

Arlington Heights District 25

STRATEGIC PLAN



REFRESH

Vision Retreat

January 27, 2026 8:00-12:00

Activity One: Introduction Overview

15 min



Welcome and Introductions

- **Who** is in the room?
- **What** are we here to do?
- **Why** is this an important event?

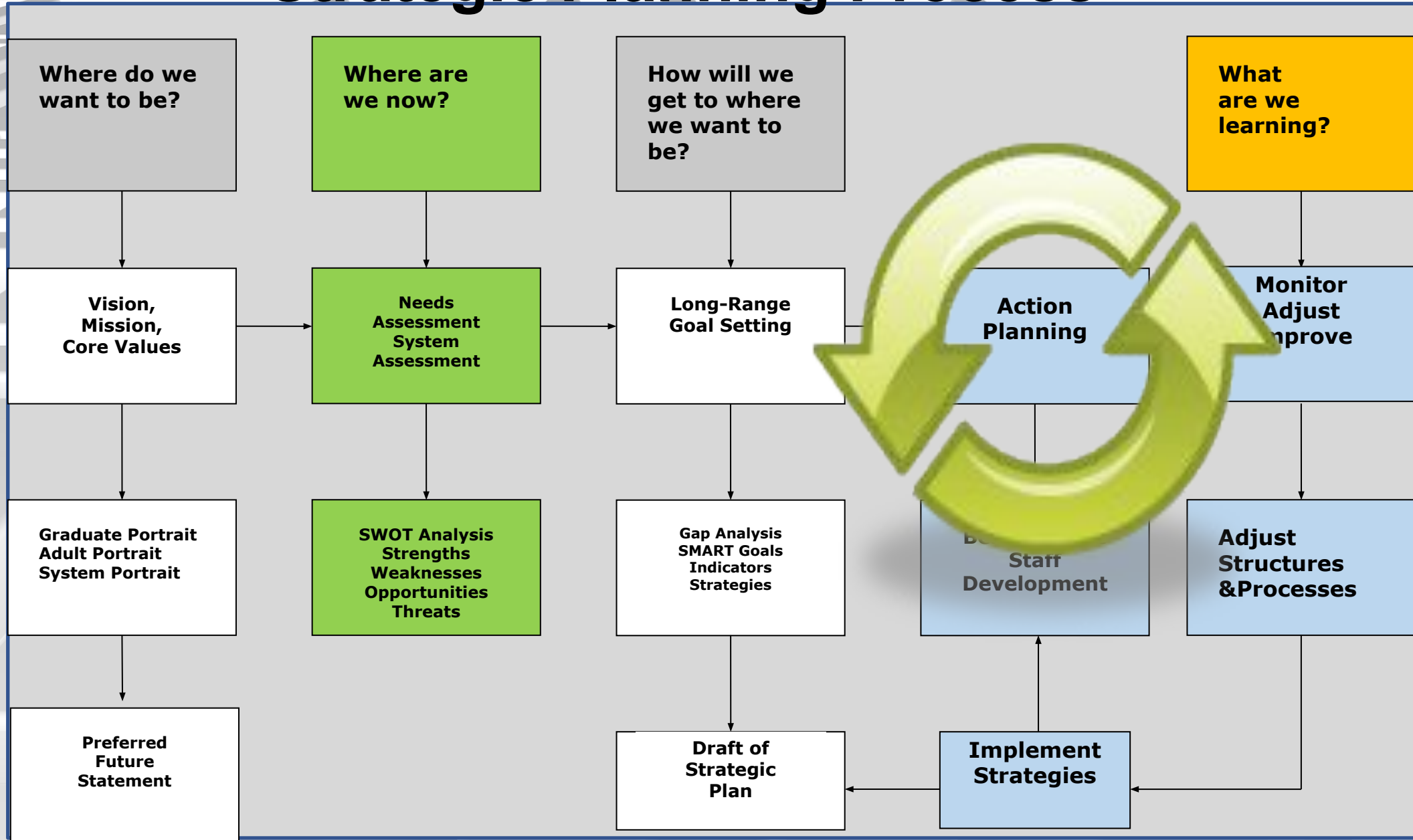




Arlington Heights District 25 Strategic Plan Schedule

Meeting	Essential Questions	Date	Time
Orientation	<i>Who are we and what are we changed to do?</i>	November 12	3:30-5:30 pm Virtual
Data Retreat	<i>Where are we now? What is working well and what isn't?</i>	December 11	8:00-12:00 Face-to-Face
Vision Retreat	<i>Where do we want to be? What will be different 5-10 years from now?</i>	January 27	8:00-12:00 Face-to-Face
Setting Direction Retreat	<i>How will we get from where we are to where we want to be 5-10 years from now?</i>	February 24	8:00-12:00 Face-to-Face
Recommendation	<i>What will we recommend to the Board of Education to set future direction</i>	March 18	3:30-5:30 pm Virtual

Strategic Planning Process





**WHERE DO WE WANT
TO BE?**

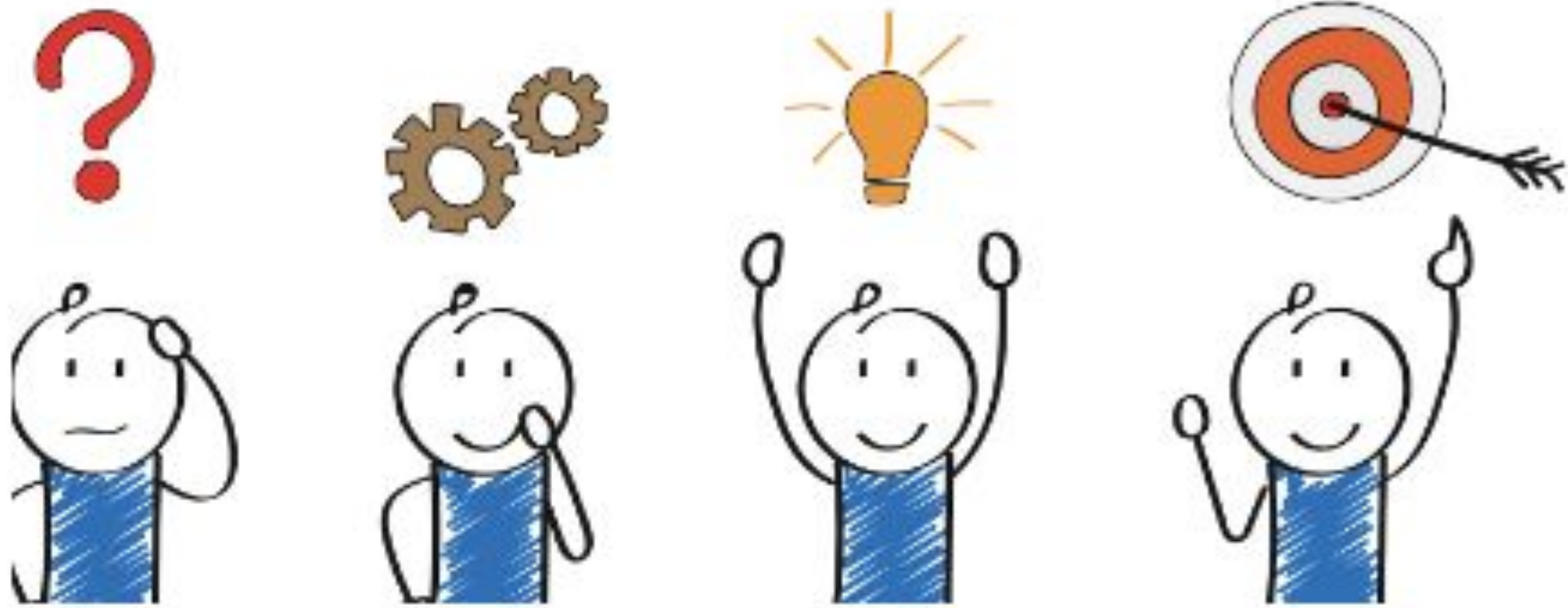
**HOW DO WE GET FROM
WHERE WE ARE TO
WHERE WE WANT TO BE?**

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

It is good to have an
end to journey
toward;

but it is the journey
that matters in the
end.

Ursula K. LeGuin 1999



Continuous Improvement Rocks!

"If schools are not imagining a different future, they will amplify their efforts to do what they have always done."

-Grant Lichtman, #EdJourney: A Roadmap to the Future of Education





How do we want to be different 5-10 years from now than we are today?



A school district
vision is not just a
statement—*it is a
unifying force that
shapes culture,
strategy, and
student success
over time.*



- 1. Provides Direction and Purpose:** A vision gives everyone—students, teachers, leaders, families, and the community—a common **sense of purpose**. It answers the question: *Where are we going?* and helps align efforts toward meaningful goals.
- 2. Guides Decision-Making:** From curriculum choices to budgeting and staffing, a strong vision acts as a **compass**. Leaders can evaluate decisions by asking whether they support the district's long-term aspirations.
- 3. Aligns Stakeholders:** A shared vision creates **coherence** across schools and departments. When stakeholders understand and believe in the vision, collaboration improves and conflicting priorities are reduced.

VISION
OF THE
FUTURE

4. Inspires and Motivates: An effective vision is aspirational. It **energizes educators and students**, fostering commitment, pride, and a belief that their work contributes to something larger.

5. Supports Student-Centered Outcomes: A clear vision keeps student success at the core—academically, socially, and emotionally—ensuring policies and practices are designed to **benefit all learners**.

6. Drives Continuous

Improvement: Vision provides a benchmark for progress. Districts can measure growth, reflect on outcomes, and adapt strategies while staying anchored to their **future goals**.

7. Builds Trust and Community

Confidence: When communicated well, a vision demonstrates transparency and intentionality, helping families and community members understand what the district stands for and **trust its leadership**.



Activity One: Review feedback and refine the SWOT Analysis

*What did the
feedback tell us?*

*What refinements
do we want to
make?*



Activity 1

SWOT ANALYSIS

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats



DRAFT SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths: What are we most proud of? What do we consider to be the results of our best work? What advantages do we have? What do others say about us in positive ways?	Weaknesses: What are we not doing well? What are we most criticized for or receive the most complaints about? What do we seem to have a <u>hard time</u> doing well? What needs our immediate attention?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Academic Excellence & Student Achievement (state assessments, growth, rigor)○ Financial Stability & Fiscal Responsibility (AAA bond rating, budgeting, sustainability)○ High-Quality Staff & Retention (teacher quality, stability, professional learning)○ Class Size & Staffing Ratios (small classes, access, individualization)○ Social-Emotional Learning & Student Support (RULER, wellness, interventions)○ School Culture, Climate & Safety (relationships, pride, safe environments)○ Technology & Infrastructure (1:1 devices, instructional support)○ Community Engagement & Governance (communication, trust, stakeholder voice)○ Data-Informed Decision Making (assessment, planning, continuous improvement)○ Enrichment & Student Opportunities (fine arts, athletics, extended learning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Staff Diversity & Representation (equity, demographics, inclusion)○ Teacher Attendance & Substitute Shortages (staffing stability, continuity)○ Curriculum Rigor, Relevance & Consistency (alignment, expectations)○ Communication & Transparency (clarity, consistency, trust)○ Student Engagement & Instructional Innovation (engagement, relevance)○ Equity of Resources & Support (space, staffing, services)○ Behavior, Discipline & Consistency (expectations, consequences)○ Staff Voice, Satisfaction & Climate (engagement, morale)○ Family Engagement & Understanding (partnerships, clarity)○ Financial & Structural Constraints (debt, external factors)

DRAFT SWOT ANALYSIS

Opportunities: What opportunities for improvement do we know about, but have not addressed? With a little work, where could we change a weakness into a strength? What are we not doing currently that might be the opportunity for us to improve?	Threats: Who or what threatens us the most? What challenges are coming that we must respond to? What might block our progress? What do we have little control over that might impact our resources?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Personalized & Extended Learning Opportunities (voice, choice, growth) ○ Curriculum Innovation & Readiness (rigor, relevance, future-focused) ○ Inclusion, Diversity & Equity Action (belonging, representation, access) ○ Personalized & Extended Learning Opportunities (voice, choice, growth) ○ Staff Recruitment, Retention & Support (diversity, compensation, trust) ○ Student Engagement, Enrichment & Athletics (access, balance, opportunity) ○ Special Education and Advanced Learning Planning & Services (structure, future readiness) ○ Social-Emotional Learning & Restorative Practices (consistency, culture) ○ Student Pathways & Transitions (readiness, continuity) ○ Artificial Intelligence Integration (instruction, professional learning, policy) ○ Community Partnerships & External Supports (coordination, awareness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding Instability & Unfunded Mandates (state, federal, special education) ○ Misinformation, Disinformation & Social Media Influence (trust, perception) ○ Student Mental Health & Behavioral Challenges (well-being, safety) ○ Staffing Shortages & Workforce Transitions (certification, retirement) ○ Political & External Influences (policy, polarization) ○ Tax Revenue Volatility (property tax, economic shifts) ○ Student Safety & Engagement Risks (attendance, motivation) ○ Facilities Capacity & Enrollment Shifts (overcrowding, boundaries) ○ Fear of Change & Legal Exposure (innovation, litigation)

Feedback Results from SWOT ANALYSIS			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Community 70% Staff 66%	Community 80% Staff 86%	Community 78% Staff 89%	Threats 93% Staff 95%

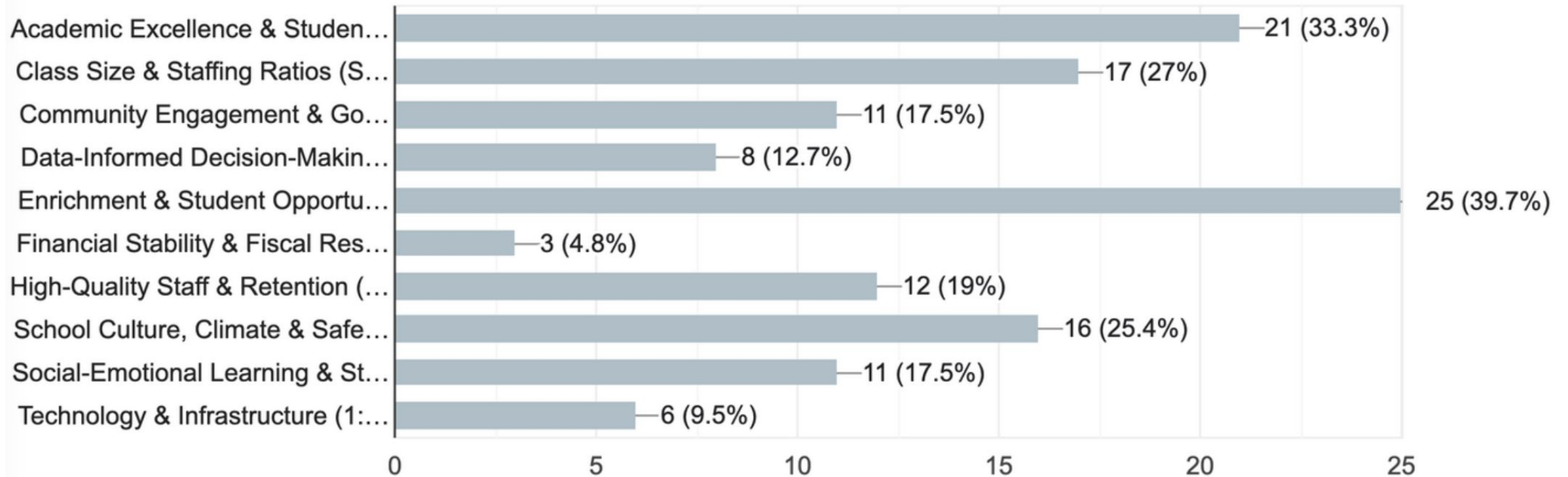
We strive for 80%

173 Staff responded

214 Community responded

Which of the following, if any, DO NOT accurately represent District 25's strengths?

63 responses



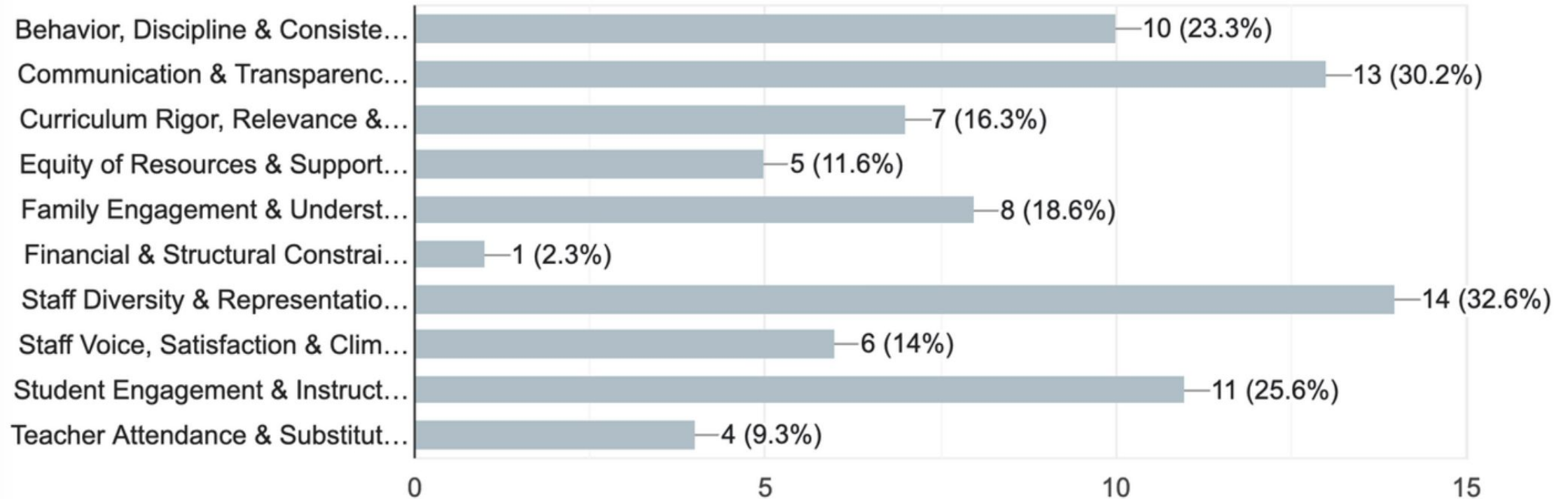
The defining strength of the organization is its people—particularly its leadership—who foster a positive, resilient culture grounded in trust, compassion, and strategic thinking.

This strong foundation supports student engagement, staff retention, academic success, and long-term stability.

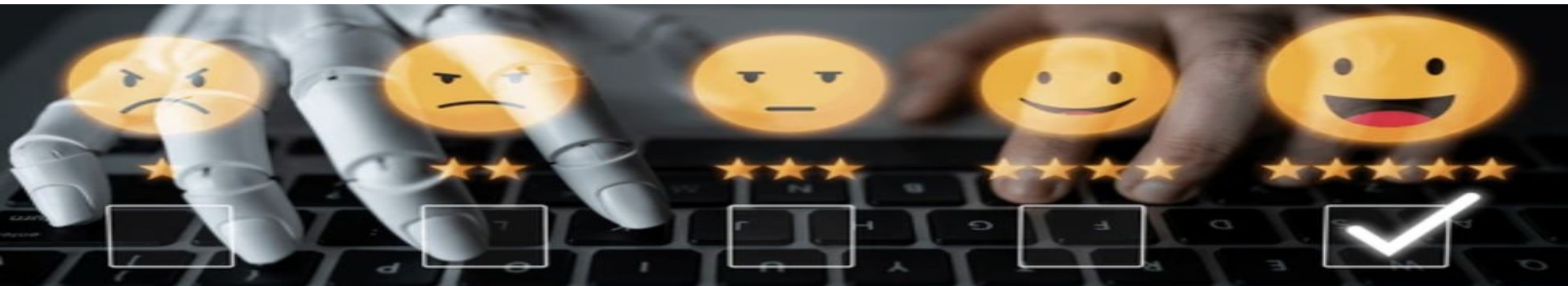


Which of the following, if any, DO NOT accurately represent District 25's weaknesses?

43 responses

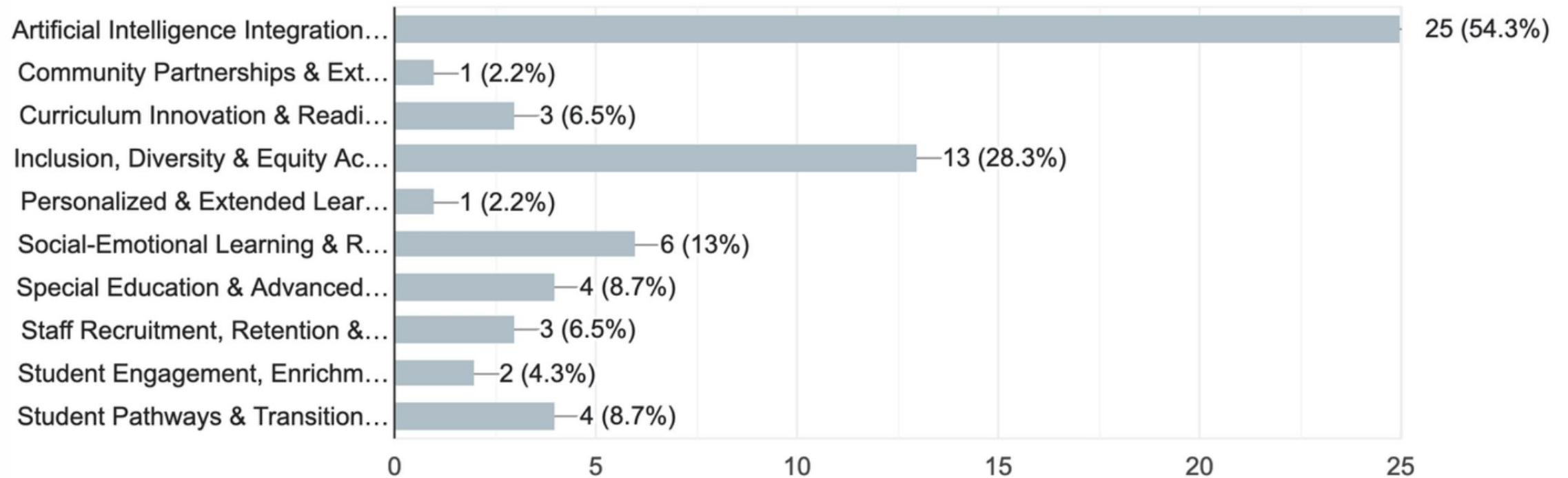


The defining weakness of the organization is a lack of coherent, consistently implemented academic and support systems that translate its strong culture and leadership into equitable, high-level outcomes for all students. The organization does many things well, but its systems are not yet tight enough, aligned enough, or consistently applied enough to ensure that every student benefits equally from those strengths.



Which of the following, if any, DO NOT accurately represent District 25's opportunities?

46 responses



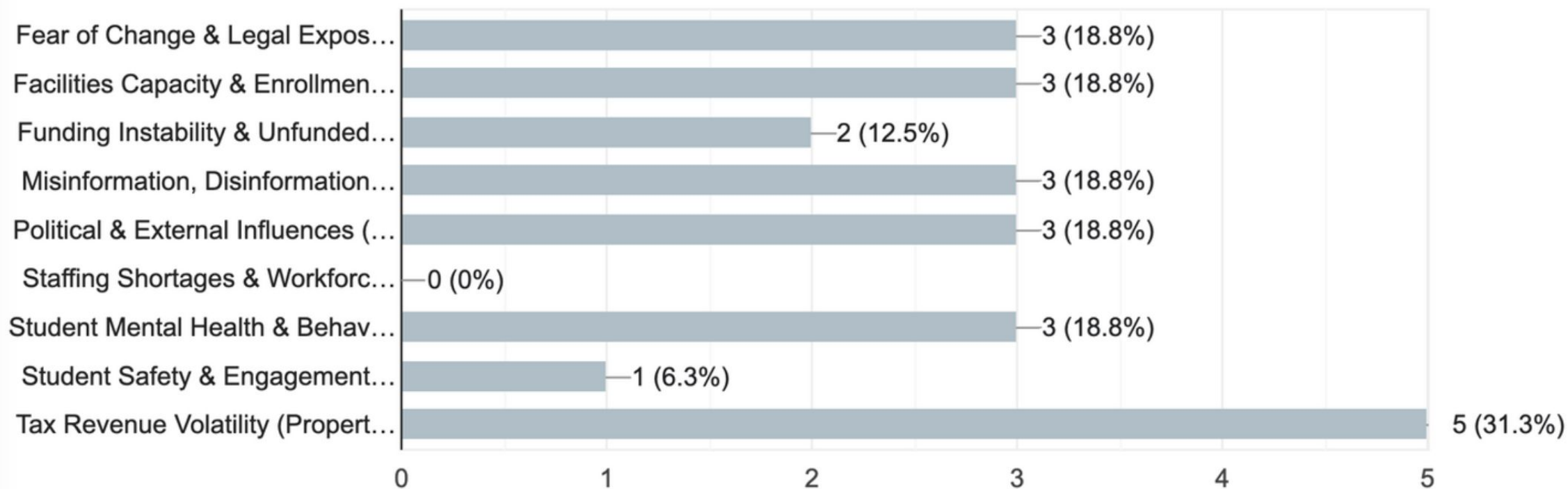
The defining opportunity for the organization is to intentionally leverage its strong, trusted leadership and positive culture to build coherent, aligned systems that deliver consistently high-quality, equitable learning experiences for every student.

The organization already has the people, trust, and community goodwill needed—now it has the opportunity to turn those strengths into consistently excellent outcomes through clear, aligned, and well-implemented systems.



Which of the following, if any, DO NOT accurately represent District 25's threats?

16 responses



The defining threat of the organization is the widening gap between rising external pressures and the organization's capacity to respond quickly, cohesively, and sustainably. The demands on the school system are increasing faster than staffing, resources, and systems can adapt—putting long-term stability, equity, and community trust at risk.





- . **Add**
- . **Subtract**
- . **Combine**
- . **Refine**



Activity Two: Understanding the importance of the Preferred Future Statement.

Characteristics of a
great Preferred Future
Statement.

Importance of the
Preferred Future
Statement



Activity 2

Characteristics
of a Great
Preferred
Future
Statement

- **Future Focused.** Provides the “big picture” and clearly describes what your organization will be like in several years.
- **Directional.** Serves as guide to organizational plans and strategies.
- **Specific.** Clear and focused enough to shape decision-making.
- **Relevant and Purpose-Driven.** Reflects the company’s response to the challenges of the day.
- **Values-Based.** Implies the set of values that are required to support the organization.
- **Challenging.** Inspires members of the organization to do great things and achieve a higher level of standards.
- **Unique and Memorable.** Highlights what makes the organization different and why it matters.
- **Inspiring.** Appealing and engages people to commit to a cause.

Activity Three: Findings of the Vision Retreat Surveys

Students

Staff

Families



Activity 3

Vision Survey, Fall 2025

Strengths

Student	Parent	Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I know how to use technology safely and responsibly. ○ I understand what success looks like in my classes ○ I work on projects or group work with other students ○ My teachers care about me as a person ○ My teachers treat me with respect and help me when I need it ○ My school spaces make it easy to work alone, in small groups, and as a whole class. ○ I feel proud and successful about my learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The district's safety and security efforts help students feel protected and supported. ○ I know how well my student is performing in school. ○ Overall, I would give the district a grade of A or B. ○ The district provides a distinctive, high-quality educational experience for students. ○ The district prioritizes students' academic growth, social-emotional learning, character development, and life skills. ○ I am satisfied with communication and relationships with my student's teachers. ○ My student is being prepared with the technological skills needed for success in a global, digital world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I know how to use technology safely and responsibly. ○ Our district fosters a collaborative, creative, and innovative learning environment. ○ The district takes a proactive approach to safety and security. ○ My students are prepared technologically to be future global workers and citizens. ○ I have the resources I need to do my job well, ○ I am satisfied with the relationship I have with grade level or department personnel. ○ My team is collaborative and productive

Opportunities

Student

- My teachers listen to me and notice when something is bothering me.
- I have a say in what or how I learn
- I have learning experiences outside the classroom.
- I get to work on real-world problems or projects that make a difference
- Students in my classes care about and respect each other.
- My teachers help me see how much I've grown as a learner
- I feel I'm being prepared for high school, college, and my future

Parent

- My teachers listen to me and notice when something is bothering me.
- The district is transparent and accountable in managing taxpayer resources.
- The district connects classroom instruction with real-world learning experiences.
- Students have opportunities to learn beyond the classroom, both virtually and through community or outdoor experiences.
- The district effectively addresses bullying concerns and ensures students feel safe at school.
- Homework reinforces learning, encourages independent thinking, and feels meaningful rather than excessive.
- Students should learn how to use artificial intelligence (AI) to prepare for future success.

Staff

- I am satisfied with the way the district measures student success.
- The current Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) effectively meets my students' needs.
- Professional development opportunities are meaningful and help me improve my instructional practice
- My school schedule provides adequate time for effective collaboration
- Salaries and benefits in our district are competitive
- Students should learn how to use artificial intelligence (AI) to be successful in their future work
- Our district prioritizes applied learning by connecting teaching methods to real-life experiences.

What **impressed you from the STUDENT Vision Survey** about their ideas from the future?



What Middle School Students Told Us About Their Vision for Learning

Students Learn Best When...

- Instruction blends **clear teacher guidance** with **active, hands-on learning**
- Learning includes **group or partner work**, especially small-group collaboration
- Lessons connect to **real-world problems**, projects, and experiences beyond the classroom
- Teachers clearly explain expectations and provide **step-by-step instruction**
- They have **choices** in how they learn, show understanding, and use technology
- Technology is used purposefully—not excessively

Students Feel Most Cared For When...

- Adults **notice them, listen to them, and respond when something is wrong**
- Teachers treat them with **patience, kindness, and respect**
- Classmates respect one another and learning environments feel safe

Grounded in Student, Staff, and Family Voice

What We Learned Across All Stakeholder Groups

Despite different perspectives, **students, staff, and parents are remarkably aligned** in what they want school to feel like and accomplish by 2030:

- Learning should be **engaging, relevant, hands-on, and connected to real life**
- Students need to feel **known, heard, safe, and supported**
- Instruction must balance **strong foundational skills with creativity, collaboration, and choice**
- Schools must support the **whole child**—academically, socially, emotionally
- Teachers need **time, trust, training, and fair compensation** to do this work well
- The district must be **transparent, consistent, and accountable**

What Staff Hope Will Be Different by 2030

- **More hands-on, real-world, and developmentally appropriate learning**
- **Increased focus on STEM/STEAM, digital literacy, executive functioning, life skills, and SEL**
- **Stronger systems for advanced learners and students in the middle range**
- **Balanced technology use, especially in earlier grades**
- **Safer schools with consistent discipline and adequate staffing**
- **A culture of trust, respect, collaboration, and shared responsibility**

A Unified Vision for the District by 2030

By 2030, our district will be a place where every student is known, challenged, supported, and prepared for the future. Learning will be engaging, meaningful, and connected to the real world. Students will develop strong academic foundations alongside creativity, collaboration, problem-solving, and social-emotional skills. Teachers will be empowered, trusted professionals with the time, resources, and support needed to meet the diverse needs of learners. Families and staff will partner with the district through transparent communication, consistent expectations, and shared accountability to ensure safe, inclusive, and high-performing schools.

What **impressed you from the STUDENT Vision Survey** about their ideas from the future?



Activity Four :

Review the district's current mission statement. Review the criteria for a good mission statement.

Consider a 2030 mission statement



Activity 4

The FOUR Pillars of a Strategic Plan

Mission

Who we are?
Why do we
exist?

Vision

What must we
become?

Values

How must we
behave?

Goals and Objectives

How we gauge
our success?

Definitions
Connections
Criteria for Success

VISION

MISSION



MISSION

MISSION: The mission pillar asked the question, “WHY?” More specifically, it asks “**Why do we Exist?**” The intent of this question is to help reach agreement regarding the **fundamental purpose of the organization.** This clarity of purpose can help establish priorities and becomes an important factor to guide decisions.”

- (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many, *Learning By Doing*, Second Edition: Solution-Tree, 2010)



A great MISSION statement:

Tells a story, in a few words that defines **why the organization exists.**

Describes the **core purpose of the district** that is persistent over time.

Answers the following questions: **Who does this organization serve** and how are they served? What is the organizational purpose?

Incorporates features of the organization that **highlight its uniqueness** and define its purpose.

Focuses on **satisfying learner, family and community needs.**



Mission

Why we Exist

ment of Financial Position

2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29
1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29
1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29
1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29



BUSINESS REPORT

ment of Financial Position

2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29
1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29
1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29
1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29	1,481.29



Current Mission

Essential Criteria for writing a great mission statement:

- *Clear Purpose*
- *Student-Centered*
- *Action-Oriented*
- *Equity & Access*
- *Concise & Focused*
- *Present-Focused*
- *Authentic & Credible*
- *Community-Aligned*

Empower an inclusive, diverse community of learners to innovate and thrive as global citizens.

Criteria for evaluating a mission statement:

- Is it **clear and understandable**?
- Is it brief enough for most people to remember and **one breath**?
- Does it clearly specify the school's **fundamental purpose**?
- Does it have a **primary focus** on a single strategic thrust (such as learning)?
- Is it broad enough to **allow flexibility in implementation**, but not so broad as to create lack of focus?
- Will it help school personnel, parents, and community **members make decisions**?
- Is it **energizing and compelling**? Does it **motivate and inspire** employee commitment?



Mission



Mission

A mission is a promise about what a school is committed to doing for its students, every day.
A **mission** is a clear statement that explains **why an organization exists** and **what it does every day to fulfill its purpose.**

Current	Criteria	Future
Empower an inclusive, diverse community of learners to innovate and thrive as global citizens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is it clear and understandable?• Is it brief enough for most people to remember and say in one breath?• Does it clearly specify the school's fundamental purpose?• Does it have a primary focus on a single strategic thrust (such as learning)?• Is it broad enough to allow flexibility in implementation, but not so broad as to create lack of focus?• Will it help school personnel, parents, and community members make decisions?• Is it energizing and compelling? Does it motivate and inspire employee commitment?	

Assessment Against Your Criteria

1. Is it clear and understandable?

Mostly, but abstract.

The language is familiar to educators, but phrases like “*global citizens*” and “*innovate and thrive*” may feel vague to students and families. People may agree with it without clearly picturing what the school actually does.

2. Is it brief enough to remember and say in one breath?

Yes.

It’s short, concise, and easy to recite—this is a real strength.

3. Does it clearly specify the school’s fundamental purpose?

Partially.

It suggests *who* the school serves (a diverse community of learners) and *what outcome* is desired (thriving), but it does **not clearly state the school’s core work**, such as learning, growth, or preparation for the future.

4. Does it have a primary focus on a single strategic thrust (e.g., learning)?

No—there are several competing ideas.

Empowerment, inclusion, diversity, innovation, thriving, and global citizenship are all important, but together they dilute focus. Learning is implied, not centered.

Consider a possible Mission Statement

Empower an inclusive, diverse community of learners to innovate and thrive as global citizens.

We help every student learn, grow, and succeed in a diverse and caring community.

We ensure every learner is challenged, supported, and prepared for our evolving world.

Together we learn, lead, and build a better future

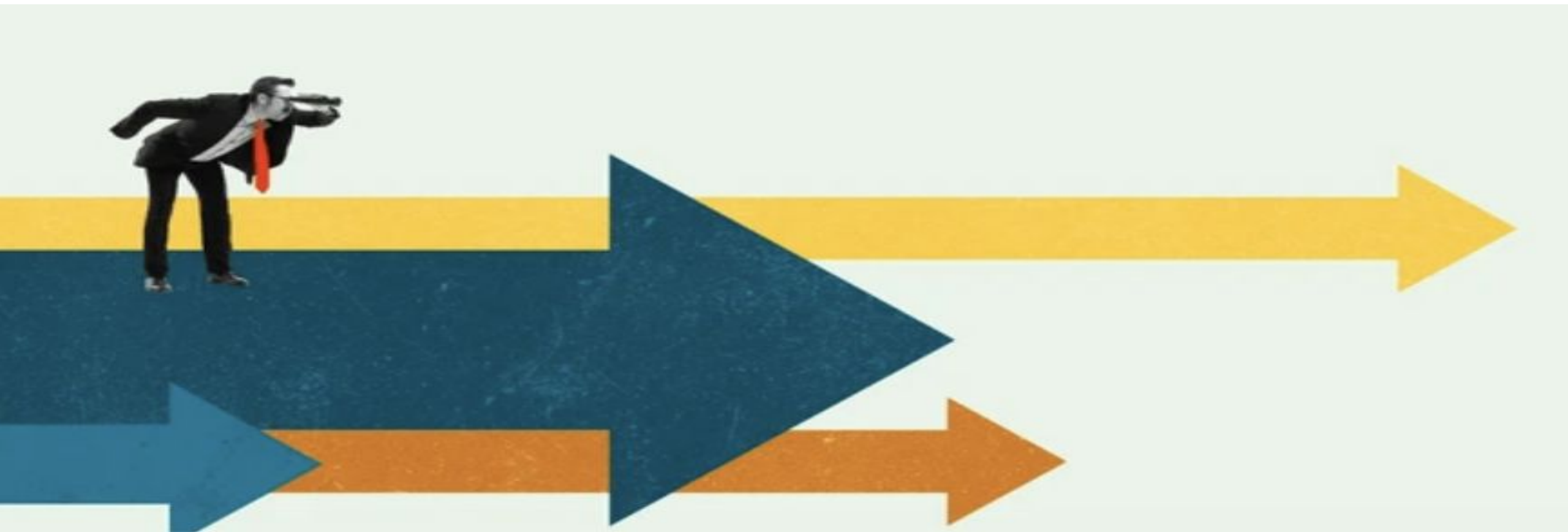
Activity Five:

Review the district's current vision statement. Review the criteria for a good vision statement.

Consider a 2030 vision statement



Activity 5



VISION

VISION

VISION: The vision pillar asks “What?”—that is, “What must we become in order to accomplish our fundamental purpose?” In pursuing this question, the district attempts to *create a compelling, attractive, realistic future that describes what they hope their district will become.* **a sense of direction and a basis for assessing both the currently reality of the district and potential strategies, programs, and procedures to improve upon that reality.**

DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many, *Learning By Doing*, Second Edition: Solution-Tree, 2010)



A great VISION statement:

Describes where the organization wants to be, typically three to five year in the future. Focuses on the **district's "North Star."**

Vividly captures the organization's **"picture of the future"**. Is brief and **easy to understand** and communicates a message that is **emotionally inspiring** to create a passion to contribute to the organization's future success.

It is audacious and **takes you way beyond where you are to the "mountain top."**

It **builds on core competencies**. It gives employees a larger sense of purpose, so they see themselves as **building a cathedral instead of laying stones**.



Vision

Cultivate a personalized environment of excellence that prepares every learner, every day, for a better tomorrow by:

- Building the knowledge, skills and attitudes of learners to be successful, contributing citizens of a global society
 - Developing resilience and perseverance in learners to problem-solve and co-create their learning
 - Embracing individuality and modeling empathy in an inclusive environment
 - Promoting learner confidence, courage, growth mindset and well-being
 - Fostering collaboration, voice and engagement with and among staff, families and our communities to partner in ensuring each learner's continuous improvement
 - Ensuring equity of resources, access and opportunities for all learners and staff to learn, work and succeed.
-

Current Vision

At its heart, a vision answers:

- **Who are our students becoming?** (Skills, knowledge, dispositions, identity)
- **What kind of learning experience do we want for every student?** (Engaging, rigorous, inclusive, relevant, supportive)
- **What do we believe is possible for all students?** (Beliefs about potential, equity, and opportunity)
- **What will success look like when we get this right?** (Not just test scores—student readiness, confidence, agency)
- **What will be different because this vision is real?** (In classrooms, relationships, instruction, culture)
- **What future are we preparing students for?** (College, career, citizenship, life in a changing world)
- **What do we refuse to compromise on?** (Non-negotiable values and commitments)
- **How should this guide our decisions?** (What we invest in, start, stop, or change)

Criteria for evaluating a vision statement:

- It is **student-centered**
- Its words are **clear and memorable**
- It is **aspirational yet realistic**
- It is **values-driven**
- The statement is **co-created**
- It serves as a **guide for making decisions.**
- It is **system-aligned**
- It **must be able to be actively lived**





Vision		
A vision is a shared picture of the future a school district wants to create for its students and community. Describes what success looks like in the long term . Describes what success looks like in the long term . Inspires and unites students, staff, families, and the community		
Current	Criteria	Future
Cultivate aa personalized environment of excellence that prepares every learner, every day, for a better tomorrow by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building the knowledge, skills and attitudes of learners to be successful, contributing citizens of a global society• Developing resilience and perseverance in learners to problem-solve and co-create their learning• Embracing individually and modeling empathy in an inclusive environment• Promoting learner confidence, courage, growth mindset and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is student-centered• It words are clear, easy to understand, and memorable• It if future focused and coherent• It is aspirational yet realistic• It is unifying and inspiring• It is values-driven• The statement is co-created• It serves as a guide for making decisions.• It is system-aligned, broad enough to guide strategy• It must be able to be actively lived	

1. Student-Centered & Values-Driven

Yes—very strong.

The vision clearly centers on *every learner* and emphasizes equity, belonging, well-being, growth, resilience, and voice. The district's values are explicit and authentic.

Strength: Deep commitment to students and inclusivity

Watch-out: The learner focus gets buried in length and complexity

2. Clear, Easy to Understand, and Memorable

No.

While the ideas are clear individually, the full statement is long, dense, and full of educational language (“co-create learning,” “personalized environment of excellence,” “equity of resources and access”).

Reality check:

Most students, families, and even staff would struggle to:

remember it

say it out loud

explain it simply to others

3. Future-Focused, Coherent, Aspirational Yet Realistic

Partially.

The phrase “*a better tomorrow*” signals future focus, but the vision reads more like a **strategic plan or list of commitments** than a compelling picture of the future.

Issue: Too many ideas competing for attention

Result: The future image isn't sharp or vivid

New Vision Statement

“A community where every learner feels valued, supported, and prepared to thrive today and tomorrow.”

What this looks like in action:

- Every student feels welcomed and respected for who they are
- Support is personalized so all learners can succeed
- Learning prepares students for school, work, and life
- Staff, families, and community members partner in student success
- Equity guides decisions about resources, access, and opportunities

“Together, we empower every learner to learn boldly, grow confidently, and shape a better tomorrow.”

What this looks like in action:

- Students take ownership of their learning and choices
- Curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving are encouraged
- Mistakes are part of learning and growth
- Student voice and leadership are valued
- Schools model empathy, collaboration, and hope for the future

Activity Six:
Review the
district's current
core values.
Review the criteria
for identifying core
values.

Consider 2030
Core Value
updates.



Activity 6

CORE

VALUES



CORE VALUES –

CORE VALUES: The values pillar asks “How must we behave?”—that is, “What beliefs must we all share to achieve our mission and vision?” In pursuing this question, the district attempts to *clarity commitments everyone must share and be responsible and accountable for to move the district forward to*. Core values are **few in number, easy to remember, be guiding principles defining a code of conduct and behavior.**

(DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many, *Learning By Doing*, Second Edition: Solution-Tree, 2010)



Great CORE VALUES:

Describe **what the organization stands for** in the context of its mission and vision.

Guiding principles, defining **the code of conduct and behavior** that is expected of all employees.

Provide **ethical guidelines for decision-making and daily conduct.**

Are **aligned with organization vision, mission and culture.**

Should be **described in vivid behavioral terms.**

Are represented in a phrase but not a sentence or paragraph.

Should **not include more than 5-7** so they can be memorable.

Current Core Values

Responsibility: This involves students taking ownership of their learning, completing assignments, and holding themselves accountable for their actions. It also extends to staff and administrators taking responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment, according to a school district's core values document.

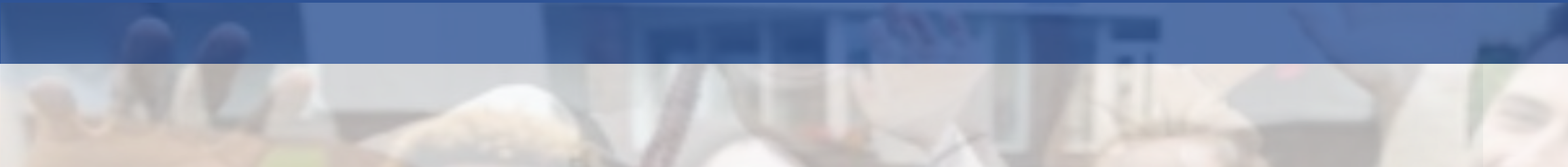
Integrity: This means being honest, ethical, and trustworthy in all interactions. It includes upholding academic honesty and demonstrating integrity in all aspects of school life.

Collaboration: This emphasizes the importance of teamwork, cooperation, and shared responsibility for student learning. It involves fostering communication and partnerships between students, teachers, parents, and the wider community.

Fairness: Ensuring equitable treatment and opportunities for all students, regardless of background or circumstances.

Kindness: Promoting a culture of empathy, compassion, and support within the school community.

Perseverance: Encouraging students to develop resilience, determination, and a growth mindset, enabling them to overcome challenges



Criteria for evaluating a core value or belief:

1. **Fundamental:** It reflects a deeply held belief, not a preference, tactic, or trend. You would uphold it even if it caused short-term disadvantage.
2. **Enduring:** It remains relevant over time and does not shift with circumstances, leadership, or market conditions.
3. **Guides Behavior:** It clearly influences decisions and actions, especially in difficult or ambiguous situations. You can point to real behaviors that demonstrate it.
4. **Non-Negotiable:** It is not compromised for convenience, profit, or popularity. Violating it would feel like a loss of identity.
5. **Distinctive:** It differentiates the person or organization from others. It is not just a generic or aspirational statement everyone claims.

Criteria for evaluating a core value or belief:

6. **Authentic:** It reflects who you *actually are*, not just who you want to appear to be. It aligns with past actions and lived experience.
7. **Actionable:** It can be translated into observable behaviors and standards. People can use it to decide *what to do* or *what not to do*.
8. **Consistent:** It is applied across situations, people, and levels of authority. Leaders and members are held to the same standard.
9. **Meaningful:** It resonates emotionally and ethically with those who hold it. People care about it enough to defend it.
10. **Testable:** Ask: *Would we keep this value if it cost us money, status, or comfort? Would we remove someone who violates it, even if they perform well?* If the answer is “no,” it’s likely **an aspiration or slogan**, not a core value.

Core Values

Core values describe what a school district believes in and how it commits to acting—especially when making hard choices. Set expectations for **behavior, decisions, and relationships**. Guide how the district **serves students, families, and staff**. Shape the district's **culture and climate**.

Current	Current	Current
<p style="text-align: center;"> Compassion & Empathy Inclusivity & Diversity Equity & Social Justice Innovation & Creativity Collaboration & Communication Resilience & Perseverance </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental: It reflects a deeply held belief, not a preference, tactic, or trend. You would uphold it even if it caused short-term disadvantage. • Enduring: It remains relevant over time and does not shift with circumstances, leadership, or market conditions. • Guides Behavior: It clearly influences decisions and actions, especially in difficult or ambiguous situations. You can point to real behaviors that demonstrate it. • Non-Negotiable: It is not compromised for convenience, profit, or popularity. Violating it 	

† Key Gaps When Measured Against the Criteria

Criteria	Assessment
Fundamental	Partially. Many read as aspirations rather than deeply defined beliefs.
Enduring	Mostly yes, though some wording reflects contemporary language that may evolve over time.
Guides Behavior	Weak. Values are broad and overlapping, making it hard to use them in real decisions.
Non-Negotiable	Unclear. There's no indication of what the district would refuse to do because of these values.
Distinctive	Limited. Nearly every district claims these same values in similar language.
Authentic	Depends on district practice; wording alone does not anchor them in lived behavior.
Actionable	Weak. Staff, students, and families may struggle to translate them into daily choices.
Consistent	Unclear. No behavioral expectations are stated across roles or levels.
Meaningful	Strong. The values carry emotional and ethical weight.

New Core Values

1. Collaboration & Community

Students work with others to learn, create, and solve problems.

What this looks like across K–8:

- Listening to and respecting different perspectives
 - Sharing responsibility and contributing ideas
 - Building relationships and resolving conflict constructively
-

2. Communication

Students express ideas clearly and listen thoughtfully across contexts.

What this looks like across K–8:

- Speaking, writing, and presenting for different purposes
- Listening and responding appropriately
- Using language, visuals, or media to convey meaning

3. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

Students analyze information, ask questions, and solve meaningful problems.

What this looks like across K–8:

- Asking “why” and “how”
- Using evidence to make decisions
- Applying strategies to new or real-world challenges

New Core Values

4. Creativity & Innovation

Students generate ideas, take risks, and create original work.

What this looks like across K–8:

- Exploring multiple solutions or perspectives
 - Designing, building, or expressing new ideas
 - Learning from mistakes and revising work
-

5. Self-Direction & Adaptability

Students take ownership of learning and respond productively to change.

What this looks like across K–8:

- Setting goals and reflecting on progress
 - Managing emotions, time, and effort
 - Adapting strategies when faced with challenges
-

6. Ethical & Responsible Citizenship

Students act with integrity and care for others and their communities.

What this looks like across K–8:

- Understanding fairness, responsibility, and impact
- Making thoughtful decisions
- Contributing positively to classrooms and communities

Activity Seven:

Learn about the importance of a Portrait. Learn about the work of the Learner/ graduate Portrait Team.

Share draft of
Learner/Graduate
Portrait
Share feedback



Activity 7

A "Portrait of a Graduate" is a school or district's vision for student success, outlining the skills and competencies needed for thriving in learning, work, and life beyond academics, often developed through community input.



Portraits

Your **North Star** for Impact

The first step to achieve lasting impact is establishing a shared vision of future-ready, deeper learning for every graduate (learner), educator, and system.

Locally developed and globally positioned, a school district's Portraits are developed with all stakeholders to **identify the durable skills and competencies** students, educators, and the district need for success in this rapidly changing, complex world.

A Portrait to Impact framework will **use both data and storytelling to showcase evidence of student growth, assess their knowledge and skills, and demonstrate real-world application.**



- I take care of my physical, emotional, and mental health needs.
- I believe in myself and advocate for what I need.



EMPOWER MYSELF

- I never stop learning and pursuing knowledge.
- I actively seek out different viewpoints and remain open to ideas that challenge my assumptions.



REMAIN CURIOUS

- I adapt to change and remain flexible, even in the face of challenges.
- I dream big and succeed by using setbacks as learning opportunities.



SHOW RESILIENCE

- I analyze complex issues and propose creative solutions to solve problems.
- I seek and check information from multiple sources before coming to conclusions.



THINK CRITICALLY



OWN MY FUTURE

- I take ownership of my learning and seize opportunities available to me.
- I have a plan and am confident in my ability to succeed in the next phase of my journey.



COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

- I thoughtfully describe my views, opinions, and ideas.
- I listen respectfully to different audiences and encourage constructive conversations.



DEMONSTRATE KINDNESS

- I am kind and compassionate in my words and actions toward all people.
- I empathize, build meaningful connections, and collaborate effectively with others.



SUPPORT MY COMMUNITY

- I actively participate in and serve my community.
- I apply my practical knowledge and visionary thinking to make a positive impact in the world.



PORTRAIT OF A D214 GRADUATE





Led by our **ASPIRATIONAL BELIEFS** and informed by data...

If we engage and challenge all students in every classroom

using our exceptional educators to strengthen relationships and engage every student in rigorous learning through real-world experiences...

And we build in agility and youth leadership
by empowering students and fostering a culture of agility...

...then we will **INSPIRE**
lifelong learners who
thrive in ***innovation***

ASPIRATIONAL BELIEFS

Students are our focus.

Youth leadership and voice is critical for student success.

Inclusivity is our strength.

We are committed to equity and working with our diverse communities to enhance experiences for all.

Hard decisions are required.

We must take bold, data-driven action to deliver results for students.

Agility is non-negotiable.

A rapidly-changing world demands innovation and adaptation.

A shared vision is our way.

Each school is unique *and* aligned with district goals so together we can go farther.







**How might a Portrait of a Learner
(Graduate) help us refresh our vision?**

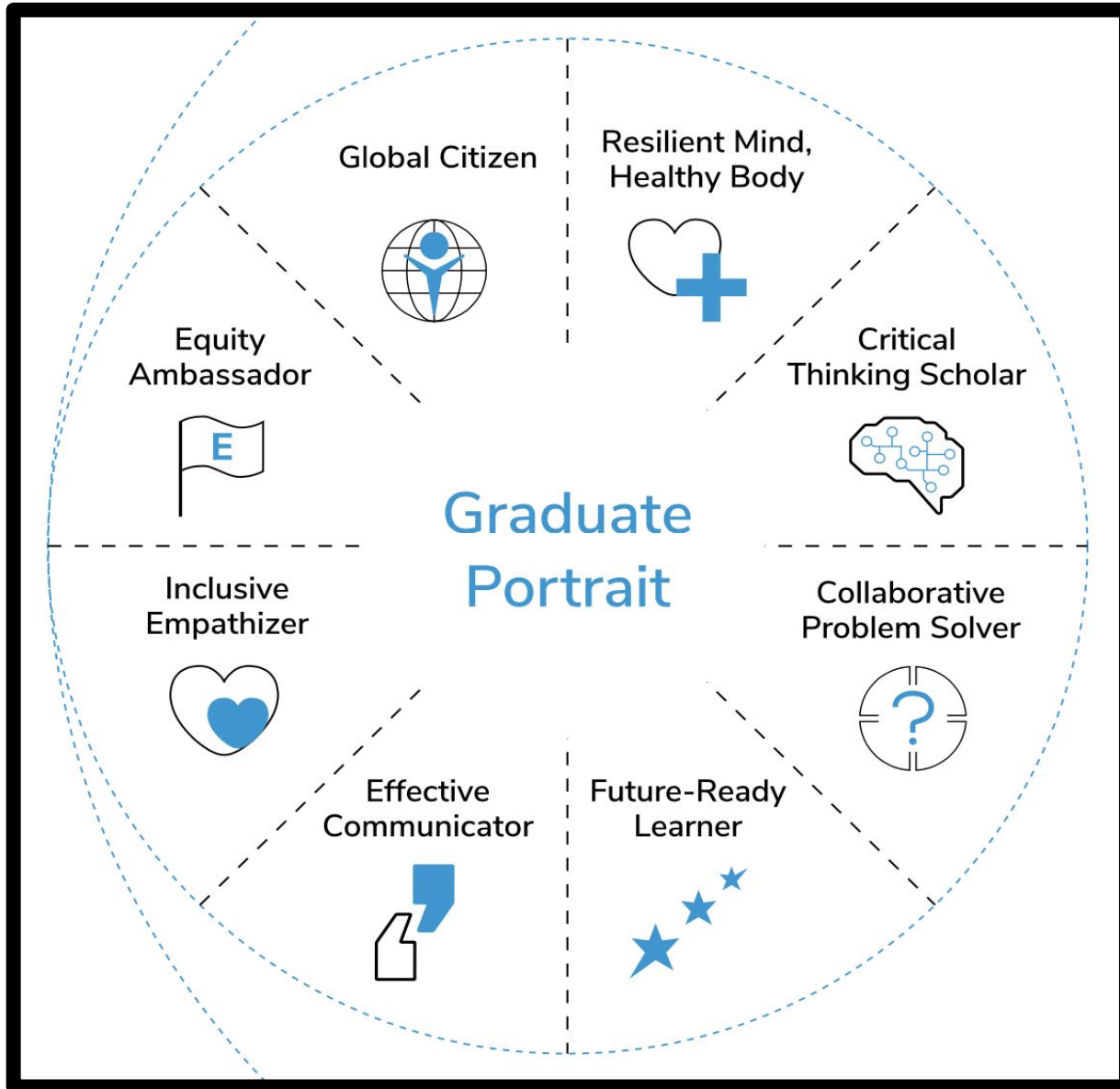
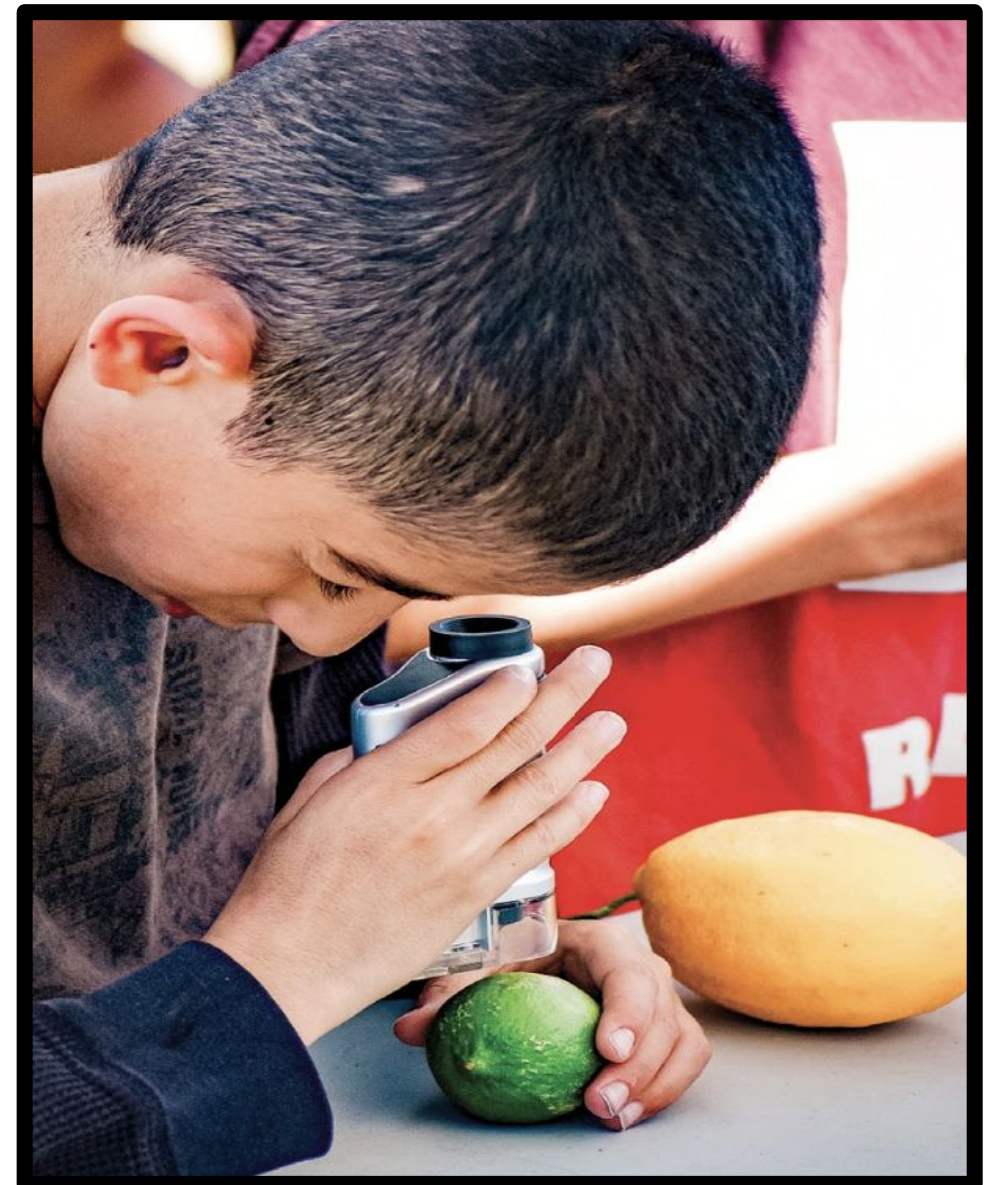


A great Learner (Graduate) PORTRAIT statement:

- Equips students with durable skills that enable them to **thrive as either employees or entrepreneurs upon entering the workforce.**
- Positions students to be “**owners**” of **their learning** and drivers of the experiences that prepare them for life and workforce readiness.
- Aims to **transform educators into facilitators of learning**, moving beyond the confines of standardized testing.

A great Learner (Graduate) PORTRAIT statement:

- Encourages **educators to embrace innovative teaching methods**, allowing for a more dynamic and exploratory learning environment.
- Enriches the student learning experience and revitalizes educators by empowering them **to experiment and take risks in their teaching practices**.
- This shared vision paves the way for **re-imagining education and optimally preparing students for a dynamic and intricate world**.



AHSD 25 LEARNER/GRADUATE PROFILE

The Transformational Learner/Graduate Portrait is a set of evidence based practices that highlight the most essential elements of effective learning. They bring focus and a common language to the shared work of ensuring all students have access to impactful and joyful learning experiences. They focus on the elements of effective learning that will prepare our students for high school and life beyond.

TOP EIGHT (Elements of a D25 Learner/Graduate)	DESCRIPTION
Critical and Creative Thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 tables out of 7 Aligned with D214 Graduate Portrait: Think Critically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use creative thinking to generate new ideas and create innovative solutions to problems. I use critical thinking to analyze, evaluate and interpret information to make sound decisions.
Communication & Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 tables out of 7 Aligned with D214 Graduate Portrait: Communicate Effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use clear and concise language to build strong relationships, exchange ideas, foster trust, and ensure a shared understanding, agreement, and common direction. I work together with others to create a positive and inclusive learning environment that values teamwork, innovation and creative solutions and perspectives to achieve a common goal.
Responsibility & Accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 tables out of 7 Aligned with D214 Graduate Portrait: Own My Future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that becoming a responsible learner is crucial for academic success and overall personal growth. I take ownership of the results of my behaviors and actions, both successes and failures.
Problem Solving & Decision Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 tables out of 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By engaging in problem-solving activities, I actively apply my knowledge, develop a deeper understanding of concepts, and improve my ability to recall information. I work hard to choose the best course of action from available options.
Literacy-Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 tables out of 7 Aligned with D214 Graduate Portrait: Support for My Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I value reading, writing, speaking, and listening, all of which are essential for comprehending information, expressing ideas, and communicating effectively across all subject areas and as a global citizen.
Empathy & Perseverance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 tables out of 7 Aligned with D214 Graduate Portrait: Demonstrate Kindness & Show Resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I connect with others, demonstrate understanding of their needs and perspectives, and interact with kindness and respect. I view challenges and setbacks as learning opportunities, bouncing back and forward ultimately leading to greater academic success and improved emotional well-being.
Flexibility & Agility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 tables out of 7 Aligned with D214 Graduate Portrait: Show Resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I adapt to changing learning environments and life situations, allowing me to learn at my own pace and take personal responsibility for my learning. By fostering a mindset of continuous learning and improvement, I adapt to new information, situations, and challenges to stay relevant and successful in an ever-changing world.
Self-Awareness & Confidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 tables out of 7 Aligned with D214 Graduate Portrait: Empower Myself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I know myself as a learner, understanding my strengths and weaknesses, and work on my weaknesses with a growth mindset. I approach challenges with a "can-do" attitude and advocate for myself to achieve academic success and address my physical, social, emotional and mental health needs.

Critical & Creative Thinking

Communication & Collaboration

Responsibility & Accountability

Problem Solving & Decision Making

Literacy- Listening, Speaking, Reading & Writing

Empathy & Perseverance

Flexibility & Agility

Self-Awareness & Confidence

Activity Eight: Reflection on the Day/ Looking Ahead

Identify next steps.

Appreciations and
Celebrations



Activity 8

Putting it ALL Together: One Coherent System

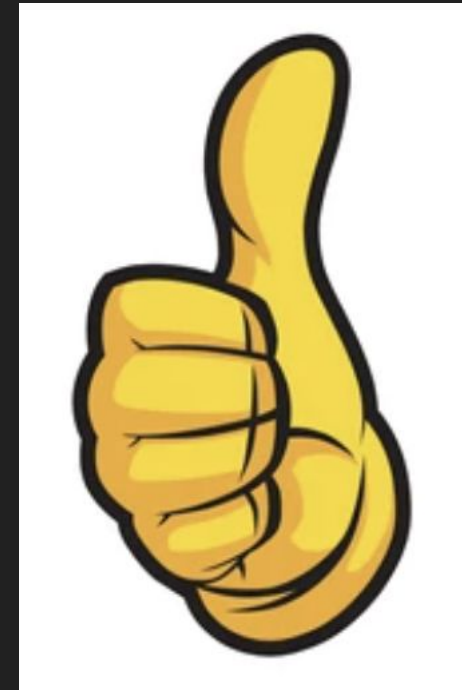
Think of these four elements not as separate statements, but as **one aligned framework that guides the entire district.**

1. Mission — *Why We Exist (Today)*

- Defines the district's **purpose and daily work**
- Answers: *What do we do, for whom, and how?*
- Grounded in current reality and action

Role in the system:

The mission anchors everyday decisions, instruction, and operations.



2. Vision — *Where We Are Going (Tomorrow)*

- Describes the **aspirational** future of the district
- Answers: *What will success look like if we fulfill our mission?*
- Forward-looking and motivating

Role in the system:

The vision inspires long-term planning and aligns improvement efforts.





3. Portrait of a Graduate — *What Success Looks Like for Students*

- Clearly defines the **knowledge, skills, and dispositions** students should have at graduation
- Typically includes academic, social-emotional, and civic competencies

Role in the system:

The portrait translates the vision into **student outcomes** and guides:

- Curriculum design
- Instructional practices
- Assessment priorities

4. Core Values — *How We Act Every Day*

- Shared beliefs and commitments that shape **behavior and culture**
- Answers: *How do we treat one another and do our work?*

Role in the system:

Core values influence decision-making, relationships, and organizational culture.



How They Align (At a Glance)

- **Mission** → What we do now
- **Vision** → What we aim to become
- **Portrait of a Graduate** → What students will know and be able to do
- **Core Values** → How we behave while doing the work

Together, they form a **strategic compass** for the entire district.



1. Clear Direction & Coherence

- Everyone—from board members to teachers to families—understands:
 - The district's purpose
 - The destination
 - What student success means
- Reduces fragmented initiatives and competing priorities



2. Stronger Instructional Alignment

- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment align directly with the Portrait of a Graduate
- Teachers have a shared understanding of:
 - Skills to develop
 - Learning experiences to prioritize
- Professional learning becomes more focused and meaningful



3. Better Decision-Making

- Leaders can ask:
 - *Does this align with our mission and vision?*
 - *Does it advance our Portrait of a Graduate?*
 - *Is it consistent with our core values?*
- Leads to more transparent, defensible decisions



4. A Strong, Unified Culture

- Core values reinforce positive behavior, equity, and trust
- Supports consistency across schools while honoring local contexts
- Improves staff morale and collective efficacy



5. Improved Communication & Community Trust

- Families and community members clearly understand:
 - What the district stands for
 - What graduates are being prepared for
- Builds confidence and shared ownership in district goals



6. Student-Centered Focus

- Keeps students—not programs—at the center of all work
- Encourages development of:
 - Academic excellence
 - Critical thinking
 - Social-emotional skills
 - Civic responsibility and adaptability





Bottom Line

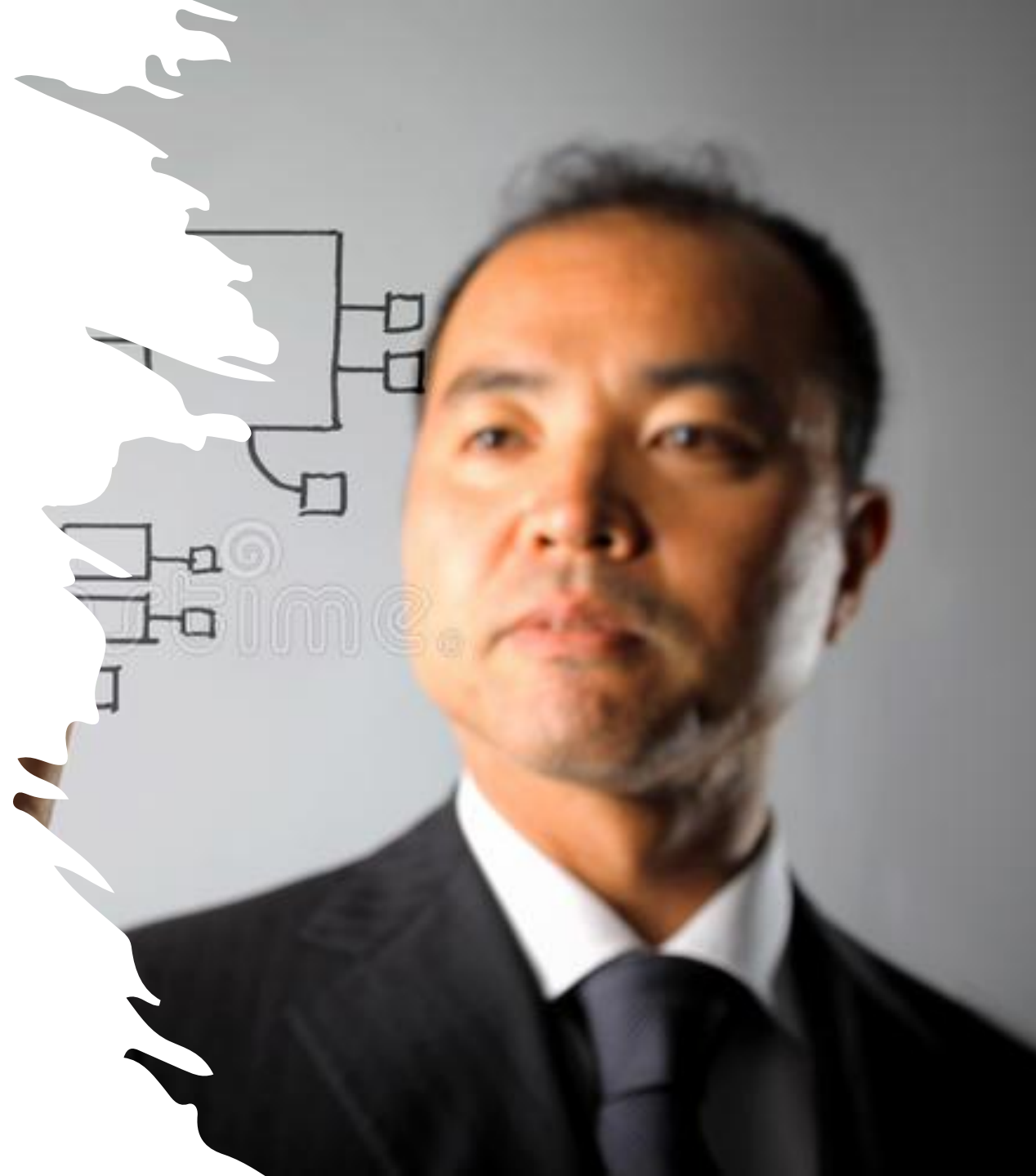
When a school district intentionally aligns its Mission, Vision, Portrait of a Graduate, and Core Values, it gains:

- Strategic clarity
- Instructional focus
- Cultural coherence
- Stronger outcomes for students

Next Steps: Looking ahead

**Previewing the Setting
Direction Retreat**

***Celebrations and
Appreciations***





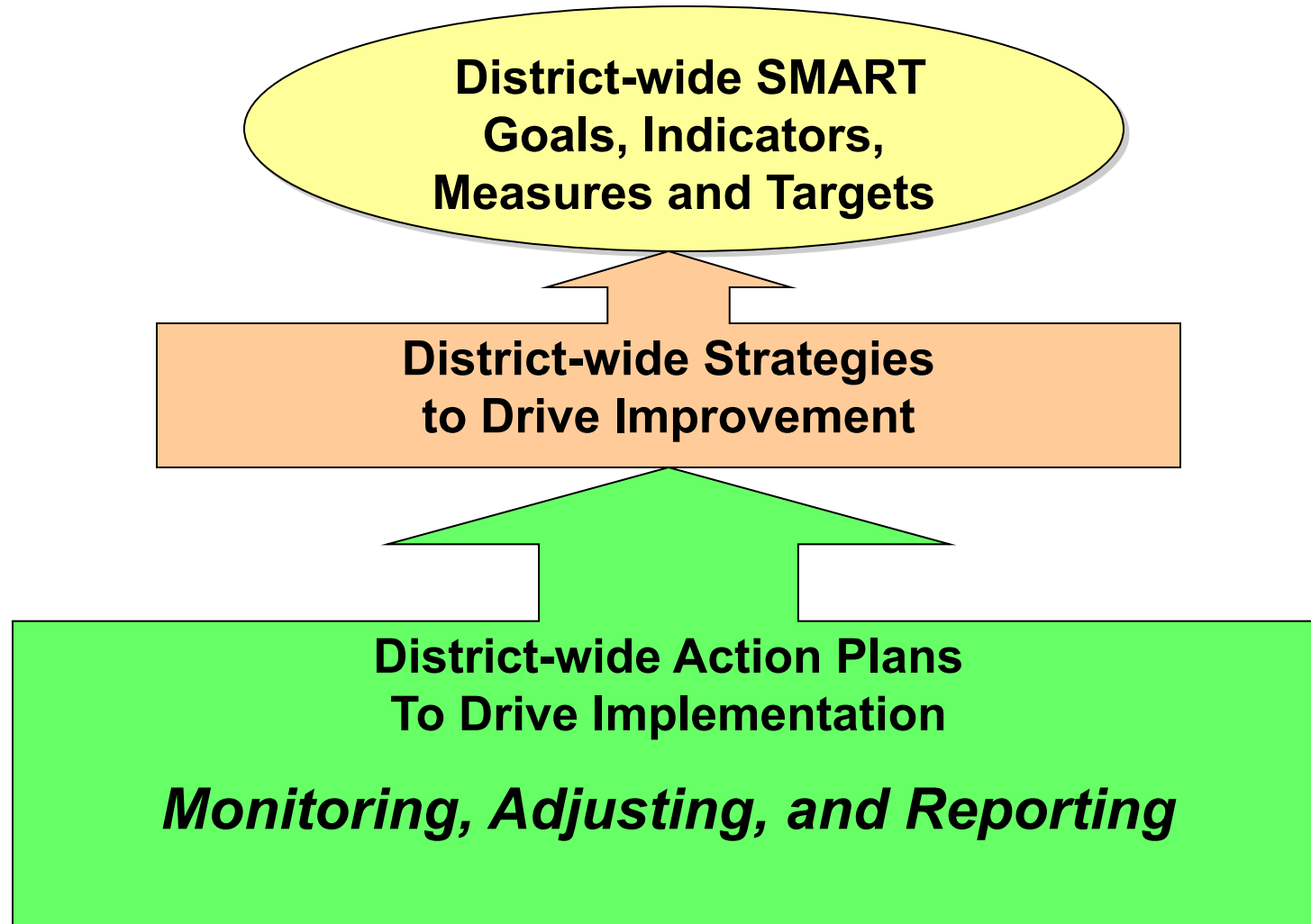
**Setting Direction Retreat: How do we get from where we are now to where we want to be?
To determine high priority strategies to accomplish long-range goals
In person 6-hour session**

“One is hard pressed to think of any organization that has sustained some measure of greatness in the absence of goals, values and missions that become deeply shared throughout the organization.”

~ Peter Senge
The Fifth Discipline



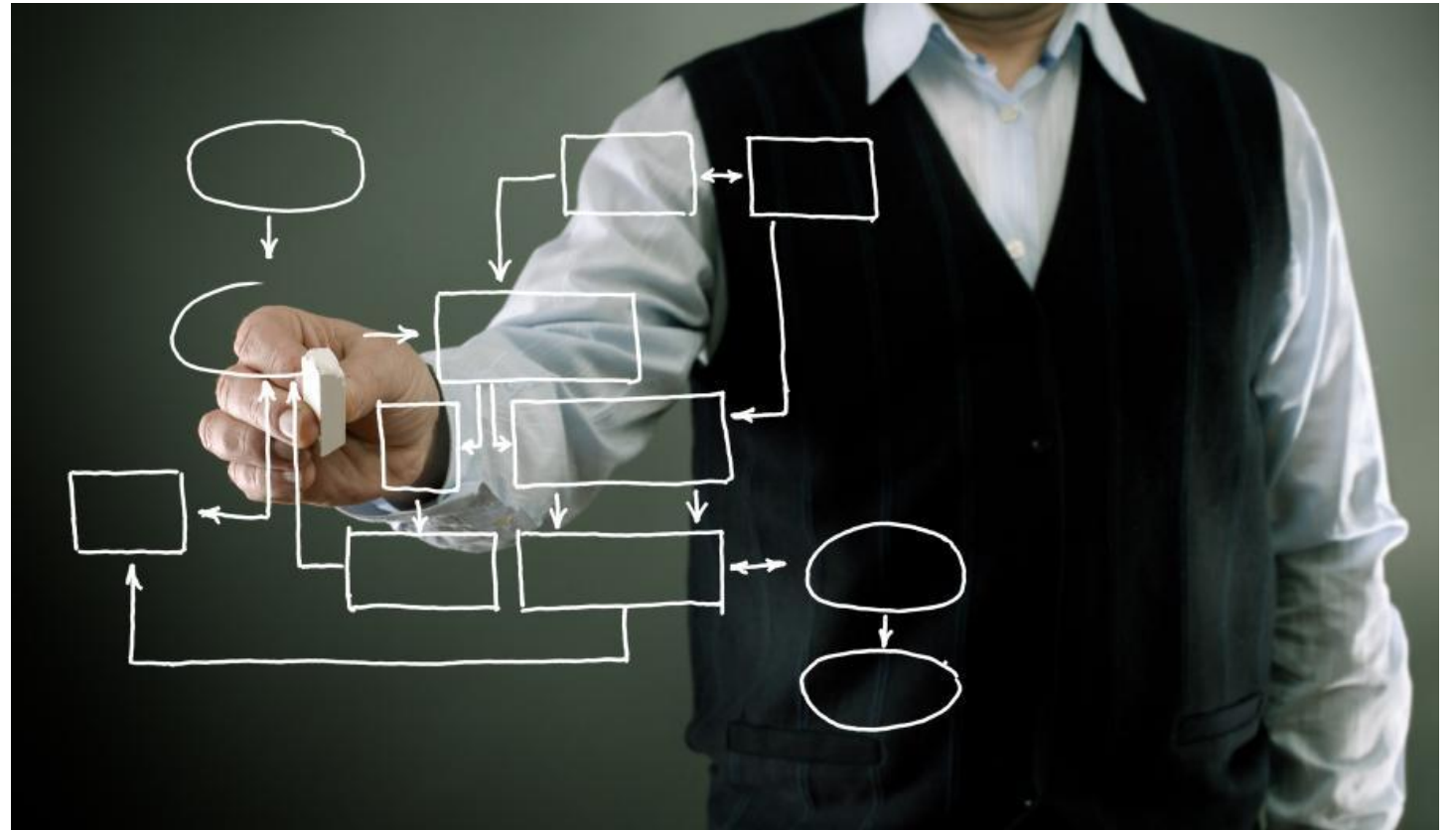
SMART goals require aligned strategies and well-designed action steps in order to provide stakeholders with a map of what's important and a plan for how to get there.



What do we
need to do to
close the gaps
and **get closer to**
realizing our
mission, vision,
values and
goals?



PLAN DRAFT



Deliverables

- One Page Strategic Plan-
Vision, Mission,
Values/Beliefs, Goals,
Strategies
- Support Document
containing details related
to the One-Page Plan



FEEDBACK AND REFINEMENT





A close-up photograph of four hands of different skin tones (light, medium, dark, and medium-dark) all giving a thumbs-up gesture. The hands are arranged in a row, with the thumbs pointing upwards. The background is blurred, showing parts of people in business attire.

**THANKS to the
Strategic Plan Team**