

West Chicago District 94

Setting Direction Retreat

February 6, 2025

9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Participant Handout



Setting Direction Retreat Purpose

The Setting Direction Retreat provides an opportunity for the strategic plan team to develop a shared understanding of the current mission, vision, core values and strategic themes and build upon those ideas to move the district forward in answering the question, “Where do we want to be five years from now that is different than where we are today?”

The outcome is for the plan team to verify District Long-Range Goals, Indicators, and Measures and to Prioritize the Strategies that need most attention to move the district toward continuous improvement. The product of the day will be a DRAFT of the Strategic Plan.

Common Vocabulary

Goal	Long-range goals provide clarity in what the district hopes to achieve throughout the duration of the strategic plan timeline. They foster a results orientation and help close. They help identify the targets and timelines that enable a staff to answer the question, “How will we know if all of this is making a difference?”
Strategy	Strategies are the actions required to guide plans to move the organization from where it is to where it wants to be. <i>Strategies are gaps that currently are not yielding the results that are necessary and if addressed would present the most probable return on the investment of time, people and other resources.</i> Strategies must be few in number and comprehensive in action.
Indicator	<i>The standards, skills, or evidence of performance that comprise or lead to attainment of a goal. Lagging indicators are summative in nature. Leading indicators are formative in nature. Indicators indicate what will be used as evidence for goal progress monitoring and reporting.</i>

Measure	<i>Measures are the instruments or tools aligned to the indicators that defines success. Often there are multiple measures for one indicator. Measures may be quantitative or qualitative.</i>
Target	<i>Targets are short term incremental steps measuring growth toward the Goal. Targets are set for each measure. Goals without targets lack power and usefulness.</i>
Action Plan	<i>An action plan defines the sequence of steps that must be taken, or activities that must be performed well, for a strategy to succeed. An action plan has four major elements (1) Specific tasks: what will be done and by whom. (2) Resource allocations: what specific funds are available for specific activities; timelines; people responsible (3) Professional Learning and Support: what will people need to know and do for effective implementation, and (4) Evidence: what will serve as the products for progress monitoring and strategy attainment.</i>
Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	<i>A Key Performance Indicator is a measurable value that demonstrates how effectively a company is achieving goals and strategies. . Organizations use KPIs at multiple levels to evaluate their success at reaching targets.</i>

Activity One: Update the Strategic Foundation or Preferred Future Based on Student and Staff Feedback. Use the Findings of the Vision Retreat documents to see summary of concepts and ideas from our last session.

Components	Reflections for changing the Preferred Future Statement
MISSION: Cultivate a vibrant and inclusive community that fosters resilience, ignites lifelong learning, and empowers learning, leading and living in an ever changing, global community. Or Ignite a passion for learning, foster a sense of leading and responsibility, and instill personal excellence to be successful in life. MOTTO: LEARNING. LEADING LIVING.	

VISION

Wildcats will become the future leaders, designers, and builders of tomorrow's world by:

- **Taking responsibility for their own learning and furthering their interests**
- **Utilizing technology as a powerful tool for communication, collaboration, and exploration**
- **Experiencing personalized, project-based learning opportunities leading to strong sense of accomplishment and a pathway to life after high school.**
- **Possessing the characteristics of a confident individual equipped with work and life skills**
- **Understanding the realities of what is predicted to be ahead in this ever-changing, complex, global world.**

OR

By 2030 graduating students will have developed competencies that will ensure their personal success to their pathway to work and life through:

- **Realizing their potential with academic excellence**
- **Cultivating their well-being and confidence**
- **Having a strong sense of pride in their learning, their course work and their academic success**
- **Harnessing the power of communication, collaboration, and technology**
- **Feeling they are part of a strong community contributing to a global world.**

PORTRAITS Learner Portrait ○ Critical & Creative Thinker ○ Communicator & Collaborator ○ Responsible & Accountable ○ Problem Solver & Decision-maker ○ Literacy Performer ○ Socially, Emotionally, & Physically Confident ○ Empathizer & Perseverant Educator Portrait ○ Critical Thinker & Problem Solver ○ Student Centered ○ Team Player & Collaborator ○ Passionate Teacher ○ Lifelong Learner ○ Ethical Decision-maker ○ Empathizer and Perseverant ○ Listener, Learner, Responder System Portrait ○ Promoter of learner interests voice and choice ○ Promoter of hiring, retaining and developing excellent employer ○ Believer in equity, diversity and inclusivity ○ Promoter of innovation and real-world relevance ○ Valuer of relationships and safety ○ Insurer of partnerships through engagement and collaboration ○ Believer in continuous improvement ○ Believer of student responsibility for their learning.	
Core Values: Worthiness, Wisdom. & Well-being Inclusion and Integrity Long-term focus and Lifelong learning Determination and Data Driven Decisions Community, Collaboration, Communication and Commitment Academic excellence and Agility	

STRATEGIC GOALS: The final pillar of the foundation asks members to clarify the specific goals they hope to achieve as a result of their improvement initiative. The goals pillar identifies the targets and timelines that enable a staff to answer the question, *“How will we know if all of this is making a difference?”* Goals provide a sense of priorities and the steps to achieve the benchmarks.

Effective goals foster both the results orientation and the individual and collective accountability for achieving the results. They help close the gap between the current reality and where the organization hopes to move performance to a higher level (the shared vision). Goals must have a results-orientation.

A goal tells us what we want to achieve. A strategy tells us what we might do differently to see if we can achieve the goal. A goal is a **“WHAT”!** A strategy is a **“HOW”!** (adapted from DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many, *Learning By Doing*, Second Edition: Solution-Tree, 2010)

Criteria for evaluating a goal statement:

- Does it manifest our mission and vision?
- Is it specific and strategic?
- Is it measurable?
- Is it actionable and aligned?
- Is it results-oriented?
- Is it time bound and target-oriented?
- Will it guide with work of school improvement?
- Will it guide the work of team/department and classroom improvement?
- Can it be aligned to leader and employee performance goals?
- Will it provide a data system to monitor and report performance at all levels?

Examples of Strategic Goals:

- Ensure college and career readiness for ALL students.
- Ensure maximum development, growth, and achievement for all students.
- Engage families and the community as vital partners in the education process.
- Provide a rigorous, relevant, engaging and satisfying learning environment.
- Provide a productive, safe, and supportive learning environment.
- Develop shared responsibility and accountability through a partnership among and between school, home, and the community.
- Align resources to accomplish priorities within a balanced budget.
- Cultivate a positive and productive working environment that attracts, develops and retains high quality staff.
- Demonstrate effective and efficient business operations and ensure excellent stewardship of public resources.

Current Long-Range Goals	Proposed Long-Range Goals

There are currently no goals	<u>Student Growth & Achievement:</u> Redefine graduation requirements to ensure all students have a pathway to excellence. Ensure academic excellence while working to close the achievement gap among all learners.
	<u>Sense of Belonging:</u> <u>Students:</u> Empower learners to take responsibility for their learning through trusting relationships and innovative use of practices. Expect and support relevant, rigorous, respectful, and reflective learning environments. <u>Staff:</u> Recruit, support and retain an innovative workforce that encourages staff growth, learning, and having a voice in decisions that impact teaching and learning. Equip workforce to embrace innovation and competency-based teaching and learning.
	<u>Communication, Engagement, & Partnerships:</u> Partner with families and the community to provide learner support, real world experiences and exchange of resources. Partner with families and the community to support their engagement in student success and academic achievement.
	<u>Fiscal Stewardship & Resource Alignment:</u> Make effective use of financial, facility, time, space and technology resources. Commit to effective operations and use of resources across the district to allow schools to maintain their focus on student success

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Activity Three: Discuss the difference between a goal and a strategy. Learn about College, Career, and Life Readiness Standards. View examples of goals and aligned strategies.

Reminder: The difference between a goal and a strategy is . . .

Goal: What we want to achieve and if we achieve all goals we will fulfill our mission and vision.

Strategy: What is most urgent for us to address and do differently to achieve our goals. While a strategy is aligned directly to a goal, a strategy may have impact on more than one goal. Action plans will be developed following strategic planning for all strategies.

Activity Four: Reflect on the Findings of the Vision Retreat and in particular revisit the Design Principles and the importance of reimagining high school.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FROM XQ SCHOOLS	REFLECTION THOUGHTS
A unifying set of values and principles that <i>provide common purpose, express belief in the potential of every student, and define every aspect of a reimagined high school and its programs.</i>	
Innovative approaches to skills and competencies that <i>use real-world expertise and experiences to enable the learner to develop and apply deep content knowledge and complex skills.</i>	
Redefining graduation requirements to <i>include learner profiles and pathways to achieve critical learning outcomes, new assessment systems, work-based learning experiences, career exploration, and project-based learning.</i>	

Consistent emphasis on truly getting to know students, both inside and outside the classroom, and on <i>building positive relationships among students and between students and teachers.</i>	
An approach and an overall culture that focuses on giving all students opportunities to <i>build their identities as team members and develop the capacity for agency and autonomy.</i>	
Powerful partnerships- with community and cultural institutions, business and industry, high education, nonprofit organizations, and health and service providers- <i>that provide support, real-world experiences, and networking opportunities for students, enabling them to envision and set goals for the future.</i>	
<i>Non-traditional, flexible uses of time, technology, space, place, financial resources and roles to increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning and the building of confidence.</i>	
FUTURE READY SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK	REFLECTION THOUGHTS
Personalized Professional Learning ○ Shared ownership & responsibility ○ 21st skill set ○ Broad-based participative evaluation ○ Diverse opportunities for professional learning	
Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment ○ 21st Century Skills/Deeper Learning ○ Collaborative, Relevant and Applied Learning ○ Assessment informs Instruction	
Robust Infrastructure ○ Network infrastructure ○ Adequate and responsive support ○ Formal cycle for review and replacement ○ Adequacy of devices, quality and availability	
Data & Privacy ○ Data and data systems ○ Policies, procedures and practices ○ Decision Making ○ Data literate professionals	
Community Partnerships	

○ Local community engagement and outreach ○ Digital learning environments and connectors ○ Global and Cultural awareness ○ Parental Communication & Engagement	
Use of Space & Time ○ Flexible Learning, Anytime, Anywhere ○ Competency-based learning ○ Extended Time ○ Project-based ○ New schedules, new pedagogy, new learning environments	
Budget & Resources ○ Alignment to district and school plans ○ Consistent funding streams ○ Learning return on investment ○ Efficiency and cost savings	
Collaborative Leadership ○ A culture of collaboration, capacity building, innovation and empowerment ○ Shared forward thinking vision for teaching and learning ○ Coherent Thinking ○ Evidenced-based transformations	

Activity Five: Provide feedback on POSSIBLE goal Key Performance Indicators/Measures to be used to measure progress monitor, and report performance on the long-range goals.

Teams 1 and 4. Goals 1 and 2
Teams 2 and 5 Goals 1 and 3
Teams 3 and 6. Goals 4 and 5

Proposed Long-Range Goals	Suggested Key Performance Indicators
<u>Student Growth & Achievement:</u> Redefine graduation requirements to ensure all students have a pathway to excellence.	● Graduation Rate ● ACT English Language Arts ● ACT Mathematics ● ACCESS Growth ● state assessment science assessment ● Freshmen On Track (FOT) ● English Language Proficiency

Ensure academic excellence while working to close the achievement gap among all learners.	• Post Secondary Plan – % of students with a post secondary plan • Post Secondary Success – % of graduates that completed an AP or DC course, or received career certifications. • advanced placement/ honors/ algebra in 8th grade– high school readiness
<u>Sense of Belonging (Students):</u> Empower learners to take responsibility for their learning through trusting relationships and innovative use of practices. Expect and support relevant, rigorous, respectful, and reflective learning environments.	• Student Attendance • Chronic Absenteeism • Diversity • English Language Learners • Student Behavior Referrals • In School Suspensions • Out Of School Suspensions • Student Satisfaction • Panorama • 5Essentials • Student Engagement • Participation In Extracurricular Activities • % of students in athletics • % of students in clubs & activities
<u>Sense of Belonging (Staff):</u> Equip workforce to embrace innovation and competency-based teaching and learning. Recruit, support and retain an innovative workforce that encourages staff growth, learning, and having a voice in decisions that impact teaching and learning.	• Teacher/Staff Enrollment • Teacher/Staff Diversity • Teacher/Staff Attendance • Teacher/Staff Retention • Certified/ Non-Certified Staff Satisfaction Survey • Salaries And Benefits • Professional Development Opportunities
<u>Communication, Engagement, & Partnerships:</u> Partner with families and the community to provide learner support, real world experiences and exchange of resources.	• Family Engagement • Family Attendance At Conferences • Family Satisfaction Surveys • Volunteerism • Family Use Of Digital Reporting Systems • Service-Learning Opportunities • Internship Opportunities • Community Partnerships • Foundation

Partner with families and the community to support their engagement in student success and academic achievement.	
<u>Fiscal Stewardship & Resource Alignment:</u> Make effective use of financial, facility, time, space and technology resources. Commit to effective operations and use of resources across the district to allow schools to maintain their focus on student success	• Fund Balances Have Grown Each Year • Expenditure Less Than Revenues Annually • Equalized Assessment Valuation/Tax Rate • State Financial Profile • Operating Expense Per Pupil • Instructional Expense Per Pupil • Annual Audit Findings • Grant/Other Resources • Space Utilization • Life Safety Compliance • Facilities Long Range Plan On Track • Cleanliness • Safety And Security • Maintenance • Cycle Time For Facility Related Repairs • Cycle Time For Facility Related Replacements • Network/Wifi Capacity • Classroom Technology Up To Date • Cycle Time For Tech Related Repairs • Cycle Time For Tech Related Replacements
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Activity Six: Reflect on SWOT analysis and Preferred Future Statement to identify most urgent strategies for action.

Strategies: Strategies are the actions that are required to guide plans to move the organization from where it is to where it wants to be. *Strategies are gaps that currently are not yielding the results that are necessary and if addressed would present the most probable return on the investment of time, people and other resources.* Strategies must be *few in number and comprehensive in action.*

Strategies are identified by the strategic plan team at the district level but are turned over to action plan teams who are best qualified and certified to identify how the organization will go about closing the gaps. Action planning must follow the Plan-Do-Study-Act process to ensure consistency in approach and quality in research-based practice.

A goal is what we hope to achieve. A strategy is something we are going to do differently to achieve the goal.

(adapted from DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many, ***Learning By Doing***, Second Edition: Solution-Tree, 2010)

Criteria for evaluating a strategy statement and related SMART Action plan:

- Is it an urgent gap or need that must be addressed to achieve our goals?
- It is supported by data and information from stakeholders.
- Is it a mandate that must be accomplished within a timeframe that demands we do it now?
- Is it a high priority?
- Is there buy in and ownership from stakeholders as to the urgency for our alignment of time, money, and people resources?
- Do we know what had been done in the past to address this strategy that has not worked?
- Do we know what is required to do this strategy differently?
- Can this strategy be measured, and progress monitored?
- Will it guide the work of school and district improvement?

Examples of Strategy Ideas:

- ✓ Equity
- ✓ Student Agency: Voice, Choice, ownership of learning
- ✓ Inquiry-Based Learning; Problem-based Learning
- ✓ STEM or STREAM
- ✓ Community perception/satisfaction
- ✓ Staff engagement, professional development, collaboration
- ✓ Technology Integration
- ✓ Aligned, Articulated Curriculum and Assessment
- ✓ High Impact Instruction; Differentiated Professional Development
- ✓ High-Quality Interventions and Enrichments
- ✓ Data Driven Decision Making: Goals, Measures, Targets, Progress Monitoring and Reporting
- ✓ Collaboration and Teaming for Continuous Improvement; Professional Communities of Practice
- ✓ Master Facilities Plan: Life Safety & Universal Access
- ✓ Social Emotional Learning
- ✓ Limited Resources

Proposed Long-Range Goals	Proposed Aligned Strategies
<u>Student Growth & Achievement:</u> Redefine graduation requirements to ensure all students have a pathway to excellence. Ensure academic excellence while working to close the achievement gap among all learners.	Student achievement gaps Personalized, competency-based learning Analyzing and reporting information with data
<u>Sense of Belonging (Students):</u> Empower learners to take responsibility for their learning through trusting relationships and innovative use of practices. Expect and support relevant, rigorous, respectful, and reflective learning environments.	Attendance and absenteeism Student Engagement School spirit/effort/motivation Future Ready School
<u>Sense of Belonging (Staff):</u> Equip workforce to embrace innovation and competency-based teaching and learning. Recruit, support and retain an innovative workforce that encourages staff growth, learning, and having a voice in decisions that impact teaching and learning.	Staff competitive compensation Innovation and real life learning projects and experiences Analyzing, Reporting, Information with data
<u>Communication, Engagement, & Partnerships:</u>	Clear and transparent communication and

Partner with families and the community to provide learner support, real world experiences and exchange of resources. Partner with families and the community to support their engagement in student success and academic achievement.	collaboration to enhance perceptions of district Feeder School Districts connections and collaboration
<u>Fiscal Stewardship & Resource Alignment:</u> Make effective use of financial, facility, time, space and technology resources. Commit to effective operations and use of resources across the district to allow schools to maintain their focus on student success	Reimagining use of time, space, technology
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Activity Seven: Summary of most frequently identified strategies:

Identify 8–12 strategy topics that need our critical attention to move the district to a higher level of discussion.

- 1. Chart all strategies with the total number of tables with the same issue identified.**
- 2. Identify those strategies on the list with 5 or more table team responses**
- 3. 4 or more**
- 4. 3 or more**

Select the top 8–12

Reminder:

The Final Meeting of the Strategic Plan Team will be on February 20 from 5:00–7:00pm. It will be a virtual meeting.

A draft of the plan will be sent out for stakeholder feedback between now and that meeting.

The team will review all feedback and make final refinements to the draft of the plan. The plan will then be readied for Board approval.

Schedule:

- Reviewing the Draft Plan Final Session (Zoom)
- Board of Education Regular Action Meeting Sharing the Findings of the Final Meeting of the Plan Team.
- Central Leadership Team Workshop on Living the Plan
- Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting Presentation
- Board of Education Regular Action Meeting for Approval