Stafford County Public Schools

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POST-ENTRY PLAN

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SUPERINTENDENT



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Thank You

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To the entire Stafford community, thank you. Your support and partnership throughout my entry process means the world to me. I'm deeply grateful for the warm welcome, the honest conversations, and the shared commitment to doing what's best for our students and staff. It's a privilege to serve alongside you.

As we move forward, the information in this post entry plan outlines the key priorities, strategies, and commitments that will further drive our work. It provides a clear picture of where we are, what we've learned, and how we intend to move forward with transparency, accountability, and shared purpose.

Looking ahead, this plan will serve as a living guide as we continue building strong foundations for our students, strengthening relationships, and delivering on our promise that every child be Prepared to Excel. Together, we will remain focused on progress that is thoughtful, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of our students, staff, and families.

Thank you for your support.
Daniel W. Smith, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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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 post-entry action steps we will take as a division, each in alignment with the goals in our Strategic Plan.

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 division 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 division to hear from our students, staff, parents, and community members. During this phase, I generated themes about what I heard and created concrete action steps, shared with the School Board and on the division website.

The final phase, post-entry, of my entry plan focuses on implementation. I will incorporate my findings from the community and provide concrete tactics for advancing our strategic plan.



Over the last six months, I have invested considerable time into listening, evaluating, and understanding Stafford Schools, its processes, and its people. As we begin the earnest work toward advancing the strategic plan, the following five goals will remain our guiding principles as we make decisions, strengthen collaboration, and enhance operation efficiencies. Let's get to work!

- **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?
- **Operational Efficiency and Fiscal Transparency:** How are we being fiscally responsible and transparent?

Continuous Improvement

Opportunities for Growth



While Stafford Schools is exceptional in many regards, efforts are needed to excel to the next level and achieve the goals set forth in our strategic plan. First, we 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 division must refine processes such as the enrollment projection system, staffing standards, and resource distribution. By aligning leadership structures and responsibilities with division priorities, the division can create a more equitable environment for students and staff alike.



In addition to organizational coherence, there is 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 division'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 division'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 division. Stakeholders have expressed the need for better communication between the division and schools, schools and families, and within departments. The current understaffing in the communication office exacerbates challenges in meeting these demands. To address this, the division 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 division 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 division 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 division. This includes advocating for a Cost to Compete Adjustment (COCA) to maintain competitive salaries, as well as seeking compensation for lost revenue due to state supported tax relief programs that have negatively impacted revenue. Strengthening these funding efforts will enable Stafford Schools to continue meeting the needs of students and staff while advancing our educational mission.

Post-Entry Executive Summary



GOAL 1 MEANINGFUL POSTSECONDARY OUTCOMES

- Launch Business & IT Specialty Center (2025) at Colonial Forge HS; 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 2 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 3 SAFE, ENGAGING, & WELCOMING SCHOOLS

- Implement four-tier transportation system
- Launch Opt-In model for bus riders
- 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 4 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 efficiency
- Redesign onboarding and recruitment for hard-to-fill positions
- Expand recognition, wellness, and collaboration opportunities

GOAL 5 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

SIGNS OF SUCCESS



Transportation Opt-In

Families must now opt-in for their student(s) to receive bus transportation during the school year.

Routes will now reflect actual ridership and improve transportation services' efficiencies.

OPT-IN

24,493

Confirmed AM/PM Bus Riders in 2025-2026

Students not Riding a Bus in 2025-2026

5,640

OPT-OUT

2025-2026 Elementary Bell ScheduleTiering

Elementary School	Current Start Time	Proposed Start Time	Difference
Rockhill	7:30 AM	8:15 AM	45 min
Falmouth	8:25 AM	8:15 AM	10 min
Grafton Village	8:25 AM	8:15 AM	10 min
Hampton Oaks	8:25 AM	8:15 AM	10 min
Kate Waller Barrett	8:25 AM	8:15 AM	10 min
Margaret Brent	8:25 AM	8:15 AM	10 min
Rocky Run	8:25 AM	8:15 AM	10 min
Stafford	8:25 AM	8:15 AM	10 min
Winding Creek	8:25 AM	8:15 AM	10 min
Total Schools		9	

Elementary School	Current Start Time	Proposed Start Time	Difference
Anne E. Moncure	8:25 AM	8:45 AM	20 min
Anthony Burns	8:25 AM	8:45 AM	20 min
Conway	8:25 AM	8:45 AM	20 min
Ferry Farm	8:25 AM	8:45 AM	20 min
Garrisonville	8:25 AM	8:45 AM	20 min
Hartwood	8:25 AM	8:45 AM	20 min
Park Ridge	8:25 AM	8:45 AM	20 min
Widewater	8:25 AM	8:45 AM	20 min
Total Schools		8	

- More On-Time Buses
- Improved Communication
- More Efficient Use of Staff
- Greater Flexibility for Route Coverages
- Maintains the Current Bell Schedule Order: High Schools, Elementary Schools, Middle Schools

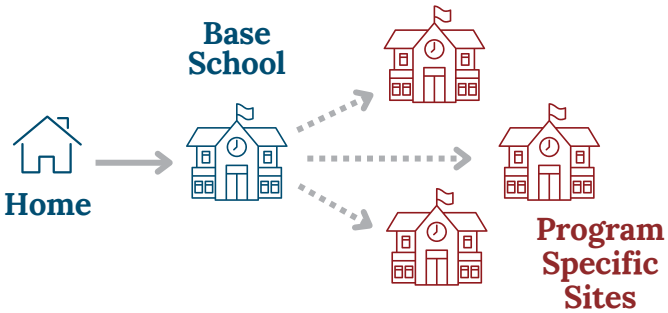
Redistricting & Preparing for 2026

After completing a community engagement process for redistricting elementary and high school boundaries, a division transition team is in place to ensure a smooth, student-focused launch of three new schools in Fall 2026 through collaboration and careful planning. Throughout 2025, community-led committees will continue to select meaningful names and mascots.



High School 6 Rendering

Special Education: Targeted Student Supports



We are shifting from "back to base" to personalized support by placing students in schools that best meet their individual needs for greater success. Program development teams for emotional disabilities, autism, and intellectual disabilities are creating tailored strategies that better meet student needs.

Intentional Professional Development

By investing in professional learning for all, we create a learning environment that extends beyond the classroom, fostering a sense of well-being and growth for everyone.

Leadership

SLA SUMMER LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Admin 360

Service Staff

Service Professionals Advancing their Roles & Knowledge (SPARK)

Sub 360 EMPOWERING SUBSTITUTES

Licensed Staff

Mentor 360

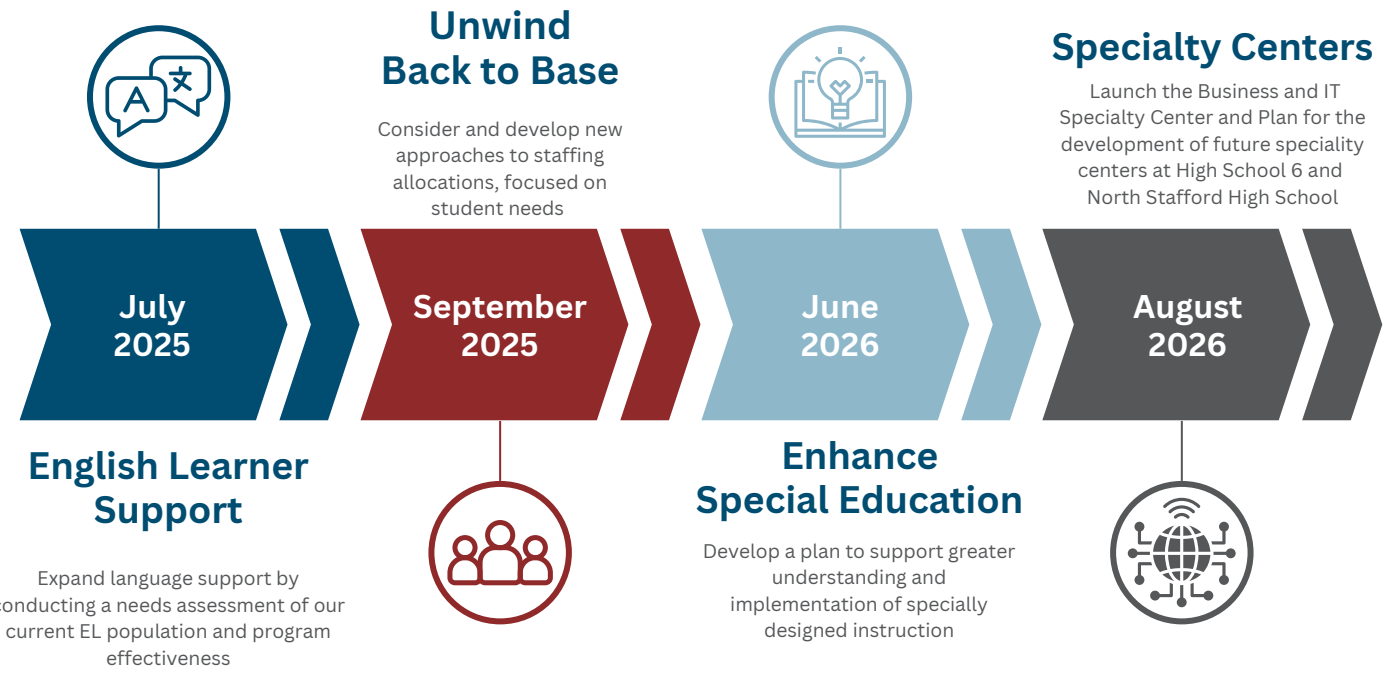
Prep for Success WEEK A MENTOR 360 PROGRAM

All Staff

Professional Learning Days

GOAL 1

MEANINGFUL POSTSECONDARY OUTCOMES



To prepare all students for success beyond graduation, whether in college, careers, or the military, we are advancing focused initiatives to expand opportunity, enhance supports, and individualize services.

Expanding Access and Career Planning

We launched the Business and Information Technology Specialty Center at Colonial Forge High School and are planning additional centers at North Stafford High School and High School 6 to expand access to high-demand career pathways. To support informed post-secondary choices, we are enhancing our Academic and Career Plans and implementing SchoolLinks, a tool that helps students track goals and explore opportunities tailored to their interests and aspirations.

Improving Special Education Services

We are reviewing Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and 504 implementation and conducting monthly at-risk reviews to strengthen student outcomes. We are assessing the effectiveness of our transition services to better support students with disabilities after high school. Work is also underway to improve staff use of specially designed instruction, ensuring more effective and personalized learning experiences.

Providing Targeted Student Supports

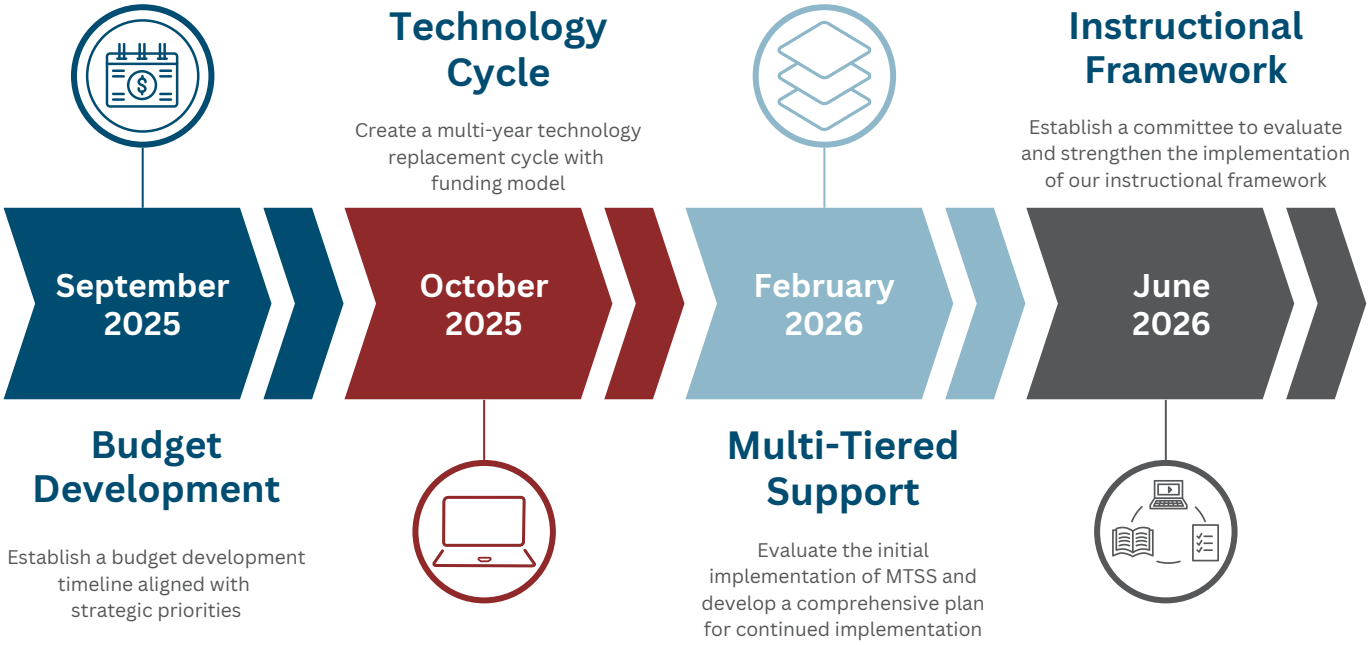
We are moving away from the "back to base" model toward more individualized support. Program development teams for emotional disabilities, autism, and intellectual disabilities are creating tailored strategies that better meet student needs. We are also reviewing staffing allocations, shifting from enrollment-based models to those driven by student-specific needs.

Enhancing Language Supports

A division-wide needs assessment is underway to evaluate the effectiveness of our English Learner (EL) program. We're making immediate improvements to translation services and designing a newcomer program to better serve English learners during their initial transition. Together, these efforts reflect our commitment to ensuring every student, regardless of background or ability, is equipped with the knowledge, support, and options needed for a meaningful post-secondary future.

GOAL 2

HIGH ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS



To deliver consistent, effective instruction across all classrooms, we are focused on strengthening our instructional framework, refining student support systems, and ensuring equitable resource allocation.

Strengthening Instructional Practices

We established an Instructional Framework Committee made up of school-based and teacher leaders to identify gaps between current practices and research-based best practices. The team is developing clear, practitioner-friendly "look-fors" that define high-quality instruction across content areas. Stakeholder feedback is guiding revisions to the instructional framework and related resources to ensure clarity, usability, and alignment with our teaching standards.

Advancing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

We are conducting a full review of the initial rollout of MTSS and developing a detailed plan to guide its next phase. This plan will ensure consistent practices across schools to better support students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs.

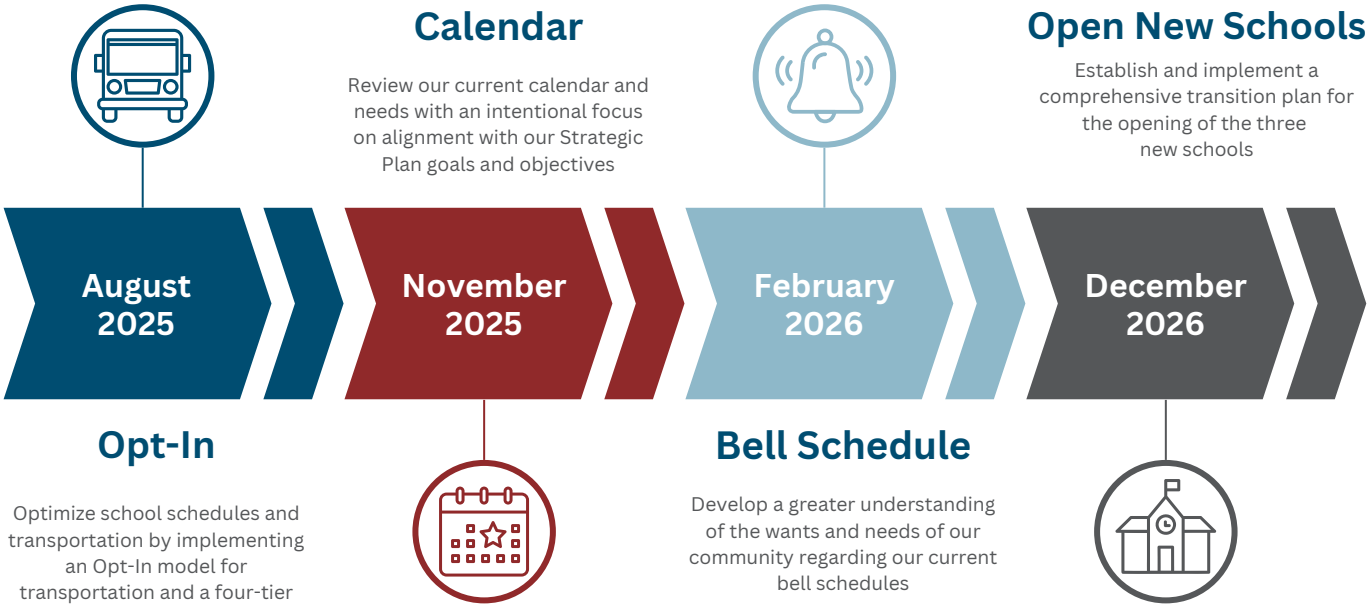
Aligning Resources to Instructional Goals

To create sustainable and equitable support for teaching and learning, we are reviewing current resource allocations across schools and developing an inventory management system for instructional materials. A budget development timeline has been aligned with strategic priorities, with an emphasis on differentiated, needs-based allocation. We are also creating a multi-year technology replacement cycle, finalizing a textbook adoption schedule, and implementing a resource allocation formula that supports equity and long-term planning.

These actions ensure that our instructional practices are grounded in research, our supports are responsive to student needs, and our resources are aligned with our goals laying the foundation for strong teaching and learning in every classroom.

GOAL 3

SAFE, ENGAGING, & WELCOMING SCHOOLS



We are working to improve the effectiveness of our operational systems - transportation, scheduling, communications, and school transitions - so they better support the needs of students, staff, and families.

Improving Transportation and Scheduling
Informed by feedback from the Transportation Advisory Committee and a recent external review, we are shifting to a four-tier transportation model and launching an opt-in system to increase efficiency and reliability. An efficiency audit of current bell schedules and routes is also underway, along with efforts to better understand community preferences. These efforts will inform future scheduling decisions that balance instructional needs with transportation capacity.

Reviewing the Academic Calendar
A calendar committee is being formed to evaluate our current academic calendar with a focus on alignment to strategic goals and community needs. This review will guide updates that better support student learning and family planning.

Enhancing Communications and Engagement
We are conducting a full communications audit to assess how we engage with families and staff. Based on the findings, we will implement clear customer service standards, provide targeted professional development, and design tailored communication strategies for different stakeholder groups to improve clarity, consistency, and connection.

Planning for New School Openings
To support the smooth opening of three new schools, we've established a division-level transition team. This team will collaborate with school leaders, families, and community members to ensure a positive, well-organized launch that reflects our commitment to thoughtful planning and student-centered support.

These operational improvements reflect our commitment to building responsive systems that enhance the daily experience of students, families, and staff, and position our division for future growth.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 3:
PROVIDE A SAFE, WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

GOAL 4

INVEST IN STAFF



We are refining how we work, support employees, and grow talent so every staff member can meaningfully contribute to student success.

Building Collaborative Structures
To strengthen communication and collaboration, we have launched a new Principal Leadership Team that meets twice monthly, established a clear meeting structure for senior leadership, and developed the initial framework for a Teacher Cabinet.

Balancing Workload and Resources
A dedicated workgroup is examining staff workload and resource use to identify opportunities to streamline responsibilities and reduce unnecessary burdens. This analysis will help us direct staff time and energy toward what matters most for students.

Strengthening Advisory Channels
Advisory structures have also been refined. We've clarified the communication and support roles for members of the Superintendent's Advisory Committees, which will strengthen the flow of information between schools, central office, and our community stakeholders.

Enhancing Human Resources Practices
In our Human Resources work, we've begun a full review of our recruitment, hiring, and onboarding practices. This includes launching enhanced recruitment strategies for hard-to-fill positions, examining how staff recognition aligns with strategic goals, and establishing a wellness committee to promote staff well-being. We are also developing a more thoughtful and impactful onboarding process to support every new employee's successful start in the division.

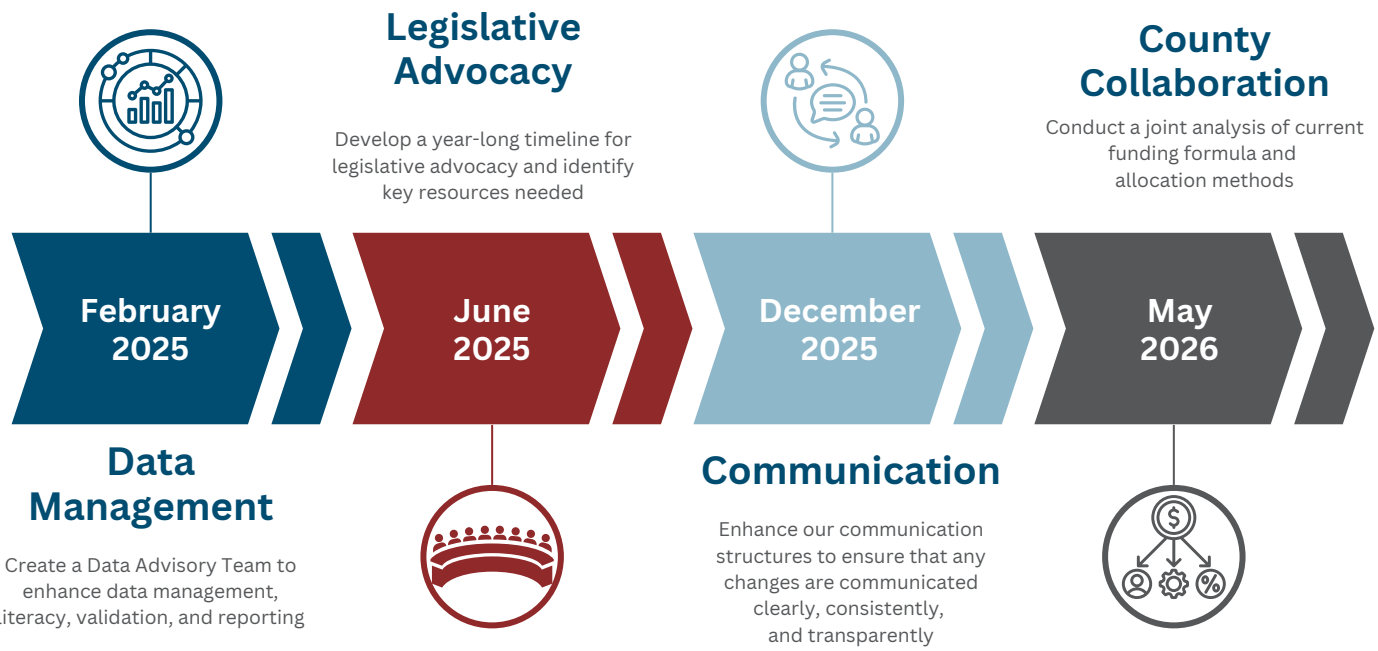
Aligning Professional Development
To ensure professional learning is responsive and relevant, we've conducted needs assessments for identified staff groups, including those serving students with disabilities and English learners. We are enhancing professional development to support inclusive practices, differentiation, language acquisition strategies, and customer service, all aligned to the evolving needs of our schools and communities.

Through these initiatives, we are building a workplace culture that values collaboration, promotes staff well-being, and supports professional excellence ensuring our people are equipped and empowered to help every student succeed.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 4:
SUPPORT AND INVEST IN ALL STAFF

GOAL 5

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY & FUNDING



We are working to ensure every resource is aligned to support student success, with a strong focus on transparency, advocacy, and collaboration.

Smart Resource Management and Strategic Alignment
A comprehensive assessment of our base budget and operational efficiency is underway to ensure resources are allocated effectively. This includes reviewing leadership learning needs, making targeted adjustments to key positions, and aligning staffing structures to support evolving priorities. A Data Advisory Team will help improve data quality and usage across the division.

Stronger Advocacy and Legislative Engagement
We've developed a timeline and tools for year-round legislative advocacy, analyzed funding comparisons with peer divisions, and identified key stakeholder relationships. At the state level, regular meetings with legislators and improved advocacy materials are strengthening our efforts. Locally, we've established a meeting structure with county leadership to align on enrollment trends, funding formulas, and budget advocacy.

Improved Communication and Governance Support
New communication protocols are helping ensure that changes are shared consistently and transparently. We're also improving School Board-Superintendent collaboration through clearer communication structures, streamlined agenda planning, and joint learning around effective governance.

Building Community Awareness and Support
To build public understanding of school finance, we are creating accessible funding explainer materials, improving regular budget updates, and enhancing collaboration with the Citizen's Budget and Capital Improvement advisory groups. Plans are also in development for a business partnership council to support long-term resource development and advocacy.

These efforts are strengthening our ability to make data-informed decisions, advocate effectively for funding, and ensure every dollar directly supports meaningful student outcomes.

Daniel W. Smith, Ed.D. Post-Entry Plan



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