

WATERLOO SCHOOLS

WATERLOO SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2026 School Year

DR. JARED SMITH

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



It is with great enthusiasm that I present the Waterloo Community School District's Strategic Plan, a roadmap that reflects our collective commitment to empowering every student to succeed. This plan outlines our vision, mission, goals, and values, serving as the foundation for our decisions and actions.

Grounded in collaboration and inspired by the aspirations of our staff, families, students and community members, this plan defines our shared path toward academic excellence, equity, and innovation.

Thank you for joining us in this important journey. Together, we will continue to build a bright future for our students and community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jared Smith

ASTOR WILLIAMS

SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT



The Waterloo Community School District (WCSD) strategic plan focuses on enhancing attendance, building a positive and inclusive school culture, and driving academic achievement.

We are committed to creating an educational experience where every student and staff member feels valued and empowered to achieve their full potential. This is achieved by prioritizing consistent student engagement, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment, and providing the necessary resources for success.

We will be intentional to create a culture where equity, collaboration, well-being and excellence are at the forefront of our district. We are committed to and excited about the future of WCSD and look forward to seeing growth in our goals.

Sincerely,

Astor Williams

WATERLOO SCHOOLS

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS



From left to right: Dr. Jared Smith (Superintendent), Astor Williams (President), Janelle Ewing, Jesse Knight, Stacie Mills, Krystal Madlock, Lyle Schmitt (Vice President), Jonathan Cox, Pam Arndorfer (Secretary)

WATERLOO SCHOOLS

WATERLOO SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2026 School Year



OUR VISION

One Waterloo, Infinite Possibilities.

OUR MISSION

The Waterloo Schools will **set the standard for urban education** by ensuring that every student is given the comprehensive support and diverse experiences needed **to graduate with a diploma and a plan.**

OUR GOALS

1. ATTENDANCE
   As a district, **chronic absenteeism will decrease from 23% to 20%** by the end of the school year.

2. CULTURE
   As a district, **employee satisfaction will increase from 87% to 90%** by the end of the school year.

3. ACHIEVEMENT
   As a district, **ISASP scores in ELA will increase from 58% to 63%** by the end of the school year.
   As a district, **ISASP scores in math will increase from 58% to 63%** by the end of the school year.
   As a district, **ISASP scores in science will increase from 51% to 56%** by the end of the school year.

OUR FOCUS



OUR VALUES

We will create a culture where every student and employee values...

- **EXCELLENCE,** by striving for greatness so that all are successful.
- **WELL-BEING,** by prioritizing empathy so that all are valued.
- **UNITY,** by being inclusive so that all are welcomed.
- **COLLABORATION,** by cooperating with each other so that all are supported.

ONE WATERLOO *infinite* POSSIBILITIES

1516 Washington St.
Waterloo, IA 50702

319–433–1800

WaterlooSchools.org

WHO WE ARE



We serve 150 sq miles in Iowa including:

Waterloo
Elk Run Heights
Evansdale
Gilbertville
Raymond
Washburn

★ *Represents the countries of origin for our WCSD families.*

INFINITE POSSIBILITIES

- 21 Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses
- Only International Baccalaureate World Diploma program in Iowa
- Career experiences outside of the classroom for students in grades K–12
- State of the art career center with 20 academies
- Dozens of career pathways and work-based learning opportunities
- Innovative transition programming for students with disabilities
- 70+ extracurricular and club opportunities for students in grades K-12
- 80+ college classes resulting in over $1M in college credits and scholarships
- State recognized Seal of Biliteracy programming

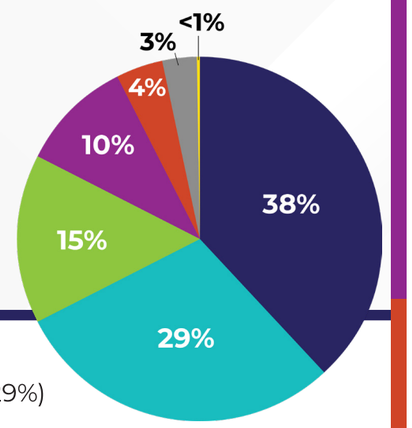
EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

- 44% of teachers hold an advanced degree
- 87% of employees express job satisfaction
- 1 in 5 Waterloo employees is a person of color
- 1 in 3 employees have 10+ years in the district
- 3 employee degree advancement pathways
- 2 student education degree pathways

CELEBRATING OUR DIVERSITY

- 62% of students are minority
- 15% of students are English Language Learners
- 50% of ELL students are newcomers





- White (38%)
- Black or African American (29%)
- Hispanic/Latino (15%)
- Two or more races (10%)
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (4%)
- Asian (3%)
- American Indian or Alaska Native (<1%)

8TH LARGEST
School District in Iowa

10,000+ STUDENTS
K-12 Grade

1800+ EMPLOYEES
900+ Teachers
60+ Administrators
800+ Support Staff

19 BUILDINGS
To Support Learning

40+ LANGUAGES
Spoken by Our Families

20 CAREER PROGRAMS
and Growing!

FAIRNESS ACCESS DIVERSITY SUPPORT OPPORTUNITY QUALITY RESPECT

ADVOCATE EMPOWER HEALTH SAFETY ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPATION

HOW WE GOT HERE

BALANCE WELLNESS RESILIENCE ACHIEVEMENT EQUITY SUCCESS INNOVATION GROWTH

1200+
SURVEY RESPONDERS
consisting of parents, students, community members, and school personnel including teachers, administrators, support staff, custodial, food service.

14 FACILITATED & COLLABORATIVE MEETINGS
to gather and disseminate feedback from all stakeholders including the District Leadership Team, principals, assistant principals, athletic directors, and instructional coaches, led by Central Rivers AEA.

1 DISTRICT RETREAT

"It is evident that leadership prioritizes trusting employees, making us feel respected and recognized as the capable professionals we are." –Employee

"The school encourages critical thinking, inquiry, and reasoning." –Community Member

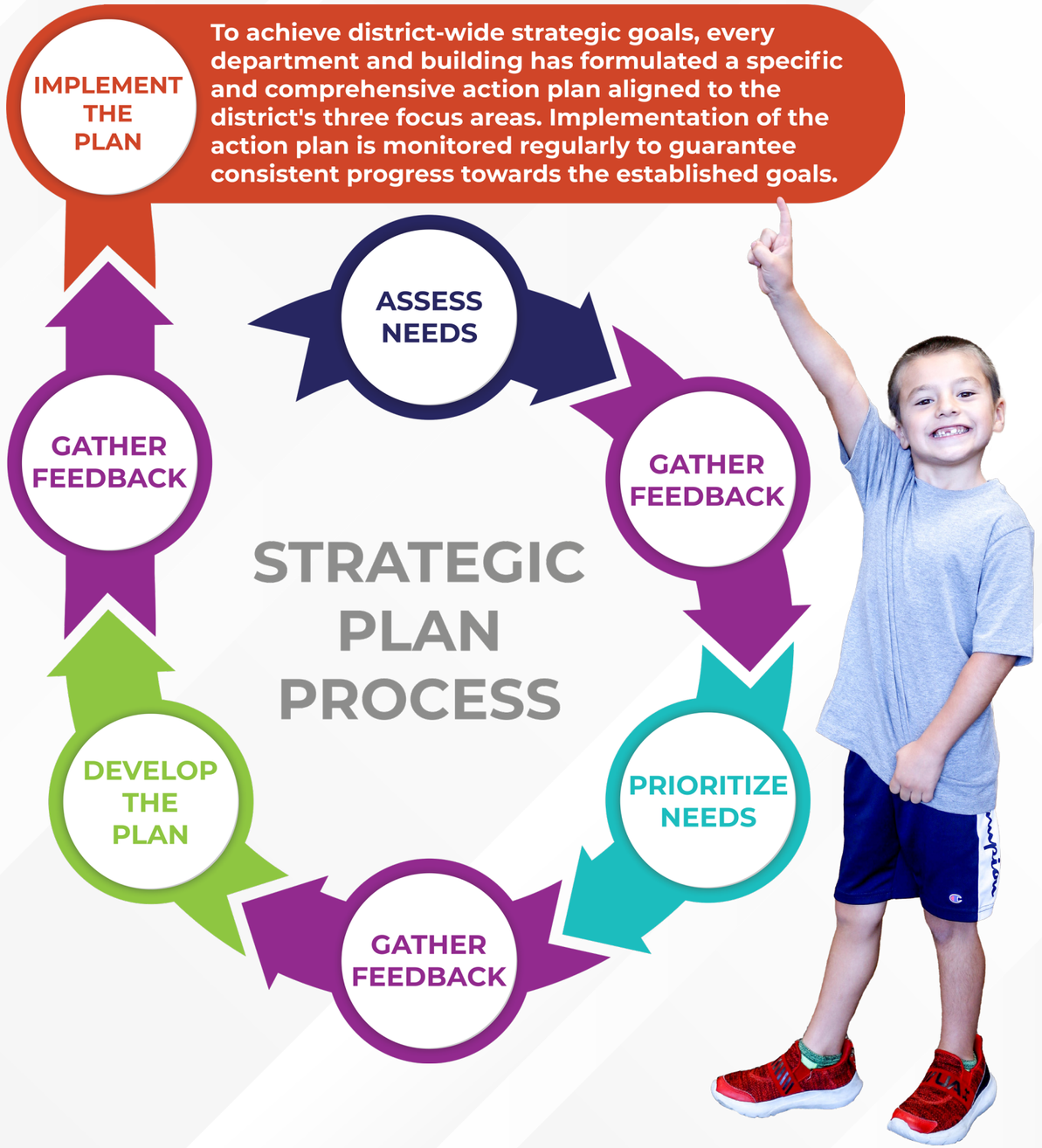
"They really listen to us and want our input. I love being in a place that puts kids first. I really feel seen and I'm making a difference at school." –Student

"We need to continue celebrating diversity within our student body and staff." –Employee

"Our school is led by compassionate leaders who empower others." –Parent

"I feel like my school is a safe place where I can express my true self and not feel judged. We respect each other and encourage everyone to do their best." –Student

"We benefit from rigorous professional development, transformative classroom practices (including learning beyond the classroom), and vibrant school-wide pride." –Staff



ASPIRATION EXCELLENCE LEADERSHIP TEAMWORK PARTNERSHIP UNITY

JUSTICE COOPERATION COMMUNICATION SHARING SYNERGY INCLUSION



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OUR MISSION

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OUR VALUES

We believe in.....

Excellence, by striving for greatness so that all are successful.
We believe in innovative ideas, ambitious goals, personalized learning, and strategic action.

Well-being, by prioritizing empathy so that all are valued.
We believe in holistic development, active listening, mutual respect, and inclusive environments.

Unity, by being inclusive so that all are welcomed.
We believe in fostering belonging, prioritizing students, celebrating diversity, and respecting differences.

Collaboration, by cooperating with each other so that all are supported.
We believe in cultivating trust, open communication, meaningful engagement, and supportive partnerships.

OUR FOCUS



OUR GOALS

OUR GOALS



OUR FOCUS

FOCUS

DISTRICT FOCUS AREA #1

ATTENDANCE

Waterloo Community School District (WCSD) is committed to fostering meaningful relationships, providing enriching educational experiences for students, and partnering with families and community members to increase engagement and reduce chronic absenteeism.

The district recognizes that chronic absenteeism negatively impacts students' academic, social, and emotional growth. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, our chronic absenteeism rate has risen above the state average, and reversing this trend has become a top priority. Regular attendance is the cornerstone of student success and by addressing chronic absenteeism, we aim to create an environment where every student can thrive.

> **By prioritizing student attendance, we are investing in the long-term success of our students and the strength of our community.**

Our approach to reducing absenteeism is data-driven and comprehensive. We focus on engaging families through stronger connections, offering early interventions, and implementing strategies like mentorship, attendance incentives, and targeted support systems to prevent absences from escalating. By prioritizing student attendance, we are investing in the long-term success of our students and the strength of our community.

Waterloo Schools is committed to reducing chronic absenteeism from 23% to 20% by the end of the school year.

ATTENDANCE



Grade Level	Year 2023	Year 2024	Year 2025
District-Wide	32.16%	30.21%	22.74%
Elementary	28.20%	25.21%	17.01%
Middle School	33.26%	29.96%	24.67%
High School	37.94%	38.70%	30.74%

**Percent of students identified as chronically absent*



OUR GOALS



GOALS

OUR GOAL

We are committed to reducing chronic absenteeism from 23% to 20% by the end of the school year.

OUR FOCUS



OUR GOALS

OUR GOALS



OUR FOCUS

FOCUS

CULTURE





OUR GOALS



GOALS

DISTRICT FOCUS AREA #2

CULTURE

Waterloo Community School District (WCSD) is dedicated to fostering a culture that promotes inclusivity, respect, and support, ensuring that all staff and students have the opportunity to thrive.

Establishing a positive and supportive school culture is crucial for our district's success. According to a 2022 survey by the National Education Association, 55% of educators have considered leaving the profession early, up from 37% in 2021. As a result, our goal is to cultivate an environment where employees feel appreciated, respected, and supported, recognizing that staff well-being has a direct impact on student success. By encouraging meaningful collaboration, open communication, and honest feedback, we strive to create a workplace where all employees feel empowered to contribute.

> **By addressing the specific needs of our employees, we aim to create a culture where staff feel connected to their work and supported in their professional and personal lives.**

Our approach focuses on using data-driven strategies to enhance employee satisfaction, starting with analyzing feedback from our staff climate survey. We identify areas for growth and implement targeted initiatives to improve professional development, staff well-being, and support systems across the district. By addressing the specific needs of our employees, we aim to create a culture where staff feel connected to their work and supported in their professional and personal lives.

Waterloo Schools is committed to increasing employee satisfaction from 87% to 90% by the end of the school year.

Job Type	Year 2023	Year 2024	Year 2025
District-Wide	81.75%	87.31%	86.94%
Admin Support	86.99%	90.43%	91.34%
AFSCME	81.38%	87.76%	85.12%
Certified	81.32%	86.95%	86.93%
Classified	82.45%	87.00%	85.99%

**Percent of employees reporting workplace satisfaction*

OUR GOAL

We are committed to increasing employee satisfaction from 87% to 90% by the end of the school year.

OUR FOCUS



OUR GOALS

OUR GOALS



OUR FOCUS

FOCUS

ACHIEVEMENT





OUR GOALS



GOALS

DISTRICT FOCUS AREA #3

ACHIEVEMENT

Waterloo Community School District (WCSD) is committed to fostering academic excellence, ensuring that students graduate equipped with a diploma and a plan for future success.

Academic achievement is fundamental to students reaching their full potential and achieving their life goals. As literacy, math, and science skills form the foundation for success across all academic areas, Waterloo Schools is dedicated to improving outcomes in these critical subjects. Our district's focus is to ensure that all students meet or exceed grade-level expectations, enabling them to thrive in their academic journeys and beyond.

By equipping teachers with evidence-based strategies and closely monitoring student progress, we aim to foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Our approach prioritizes data-driven instruction, targeted interventions, and ongoing professional development to improve achievement. By equipping teachers with evidence-based strategies and closely monitoring student progress, we aim to foster a culture of continuous improvement. Through collaboration and active engagement with students, staff, and families, we work to ensure that all students meet or exceed expectations in literacy, math, and science, laying a strong foundation for their overall academic growth.

Waterloo Schools is committed to increasing ISASP scores in English Language Arts (ELA) from 58% to 63%, ISASP scores in math from 58% to 63%, and ISAP scores in science from 51% to 56% by the end of the school year.

	Year 2023	Year 2024	Year 2025
ELA ISASP District-Wide	**56.31%**	**56.93%**	**58.21%**
Elementary	56.61%	54.90%	57.92%
Middle School	57.67%	58.82%	58.76%
High School	55.18%	57.07%	57.93%
Math ISASP District-Wide	**57.54%**	**56.05%**	**57.44%**
Elementary	65.04%	63.33%	65.81%
Middle School	57.55%	58.01%	58.76%
High School	49.80%	46.89%	47.93%
Science ISASP District-Wide	**44.94%**	**43.09%**	**51.13%**
Elementary	45.59%	41.43%	50.27%
Middle School	44.61%	46.19%	56.06%
High School	44.62%	41.61%	47.17%

**Percent of students proficient according to the state assessments*

OUR GOAL

We are committed to increasing ISASP scores in ELA from 58% to 63%, ISASP scores in math from 58% to 63%, and ISASP scores in science from 51% to 56% by the end of the school year.



OUR FUTURE

Coming soon

BRIDGING FUTURES
ONE CAMPUS · ONE COMMUNITY · ONE WATERLOO
WATERLOO SCHOOLS

FALL OF 2028



We are excited to announce the construction of a unified high school campus for all 10th- to 12th-grade students in the district. This new, vibrant campus, set to open for the 2028-29 school year, will be located next to the Waterloo Career Center (WCC). The campus will provide cutting-edge educational resources and infrastructure, enhancing the learning experience for every high school student in the district.

To learn more about the project and follow updates, visit WaterlooSchools.org/bridging-futures.

SCAN ME





REIMAGINING THE FUTURE FOR WCSD STUDENTS