Stafford County Public Schools

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ENTRY PLAN REPORT

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SUPERINTENDENT



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Executive Summary





As I reflect on my first few months serving as Superintendent of Stafford Schools, I am honored to share this comprehensive report detailing my journey of listening, learning, and planning for our future. Through extensive engagement with students, staff, families, and community members across our diverse district, I have gained invaluable insights into our collective strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth.

At the heart of this journey was an intentional Connections approach to collaborative leadership—fostering a shared voice that will guide our shared future. These structured discussions provided a collaborative platform for stakeholders to share their perspectives, aspirations, and concerns, shaping the foundation for our next steps as a school division and community. This leadership approach is not a one-time initiative but instead a model that will guide our ongoing efforts to engage, listen, and collaborate. The findings in this report represent more than simple observations—they reflect the lived experiences of our community members and will serve as the cornerstone for our strategic actions moving forward. By listening deeply to those we serve, it is clear the community strongly believes in our educators, our student opportunities, and our fiscal responsibility. Additionally, they have identified several clear patterns and opportunities for growth that align with and enhance our Elevate Stafford strategic plan. We need greater organizational coherence through more streamlined structures and clearer communication pathways. Our commitment to educational excellence must ensure high-quality instruction and appropriate support for all learners. We must improve operational efficiency by optimizing resources, particularly in transportation and scheduling. Building a collaborative culture requires stronger partnerships among schools, families, and communities. Strategic resource allocation ensures resources are distributed based on student needs, while fiscal sustainability depends on developing stronger advocacy and partnership with funding authorities.



Personal Leadership Statement

Personal Leadership Philosophy

- **Collaborative Decision-Making:** The most effective solutions emerge when diverse perspectives contribute to problem-solving.
- **Student-Centered Leadership:** Every decision is guided by its impact on our most vulnerable students, with a focus on individualized support.
- **Commitment to Student Achievement:** Success is measured by how well students are supported, challenged, and empowered to grow.
- **Transparent Communication:** Builds trust through honest, consistent, and authentic dialogue. We must share both our successes and struggles to build a strong community.
- **Data-Informed Improvement:** Combines stories and experiences with data analysis to guide decisions and track progress.
- **Servant Leadership:** Central office supports schools by removing barriers, providing resources, and creating conditions for excellence in every school and classroom.
- **Fiscal Stewardship and Advocacy:** Responsible resource management paired with strong advocacy for the funding students need.

At the heart of our efforts is a clear and unwavering focus on student achievement. All of our strategic actions—from enhancing special education services to strengthening instructional frameworks and optimizing operational efficiency—are aimed at ensuring every student reaches their fullest potential. We will measure our success by the academic and personal achievements of our students.

To address these priorities, we will immediately focus on enhancing special education services, strengthening the implementation of Stafford's Framework for Student Learning (instructional framework), optimizing school schedules and transportation, establishing collaborative decision-making structures, implementing more efficient organizational structures, and developing comprehensive funding advocacy strategies to secure the resources our students deserve.

This report outlines my approach to understanding our school division, synthesizes what I have learned from our community, and presents recommended action steps that will guide our collective work. Together, we will build upon Stafford's considerable strengths while addressing key areas of opportunity to ensure every student is inspired, empowered, and excels.

My Vision
for Stafford Schools



Building on the strong foundation I've observed during my first 100 days, I envision a school system that personalizes learning for every student, providing educational experiences tailored to their strengths, needs, and aspirations. We will prepare students for success beyond graduation by ensuring they are ready for **Enrollment** in higher education, **Enlistment** in military service, or **Employment** in a meaningful career. By focusing on these three outcomes, we will equip every student with the skills, knowledge, and opportunities necessary to achieve their goals.



To support this vision, we will develop systems that balance high expectations with personalized support, ensuring that every student has a well-defined path to success. We will empower educators by treating teachers and staff as creative professionals, equipping them with the resources, autonomy, and support needed to foster innovation and excellence. While embracing forward-thinking instructional strategies, we will also honor time-tested practices that prepare students for a rapidly changing world.



We will ignite a culture of belonging where every student and staff member feels valued and supported, building inclusive school communities that reflect the diverse strengths of Stafford County. Strong partnerships with families, businesses, and community organizations will create a network of support that enhances student learning and career readiness. Finally, we will advocate for sustainable funding and strategic resource allocation to ensure our schools have the tools necessary to prepare students for lifelong success.

My Process

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Stafford Schools has a long history of academic excellence. As Superintendent, I've spent time listening, learning, and building relationships across our school community. I've completed the pre-entry and entry phases of my transition, and now I'm excited to share what comes next.

The following pages outline the final phase—my post-entry plan—and how I'll continue building on what's working while staying focused on growth and meeting the needs of every student.

During the pre-entry phase, I learned about the culture and values of Stafford Schools. This phase consisted of a review of guiding documents and meetings with key district leaders to help me further articulate essential strategies and actions to focus on in the first months as Superintendent.

During the entry plan phase, I held stakeholder listening sessions throughout the district to hear from our students, staff, parents, and community members. During this phase, I generated themes about what I heard and learned in order to create concrete action steps, shared during my report to the School Board and on the division website.

The final phase, post-entry, of my entry plan will focus on implementation. It is also during this phase that I will triangulate my findings with the community and seek additional input and feedback.



The success of any organization depends on strong relationships and a smooth transition plan. In each phase, my focus centers on building strong relationships with the School Board, staff, parents, students, and community members. Furthermore, this entry plan has provided me with an opportunity to assess our current state against Stafford Schools' Strategic Plan Goals:

- **Provide a Safe, Welcoming Environment:** How does our culture and climate improve the social, emotional, and academic development of each student?
- **Support High Expectations for Academic Performance:** How are students being identified as needing additional supports, what does support look like, and how are we meeting the needs of each and every student?
- **Ensure Meaningful Post-Secondary Outcomes:** How do we prepare and support each student to be informed and successful in their chosen post-secondary path?
- **Support and Invest in All Staff:** How are we recruiting, hiring, and retaining the most qualified candidates?
- **Fiscal transparency:** How are we being fiscally responsible and transparent?

Entry Plan Goals

As we work together to ensure our schools thrive and our students are learning in a socially, emotionally, and academically supportive and rigorous environment, it's important to outline the transition goals that guided my entry into Stafford Schools.





- Build strong and transparent **relationships** with the School Board, staff, students and parents;
- Assess the current **progress of the Strategic Plan** Goals, implementation and metrics, post-secondary outcomes, academic performance, climate and culture, and staff support, while ensuring that each Stafford Schools graduate is prepared to be successful in their chosen path;
- Evaluate **organizational effectiveness and efficiency**, including the degree to which clarity, coherence, and competence exist across the school division;
- Verify there are **effective and impactful structures and systems** in place to regularly monitor, intervene, and support the academic progress and growth for each student;
- Develop **strong and meaningful partnerships** with advisory groups, Parent-Teacher Organizations, Stafford Education Foundation, legislators and elected officials, local and state education associations, and community leaders.

On the following pages, I have outlined my core beliefs and vision for the district, as well as initiatives I plan to implement in alignment with our Strategic Plan.

This following pages do not contain all inclusive list, rather they contain a sampling of the activities surrounding each of these five goals.



Connections

SHARED VOICE. SHARED FUTURE.

Overview

- Connections: Shared Voice, Shared Future, was an extensive listening and learning tour designed to gain deep insights into our division's dynamics, culture, and aspirations. A key component of this approach was to host staff and community forums in each magisterial district across the county, creating open spaces for dialogue with diverse stakeholders.

Key Questions

- Where do we excel as a school system?
- What needs to improve?
- What is most important to do well?

Objective

- Facilitate meaningful dialogue, enhance transparency, and reinforce our commitment to shared decision-making.
- Ensure accessibility for all families and community members by hosting forums in each magisterial district as well as three online forums.

Scope

- Visited all 34 schools and specialized programs
- Visited division facilities and departments; engaged with staff to understand their operations
- Conducted individual and small group meetings with a broad range of stakeholders to include students, staff, administrators, parents, community and business leaders, the School Board, and state and local legislative representatives

ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

34+ Schools & Programs Visited Multiple Times

450+ Stakeholder Comments Received

23 Structured Connections Sessions w/ More Than **600** Staff, Families, and Students

Connections Events Hosted Across the County & Online

60+ Key Stakeholder Meetings Conducted

16 Meetings with Community, Business and Faith Leaders and Partners

8 Sessions with Student Leadership Groups

5 Meetings with State Legislative Representatives

Biweekly Meetings with the County Administrator

9 Meetings with Key County Officials

"Stafford County Schools excels in the dedication and expertise of many of its teachers. Educators across the county work hard to support students, often going above and beyond to meet their needs, despite challenging circumstances. Additionally, the county has made strides in areas such as extracurricular opportunities and community involvement, which benefit students both academically and socially."

- Connections Attendee

What I Learned

Key Strengths

"We care.
We help each other.
We try not to pass the buck."
– Connections Attendee



Dedicated Staff Across All Roles

- Staff are dedicated, caring, and committed.
- Relationships create a close-knit school community.
- Every role supports student success and well-being.
- Mentor360 and Admin360 welcome and prepare new staff.
- The community values passionate, impactful employees.



Academic Excellence & Future-Ready Opportunities

- Stafford Schools offers strong academic and career preparation pathways.
- Students access high-quality, goal-aligned learning experiences.
- Specialty Centers are innovative, inclusive, and future-focused.
- Families value the focus on postsecondary readiness.
- The district supports every student's unique path.



Highly Engaged Families & Community Support

- Stafford Schools has a deeply engaged family and community network.
- Families engage through volunteering, advocacy, and advisory committees.
- School Board Advisory Committees shape priorities and build trust.
- "Small-town feel" strengthens connections and engagement.
- Ongoing investment in communication and regional engagement is essential.



School-Based Leadership Excellence

- School-based leaders drive the district's success.
- Principals are accessible, responsive, and achievement-focused.
- Strong leadership fosters trust, improves morale, and unites school communities.
- School leaders create supportive, safe environments.
- Investing in leadership development ensures continued school-based excellence.



Strong Student Voice & Engagement

- Students are eager to lead and shape their school experience.
- Students seek more opportunities and input in school decisions.
- Student representation and advisory groups are valued.
- Stakeholders encourage expanding student leadership at all levels.



Fiscal Responsibility

- District is recognized for managing funds effectively.
- District prioritizes student needs and instruction.
- Financial transparency and thoughtful use of taxpayer dollars are valued.
- Stakeholders take pride in maximizing the impact of every dollar.
- Fostering student perspectives deepens engagement and promotes civic readiness.
- Efficient budgeting supports advocacy and long-term planning.

What I Learned

Opportunities for Growth



Moving Forward:

A Post-Entry Focus on

- Organizational Coherence
- Special Education Services
- Communication Systems
- Operational Efficiency
- Instructional Framework
- Resource Allocation
- Funding Advocacy

"Our goal is to help students overcome challenges, recover, and ultimately achieve their full potential."

-Connections Attendee



Opportunities for Growth

While Stafford County Public Schools has many strengths to build upon, the Connections sessions, key stakeholder meetings, and data points also surfaced clear, recurring themes about areas where the division must improve. These insights were not offered as criticism, but as a **call to action**—a reflection of how deeply families, staff, and students care about the success of their schools.

Stakeholders identified **opportunities for growth** in critical areas such as staffing, transportation, consistency across schools, student behavior support, facilities maintenance, and funding advocacy. Many of these challenges are interconnected and require **thoughtful, systemic responses** that align with community expectations and the district's strategic goals.

By facing these opportunities directly—and responding with transparency, collaboration, and urgency—Stafford Schools can strengthen trust, accelerate improvement, and ensure an excellent educational experience for **every student.**

Organizational Coherence

In reviewing our current **organizational structure**, it's clear that silos have developed, sometimes hindering effective communication, collaboration, and overall **operational efficiency**. There is a need for more streamlined leadership structures that align responsibilities and decision-making processes with district priorities. Additionally, feedback from the Connections sessions highlighted the lack of consistency in various areas—such as policies, expectations, program implementation, and resource allocation across different schools. This was one of the **top five issues** mentioned by stakeholders, contributing to disparities in how we serve our students and support our staff.

Without consistency and coherence, there is a risk of creating an imbalance of resources, where certain schools or programs may receive more support than others due to inconsistent resource allocation or varying expectations. This imbalance can **hinder** the overall success of our school division and create inequities that affect both student achievement and staff morale.

For example, a **refined process** for enrollment projections will help ensure that resources are allocated more fairly and accurately across schools, taking into account the specific needs of each school community. Similarly, **updating and reviewing staffing standards**—along with establishing a formal review and feedback process involving principals—will allow staffing levels to align with student needs and district priorities, preventing disparities across schools.

There are also areas within the district where leadership roles and responsibilities are not fully aligned, leading to inefficiencies in oversight and support. Streamlining these roles and ensuring leadership positions are **appropriately structured** will help maximize the effectiveness of our organization, ensuring that all staff contribute fully to the district's goals.

To improve **organizational coherence and consistency**, it is essential to establish clearer lines of communication and alignment between departments and our overarching goals. By refining the leadership model and clarifying roles and responsibilities, a culture of accountability and collaboration can be fostered across all schools. **Strengthening communication** and cooperation among schools, departments, and central office staff will also be critical. Ensuring that principals, district leaders, and central office teams work together seamlessly will help us respond more effectively to both student and community needs, ensuring uniformity, fair resource distribution, and a shared direction in all that we do.

Special Education Services

While our special education services meet all of the compliance requirements, there is an opportunity to improve how we provide **specially designed instruction** to support the unique needs of each student. Families and staff have highlighted the need for more consistent and individualized accommodations, as well as addressing disproportionality in discipline. Beyond compliance, our focus must shift toward ensuring that each student with disabilities receives tailored instruction from highly skilled educators who are trained and supported to meet their specific needs.

This includes **enhancing professional development** for special education staff, developing specialized programs for students with emotional disabilities, autism, and intellectual disabilities, and strengthening the collaboration between special education teachers and general education staff. We will also reverse course on the **"back to base"** approach and focus on a more individualized and targeted approach that is better aligned with students' needs.

Opportunities for Growth, continued

Communication Systems

The need for improved communication emerged as a significant theme across the **23 Connections events**. Stakeholders across various groups—staff, community members, and students—expressed a strong desire for clearer, more transparent, and **consistent communication**. This need spans multiple levels: between the district and schools, between schools and families, and among different departments within the district.

While communication has often been cited as a strength, there are **notable gaps**, especially in key operational areas like transportation, special education, staffing issues, and mental health. These areas require more transparent and timely updates to keep all parties informed and engaged. Additionally, it has become clear that our communication department is currently understaffed, which further exacerbates these challenges. This **resource gap** makes it difficult to meet the growing demand for consistent, clear, and frequent communication across the district.

To address this, our communication systems must **prioritize clarity, consistency, and accessibility**, ensuring that important information reaches all families and stakeholders in a timely and understandable manner. We must also foster active, two-way communication channels. These channels should encourage families to as questions, provide feedback, and engage in meaningful conversations about their students' needs and progress.

Improving communication on critical issues —such as staffing, transportation, special education, and mental health—will help ensure that families are well-informed and better prepared. This will also help **reduce confusion** and frustration, **building stronger, more collaborative relationships** between the district, schools, families, and the broader community. By fostering a more transparent and inclusive communication strategy, and addressing the staffing challenges within the communication department, we can create a more cohesive, informed, and supportive environment for everyone involved.







Operational Efficiency

Operational efficiency is a critical focus as we work to maximize our resources and enhance the effectiveness of district operations, especially given the current constraints on funding. While operational efficiency is always desired, it becomes even more essential when resources are limited.

Several challenges have been identified, including inefficiencies in transportation. Problems such as bus delays, route inconsistencies, early bus pick-up times, the need for more bus drivers, and general inefficiencies were raised frequently by both community members and staff. To address these challenges, we have already announced a shift to a **four-tier transportation system**, including two tiers for elementary schools. This change will improve efficiency by optimizing bus routes, reducing wait times, and ensuring more reliable transportation services for all students.

Additionally, we must assess our staffing levels and resource allocation across all departments. For example, the **Operations and Maintenance** team is currently understaffed. The industry standard is 1 full-time employee per 50,000 square feet, but in Stafford Schools, we have 1 full-time employee per 78,000 square feet, leaving us understaffed by approximately 29 full-time employees. This is just one example of how staffing shortages impact our ability to maintain facilities effectively and efficiently. Similar resource gaps can be found in other areas, further highlighting the need for a comprehensive review of our staffing and resource allocation practices.

A key area for improvement will also be the integration of technology across departments. Currently, some of our technology systems are operating independently, which requires additional work and time. We must ensure that our systems are aligned and integrated, allowing for smoother data sharing, improved decision-making, and reduced redundancy. By enhancing the integration of technology to manage administrative tasks, streamline communication, and improve data management, we can not only improve operational efficiency but also create a more seamless experience for staff, students, and families.

Lastly, we will continue to refine our human resource management practices and strengthen our approach to budget management and resource allocation. This includes reviewing staffing patterns, aligning resources with district priorities, and ensuring that financial planning supports our long-term goals. By taking a more strategic approach to managing our resources, we will improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations, ultimately supporting the success of our students and staff.

Opportunities for Growth, continued

Instructional Framework

Through my engagements, it became evident that while our **Framework for Student Learning** is recognized, it has not yet been fully integrated into our daily instructional practices. Teachers and administrators noted that although the framework exists, it is not consistently referenced or applied across all classrooms. This inconsistency presents a barrier to achieving the level of alignment necessary to ensure high-quality teaching and learning for all students. There is a strong desire for the framework to become a more central component of our instructional approach, ensuring that teaching and learning are aligned and that all students have equitable access to the best possible educational experiences.

To address this, we will build on the existing coaching team model and the excellent work already being done at both the division and school levels. By strengthening this model, we will provide division-wide consistency in the way feedback and support are provided to our educators and team members. This approach will **ensure that all teachers have access to high-quality, individualized coaching that directly supports their ability to implement the framework consistently in every classroom.** In turn, this will lead to more effective instructional practices that directly impact student achievement.

Additionally, we will establish clear expectations for feedback and professional development, ensuring that all teachers have the resources and opportunities necessary to continuously improve. This will foster a **culture of continuous improvement** and set the standard for high instructional quality across the division. By providing teachers with targeted, ongoing professional development, we will equip them to consistently apply the framework in ways that support student growth and achievement. Through collaborative work with our coaching teams, we aim to create a system that not only supports teachers' professional growth but also holds everyone accountable for maintaining high instructional standards that lead to improved student outcomes.

Resource Allocation

The community has consistently expressed the need for **differentiated resource allocation**, particularly in terms of differentiated staffing and funding that aligns with the specific needs of our students. This continues to be a top priority for the School Board and an area that demands sustained focus. To ensure every student receives the support they need, resources must be allocated in a way that directly addresses the diverse needs of our student populations, including those who require additional support or specialized services.

There is also growing recognition that **funding** must be distributed more effectively across the district. It's essential that all schools have access to the resources they need to succeed, regardless of their size or the challenges they face. This requires us to refine how resources—whether financial, staffing, or materials—are allocated to better match the unique needs of different schools and student groups. For example, differentiated staffing strategies must be developed to ensure that schools with higher concentrations of students requiring specialized services, such as special education, English language learners, or students with mental health needs, are adequately supported.

By implementing a differentiated and **data-driven approach** to resource allocation, we can ensure that every school has the tools it needs to provide high-quality education and support for all students, while also maintaining the operational infrastructure necessary for success.

Funding Advocacy

Stakeholders across all groups identified the need for more robust and strategic funding advocacy to secure adequate school funding. Our division's approach to legislative strategy has been noted as an area needing enhancement in order to more effectively influence state-level funding and legislation that impacts our schools.

A key component of our advocacy efforts will be focusing on securing an increase to the **Cost to Compete Adjustments** (COCA) to address the rising costs of living and ensure that our salaries remain competitive with neighboring districts. **Competitive compensation** is vital not only for attracting and retaining high-quality educators but also for ensuring that we have the necessary staff to support student achievement in every classroom. We will also advocate for financial support to compensate for the lost revenue resulting from the **Disabled Veterans Tax Relief**, which has significantly impacted our local funding. These adjustments are critical to maintaining the integrity of our infrastructure, allowing us to reinvest in our schools, and ensuring we can continue offering competitive compensation packages for our staff.

Additionally, we will explore other funding mechanisms that can support not only our infrastructure needs but also enhance salaries and benefits for our staff. By securing these resources, we will ensure that our educators and service personnel are properly supported, which will directly benefit student achievement by enhancing the quality of education and student support services. Investing in our facilities, technology, and educational resources is equally important, as these investments create environments where students can thrive and succeed.

By strengthening our funding advocacy at both the local and state levels, we will ensure that Stafford Schools has the financial resources required to meet the district's needs and continue advancing our educational mission. This effort will ultimately provide the foundation necessary to ensure that all students have access to the tools, opportunities, and support they need to succeed academically and beyond.

Opportunities for Growth

In Summary



Stafford Schools must address the current silos in leadership and communication that hinder collaboration and **operational efficiency**. The lack of consistency in policies, resource allocation, and program implementation across schools has created disparities in how students are supported, impacting both student achievement and staff morale. To improve **organizational coherence**, the district must refine processes such as the enrollment projection system, staffing standards, and resource distribution. By aligning leadership structures and responsibilities with district priorities, the district can create a more equitable environment for students and staff alike.



In addition to organizational coherence, there is significant room for improvement in **special education services**. While Stafford Schools meets compliance standards, a more individualized approach to supporting students with disabilities is needed. This includes a stronger focus on personalized transition planning that prepares students for life after high school with the necessary academic, vocational, and life skills. Strengthening professional development for special education staff and fostering better collaboration between special education and general education teachers will ensure all students, regardless of ability, are fully supported. Similarly, the district's **Framework for Student Learning** must be more consistently integrated into daily instructional practices. By enhancing coaching models and setting clear expectations for professional development, teachers can align their teaching methods with the district's instructional goals, ensuring higher-quality education and improved student outcomes.



Communication systems also require improvement to support clearer, more consistent, and transparent communication across the district. Stakeholders have expressed the need for better communication between the district and schools, schools and families, and within departments. The current understaffing in the communication department exacerbates challenges in meeting these demands. To address this, the district must prioritize timely updates and foster two-way communication channels, ensuring that families and staff remain well-informed and engaged. Additionally, operational efficiency is crucial, particularly with limited resources. By addressing inefficiencies in areas like transportation, technology integration, and staffing shortages, the district can optimize its resources. Ensuring equitable **resource allocation** through a data-driven approach will allow schools to receive the support they need, ultimately fostering a more cohesive and effective educational environment for all students. Lastly, **funding advocacy** is a key area for the district to focus on, particularly in securing increased financial support. Strategic efforts will be made to advocate for additional funding to address rising costs, ensure competitive compensation for staff, and support the overall infrastructure of the district. This includes advocating for a Cost to Compete Adjustment (COCA) to maintain competitive salaries, as well as seeking compensation for lost revenue due to tax relief. Strengthening these funding efforts will enable Stafford Schools to continue meeting the needs of students and staff while advancing our educational mission.



Post-Entry

GOAL 01 MEANINGFUL POSTSECONDARY OUTCOMES

- Launch Business & IT Specialty Center (2025); plan new centers at High School 6 and North Stafford HS (2026)
- Expand access to academic and career planning, internships, and credentials
- Improve special education services with an emphasis on individualized instruction
- Enhance language support for English learners

GOAL 02 HIGH ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

- Reinforce our Instructional Framework with clear tools, coaching, and expectations
- Expand Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to address academic, emotional, and behavioral needs
- Align instructional materials, professional development, and school budgets with strategic goals

GOAL 03 SAFE, ENGAGING, AND WELCOMING SCHOOLS

- Implement four-tier transportation system for 2025–2026
- Launch Opt-In model for bus riders (Spring 2025)
- Develop new academic calendar with more time for learning and professional growth
- Plan successful opening and transitions of three new schools in 2026
- Improve communication channels and launch customer service standards

GOAL 04 INVEST IN STAFF

- Launch Principal Leadership Team, Teacher Council, and Strategic Plan Steering Committee
- Review compensation and workload; explore innovative strategies like Artificial Intelligence for time-saving
- Redesign onboarding and recruitment for hard-to-fill positions
- Expand recognition, wellness, and collaboration opportunities

GOAL 05 OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY & FUNDING

- Conduct audits of staffing, scheduling, and resource use
- Enhance School Board communication
- Launch legislative strategy for increased state funding and COCA adjustment
- Create tools and partnerships to help the public better understand school finance



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