to-face two-way dialogue about building activities.

Continuum of Services - often connected to gifted education and special education, this term refers to a wide range of programs and services designed to meet the needs of the student (see FAPE and LRE). The continuum generally stretches from the general education classroom without supplementary aids and services at one end to placement out of the district or in the home at the other end of the continuum.

Co-Teaching - an instructional strategy and scheduling model that provides a general education teacher and special education teacher in the classroom. While the general education teacher serves as the primary instructor and maintains the required certification, the special education teachers assists in planning and provides adaptations and modifications directly to one or more students in that classroom (see also Continuum of Services, FAPE, and LRE).

Curriculum - a planned course of study that identifies a specific set of content and skill. It frequently addresses what students should “know and be able to do.” In a school organization, curriculum is aligned horizontally (i.e., consistency at grade level in a course) and sequenced vertically (i.e., one grade sets the foundation for the next grade or course). Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are the big three areas of educational programming.

Demographic Study - a systematic and scientific approach to analyzing the population trends within a community. Given the significant changes in general population and student enrollment over the past two decades in Pine-Richland, a demographic study helps identify trends by also factoring planned housing developments, birth statistics, and the net impact of migration. It is a critical input for long-range planning.

Differentiated Supervision - a system of evaluation often used with teachers that allows the teacher and principal to determine the most effective method of feedback. This approach acknowledges that teachers are at different points of experience and effectiveness within their

career. The needs of a new teacher are very different than a master teacher in a specific content area.

End-User Device - a piece of technology, such as a desktop computer, laptop computer, or tablet, that is used to complete a work task or in the learning process.

Extra-curricular - similar to co-curricular, these activities are not part of the traditional school day or required program. Examples include: athletics; clubs; student groups; and certain ensembles. A wide range of extra- and co-curricular activities provide opportunities to engage students with different interests.

Finance & Operations - a category of the Pine-Richland Strategic Plan that focuses on the overall budget, long-range budget planning, and key areas of operations (e.g., transportation, food service, technology, and legal services).

Flipped Classroom - this instructional concept has grown with the availability of technology and online resources. The teacher prepares a lesson, lecture, or set of background learning segments for students to complete at home. The traditional “homework” or “practice” then occurs during the school day so the teacher can provide individual feedback and direction to the learner.

Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) - a requirement for public educators connected to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act to ensure that students with disabilities receive a complete educational experience (see also LRE). FAPE varies based on the specific child and his or her individual needs.

Gifted Education - specified through Chapter 16 of Title 22 in the Pennsylvania School Code, gifted education outlines the programs and services for qualified students with a gifted exceptionality. An evaluation is required within a multi-factor matrix to determine qualification (see also Continuum of Services and FAPE).

Induction - an orientation and professional development program for new teachers. Required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, an induction program provides additional training for new teachers and often connects them to mentor teachers and district-specific resources.

Innovation - break-through change or new ways of performance that represent a discontinuous improvement. Innovation is often connected to or made possible through advancements in technology. It differs from continuous improvement in that is represents a shift or change in action.

Instruction - refers to the methods and strategies used by the teacher to enhance student learning. Instructional strategies may vary depending on the age of student, the content area, the size of the group or class, and whether the content is new versus a situation where

background knowledge already exists. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are the big three areas of educational programming.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) - a requirement for public educators connected to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act to ensure that students with disabilities have an educational program that most closely resembles the general education learning environment. Based on the specific student or severity of disability, the LRE may even occur through an outside placement or instruction in the home (see also FAPE).

Long-Term Goals - an action statement within each category that describes the area of focus and improvement. The time horizon for long-term goals in the Pine-Richland Strategic Plan is four years (i.e., 2015 - 2019).

Maker Space - a term used to describe a hands-on learning laboratory that contains various traditional and technological materials and resources that can be used to construct products, practice engineering, encourage creativity and play, and allow exploration. Examples could include: robotics materials; building materials; 3D printers; and science lab-type materials.

Metrics - the data points, statistics, or results used to measure levels, trends, and/or comparisons in performance.

Mission - the mission or mission statement expresses the primary purpose of the organization.

Online Learning Platforms - also known as content management systems, online learning platforms provide a secure space for interaction between teachers and students in the learning process. Examples include Blackboard and Google Classroom.

Performance Tracker - a software program and database within the district's student information software system that stores various sets of achievement test data for further analysis.

Progress Monitoring - an approach used by teachers to measure student learning at multiple points throughout a school year on the same assessments. This process provides information related to both achievement levels and growth over time. It is a requirement in special education and could be considered across all learning environments.

Professional Development (PD) - the system of ongoing training for all staff in the organization. Primarily connected to the in-service calendar, professional development is necessary for improved performance and for compliance with legislative requirements (e.g., Act 48). It is a component of the PDE-required professional education plan for the district that is a subset of the comprehensive plan.

Project-Based Learning - an instructional method where students gain knowledge and skills

by working for an extended period of time to complete an in-depth study of a complex issue or real-world challenge.

Regional Wide Area Network (RWAN) - the connectivity between school districts in Allegheny County that also provides Internet service to all schools.

Resiliency - the ability to adapt well in the face of hard times and build upon one's strengths **(**adapted from the American Psychological Association).

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII) - a general education concept for the early identification of students with academic needs that are then addressed through a multi-tier invention system based on achievement data. Supports can occur within and outside the general education classroom. Often viewed as a triangle, the largest number of students are the base of the triangle supported through the regular program. As a smaller number of students demonstrate need and move toward the top of the triangle, the location and intensity of interventions can increase.

SAMR - a model designed to integrate technology into the learning process that progress through the following levels: substitution (S); augmentation (A); modification (M); and redefinition (R) . The first two levels focus on technology for "enhancement" of a task and the second two levels for "transformation."

School-Based Mental Health - a potential agreement with a third party mental health service provider and the district to operate a program within a school or schools at Pine-Richland (i.e., similar to Stepping Stones). The district will work with the Allegheny County Offices of Behavioral Health and Community Care Behavioral Health for consideration of this service. That organization also provides the oversight. This would be an optional service is designed for students with the most serious needs. Families could always choose to address these types of matter separately from a school-based program. An onsite location helps remove barriers to service.

Short-Term Action Plans - the methods used to accomplish the long-term goals of the district. The time horizon for a short-term action plan is usually one year or less.

Special Education - specified through Chapter 14 of Title 22 in the Pennsylvania School Code and the federal Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), special education outlines the programs and services for qualified students with an identified disability. An evaluation is required within a multi-factor matrix to determine qualification (see also Continuum of Services, FAPE, and LRE).

Stakeholder - any member of the community with a vested interest in the Pine-Richland School District. Examples include but are not limited to: students; parents; staff; residents; and local business owners.

STEAM - an acronym used to describe an emphasis on science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics. It is often associated with hands-on, interdisciplinary learning activities. It is also known by variations (e.g., STEM or STREAM).

Strategic Plan - a document that guides the direction and priorities of the school district. It is comprised of the mission, vision, and values of the organization. Areas of continuous improvement are organized by category, long-term goal, and short-term actions.

Student Assistance Program (SAP) - a program required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education that helps identify barriers to student success and provide supports to enhance school performance. Barriers could include but are not limited to: attendance; discipline; drug and alcohol use; and potential family concerns.

Student Services & Programs - a category of the Pine-Richland Strategic Plan acknowledging that students learn and develop intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and morally. It incorporates the areas of special education and gifted education. It also includes special programs, clubs, activities, and sports which help provide the opportunity for student growth

SWOT Technique - an approach used to assess an organization based upon strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O), and threats (T). A SWOT analysis can be used to determine areas of growth for the organization.

Teaching & Learning - a category of the Pine-Richland Strategic Plan that focuses on the fundamental delivery of services for all students. It includes: curriculum; instruction; assessment; enrichment; remediation; technology integration; and real-world learning activities.

Values - words or phrases that outline the fundamental beliefs of the organization

Vision - the vision or vision statement paints a picture of the ideal future for the organization.

Whole Child - a recognition that education plays a role in child development in the following areas: intellectual; social; emotional; and physical. It implies a value for all aspects of development beyond academic performance.

Workforce - all of the people that play a role in delivering the programs and services of the district. The workforce is comprised of various segments (e.g., teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, cafeteria staff, custodial/maintenance, psychologists, and secretaries).

Workforce Development - a category of the Pine-Richland Strategic Plan that focuses on improving the knowledge and skill of the workforce (see workforce). It includes the methods used to strengthen relationship with workforce segments, partners, suppliers, and collaborators.