STRATEGIC PLAN





CALCASIEU PARISH SCHOOL BOARD
CPSB
BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

CALCASIEU PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

The following strategic plan is the product of a comprehensive process of quantitative and qualitative research and discovery to unify all stakeholders of the Calcasieu Parish School Board and better position the parish's educators and students for a successful future. This strategic planning process included feedback from all of Calcasieu Parish School Board's stakeholder groups: students, parents, faculty and staff, School Board leadership, School Board members, and community stakeholders. This feedback was intentionally elicited and included in the finalized strategic plan to ensure the School Board's future direction is responsive and relevant to the needs of stakeholders to successfully position the School Board's efforts to provide an engaging and exceptional educational experience to every child in Calcasieu Parish.

This strategic plan sets the vision for Calcasieu Parish School Board for the next five years and provides the roadmap to guide the organization as it builds foundations for the future.

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LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Dear Calcasieu Parish School Board Community,

It is with deep pride and a profound sense of purpose that I share with you the strategic vision guiding the future of the Calcasieu Parish School Board. For more than 25 years, I've had the privilege of serving this district—as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, director, Chief Academic Officer, and now, Superintendent. Every step of that journey has deepened my belief in the incredible potential of our students, the strength of our educators, and the resilience of our community.

My wife, Amanda, and I have seen that potential firsthand through our son, Paxton, who is a recent CPSB graduate. Like many of you, I've experienced this district not only as an educator, but as a parent. That personal connection drives my commitment to every child, every family, and every school across Calcasieu Parish.

Our mission—building foundations for the future—guides everything we do. It's more than a mission statement, it's a promise. A promise that we will give every student a strong academic foundation, rooted in literacy, led by passionate teachers. A promise that we will create classrooms filled with opportunity, where curiosity is sparked and learning thrives.

This strategic plan is built around four key commitments:

- Prioritize student learning, development, and achievement
- Enhance existing and new resources
- Strengthen the teacher experience and pipeline
- Boost collaboration and engagement

These focus areas are not just goals. They are actionable steps that will shape the direction of our schools in the years ahead. They reflect our values, our mission, and our unwavering belief in the power of public education to transform lives.

Together, we are laying the groundwork for a stronger tomorrow for our students, our staff, and our entire community. Thank you for being part of this journey and for your continued trust and support.

Sincerely,

Jason VanMetre, Ed. D.
Superintendent
Calcasieu Parish School Board

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Calcasieu Parish School Board (CPSB) is one of the largest school districts in Louisiana, with more than 4,900 employees and over 2,600 teachers. CPSB connects over 28,000 students to innovative opportunities to foster academic excellence and expand personal and future professional horizons. From academics, athletics and gifted and special education courses, CPSB teachers and administrators work with families to live out the core mission of the district: to build foundations for the future.

Recent natural disasters and events (e.g., hurricanes, COVID-19 pandemic) created unprecedented stress and challenges that CPSB leadership, faculty and staff, and students learned to navigate daily. These events have underscored the need for a clear, cohesive strategic plan to empower all stakeholders (i.e., students, parents, faculty and staff, School Board leadership, School Board members, and community stakeholders) to work toward shared and consistent goals and priorities.

As a way to understand the current state of CPSB, a data request and review of relevant documents provided the initial context of CPSB's core mission, operations, and perceived challenges. Additionally, two surveys, one targeted toward CPSB's parents and another to CPSB employees, were fielded from February to March of 2022. Further, to fully understand the perspectives and needs of CPSB stakeholders, interviews were conducted with current CPSB members, senior-level CPSB staff members, current CPSB principals, and external stakeholders in Calcasieu Parish (e.g., community and business leaders, higher education leadership). The document review, surveys, and interview efforts helped inform the current state analysis, which included a breakdown of CPSB's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

The current state analysis was utilized when facilitating discussions with CPSB leadership. To better understand the vision of CPSB's leadership team, a CPSB leadership workshop was held in December of 2022. At the workshop, CPSB leadership received topline results from the surveys, summaries of the stakeholder interviews, and an overview of CPSB's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This background helped CPSB's leadership team identify priorities, goals, strategies, and tactics through a visioning exercise to inform the direction of the strategic planning process and resulting plan. Throughout the leadership workshop, understanding that education impacts life beyond the classroom, CPSB leadership looked to different styles of teaching and different content administered to provide the best opportunities for their learners. Additionally, concerns regarding the safety and security of the child's educational institution surfaced during workshop sessions, especially given recent events involving the use of threats and weapons at schools nationwide. Encapsulating both conversations resulted in the last topic, which included being more attentive to students' well-being and mental health, most notably because of the challenges the children in Calcasieu Parish have endured in recent years, both pandemic- and weather-event-related.

This strategic plan is a comprehensive and long-term plan that outlines the goals, objectives, and strategies for improving the quality of education and achieving desired outcomes for students in Calcasieu Parish. The plan provides a roadmap for CPSB to follow as it seeks to prioritize student learning, development, and achievement, strengthen the teacher experience and pipelines, enhance existing and new resources, and boost collaboration and engagement. By following the proposed plan, CPSB will position itself better as it continues building foundations for the future.

INTRODUCTION



The Calcasieu Parish School Board (CPSB) is one of the largest school districts in Louisiana, with more than 4,900 employees and over 2,600 teachers. CPSB connects over 28,000 students to innovative opportunities to foster academic excellence. Located in Southwest Louisiana, Calcasieu Parish includes the cities of DeQuincy, Lake Charles, Sulphur, and Westlake and the towns of Iowa and Vinton.[1] As of July 2021, the Parish had a population of approximately 205,000.[2] With Lake Charles as the Parish Seat, Calcasieu Parish has experienced both recent growth and challenges. The region's robust energy, gaming, and petrochemical industries boosted its economy, resulting in substantial economic and population growth and investment over the past decade. In 2020, the region was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and several weather events, which created challenges for both businesses and residents and resulted in outmigration.[3] These challenges impacted CPSB as its stakeholders—faculty and staff, students and parents, and community advocates—were adjusting to a changing workplace and lifestyle driven by pandemic and weather impacts.

Although 2020 and the following years proved challenging, CPSB and its stakeholders were resilient and looked to future opportunities to strengthen and grow the school district and its educational offerings. To address its stakeholders' needs and achieve its goals, CPSB engaged Emergent Method, a Louisiana-based management consulting firm, to develop a strategic plan by considering CPSB's current state and assessing future opportunities and challenges. To fully understand the current state, Emergent Method performed a review of requested documentation and data, facilitated in-person stakeholder interviews with current CPSB members, senior-level CPSB staff members, current CPSB principals, and external Calcasieu Parish stakeholders (e.g., community and business leaders, higher education leadership), and administered both parent and staff surveys. These efforts helped inform a current state analysis, which included CPSB's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. A CPSB leadership workshop was also held to gain insight from the district's educator leaders.

1 louisiana.gov/local-louisiana/calcasieu-parish
2 census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/calcasieuparishlouisiana,LA,US/PST045222
3 theadvocate.com/lake_charles/article_48b44814-fbae-11eb-a7db-ff33b2862fc7.html

At the CPSB leadership workshop, the leadership team received a project and process update, topline survey results, summaries of the stakeholder interviews, and an analysis of CPSB's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This context and background assisted leadership as they worked to identify priorities, goals, strategies, and tactics, which informed the direction of the strategic planning process and resulting plan. Throughout the workshop, conversations with varying viewpoints occurred, highlighting issues the district's leadership found important and topics they found should be elevated. Discussions surrounding the impacts of life beyond the classroom were held at length, including focused dialog on providing differentiated learning, content, and teaching opportunities to provide elevated, customized opportunities for learners. Additionally, the safety and security of the child's educational institution sessions, especially given recent events involving the use of threats and weapons at schools nationwide, surfaced throughout the workshop. Encapsulating both conversations resulted in the last topic, which included allocating more attention to students' well-being and mental health, most notably because of the challenges the children in Calcasieu Parish have endured in recent years, both pandemic and weather-event-related.

After the leadership workshop, an overview of the strategic planning process was provided to the CPSB members at the February 2023 CPSB retreat. Following the overview was an opportunity for CPSB members to ask questions about the strategic planning process and methodology.

In addition to the initial project efforts and resulting current state analysis, the discussions and output from the CPSB leadership workshop and CPSB retreat informed the following strategic plan. Thoughtful yet ambitious, the strategic plan was created to position CPSB to thrive in the future. The CPSB strategic plan that emerged is a detailed and extensive plan that delineates the aims, targets, and approaches for advancing educational quality and achieving optimal results for students in Calcasieu Parish. The plan furnishes CPSB with a blueprint to guide the upcoming five years as it endeavors to prioritize its student learning, development, and achievement, strengthen the teacher experience and pipelines, enhance existing and new resources, and boost collaboration and engagement. As Louisiana's fifth largest school district, CPSB understands its impact and looks to follow this plan as it continues its work building foundations for the future and transforming the lives of children and families across Calcasieu Parish.



CPSB AT A GLANCE



7TH LARGEST
district in Louisiana



1,094 SQ. MI
in Calcasieu Parish



4,900+
employees



2,600+
teachers



28,000+
students

2 K-12 schools

35 elementary schools

11 middle schools

11 high schools

1 academy of learning

2 career and technical facilities

4 alternative facilities



300+
bus routes



1+ MILLION
meals served annually

34 YEARS
of consecutive financial reporting excellence

$390+ MILLION
budget

$45+ MILLION
in federal grants

SOURCE: CPSB.ORG/DOMAIN/21

Building Foundations for the Future

VISION

VALUES

- Alignment
- Ownership
- Streaming
- Creativity
- Technology
- Critical Thinking
- Work Ethic
- Innovation

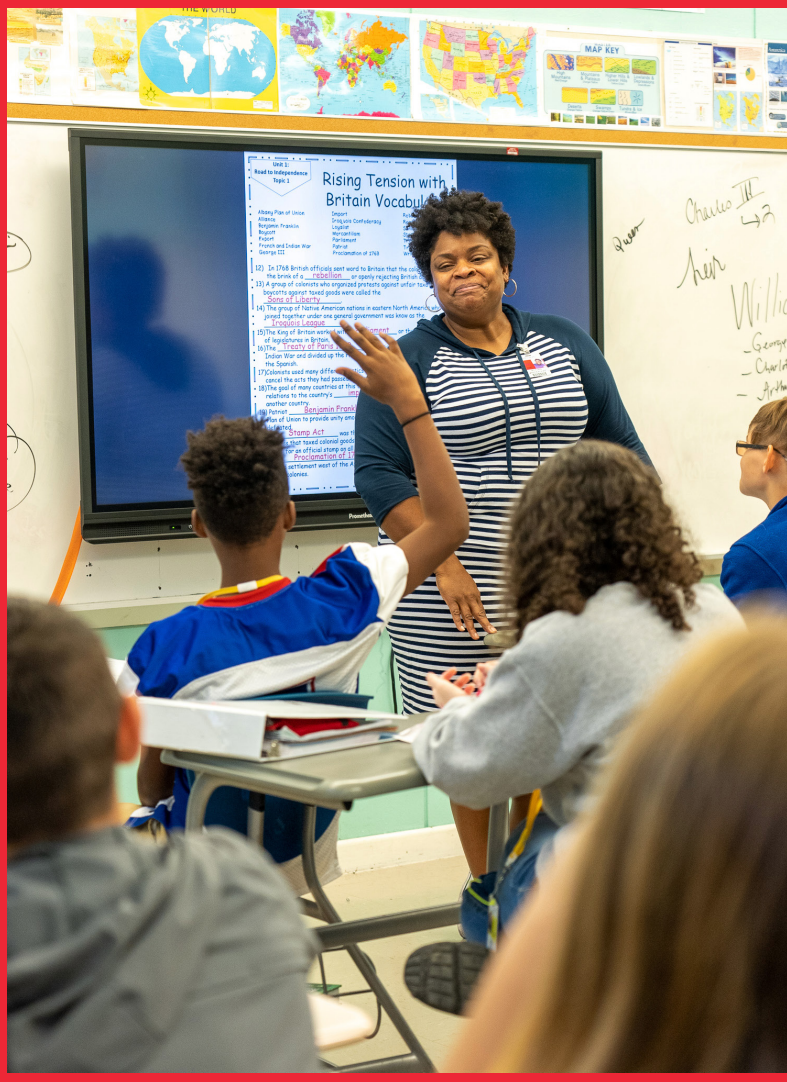
POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Rocks and Ripples
- Choose Positive
- Safety and Security
- Customer Service
- Be Intentional
- Win the Week

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS



To ensure that CPSB is positioned for future success and that it's relevant, trusted, and valued by the communities it serves, CPSB leadership was provided feedback from stakeholder interviews and fielded surveys. Based on this feedback, the following four strategic focus areas' short- and long-term initiatives were identified as actions to address to position CPSB for a successful future.



01

Prioritize student learning, development, and achievement

02

Strengthen teacher experience and pipelines

03

Enhance existing and new resources

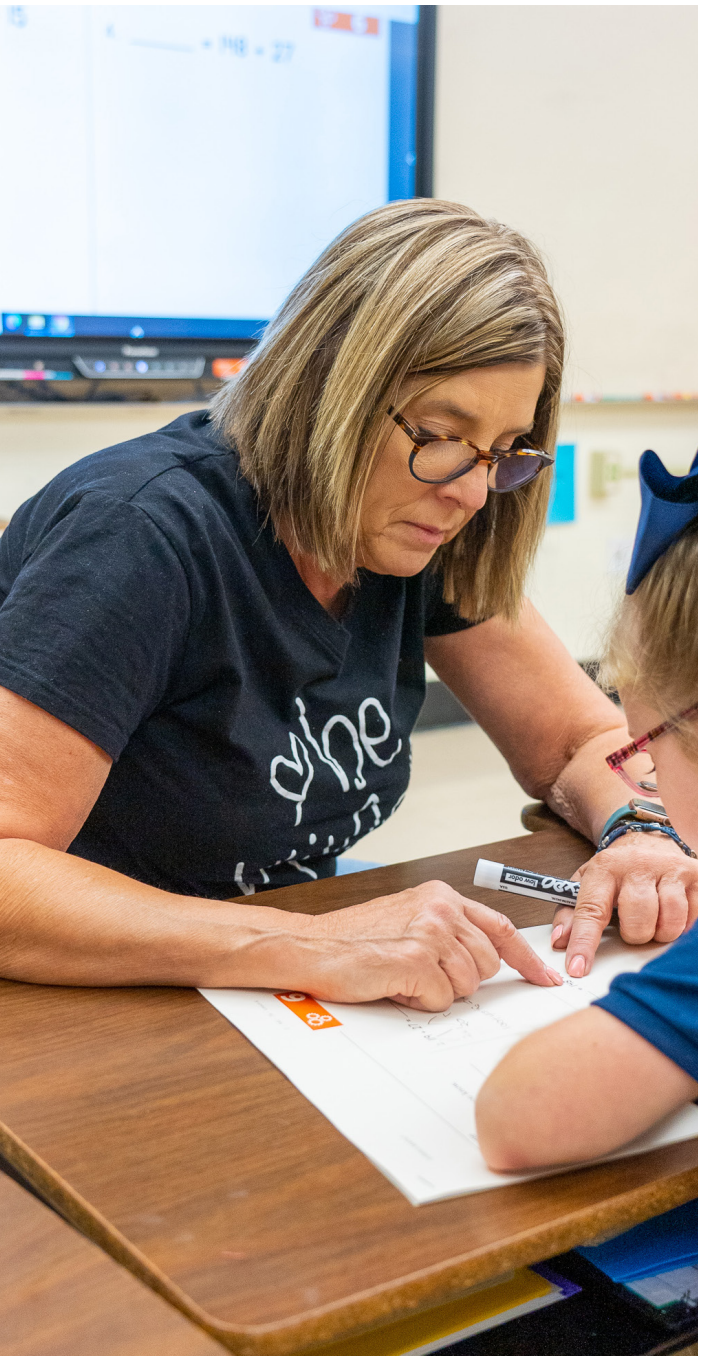
04

Boost collaboration and engagement



1.0

Prioritize student learning, development, and achievement



Providing a solid, equitable education is the responsibility of the community's educators and is critical for sustained economic growth and development. On a broader scale, a well-educated workforce is essential for innovation, productivity, and competitiveness in the global economy. To educate those in their formidable years, CPSB's focus on teaching, curriculum enhancements, and outcomes must prioritize preparing students for life. Although not a component of the academic curriculum, additional attention to students' and staff's well-being and mental health, especially given the challenges (i.e., weather events, pandemic) that Calcasieu Parish has endured in recent years, continues to be increasingly important and should be prioritized for stakeholders. By strategically developing a curriculum that will benefit students holistically and offering wellness and mental health resources, CPSB's students will be better prepared to tackle life's challenges.

As CPSB seeks to improve student outcomes, CPSB will focus on the following:

- **Preparing Calcasieu Parish children as lifelong learners**
- **Tailoring experiences for each student's educational journey**
- **Creating an inclusive classroom experience**
- **Promoting the well-being of students and staff**

Prioritize student learning, development, and achievement

1.0

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

1.1. Preparing Calcasieu Parish children as lifelong learners

- 1.1.1. Institute a coordinated system of programs and supports for CPSB's early childhood education program that has precise alignment with the district's vision and values and that is equitably accessible
- 1.1.2. Introduce enhanced high-quality curriculum to support rigorous student learning that is mastery-based and relevant
- 1.1.3. Implement an annual curriculum evaluation review process cycle for all subject areas
- 1.1.4. Create study programs and diverse pathways that mirror after-graduation experiences (e.g., vocational training, four-year university) and emphasize work ethic and professionalism
- 1.1.5. Cultivate and grow students who are lifelong learners ready for educational and career options after high school

1.2. Tailoring experiences for each student's educational journey

- 1.2.1. Ensure students are pursuing areas of interest and learning techniques to position them better to thrive (e.g., project-based learning)
- 1.2.2. Engage with both students and parents in dialogue around what is going well and areas for improvement
- 1.2.3. Diversify educational options and specialty programs to meet students' interests, specifically through early college access(e.g., dual enrollment, AP and IB courses), work-based learning, and apprenticeship programs
- 1.2.4. Pursue new revenue sources to support current options and programs and implement new initiatives to enhance student success

1.3. Creating an inclusive classroom experience

- 1.3.1. Emulate best practices for cultivating environments that support diverse students
- 1.3.2. Intentionally foster collaboration and education about the needs of a varied student population promoting mutual respect and understanding
- 1.3.3. Provide differentiated support (e.g., advising, mentoring) to meet the needs of all students

1.4. Promoting the well-being of students and staff

- 1.4.1. Field a survey to assess student and staff well-being and mental health needs
- 1.4.2. Develop uniform processes across the district to address responses to and programs around mental health and wellness
- 1.4.3. Partner with wellness and behavioral health organizations to provide social-emotional wellness resources for students and staff
- 1.4.4. Expand access to social-emotional resources for students and staff by offering sustainable models for the direct delivery of mental health services
- 1.4.5. Recommend and implement safety standards and systems to promote safe school environments

2.0

Strengthen teacher experience and pipelines



School districts across the United States face challenges in attracting and retaining a diverse, qualified workforce. Calcasieu Parish is no exception. Natural disasters and the pandemic exacerbated an already stressed system and pipeline of teachers in the workforce. These challenges reveal the importance of strengthening the school district's existing teacher and future teacher pipeline so that it can continue to operate and educate, as strong teachers are critical to the success of CPSB's students. In addition to staffing and recruiting considerations, teacher compensation and the substitute teacher pipeline remain top areas to address. Teachers and staff must be compensated adequately, recognized appropriately, and provided opportunities to train and develop. Lastly, CPSB must cultivate and grow leadership from the talent within the system by providing enhanced opportunities for teachers and staff to grow into transformational leaders.

As CPSB seeks to strengthen the educator experience and pipeline, CPSB will focus on the following:

- **Building a solid teacher pipeline**
- **Enhancing educator pay**
- **Creating a best-in-class workplace**
- **Empowering educators**

Strengthen teacher experience and pipelines

2.0

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

2.1. Building a solid teacher pipeline

- 2.1.1. Build an electronic database with former, current, and future teachers and support staff at CPSB
- 2.1.2. Develop and implement a thorough marketing and outreach campaign to hire more high-quality and diverse faculty and staff
- 2.1.3. Engage regional community and four-year colleges to enhance recruiting efforts and program offerings that align with CPBS's identified priorities
- 2.1.4. Consider recruiting and/or retention bonuses for areas with the most extensive staffing needs

2.2. Enhancing educator pay

- 2.2.1. Perform audit of current faculty and staff pay
- 2.2.2. Benchmark audit results against national data, focusing on similar communities and geographies
- 2.2.3. Engage with faculty and staff on compensation and benefit needs to understand opportunities and bridge the identified gaps
- 2.2.4. Calibrate compensation and benefits to align with job descriptions and leadership expectations

2.3. Creating a best-in-class workplace

- 2.3.1. Canvass similar localities (e.g., similar populations, demographics, and/or geographies) and seek to learn the best practices as an employer (e.g., perks, work-life balance, training, and development)
- 2.3.2. Identify short-, medium-, and long-term personnel initiatives for CPSB
- 2.3.3. Create a roadmap and communications plan for the implementation of opportunities to enhance CPSB's work culture and environment

2.4. Empowering educators

- 2.4.1. Kick off an educator listening tour to understand professional development requests and needs
- 2.4.2. Create a calendar of professional development and training offerings based on feedback from education stakeholders
- 2.4.3. Recommend professional development opportunities for teacher, staff, and administrator career pathways
- 2.4.4. Institute recognition and incentive programs for meeting determined development milestones and outcomes

3.0

Enhance existing and new resources



CPSB's infrastructure, including its substantial assets impacted by devastating weather events, can be enhanced through focused efforts to maintain, repair, and modernize facilities. While warranted, the infrastructure repairs, maintenance, and technology upgrades must be addressed strategically so that funds are spent appropriately and align with the school district's short- and long-term goals. CPSB recognizes the importance of maintaining safe and functional learning environments for students and staff. Facility repairs and upgrades are critical to achieving this goal, as school facilities should be maintained to meet the highest standards of safety, accessibility, and sustainability.

CPSB must view its infrastructure repairs and enhancements as a priority to stay relevant and competitive. Stakeholders acknowledged that many of CPSB's peers and competitors have infrastructure-allocated financial support or better facilities; therefore, CPSB will need to consider these capital expenditures to safely provide education to its students and be strategically sustainable.

As CPSB seeks to enhance existing and new resources, CPSB will focus on the following:

- **Modernizing infrastructure and strategically addressing repairs and maintenance needs**
- **Continuing to operate with a focus on quality and safety**
- **Updating technologies across CPSB**

Enhance existing and new resources

3.0

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

3.1. Modernizing infrastructure and strategically addressing repairs and maintenance needs

- 3.1.1. Perform audit of current infrastructure and related needs
- 3.1.2. Create a prioritization assessment to determine which physical infrastructure needs should be attended to in the short-, medium-, and long-term
- 3.1.3. Leverage existing resources to ensure repairs and upgrades are completed efficiently and with minimal disruption to student learning
- 3.1.4. Establish regular monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure that repairs are completed to a high standard and that facilities continue to meet the needs of CPSB's students and staff
- 3.1.5. Share facility improvements around the district via a public-facing website

3.2. Continuing to operate with focus on quality and safety

- 3.2.1. Create a quality and safety project team to review all CPSB assets with a focus on quality, safety, and excellence
- 3.2.2. Construct a prioritization assessment to determine which quality and safety needs should be attended to in the short-, medium-, and long-term
- 3.2.3. Implement a standing disaster response project team to assist in pre- and post-disaster planning and remediation
- 3.2.4. Update Emergency Operations and Business Continuity plans at the school and district levels
- 3.2.5. Standardize emergency preparedness, threat/risk assessment protocols, and crisis response training for all school sites, populating the information into a central hub viewable by school and district personnel

3.3. Updating technologies across CPSB

- 3.3.1. Perform audit of all technology being utilized across CPSB
- 3.3.2. Create a budget to determine costs relative to the need for updating and/or upgrading technological options
- 3.3.3. Solidify a prioritization assessment to determine which technology needs should be attended to in short-, medium-, and long-term
- 3.3.4. Revitalize learning spaces by providing technology upgrades that align with curriculum and subject areas

4.0

Boost collaboration and engagement



As Louisiana's fifth-largest school district, CPSB has an opportunity to do transformational work. By strengthening its internal and external communication and collaboration, CPSB can increase its role as a regional partner with its stakeholders. CPSB believes that when schools and communities work together, a shared sense of responsibility for student success elicits a stronger connection between schools, families, and community organizations and stakeholders. Initiatives to create an additional focus on school activities and leadership within the schools would support this strategic focus area. By enhancing collaboration with families and community partners, CPSB can leverage additional resources, funding, volunteers, and expertise to improve the school and student experience.

As CPSB seeks to boost collaboration and engagement, CPSB will focus on the following:

- **Strengthening communication for CPSB's internal and external stakeholders**
- **Collaborating and partnering with stakeholders around Southwest Louisiana, along the Gulf Coast, and nationally**
- **Increasing leadership engagement**

Boost collaboration and engagement

4.0

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

4.1. Strengthening communication for CPSB's internal and external stakeholders

- 4.1.1. Determine platforms, content, and cadence to engage with students regularly
- 4.1.2. Identify the needs of parents and the best way to engage and educate them on CPSB news and needs
- 4.1.3. Facilitate conversations with faculty and staff to understand communication needs and mediums better
- 4.1.4. Work with community and state partners to engage, educate, and advocate for CPSB, the students, and parents it serves
- 4.1.5. Enhance resources and learning opportunities available to families

4.2. Collaborating and partnering with stakeholders around southwest Louisiana, along the Gulf Coast, and nationally

- 4.2.1. Perform a partner audit to identify existing partners and their respective industries and markets
- 4.2.2. Utilize audit data to target affiliated partners for support and engagement
- 4.2.3. Identify and collaborate with like-minded local, regional, and national partners to further the message of CPSB's vision and values
- 4.2.4. Designate CPSB representatives to attend local, regional, and national conferences to both learn best practices and advocate for the district
- 4.2.5. Empower community members and other stakeholders to become advocates to support the success of CPSB's students, families, and schools

4.3. Increasing leadership engagement

- 4.3.1. Engage with faculty and staff to learn desired leadership objectives and goals
- 4.3.2. Determine and implement activities to motivate leadership to work beyond their established teams and reporting silos
- 4.3.3. Institute periodic forums for leadership to engage with students, families, teachers, staff, and community partners on an ongoing basis to better understand the perspectives and experiences of those groups
- 4.3.4. Enhance engagement opportunities between CPSB students, teachers, staff, and community partners to maximize participation and awareness and elevate all voices

CONCLUSION

CPSB and its stakeholders are at a pivotal moment. After weathering hurricanes, floods, and the pandemic, the parish's residents have proved resilient. Although the region has experienced these hardships and the resulting outmigration, the people in Southwest Louisiana look toward the future for the next chapter—and CPSB has and will continue to play a substantial role in that story. By investing in and providing a top-tier educational experience to every child in Calcasieu Parish, CPSB can and will transform lives and the prosperity of Calcasieu Parish.

This CPSB strategic plan is a comprehensive and long-term plan that outlines the goals, objectives, and strategies for improving the quality of education and achieving desired outcomes for students in Calcasieu Parish. The plan provides a roadmap for CPSB to follow over the next five years as it seeks to prioritize its student learning, development, and achievement, strengthen the teacher experience and pipelines, enhance existing and new resources, and boost collaboration and engagement. By following the plan, CPSB will better position itself as it continues its transformational work building foundations for the future—in Calcasieu Parish and beyond.



CALCASIEU PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

3310 BROAD STREET
LAKE CHARLES, LA 70615

P: (337) 217-4000 / F: (337) 217-4001

WWW.CPSB.ORG