VOLUSIA COUNTY SCHOOLS

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2027

HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTION

High-Quality Staff

Safe and Supportive Environment

Resources and Operational Processes

Communication and Community Engagement

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GOAL
ALL students will engage in high levels of learning EVERY day.

GUARDRAILS

1. Recruit, support, develop and retain high-quality staff.
2. Provide conditions that enhance student learning.
3. Improve operational efficiency and maximize resources to support student learning.
4. Ensure high-quality community engagement with all stakeholders.

Vision Statement
Create life-long learners prepared for an ever-changing global society.

Mission Statement
Volusia County Schools will ignite a passion for learning in all students to be productive citizens.

Description: Provide every student with challenging curriculum and high-quality instruction that is consistent throughout the district.

Metrics of Success:
1. Increase our district grade from 57% (B) to 68% (A) by 2027.
2. Increase our graduation rate from 88.9% to 95% by 2027.
3. Increase our high school college and career acceleration rate from 69% to 75% by 2027.
4. Increase the district average least restrictive environment (LRE) percentage from 80% to 83% by 2027.

Priority Strategies:
A. Deliver and actively engage ALL students with standards-aligned curriculum.
B. Provide ALL students with challenging learning experiences through differentiated instruction.
C. Engage ALL students in systematic, ongoing progress monitoring to inform decision-making.

ALL students will engage in high levels of learning every day.

Priority Strategy A:

Deliver and actively engage ALL students with standards-aligned curriculum.

Description:

Ensure ALL students are provided a high-quality learning experience through standards-aligned curriculum every day, in all content areas.

Activities:

1. Plan and provide aligned resources to increase student achievement.
2. Implement effective professional learning to support standards-aligned curriculum.
3. Monitor the implementation of the curriculum to ensure students have access to high-quality instruction.
4. Develop progress monitoring tools to track students' academic needs.
5. Provide additional curriculum resources based on the tiered needs of students.

Rationale:

Ensure equitable access to a high quality education, promote consistency and fairness and prepare students for success in higher education and the work force. We aim to foster accountability, encourage educational improvement and enhance our students' competitiveness by maintaining educational excellence.

Priority Strategy B:

Provide ALL students with challenging learning experiences through differentiated instruction.

Description:

Ensure ALL students are provided a high-quality learning experience through differentiated instruction every day, in all content areas.

Activities:

1. Plan and deliver high-quality instruction to increase student achievement in their least restrictive environment.
2. Implement effective professional learning to support high-impact instructional strategies.
3. Monitor instruction and provide feedback to improve teaching practices and increase student achievement.
4. Utilize progress monitoring to inform instructional adjustments and to determine individualized student supports.
5. Implement tiered instructional supports based on students' needs.

Rationale:

Differentiation promotes inclusivity, addresses unique learning challenges, and enhances student engagement thereby maximizing individual growth and achievement.

Priority Strategy C:

Engage ALL students in systematic, ongoing progress monitoring to inform decision-making.

Description:

Ensure students' learning outcomes are achieved through consistent, ongoing progress monitoring in all content areas.

Activities:

1. Plan progress monitoring structures for student learning of benchmark(s) while maximizing instructional time.
2. Implement effective professional learning to support consistent, ongoing progress monitoring.
3. Analyze data and provide feedback to increase student achievement.
4. Utilize progress monitoring data to determine student needs for learning (intervention, remediation, enrichment).

Rationale:

Consistent progress monitoring is crucial for achieving students' learning outcomes as it enables early intervention, personalized instruction, decision-driven data collection, motivation, alignment with standards, and engagement with all stakeholders.

Description: Ensure that systems are designed and implemented to recruit, support, develop and retain high-quality staff.

Metrics of Success:

1. Reduce the number of instructional vacancies from 6% in 2023 by 1% each year (2024-2027).
2. Increase the percentage of employees retained annually from 80% in 2023 to 90% in 2027.
3. Increase the percentage of new employees reporting satisfaction in the support system provided by Human Resources from 80% in 2023 to 90% in 2027.

Priority Strategies:

A. Design a cohesive recruitment, support and retention system that includes innovative, collaborative strategies and partnerships.
B. Develop instructional leadership and capacity to support current and aspiring leaders to create a strong talent pipeline.
C. Focus on providing actionable, meaningful feedback that supports employee engagement, retention and performance.

Priority Strategy A:

Design a cohesive recruitment, support, and retention system that includes innovative, collaborative strategies and partnerships.

Description:

Increase inter- and intra-district partnerships for more cohesive recruitment, support, and retention systems that create a marketable brand for recruitment supported by a strong retention narrative.

Activities:

1. Expand and diversify marketing outreaches, partnerships, and campaigns for employment opportunities within Volusia County Schools.
2. Revise the new teacher program to onboard and support new hires with job-embedded training and mentoring.
3. Assist teacher candidates through the teacher certification process.
4. Implement proactive retention strategies and systems with school and teacher leaders.

Rationale:

By increasing collaborative partnerships to design multi-pronged systems for recruiting and supporting employees, we will increase and sustain our candidate pool to staff the needs of the district.

Priority Strategy B:

Develop instructional leadership knowledge and capacity to support current and aspiring leaders to create a strong talent pipeline.

Description:

Volusia County Schools' leadership development programs will produce instructional leaders who are prepared to implement the district's vision and will support development of a strong talent pipeline for future generations of leaders.

Activities:

1. Realign state approved Level II leadership program (which results in school principal certification) to align with the new leadership standards, Florida Educational Leadership Standards (FELS).
2. Strengthen instructional and operational knowledge and capacity in newly assigned, current and aspiring leaders.
3. Develop and foster relationships with colleges, universities, and professional organizations to support leadership recruitment and development.

Rationale:

Developing current and aspiring leaders will lead to producing high-quality staff and ensure individuals are prepared to lead and support high-quality instruction in a safe and orderly environment. Overall, this will impact the efficacy of talent management within the district.

Priority Strategy C:

Focus on providing actionable meaningful feedback that supports employee engagement, retention and performance.

Description:

Strengthen the capacity of all stakeholders to give and receive actionable, meaningful feedback supporting employee engagement and retention.

Activities:

1. Facilitate collaborative work of the steering committees that is responsive to stakeholder feedback.
2. Strengthen professional learning provided to all stakeholders focused on actionable and timely feedback in the evaluation process.
3. Monitor protocols and evaluation data to ensure evaluators use frequent and meaningful feedback.

Rationale:

Through quality feedback, we will develop high-quality staff. Focusing on meaningful and actionable feedback will lead to increased employee performance. Overall, this will strengthen relationships between staff and supervisors, creating safe and supportive environments that will support retention.

Guardrail 2. Provide conditions that enhance student learning.

Description: Provide students a safe, healthy, and supportive environment every day.

Metrics of Success:

1. Increase the number of overall Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) implementation scores in all schools to 80% or higher in 2027 from 68% in 2023.
2. Increase the number of stakeholders reporting feeling safe on the School Climate Survey by 5% annually.
3. Increase the number of staff trained in Youth Mental Health Awareness, adhering to state guidelines and best practices from 79% in 2023 to 90% in 2027.

Priority Strategies:

A. Provide support to school administrators and teachers with proactive approaches for behavior management strategies.
B. Provide support to school administrators and teachers with strategies to enhance and promote a positive school culture.
C. Enhance support around school safety.
D. Provide all staff with education about signs of mental health concerns and how to support students through early intervention strategies.
E. Provide support to school-based teams to improve student behavior and culture on school campuses.

Priority Strategy A:

Provide support to school administrators and teachers with proactive approaches for behavior management.

Description:

Provide professional learning opportunities to administrators and teachers on behavior management strategies.

Activities:

1. Provide de-escalation training.
2. Provide classroom management training.
3. Provide targeted support for schools with low incidence programs.
4. Partner with behavior consultants to train and implement system-wide behavior management strategies embedded within the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).
5. Provide support for all schools regarding discipline systems and structures.

Rationale:

To ensure high levels of learning for all students, classroom environments must be orderly and safe. For this to occur, teachers and staff must receive professional learning and coaching in behavior management strategies.

Priority Strategy B:

Provide support to school administrators and teachers with strategies to enhance and promote a positive school culture.

Description:

Provide professional learning to school administrators and teachers on PBIS and other initiatives and programs that promote a feeling of student and staff belonging.

Activities:

1. Deliver PBIS Tier 1 training to all of Volusia County Schools' schools with follow-up coaching and support to encourage implementation fidelity. Deliver PBIS Tier 2 and Tier 3 training to PBIS schools as they accomplish an implementation score of 80% or higher.
2. Monitor school-based implementation of Schools of Character initiative.
3. Provide resources for school-based administrators on school-based mentoring programs.

Rationale:

A positive school culture will promote higher levels of student and staff attendance and engagement, leading to higher levels of learning.

Priority Strategy C:

Enhance support around school safety and security.

Description:

VCS is committed to reaching students and staff with the message that violence, harassment and intolerance are unacceptable in the school environment, and involving students, staff, parents and interested community members in learning about violence and how to prevent it. This strategy focuses on encouraging students to take the initiative. Students are essential to maintaining safety in a school, as they'll often see or hear things that no faculty member will have the chance to. They may see and know what faculty members do not and may alert appropriate staff members to potential threats.

Activities:

1. Create a "see something, say something" culture.
2. Assess and monitor district safety practices, create rules and enforce rules through leadership walks by principals.
3. Promote training and information sharing opportunities.

Rationale:

Safety and security on school campuses is everyone's responsibility. By creating a safe space for reporting, students will be able to report safety and security concerns on campuses, which will allow school personnel to mitigate discipline incidents and maintain a safe environment.

Priority Strategy D:

Provide all staff with education about signs of mental health concerns and how to support students through early intervention strategies.

Description:

Introduce staff to unique risk factors, warning signs and approaches to support students' mental health.

Activities:

1. Provide on-going training opportunities for all staff, including charter schools.
2. Ensure additional learning opportunities are available for staff to attend and obtain resources.

Rationale:

To ensure high levels of support for all students, the school climate must foster a feeling of safety and understanding. For this to occur, teachers and staff must receive professional learning on understanding signs and symptoms of mental health and positive support strategies.

Priority Strategy E:

Provide support to school-based teams to improve student behavior and culture on school campuses.

Description:

The Student Services team will provide support to administrators on campuses, to ensure safe operations.

Activities:

1. Conduct routine site visits on school campuses.
2. Review school supervision plans for effectiveness.
3. Coach administrators and administrative teachers on assignment (TOAs) on active supervision and discipline best practices.

Rationale:

To ensure high levels of learning for all students, school environments must be orderly and safe for all stakeholders. For this to occur, administrators and security team members must be aware of vulnerabilities and ways to mitigate incidents.

3. Improve operational efficiency and maximize resources to support student learning.

Description: Responsibly prioritize, allocate, and account for the district's financial resources to strategically provision, maintain, and replace physical and technical resources to improve student learning outcomes.

Metrics of Success:

1. Increase key success indicators year-over-year on the annual Staff and Student Technology Use Surveys.
2. Identify the critical operational needs to measure efficiency and achieve at least 80% of the identified efficiency benchmarks by 2027.
3. Maintain a minimum of 5% unrestricted fund balance to revenue.
4. Respond to emergency, safety and routine work orders within one hour, five days and 15 days, respectively.
5. Increase breakfast and lunch participation at School Way Café from 28.40% and 59.03% in 2023 to 31.4% and 61.03%, respectively, in 2027.

Priority Strategies:

A. Enable and improve the educational experiences of students, families and staff with secure and reliable network infrastructure, timely and effective technical support, efficient and user-friendly systems and aligned and impactful educational technologies.
B. Increase operational efficiency across all departments within the Operations Division.
C. Analyze and reallocate revenue and expenditures in alignment with strategic priorities.

3. Improve operational efficiency and maximize resources to support student learning.

Priority Strategy A:

Enable and improve the educational experiences of students, families and staff with secure and reliable network infrastructure, timely and effective technical support, efficient and user-friendly systems and aligned and impactful educational technologies.

Description:

To implement this strategy, the four Instructional Technology Services (ITS) Division's departments of Infrastructure, Client Services, Software and Systems and Educational Technology will each achieve an efficiency benchmark as a key component of this overall strategy.

Activities:

1. Modernize equipment and increase the security and reliability throughout district networks. (ITS Division's Infrastructure Department)
2. Improve technical support for staff and students. (ITS Division's Client Services Department)
3. Design and organize processes to improve the implementation, administration and iterative refinement of software and systems. (ITS Division's Software and Systems Department)
4. Increase the amount of reported use of higher level (analysis, synthesis, creative) pedagogical strategies (coding, data analysis, multi-media production, simulations, etc.) used with technology by 10% over 2022-23 baseline results. (ITS Division's Educational Technology Department)

Rationale:

As a universal K-12 technology ecosystem, there is an urgent need to leverage the full potential of educational technology in order for students to engage in high-levels of learning every day.

Priority Strategy B:

Increase operational efficiency across all departments within the Operations Division.

Description:

Maximize the district's use of available resources to support student learning, with streamlining across departments (Transportation, Maintenance, School Way Café and Planning and Construction) by using the benchmarks to provide data-driven decisions.

Activities:

1. Decrease construction cost by designing flexible buildings, increase design review time and explore more economical materials.
2. Rezone to make the Level of Service (LOS) more equitable across the seven planning areas. (Planning and Construction)
3. Increase School Way Café student meal participation for breakfast and lunch. (School Way Café)
4. Improve morning and afternoon on-time arrivals. (Transportation)
5. Improve response times to work orders. (Maintenance)

Rationale:

By maximizing the district's use of all available resources, the district provides support to the student learning environment and their educational experience.

Guardrail

3. Improve operational efficiency and maximize resources to support student learning.

Priority Strategy C:

Promote fiscal responsibility by implementing comprehensive financial management practices.

Description:

These strategies establish a solid financial base through comprehensive management practices and insightful audit analysis. Actively seeking external funding diversifies revenue, ensuring stability. Meticulous procurement and cost-effective solutions optimize expenses, curbing waste. Strategic staffing, technology utilization, and community collaboration further enhance fiscal responsibility.

Activities:

1. Develop and implement robust financial management processes, including budgeting, expense tracking, and financial reporting, to ensure transparency, accountability, and responsible resource allocation.
2. Perform regular audits to assess financial practices, identify areas of improvement, and ensure compliance with financial regulations.
3. Actively search for grants, funding, and partnerships with external organizations to supplement the district's financial resources. This includes exploring federal and state grants, corporate sponsorships, and community-based funding initiatives that align with the district's goals and objectives.
4. Utilize technology to automate administrative processes, reduce paperwork, and streamline operations. This includes implementing digital systems for payroll, purchasing, and financial management to minimize manual tasks and increase efficiency.
5. Procurement to increase efficiency and warehouse to increase revenue through maximizing residual market values of surplus assets.

Rationale:

This ensures responsible resource allocation, optimizes financial operations and promotes long-term financial sustainability to benefit our students.

Description: Ensure consistent, clear communication internally to staff and externally to community members to build reciprocal relationships.

Metrics of Success:

1. Increase the number of active district Partners in Education (PIE), who attend a district event, donate to the district, or support a district program at least once a year, from 127 in 2024 to 150 in 2027.
2. Increase the percentage of active volunteers, who volunteer at least once a year, by 5 percentage points a year from 2024 to 2027. Baseline data will be collected in the 2023-2024 school year.
3. Improve external stakeholder perception of family and community members by five percentage points from 2024 to 2027. Baseline data will be collected in the 2023-2024 school year.
4. Increase internal perception based on the percentage of employees that feel the district communicates quickly, clearly, and accurately by five percentage points by 2027. Baseline data will be collected in the 2023-2024 school year.

Priority Strategies:

A. Build mutually beneficial and engaging partnerships with the broader community to increase the number of active partners, volunteers and mentors.
B. Communicate openly and effectively with external community stakeholders and families to promote greater engagement within Volusia County Schools.
C. Communicate information quickly, clearly, and accurately to all internal staff members and stakeholders across the district.

Priority Strategy A:

Build mutually beneficial and engaging partnerships with the broader community to increase the number of active partners, volunteers, and mentors.

Description:

Active collaboration with business and community organizations will provide resources and opportunities that enhance the educational experiences of students and staff in Volusia County Schools. These relationships will result in unique learning opportunities to maximize student achievement and create positive experiences for all stakeholders.

Activities:

1. Build mutually beneficial and engaging partnerships.
2. Increase the number of active volunteers.
3. Revise and rebuild the school-based mentor program to improve mentor recruitment and retention.

Rationale:

By strengthening partnerships with the community, we will improve school culture and create learning experiences for students. Engaging the community will bring more people into the schools to build broad support for the public school system, while also having a positive economic impact.

Priority Strategy B:

Communicate openly and effectively with external community stakeholders and families to promote greater engagement within Volusia County Schools.

Description:

External communication can be strengthened by establishing a culture of open communication that is consistent, concise, and easily understandable. This will result in all stakeholders receiving important information that directly impacts them. Improving interactions between the public and staff will positively impact how visitors view our schools and the entire district. Strengthening our brand identity will provide consistency and brand recognition that are in alignment with and project the district's values, culture and vision.

Activities:

1. Engage external stakeholders with information that is geared towards meeting their needs.
2. Strengthen the district's brand identity.
3. Promote greater external stakeholder engagement through target website platforms.

Rationale:

Genuine and direct communication with external stakeholders will build and maintain a relationship to enhance public understanding and trust, promote effective community relations, and encourage involvement and support for district decisions and activities.

Priority Strategy C:

Communicate information quickly, clearly, and accurately to all internal staff members and stakeholders across the district.

Description:

Internal communication is critical to actively engage employees, improve retention, and increase performance. Developing protocols and processes for staff communications will establish expectations and create consistency when communicating across departments and from the district staff to make sure employees are receiving information in a regular and consistent manner. This will also create opportunities for employees to share feedback and create a sense of belonging.

Activities:

1. Establish a clear and effective internal communications plan.
2. Build relationships across departments.
3. Understand the scope of communications across the school district.
4. Provide communications best practices for internal communication.

Rationale:

By developing protocols and processes for internal communication, we will create an environment with well-informed employees who support student success and understand and contribute to district initiatives. Intentional communication will improve morale by encouraging employees to become involved in district decisions and activities while eliminating possible confusion and mixed messages. Collaboration between departments will create synergy, boost loyalty, and strengthen connections between employees by uniting them in a common goal.