



MAMARON*Next*

A Strategic Framework
for Continual Improvement

2025

2025.09.27



“Next” is about progress.

It describes the future.

It is also about where we have been, and how we have prepared for this moment.

It is past and future meeting in legacy.

Schools like ours have legacy. The Mamaroneck Union Free School District has deep roots in its community, in history, and in the uniquely American philosophies of education. We are passionately dedicated to the optimistic work of bringing children to the promises of public education—that is, preparation for a future in which individual and collective success guarantee each other in a society that both relies upon the strengths and accounts for the needs of each and every member.

This dedication combines with exceptional talent in our community, both inside and outside of our schools, to fuel innovation, achievement, and improvement. We are not a school district that needs the script of a five- or ten-year plan casting today’s ideas into the haze of tomorrow’s problems, but rather a district that needs the tools and permissions to bring our skills to bear upon those problems as they arise. We need a deep articulation of our mission, identification of the methods and measures of progress toward that mission, and the openness to welcome all into the work of that progress.

In technical terms, this is the implementation of continual improvement through shared decision-making, data-informed practice, design sprints, and organizational learning.

In simpler terms, it is the combination of a mission and vision that lives, that grows and moves to meet new challenges and opportunities, and that finds strength in the daily efforts of individuals as much as in the grand plans of big, multi-year efforts.

Rather than a strategic plan—a script that is out of date as soon as we begin to read its first page—it is a strategic framework. It is not as much a map of the journey ahead as the engine that moves us.

In order to move, it needs to align with the goals of our state and to consider the guidance of the best thinkers and friends in our profession. Our framework therefore meshes the promises of our mission with the curriculum standards of New York State, through its Portrait of a Graduate, which seeks to conceptualize all of the competencies that every student should master. We also reach the advice of powerful professional communities and experts to determine what we do in classrooms and offices with those students.

This is a journey that never ends. The engine of continual improvement runs and runs, reaching each destination only to set a new one, farther out and even more ambitious.

But it is a journey for all.

Framework as Engine for Continual Improvement

Our framework has several layers.

First is our mission, which is our community's broad statement of its goals for public education. A good mission seeks to be relevant for all time and all places, including the present time and place in which we operate. It is a guiding light that also reveals a community's unique strengths, identity, and history.

Next is a model for teaching and learning, which advances beliefs about the kind of education that is necessary to achieve our mission. Based on famed Harvard educational researcher Richard Elmore's Instructional Core, our model describes a vision of the relationships and interactions between and among educators, content and skills, and students that will guarantee the promises of our mission for all.

We then turn to a theory of action—an "if-then" statement that allows us to articulate how we will enact that model through its priorities of personalization, mentorship, and expertise.

We map that all to a "scorecard" of desired outcomes and targeted datapoints, which will guide us through the first phase of our framework's implementation. In the years ahead, this scorecard will shift and change to continue to serve as the connector between high altitude promises and the programs and projects that we implement on the ground.

Lastly, we plan the programs and projects that will result in positive changes in those datapoints, as if each piece of data were a needle in a gauge on a dashboard. Some of these projects will be small, contextual to this or that school or grade, while others will be massive changes to the ways in which we imagine education across the entire K-12 spectrum. Most will land somewhere in between. Some will be ongoing, while others will answer the challenges of specific problems of practice that come and go. Some are already known and underway. Others are in our future, yet to be discovered.

Through successful implementation of these projects, we believe that our measurements will show continual improvement toward a full realization of our mission. Since the projects are tied to our mission through scorecard measurements that flow from a theory of action, we will approach our destination with each turn of the wheel.

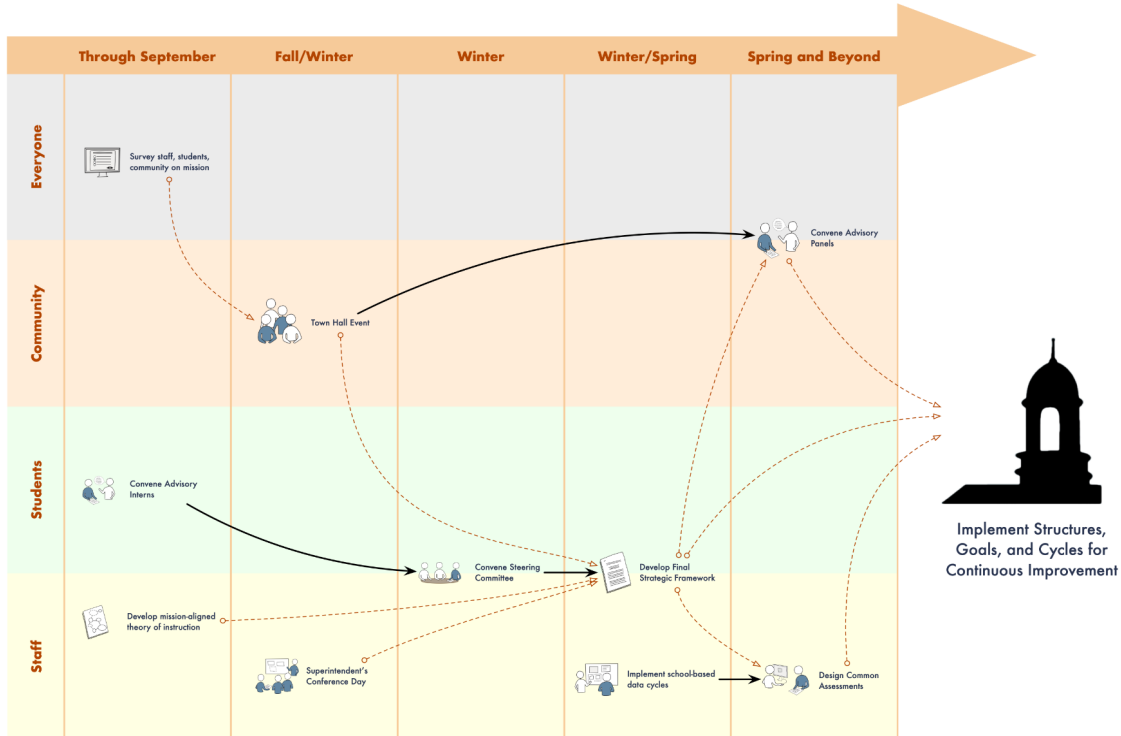
And, the engine moves.

This report details all of the above, but must first describe how we leveraged collaboration and consultation to generate the framework.

Our Process

Our process was comprehensive. It relied on consultation, deep collaboration, and a commitment to flexibility. See Figure 1 for the key milestones and participants.

Figure 1: Milestones of Strategic Planning, 2024 and Beyond



Our mission is simple, and makes three promises to all of our students.

It is the mission of the Mamaroneck Union Free School District to promote intellectual engagement and an appreciation of learning as an inherently rewarding activity, and to prepare students to function as responsible citizens in a multicultural world.

First, all students will be engaged in their learning. Second, all students will recognize the value of learning as its own pursuit. Third, all students will participate as contributors, and will leverage their unique strengths toward individual and collective success in our diverse community.

Surveys on the promises of our mission revealed opportunities for improvement, and a diverse array of visions on what success actually looks like. In the summer of 2024, our full administrative team worked to gather these opportunities and visions into a high level model of teaching and learning.

As we opened school in the fall of 2024, we shared this model with the community and with staff through specific events and presentations.

We hosted a community event in October, at which we solicited thoughts and feedback. During the event, we used artificial intelligence to gather those thoughts into an analysis of strengths,

weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Artificial intelligence allowed us to continue that conversation in the moment, rather than wait weeks for the analysis to be complete. It gave us the opportunity to learn reactions and insights in real time, from students who participated in the event.

In November of 2024, we presented our model and the results of our community event at [the November 12, 2024 meeting of our Board of Education](#). We also provided [a summary report](#) of the October community event.

The 2024-2025 Internal Steering Committee

Jeffrey Barnard
Mark Barnett
Ronald Blain
Darren Bosch
Kelly Brennan
Jennifer Cereola
Tabitha Colon
Mary Feighery
Sara Goldstein-Stoll
Jessica Gordon
Elizabeth Johnson
Melissa Katz
James Love
Jeffrey Moore
Rachel Morse
John Nelson
Michelle O'Connell
Charles Sampson
Kimberly Scheier
Johanna Scozzafava
James Short

Throughout the winter of 2024/2025, an Internal Steering Committee representing all grade bands and schools gathered the information from events and efforts to that point, and developed a theory of action aligned to New York State's Portrait of a Graduate. The team used artificial intelligence to accelerate the development of this theory of action and its alignment to the Portrait of the Graduate, primarily to indicate where they may have missed certain opportunities and feedback.

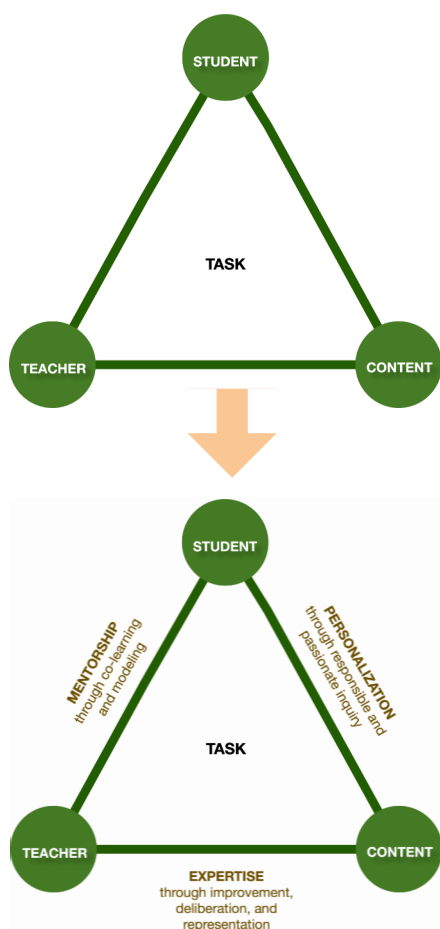
As a complementary effort throughout the 2024/2025 school year to develop leadership and educational skills to engage in the kind of data-informed practice necessary toward realization of a theory of action, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction helped each school to identify teacher leaders, to define and promote aligned analysis of data, to engage in the development of common assessments, and to assist in the facilitation of educator collaboration toward a greater focus on individualized student support and personalized education. The Office of Curriculum and Instruction developed [a continuum of shared decision-making and data use in schools](#) to describe and measure progress.



Our Model of Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning is the core technology of schools. Our model of teaching and learning sits upon the foundation of Richard Elmore's Instructional Core. Acts of teaching and learning are extremely complex, but Elmore's Instructional Core provides a simple visual for parsing out the various roles, results, and priorities in our classrooms.

Figure 2: Richard Elmore's Instructional Core and the Mamaroneck Theory of Teaching and Learning



In its simplest expression, the Instructional Core says that students, teachers, and content all work together over the successful completion of educational tasks. Each school district must use its mission to describe how the relationship between each of those points should operate. The connection between each point is therefore an axis that can describe a priority ethic or behavior.

Our mission's focus on engagement, a love of learning, and preparation for responsible civic participation in a diverse community leads us to three such priorities.

In the Mamaroneck Union Free School District, with our particular mission, we must prioritize personalization in the axis connecting students to content, as embodied by the learning standards of the State of New York. In other words, in order to realize full engagement and a love of learning, and to empower each student to grow into their unique strengths as they position themselves to be a civic actor in a diverse community, students must have voice, choice, and agency in their own education. In addition, that education must strive to unlock the unique potential of each student rather than focus on a "one size fits all" conception of success.

This connection between students and content is, in some ways, the thickest axis on the model. "Personalization" describes how we will pursue our children's achievement of state-mandated academic goals. The other two sides of the triangle certainly represent priorities, but these priorities both serve to enable personalization.

The connection between teachers and students is an axis of mentorship. "Teachers" includes all of the adults with whom a student works and interacts, not just the person in this or that particular classroom. To be a mentor, particularly to a learner, one must give of their own unique strengths to empower the learner. They must know and be able to help each student grow in their strengths, and use those strengths to mitigate their weaknesses. They must also model the best pursuit of learning that an adult can model, and see themselves as a "chief learner" in their relationship with students rather than merely as an "authority" or an "evaluator."

The notion of an educator being a "chief learner" relies on "co-learning," which also informs the third axis—the connection between teachers and content. In order to meet the demands of our mission across this connection, we must prioritize expertise. This is a commitment by all in the organization to the deliberate and measurable improvement of the system and of one's individual craft. So, as we are committed to the growth of each student, we also model a commitment to the improvement of our entire learning community. In such a community, everyone learns, not just the

children. The district must therefore provide the tools and training to help all of its adults grow. It must respect expertise by offering ample opportunities for shared decision-making. The methods by which the administrative team and the internal steering committee developed this model and the theory of action that flows from it are prime examples of this kind of decision-making, as are teacher-led professional development efforts, curriculum mapping, and more.

Our Theory of Action

Our Internal Steering Committee studied our model of teaching and learning, and worked through several sessions to develop a theory of action—a statement of how we will actualize the priorities in our model.

Theory of Action: Connecting Teaching and Learning to Mission

If we ...

Personalization

Empower each student's growth through authentic inquiry, fostering creativity within curriculum and state standards

Develop and nurture the skills and dispositions needed to contribute to and thrive in a diverse and interconnected world

Mentorship

Build authentic relationships so that all students feel seen and supported

Encourage and provide all students with opportunities that match their skills and aspirations

Expertise

Leverage educator voice and leadership through collaborative practice

Embrace innovation and challenge assumptions in the design of learning

... then all students will receive the promises of our mission.

All means all!

The development of the theory of action was an exercise in co-writing. Such exercises are difficult, as they rely on consensus. For that reason, we can never consider a theory of action to be perfect, or even finished. This theory of action is no different. As we move forward to do each of the things it prescribes, we will always need to return to those prescriptions to make sure that they are on target. If we get disappointing or unexpected results, they may not only point to a failure of implementation. They could, after all, point to a failure to even conceive of the best imperative or the right problem in the first place.

Focusing Our Mission

As we moved through the summer of 2025 and into the 2025/2026 school year, we circled back to the mission to focus the language of its promises on the directions that we had begun to identify in our theory of action. Working with our administrative team and our Board of Education, we discovered that those three promises boiled down to a few simple words—words that we could advance to ensure that we are clear in our intent.

The promise of intellectual engagement focused on a need to ensure that all students will engage in **inquiry**.

The promise of appreciating learning moved toward a focus on **curiosity**.

And, the promise of preparing all student to be responsible citizens in a multicultural world became a commitment to **integrity** as we build a **community** in which all members find belonging and empowerment.

The light of our mission, focused on four words, shines into action through the three priorities of our model of teaching and learning: personalization, mentorship, and expertise.

inquiry
curiosity
integrity
COMMUNITY





personalization



mentorship



expertise

Connecting to Outcomes

In a theory of action, each “if” in the “if-then” statements represents a belief, informed by expertise, on what we should do to reach our goal. In other words, “if we do this action, then that desired result will happen.” We must be careful to avoid counting the “doing” as the result. Too many strategic plans suffer from the measurement of activity rather than of outcomes. In a strategic framework, we are always focused on outcomes.

A theory of action is useless if its “then” is left to be so broad that we are not accountable to any specific results. For that reason, we must define what it means for “all students to receive the promises of our mission.” In the summer of 2025, the New York State’s Department of Education advanced a “portrait of a graduate” for all students reaching commencement in our state.

Figure 3: The New York State Portrait of a Graduate



We can therefore say that we fulfill our mission when all students match the portrait of a graduate through our mission’s prioritization of personalization, supported by mentorship and expertise. Furthermore, we can align the measurements of outcomes to the goals of the portrait.

To that end, in the summer of 2025, we developed a scorecard to synthesize our mission, model of teaching and learning, our theory of action, and the portrait into calls to action for first year or two of the life of our framework. As we achieve goals and gain deeper understandings of our strengths and weaknesses, we can continue to revise our scorecard. In that, we may continue to track the same datapoints, or uncover (and even develop) new ones.

How will we know if we are successful? If these datapoints show steady positive change, we are on the right track. If they do not, something is wrong. Either we are doing the wrong things or doing the right things incorrectly, and need to retool. If that fails to put us in good stead against our goals, then we need to examine the assertions we have made all the way back to our mission statement, and make sure that they are all still relevant to the landscape around us.

Our Scorecard

Empowered & Skillful Learners (ESL)

All students develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to take ownership of their learning through personalized, challenging, and authentic experiences.

Description of Success	Aligned Priorities	Datapoints	Example Projects
1. Increasing grade-appropriate awareness among students of their own strengths, challenges, aspirations, and signature strategies	Personalization Mentorship	Student achievement on both traditional and experiential assessments Focus groups/surveys with students and parents Network analysis of student/adult relationships (specifically density, centrality, reciprocity)	PSAT 8/9, NMSQT for all Expanded common assessment
2. Increasing student participation in interest-aligned extracurricular and enrichment activities, and secondary electives	Personalization	Availability of and representation within interest-aligned opportunities Focus groups/surveys with students and parents	Expanded K-12 enrichment/acceleration opportunities
3. Increasing student achievement of objectives aligned to the New York State Learning Standards, toward realization of the New York State Portrait of a Graduate for every student	Personalization	Student achievement on both traditional and experiential assessments	Coherent K-12 counseling, library, and technology curricula

Actualized Dignity & Belonging (ADB)

All members of our learning community are respected, seen, and valued, and engage in a way that allows themselves and others to authentically and fully participate in school life with dignity and integrity.

Descriptions of Success	Aligned Priorities	Datapoints	Example Projects
1. Increasing proportion of students receiving caring mentorship from at least one staff member	Personalization Mentorship	Focus groups/surveys with students and parents Network analysis of student/adult relationships (specifically density, centrality, reciprocity)	Expanded community partnerships
2. Increasing frequency of SEQuity-aligned pedagogy	Personalization Expertise	Focus groups/surveys with students and parents Measurements of teacher practice through evaluation and instructional rounds	Comprehensive K-12 culturally-responsive pedagogical toolbox

Adult Expertise & Growth (AEG)

Adults continuously grow their practice through collaborative and research-based learning, feedback, and innovation that is aligned to Mamaroneck's mission and responsive to both evolving student needs and breakthroughs in the larger field of education.

Descriptions of Success	Aligned Priorities	Datapoints	Example Projects
1. Increasing staff participation in professional development aligned to strategic framework priorities	Expertise	Staff participation	Revised professional learning and educator evaluation plans
2. Increasing alignment of classroom practice to a commonly-understood and research-based model of personalized and engaged teaching and learning	Personalization Expertise	Student achievement on both traditional and experiential assessments Measurements of teacher practice through evaluation and instructional rounds	K-12 alignment of pedagogy to the science of learning

Reflective Inquiry & Improvement (RII)

We institutionalize individual and group reflective practices and engage regularly, using data to inform decisions, improve practice, and align our efforts to common school and district goals

Descriptions of Success	Aligned Priorities	Datapoints	Example Projects
1. Increasing alignment of administrative decision-making to a commonly-understood framework for continual improvement and organizational learning	Expertise	Focus groups/surveys with administrators Measurements of administrator practice through evaluation and leadership rounds	Deployment of data clearinghouse systems Expanded organizational learning through goals-setting and design sprints
2. Increasing participation of staff through shared decision-making and teaming in a commonly-understood framework for continual improvement and organizational learning	Expertise	Focus groups/surveys with administrators and staff Measurements of administrative and teacher leadership practice through evaluation and leadership rounds	Expanded coaching and data teams
3. Increasing frequency and efficacy of teacher team meetings over student achievement and experience (e.g., discipline, attendance, etc.) data	Expertise	Focus groups/surveys with administrators and staff Measurements of administrative and teacher leadership practice through evaluation and leadership rounds	Common protocols for innovation, evaluation, and community involvement

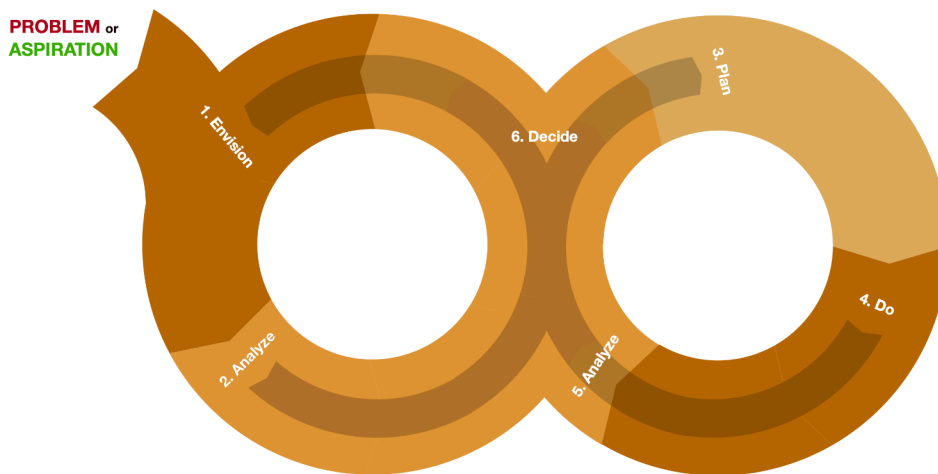
From Now ...

Much of this proposal depends upon clear cycles of innovation, problem-solving, and learning. “Double loop organization learning” is the model that fulfills all three. See Figure 5, below.

We begin by identifying opportunities and problems in steps 1 and 2, planning new or expanding existing projects in step 3, implementing in step 4, and measuring outcomes in step 5.

We must then decide what to do next in step 6. When the measurements through our scorecard respond positively, we define and tackle next levels of work by starting again at step 3. When we have negative or unexpected outcomes, we pause and rethink the assumptions of our scorecard, our theory of action, our model of teaching and learning, and potentially even our mission statement by returning to step 1.

Figure 5: Organizational Improvement Through Double Loop Learning



... To Next

Imagine counting your steps on a long hike, and considering each step its own destination. One therefore moves through an enormous number of next destinations before reaching a final destination. Such is the work of continual improvement. While a strategic plan has an end, a strategic framework is a much more organic charter under which an organization moves from one goal, to the next, to the next, but ensures that each adds to the line toward realization of an aspirational mission.

Everyone has a role. We are all co-learners, rolling up our sleeves, fixing our gaze to the progress of our movement rather than losing sight of our path by staring at the horizon.

In such an enterprise, movement has no choice but to be deliberate. Innovation will always be aligned to problems and opportunities, rather than proceeding without any call or need. We will assess efforts by their impacts rather than by their mere completion. And, in that, we will honor and assume the best intentions of effort, which requires more than just a tolerance for failure.

Setbacks, like success, must instruct.

It will all point us forward.



We are Mamaroneck.