

Charleston County School District Goals & Guardrails Frequently Asked Questions

Why are there only 4 Goals and 5 Guardrails?

There is research regarding the relationship between the number of goals an organization has and the number of goals an organization is likely to achieve. For organizations with 1 to 3 goals, they are likely to achieve 1 to 3. For organizations with 4 to 6 goals, 1 to 2. For organizations with 7 to 11 goals, 0. Effective leadership requires focus. You can have as many goals as you want -- and that will sound great, but in the end students suffer. Leaders who want to improve student outcomes focus on a narrow set of priorities.

Guardrails are an operational action or class of actions, usually strategic not tactical, the Superintendent may not use or allow in pursuit of the school system's student outcome goals. Guardrails are based on the community's values. Having fewer again creates more focus.

Are these the only things the Board cares about?

Unequivocally NO. But for the reasons mentioned above, we know that we need to be focused and clear regarding our expectations to drive change and to create genuine, trackable accountability. To be student outcomes focused, our goals are only about what students know and are able to do and therefore the interim goals are about student outputs which are also indicators of what students know and are able to do.

Why is a specific student group identified in two of the goals?

When the Board set out to develop the Goals and Guardrails, they did so using both community feedback gleaned from listening sessions and surveys as well as district student performance data. The data revealed some high needs areas that given focus could shift the tide. Our belief is that systems changes focused on improving outcomes for these student groups will in turn leverage better results for all students.

Why are the Guardrails written negatively?

Guardrails are written in this way to create freedom within a structure of accountability. Directing the Superintendent in a "thou shall not" fashion actually creates clarity and empowers creativity and innovation as they have been directed to accomplish the task already knowing what cannot be done - what is non-negotiable.

How do the Goals & Guardrails impact District planning?

The Goals & Guardrails communicate the next steps in the community's long term vision about what they want to be true for the students and the values they want protected along the way. Once adopted, it is the Superintendent's job to implement them by selecting and building the strategies necessary to accomplish the Goals while honoring the Guardrails. The Board's work shifts to the responsibility of assuring the accountability of the Superintendent in their successful implementation through frequent progress monitoring during public meetings of the board.

How will the District/Board be held accountable for achieving these Goals & Guardrails?

The District is setting yearly targets for achieving each Goal & Guardrail that will need to be met over the next five years and is responsible for monitoring progress toward achieving them. The District is

also responsible for creating or modifying strategies or next steps when Goals & Guardrails are not being achieved. The Board ensures this by monitoring progress toward achieving the Goals & Guardrails every month.

How will the Board monitor progress toward achievement of the Goals & Guardrails?

The School District is working to identify progress measures for each Goal & Guardrail that will indicate progress toward the goal. Throughout the year, the District will update the Board during public board meetings regarding whether or not the current reality for students is on track with what has been set out in the Goals & Guardrails. This occurs using Monitoring Reports that will include:

- Data to assess on-track, near-track and off-track performance
- The superintendent's evaluation of performance with documented evidence
- Next steps for improving performance when the District is off track

How will the budget be guided by these Goals & Guardrails?

Once the Goals and Guardrails are adopted, they become the framework by which the District is held accountable and that guide planning processes. This means that the Board will expect the Superintendent to bring forward a budget that supports strategies aligned with the priorities set through the Goals and Guardrails.

How can people support this work and what is their role?

The CCSD community and stakeholders can be informed and share information about Goals & Guardrails with their neighbors and networks and follow the progress and monitoring of Goals & Guardrails for the next 5 years.