

Sycamore Community Schools *SAC Implementation Team*



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Why was this project proposed?

This project will focus on how the District and the Sycamore Advisory Commission (SAC) can strengthen the process of moving completed research projects toward action, or deciding, when appropriate, to archive projects that will not be implemented.

Summary of Project:

- The District seeks to identify best practices for reviewing past SAC projects, determining their current status, and either helping guide them toward implementation or documenting and archiving those that are no longer feasible or aligned with District strategic priorities.

Essential Questions to Guide the Project:

- What is an effective, transparent process for reviewing and prioritizing past SAC project recommendations?
- How can the District and SAC collaborate to support the successful implementation of projects with strong potential impact?
- What criteria should be used to decide whether a past project moves forward, is re-scoped, or is archived?
- How do other school districts or advisory bodies track and follow up on research/innovation projects over multiple years?
- What communication and reporting methods will keep the SAC members/board/community informed about project outcomes?
- How can this process connect to the Strategic Plan and Portrait of an Aviator to ensure alignment?

Prioritization & Framework

Purpose: To create an **effective, transparent, and mission-aligned process** for reviewing and prioritizing past project recommendations using the *Portrait of an Aviator* and *Strategic Plan* as guiding frameworks.

Strategic Plan

A	ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT Establish key performance milestones and learning pathways to enhance student academic achievement.	E	EXCELLENCE IN OPERATIONS Maximize financial, operational, facilities, safety, human capital, technology and maintenance capacity to ensure district success in service of the community.
V	VIBRANT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS Enhance future readiness for students through education, exposure and experiences.	S	STUDENT-CENTERED CULTURE Lead an aligned high-performing culture that is centered on an inclusive student experience that encompasses each child's health, aspirations and belonging.

PORTRAIT OF AN AVIATOR

CHARACTER

Compassion | Integrity | Fortitude

CURIOSITY

Adaptability | Ingenuity | Discernment

COLLABORATION

Inclusive | Teamwork | Results-Oriented

COMMUNICATION

Mindfulness | Connection | Leadership

Step-by-Step Process

Step 1: Inventory & Categorization

- Compiled a full list of projects with summary, status, lead, and related goal: [Master SAC Project Listing](#)
- Categorized each under the **strategic pillar** it best supports from our [Strategic Plan](#).

[Infographic Link](#)



The Rubric

Step 2: Scoring Rubric (Each criterion out of 3 for a total out of 24)

Criterion	Guiding Question	Alignment Area (Strategic Pillars)
Mission Alignment	Does the project advance academic excellence, inclusion, or innovation?	Mission/Vision
Portrait Connection	Does it build Aviator competencies (Character, Curiosity, Collaboration, Communication)?	Portrait of an Aviator
Student-Centered Impact	Does it improve student learning, well-being, or belonging?	Student-Centered Culture
Equity & Inclusion	Does it serve diverse learners and promote fairness?	Core Values
Feasibility & Capacity	Do we have resources, time, and staff capacity to complete it effectively?	Operations
Measurable Outcomes	Are success indicators clear, measurable, and aligned with strategic goals?	Academic Achievement
Community Engagement	Does it build or strengthen partnerships with families, staff, or community?	Vibrant Partnerships
Sustainability	Can its results be maintained beyond initial implementation?	Operations

Categorizing Projects

Step 3: Decision Pathway

Total from scoring rubric __ /24

Category	Decision Criteria	Next Steps
 Move Forward (19-24)	High alignment and impact; feasible within current capacity.	Confirm timeline, assign leads, and define success metrics.
 Re-Scope / Revise (13-18)	Moderate alignment but needs adaptation to meet strategic direction or resources.	Revise goals, adjust scope, and set a new review date.
 Archive / Sunset (<13)	Low alignment, limited impact, or outdated relevance.	Archive materials, document lessons, and communicate closure transparently.

Sharing Outcomes & Monitoring Progress

Step 4: Transparency & Engagement

- Publish the **project review matrix** (title, pillar, decision, rationale).
- Share rationale linked to *Strategic Plan Objectives* and *Portrait traits*.
- Provide details regarding assigned owners and next steps once established.
- Possibly Invite feedback/input via staff forums, student voice, and/or community surveys.

Step 5: Continuous Monitoring

Projects that move forward should:

- Include **periodic check-ins** via SAC meetings & Board Meetings
- Conduct an **end-of-year assessment** to determine if the initiative should continue, evolve, or archive.

Example 1

Project: Healthy Start Times

Original Goal: Identify and develop recommendations, based on research and feasibility studies, to adjust school start times to a healthier time frame.

Findings: The research showed that high school start times after 8:00 am are recommended; task force created to understand how Sycamore might consider adjusting their start times.

Implementation Rubric Decision: ??? out of 24

Next Step:

[Master SAC Project Listing](#)

Example 2

Project: Sycamore vs. Private Schools

Original Goal: The District seeks to identify, research, and develop recommendations to retain our students within our school District.

Findings: Decisions are largely made at early ages; Recommend the District expand early & timely community engagement/education about our schools via Open Houses, Summer Camps, Social Media, etc. to coincide with Private School recruitment initiatives.

Implementation Rubric Decision: 18 out of 24

Next Step:  *Re-Scope*

Outcome

This process ensures all initiatives are:

- **Aligned** with Sycamore's mission and strategic plan.
- **Reflective** of the Portrait of an Aviator.
- **Transparent, inclusive, actionable, and sustainable.**



Learnings from Advisory Groups at Peer Districts



Clear Purpose & Scope

- Topics are **collaboratively selected by Board/Administration** with cross-functional input
- Intentional about **matching questions to the right group** (general community vs. topic experts)
- **Clear with project teams upfront** about scope: information seeking vs. intent to take action

Limited, Focused Work

- Most districts **limit work to 2–4 projects per year** to maintain depth and momentum
- Projects are selected based on **strong alignment to district goals and likelihood of action**

District Ownership & Timely Decisions

- **Boards and/or administration own implementation decisions, not the advisory group**
- As project presentations wrap up for the year, **immediate decisions are made:**
 - Assigned to administration for feasibility and execution,
 - Embedded into strategic planning and goal-setting cycles, or
 - Clearly paused or tabled with rationale back to the group

Intentional Follow-Up and Feedback Loops

- **Advisory members are kept informed** even if implementation is delayed or not feasible
- Some districts **re-engage original members** during implementation or for feedback/transparency
- **Dedicated time at Board Meetings** for Advisory Group updates

Practices that are Working at Peer Districts

Integration into District Systems

Advisory work is embedded into board retreats, strategic planning, annual goal-setting, and ongoing administrative review cycles—preventing projects from becoming disconnected or stagnant.

Action-Oriented Design

Each project is **intended to produce a concrete outcome** (action item, decision, or next step), even if full implementation is not immediate.

Realistic Expectations About Implementation

Districts clearly communicate that **not all studies will result in immediate action**; some are informational, phased, or dependent on future conditions.

Smaller, Targeted Project Teams

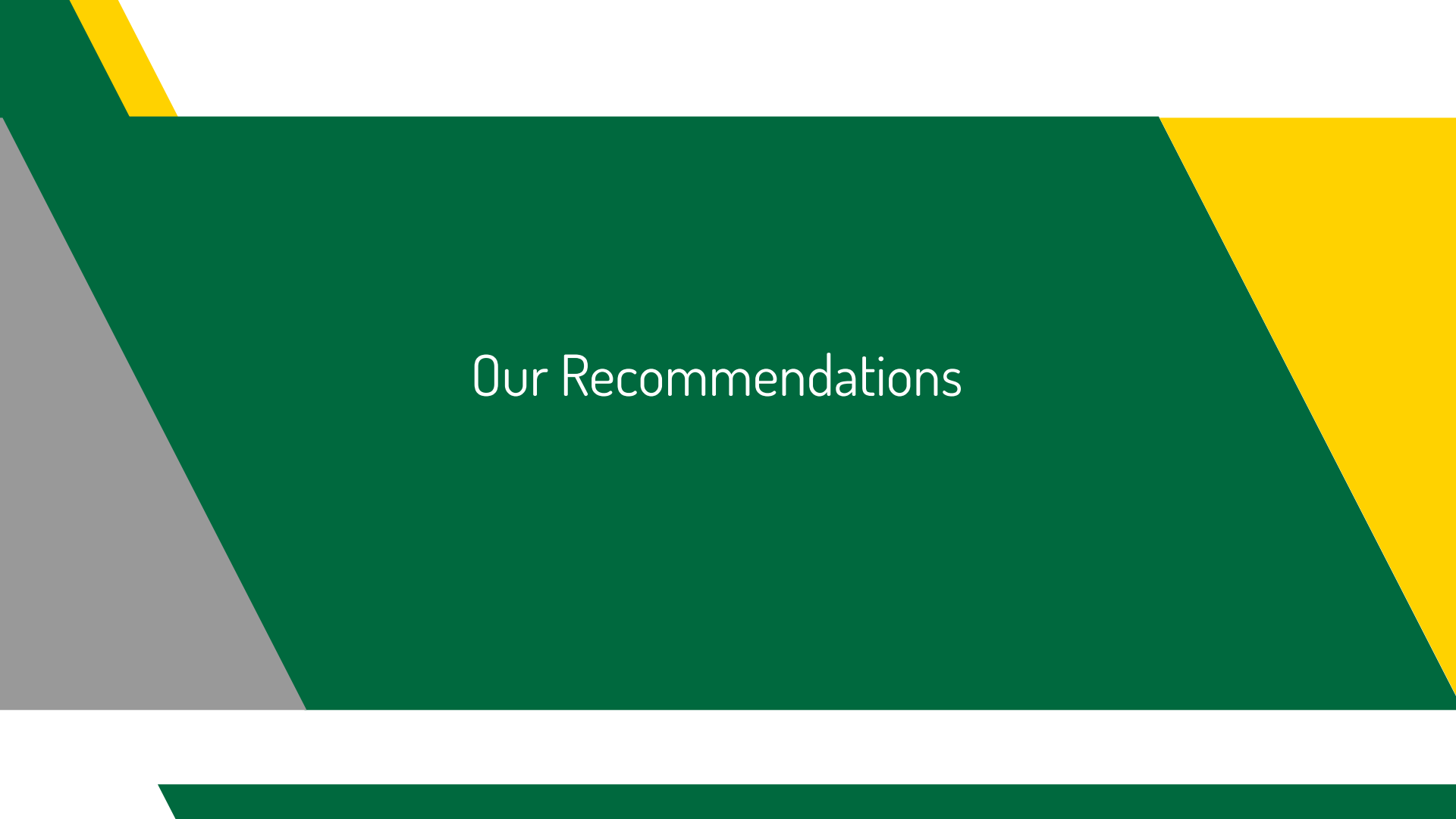
Focused teams and limited number of projects increases rigor and feasibility of recommendations. If needed, separate work groups are created with subject-matter experts (i.e. facilities or financial).

Clear Ownership of What Happens Next

Boards and administration explicitly own decisions about implementation, re-scoping, or archiving, ensuring timely action and accountability once advisory work is completed.

Strong Communication & Visibility

Districts publicly post members, current and past topics, and presentations. **Administration regularly credit advisory groups** when changes result from their work. **Monthly Board Meeting updates** keep the community informed of progress.



Our Recommendations

Recommendations

Past Projects

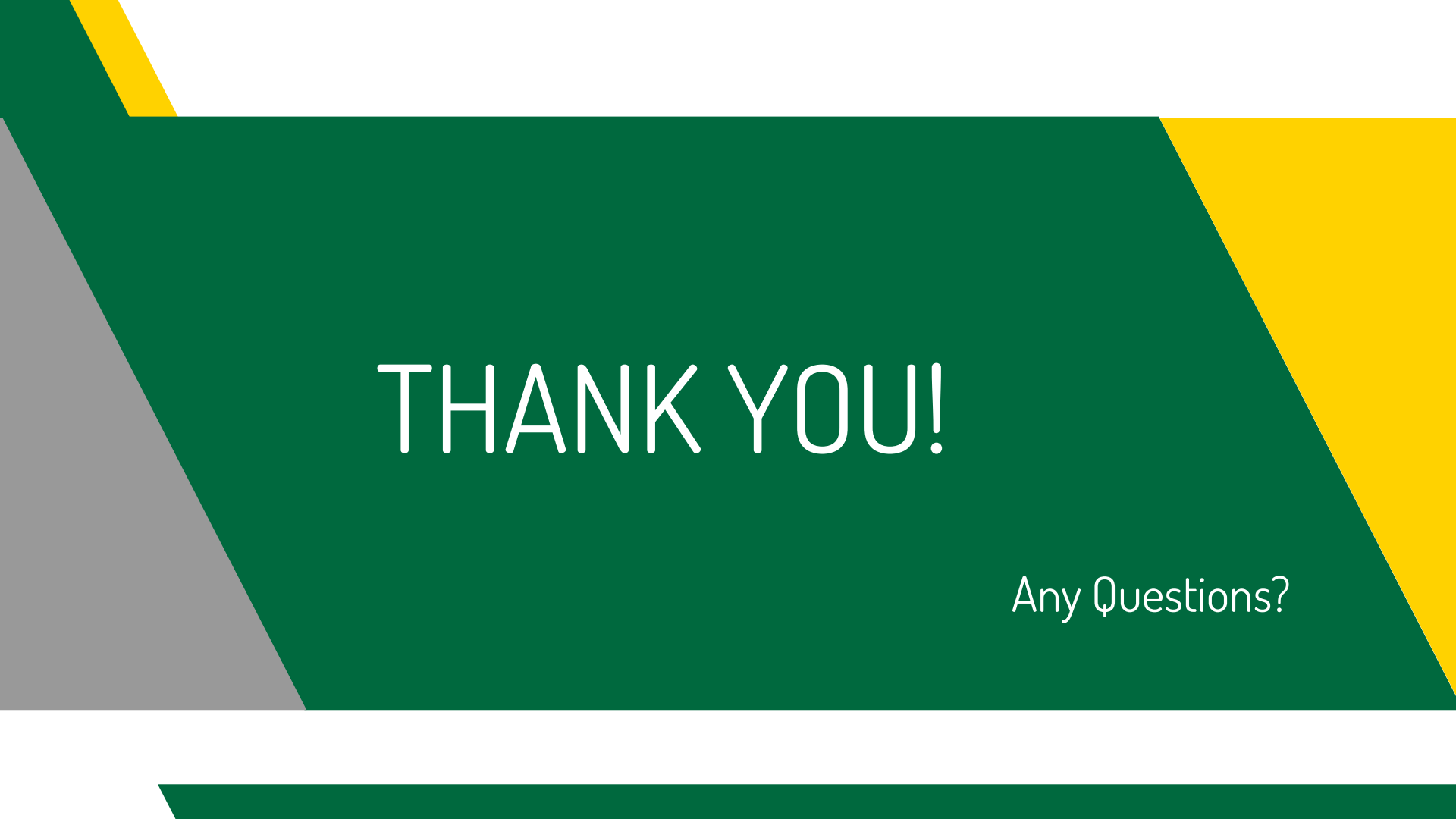
- **Rubric scoring system was applied to the past projects** with recommendations: [Master SAC Project Listing](#)
- **Recommend an additional review** by Board, Superintendent and other relevant stakeholders.
- For all 'Move Forward' and 'Re-Scope' projects, **Board and/or Superintendent assign owners to create action plans** and communicate back to SAC.

Current Projects

- Recommend that **current SAC projects be evaluated using the rubric scoring** at the conclusion of this year. [Added tab to Master list.](#)
- Based upon that evaluation, the Board can make a **timely decision whether to implement, re-scope or archive each current project.**
- Board/Superintendent should **assign owners and create action plans** by start of next school year.
- **Provide project update to SAC at first meeting of the year.**

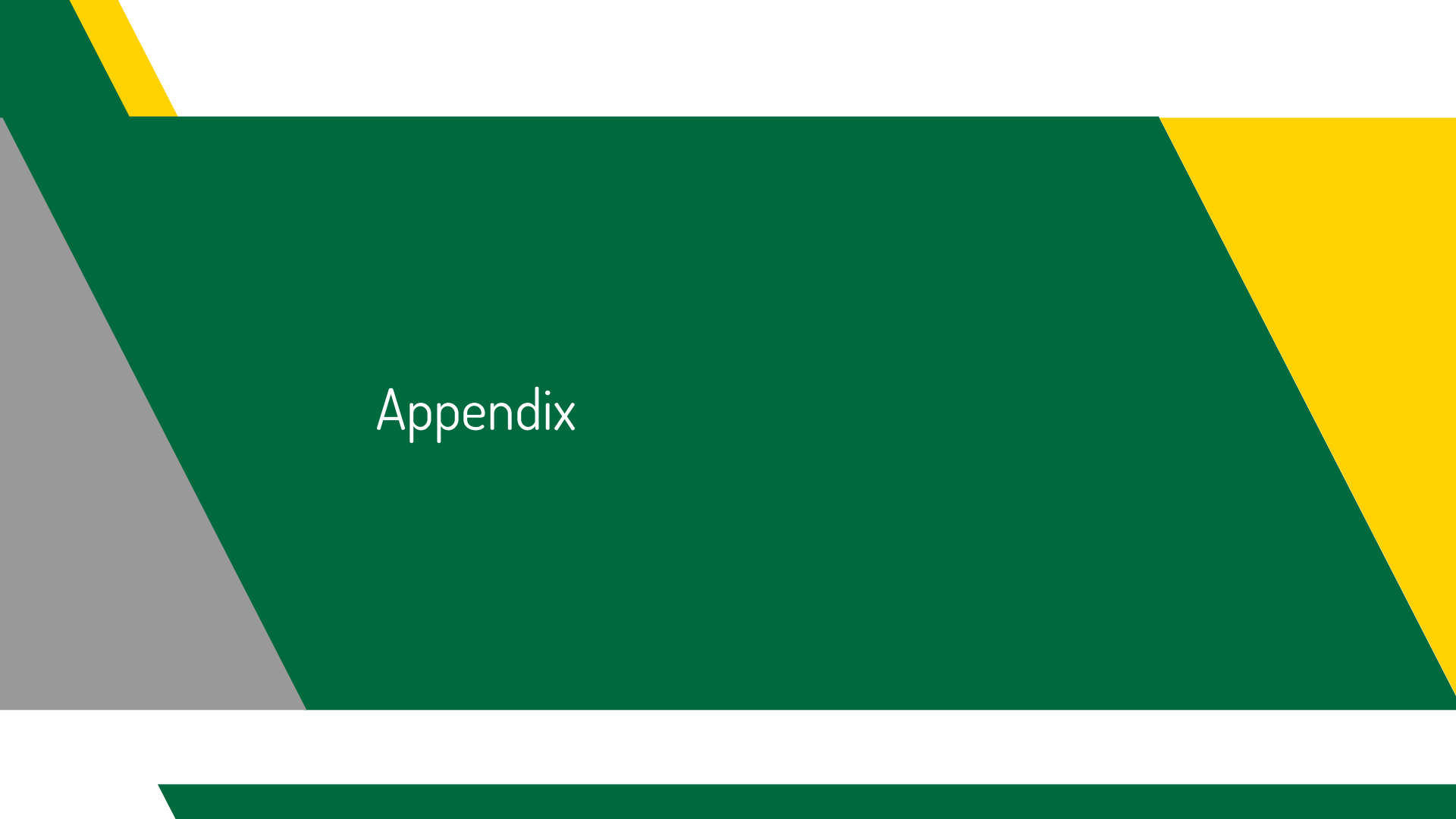
Moving Forward

- **Find ways to embed SAC advisory work into the District and Board process** vs. independent operation (pending May project team recos).
- **Maintain a running list of potential SAC projects throughout the year**, capturing ideas from SAC, Board, staff, community, etc. as they arise. Added additional tab to [Master SAC Project Listing.](#)
- **Use the scoring rubric to evaluate projects for the following year before assigning to SAC.** Determines project relevance and viability before work begins.



THANK YOU!

Any Questions?



Appendix

Summary of Peer District Advisory Groups

[Click Here for Full Interview Notes](#)

District	Group Name	Primary Purpose	Timing	Scope of Work	Group Size	Terms	Project Volume	Ownership	Implementation / Follow-Up Practices
Loveland	Community Advisory Team (CAT) (replaced Planning Commission)	Community dialogue & actionable feedback	Standing group (4x/year)	Discussion of key district topics with required action item each meeting	Community members; admin-led	Not specified	4 topics/year	Administration	Each meeting ends with a clear action; admin executes; larger research assigned to expert groups
West Clermont	Community Advisory Committee (CAC)	Targeted research & recommendations	Activated only when tasked by Board	Defined research questions (e.g., start times, strategic plan, finance)	Select community members; some continuity across projects	2-year terms (flexible)	Infrequent (project-based)	Board → Superintendent	Board decides feasibility; admin studies cost/impact; CAC kept informed during implementation or pause
Madeira	Planning Commission	Research & recommendations aligned to district goals	Standing group (monthly)	Narrow, high-likelihood-of-implementation studies	Small teams (5–6) of parents & staff	No formal terms	≤4 projects/year	Board & Superintendent	Embedded into annual planning, admin 90-day plans, and goal-setting cycles
Wyoming	Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)	Research, studies, and community relations	Standing group (monthly)	Board-approved studies (some informational, some actionable)	~12 members: community, staff, board, admin	2-year terms	Typically 2 projects/year	Board	Board determines implementation at summer retreat; admin executes; CAC updated regularly

SAC Implementation Project – Project List Review 2021-2025

			Assessment Ranges	
			19 - 24	Move Forward
			13 - 18	Re-Scope
			<13	Archive/Sunset
Project Year		Project Name	Assessment	Total (Out of 24)
2024 - 2025		SAC Alternative to Suspension	Move Forward	22
2024 - 2025		Healthy Schools Start Time	Move Forward	23
2024 - 2025		Sycamore vs. Private	Re-Scope	18
2023 - 2024		SAC Community Recreational Sports/Activities	Move Forward	20
2023 - 2024		SAC Junior High Education Teaming Model	Archive/Sunset	12
2023 - 2024		SAC Workforce & Economy	Move Forward	21
2023 - 2024		SAC - Healthy Start times	In Progress	
2023 - 2024		SAC Ambassador	Move Forward	21
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2022 - 2023		SAC Cultural Comparisons	Move Forward	23
2022 - 2023		SAC Bylaws Review	N/A	
2022 - 2023		SAC - Road Map for Creating Vaping Policy and Procedures	Move Forward	19
2022 - 2023		#WeAreAviators	Move Forward	22
2022 - 2023		Wellness for Sycamore Staff and Faculty	Archive/Sunset	13



2024-2027

SYCAMORE
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
**STRATEGIC
PLAN**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3
MISSION, VISION
& VALUES

4
BOARD OF
EDUCATION

5
DISTRICT OFFICE
ADMINISTRATORS

6
BUILDING
ADMINISTRATORS

7
PORTRAIT OF
AN AVIATOR

8
ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT

9
VIBRANT COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS

10
EXCELLENCE IN
OPERATIONS

11
STUDENT-CENTERED
CULTURE



OUR MISSION

Create a culture of academic excellence through inclusive and innovative learning opportunities for the whole child.

OUR VISION

Empower all learners to reach their full potential in a globally competitive world.

OUR VALUES

Academic Excellence
Diversity and Inclusion
Community
Character
Collaboration



MRS. SARA BITTER
President

MR. VICTOR HARRIS
Vice President

MR. PAUL BALENT
Board Member

DR. ADRIENNE JAMES
Board Member

DR. LYNNE STIEGER
Board Member

BOARD OF EDUCATION

DISTRICT OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS

Chad Lewis
Superintendent

Jenni L. Logan
Treasurer

Brody Burson
Assistant Treasurer

Brad Lovell
Assistant Superintendent

Meghan Lawson
Assistant Superintendent

Becky Tompkins
Director of Curriculum
and Instruction

Christian Long
Director of Technology

Stacey Spencer
Director of Student Services

Misty Belfrom
Special Education Coordinator

Lori Rosen-Malott
Special Education Coordinator

Lisa Zelvy
Pupil Support Coordinator

Amber Aldrich
Preschool Coordinator

Mallory Bonbright
Community Relations Director

Mark Zimmerly
Director of Operations

Michael Miller
Transportation Director

Liz Wellman
Child Nutrition and
Wellness Director



BUILDING ADMINISTRATORS

MAPLE DALE

Mindy Zellner
Principal

Danielle Gray
Assistant Principal

SYMMES

Jessica Ralston
Principal

Dr. India Chambers-Richardson
Assistant Principal

E.H. GREENE INTERMEDIATE

Greg Cole
Principal

Tricia Constable
Assistant Principal

Natalie Moss
Interim Assistant Principal

BLUE ASH ELEMENTARY

Natalie Jimenez
Principal

Lindsay Combs
Assistant Principal

MONTGOMERY

Dr. Amy Debelak
Principal

Sally Ganz
Assistant Principal

SYCAMORE JUNIOR HIGH

Janelle Schunk
Principal

Tyler Meyer
Assistant Principal

Samantha Helms
Assistant Principal

SYCAMORE HIGH SCHOOL

Taylor Porter
Principal

Dr. Princess Crenshaw
Assistant Principal

Ashwin Corattiyil
Assistant Principal

Katelyn Robinson
Assistant Principal

Ashley Gallahar
Assistant Principal

Andrew Ovington
Athletic Director



Portrait of an

AVIATOR

Purposeful Learner • Innovative Collaborator
Dynamic Problem Solver • Empathetic Communicator
Respectful Global Citizen



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Establish key performance milestones and learning pathways to enhance student academic achievement.

OBJECTIVE 1

Ensure alignment of current and future academic programming to meet the needs of the students and community.

ACTION STEPS



- Provide professional development opportunities and extended training for all staff members to support the needs of all students in the district.
- Evaluate resources and programming for all learners across all grade levels. Consider the expansion of services to meet the diverse needs of our students.
- Promote and direct pathways for college/career readiness while fostering a culture of high expectations for all students.

OBJECTIVE 2

Prioritize the continued implementation of an aligned K-12 MTSS Framework that supports the needs of all learners in Sycamore Community Schools.

ACTION STEPS



- Provide professional development opportunities and extended training for all staff members to support the needs of all students in the district.
- Establish and promote high academic and behavioral expectations for all learners.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Enhance future readiness for students through education, exposure and experiences.

OBJECTIVE 1

Create connections with alumni, staff, and community to impact the Aviator experience for all students.

ACTION STEPS



- Leverage community partnerships to provide enriching experiences for all students.
- Explore options to set up a community education foundation.
- Establish and strengthen community partnerships with local businesses and organizations.

OBJECTIVE 2

Provide dynamic communications in multiple forms that reach all stakeholders in meaningful ways.

ACTION STEPS



- Provide regular, clear, easily accessible information on school finances to foster trust, accountability, and informed decision-making among all stakeholders.
- Continually update user-friendly district website.
- Evaluate external communication channels, including social media, press releases, and community outreach. Ensure consistency, effectiveness, and alignment of district communications with the district's mission and vision.





EXCELLENCE IN OPERATIONS

Maximize financial, operational, facilities, safety, human capital, technology and maintenance capacity to ensure district success in service of the community.

OBJECTIVE 1

Develop effective strategies for attracting, hiring, and retaining high- quality staff.

ACTION STEPS



- Enhance recruitment efforts to attract and retain qualified candidates.
- Prioritize professional learning to foster career growth and job satisfaction.
- Review and adjust salary structures and benefits to remain competitive and attract top staff.

OBJECTIVE 2

Maintain high standards for fiscal responsibility.

ACTION STEPS



- Develop a communication plan that provides timely financial information in a userfriendly format.
- Maintain facilities to ensure safety, longevity, and optimal functionality for all stakeholders.
- Consistently review the priorities and strategic alignment of the district budget.

OBJECTIVE 3

Ensure the safety and security of all students and staff.

ACTION STEPS



- Conduct regular assessments to identify and address vulnerabilities.
- Provide ongoing training for emergency response procedures for students and staff.
- Promote awareness and encourage reporting of any safety concerns within the school community.



STUDENT-CENTERED CULTURE

Lead an aligned high-performing culture that is centered on an inclusive student experience that encompasses each child's health, aspirations and belonging.

OBJECTIVE 1

Foster a positive school climate for academic success and student well-being.

ACTION STEPS



- Build and maintain authentic relationships with students and families.
- Communicate clear behavior expectations and reinforcement strategies conducive to student success and well-being.
- Collaborate with families and community to reinforce positive behaviors in and out of school.

OBJECTIVE 2

Cultivate an inclusive and welcoming school environment where all students feel valued, respected, and supported in their academic and social-emotional growth.

ACTION STEPS



- Promote and celebrate cultural diversity and foster inclusivity districtwide.
- Build and maintain social-emotional support for students and staff.
- Create opportunities for students to build positive relationships and connections.

OBJECTIVE 3

Ensure all students graduate equipped with the competencies outlined in the Portrait of an Aviator.

ACTION STEPS



- Integrate rigorous content and durable skills into daily classroom practice for deeper learning.



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Cincinnati, OH 45242

Sycamore Community Schools

Project Review & Prioritization Flowchart (2024–2027)

A clear, mission-aligned process for evaluating past and ongoing initiatives through the lens of the **Sycamore Strategic Plan** and the **Portrait of an Aviator**. This framework ensures transparency, alignment, and a student-centered approach to decision-making.

1 Inventory & Categorize

List all past and paused projects. Note purpose, outcomes, and responsible team. Group each under one of the four strategic pillars: Academic Achievement, Vibrant Community Partnerships, Excellence in Operations, or Student-Centered Culture.

2 Score Each Project (Rubric 1–5)

Rate each project on eight key criteria: Mission Alignment, Aviator Connection, Student Impact, Equity, Feasibility, Measurable Outcomes, Community Engagement, and Sustainability.

3 Categorize Decision Path

- Move Forward – High alignment & feasible.
- Re-Scope – Moderate alignment; needs revision.
- Archive – Low alignment or outdated.

4 Communicate & Engage

Publish the project matrix with pillar, decision, and rationale. Share updates through leadership meetings, staff bulletins, and community channels. Invite input from students, staff, and families.

5 Monitor & Reflect

Conduct quarterly check-ins and end-of-cycle reflections. Determine if each project should sustain, evolve, or sunset based on outcomes and strategic alignment.

Integration with Portrait of an Aviator

Aviator Trait	How It Shapes the Process
Character	Ensures fairness, integrity, and recognition of prior efforts.
Curiosity	Encourages innovative thinking when re-scoping or revising projects.
Collaboration	Engages cross-departmental and community voices in decision-making.
Communication	Promotes transparency and clear updates for all stakeholders.

Outcome: Mission-driven • Student-centered •
Transparent • Sustainable

Andrew Setters - Loveland Communications Director (513-675-6823)

setteran@lovelandschools.org

Shared links (from Andrew):

- Planning Commission, our historic group, which seems more like the SAC. Their reports and presentations are on our website here: lovelandschools.org/administration/board-of-education/planning-commission
- Community Engagement, which outlines our current Community Advisory Team (CAT), Town Halls, Survey, etc: lovelandschools.org/engage
- Loveland Lobbying, where we posted info to activate our community to lobby Columbus lawmakers during the budget process last spring and summer: lovelandschools.org/lobby.

Call Notes - 1/15/26:

- In the past they had a planning commission that did board work, research, etc. (archives are on their website for us to look at)
- Members had the same questions after the research & presentations - it was a lot of work and effort, and nothing really came out of it (similar to SAC)
- That group went away and they introduced this new group (Community Advisory Team) that is led by the administration to get feedback on key issues
- They have 4 meetings per year on specific topics brought forth by the administration (there is a page on their website that outlines this)
- They gather feedback and use it to help with make decisions; the goal is to be more actionable and the group sees concrete changes from the discussions
- **They leave each meeting with one action item that they will execute**
- Topics they covered and the corresponding action items:
 1. Student mental health - they made a change to the high school start time - that was a key output from that community discussion
 2. State Funding/school funding was another meeting's topic - the action item was to take that to the community via "Finance Fridays" to let the community know about how school funding works. They also have a lobbying section on their website to give resources for the community to use to communicate with state representatives. Gives the community the biggest areas they need to advocate for, and contact information for lawmakers to make it easy for them to advocate
 3. Loveland tiger pathways - college readiness - need more people to know about it action was to create visibility
 4. 4th meeting was about facilities - coming out of it, put together a small group of experts to do a deep dive on their buildings and create recommendations to take to the board - put it through the rigor needed to get the right recommendations
- If they have a large topic they need heavy research on, they will put together a group of experts to conduct that work and present back to the board. They feel this works better than the previous planning commission
- General community communications:
 1. Have a few town halls a year that typically talk about finances (broadest appeal and what the community is most concerned about)
 2. Community Advisory Team is in the 2nd year of existence- it's an opportunity for community to get to know the administration, give feedback, and nudge them along on where changes can be made
 3. They do surveys with the community to give people a chance to voice concerns and give feedback more anonymously

- Vouchers Hurt Ohio - not sure if they've been approached by it - but his take on it is to stay neutral
- They created resources for the community to lobby to the state (linked above)

KEY LEARNINGS:

- When they had the research-based groups, they encountered similar issues to our team. Ultimately they decided to disband it and move exclusively to a community dialogue group
- Every initiative they take the CAT group through MUST have an action item coming out of it - so pick one thing that you can take action on and make it happen
- They assign the Board projects requiring research/robust recommendations to a group of experts pertaining to that topic vs. generalized community members to get more robust and strong recommendations
- Making a call on the question being asked by the board/superintendent- is this appropriate for this group to do, or does it need to be a more tailored group that works on it?

Ellie Preston- West Clermont Chief Learning Officer/Assistant Superintendent

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513-943-5030

Links:

<https://www.westcler.org/our-team/board/cac>

Call Notes - 1/15/26:

- CAC hasn't been in existence for a long time - it is a formed group but is only brought together as needed
- They are only brought together when the board has tasked them with something - they don't just meet monthly or have ongoing dialogue. Their members have 2 year terms
- They have only done 2 projects so far:
 - **Start Times at the middle school** - tasked to do research, come with recommendations on what they should do
 - They didn't get into the weeds of the details - more from the perspective of what's best for students
 - After the presentation, the board then tasked the superintendent and their team to investigate how to make it happen, the cost, etc.
 - It became cost prohibitive so they tabled the project
 - The board was very interested in moving forward, but financially made it unviable
 - It will remain on the docket in the background in context of other decisions they make, it could be revisited if circumstances change
 - The project took nearly a full year from start to finish
 - **Strategic plan**
 - Some of the folks from the first group stayed on for this project, and for the folks that left for personal reasons, they were backfilled with folks that were interested the first time around but weren't accepted
 - Tasked with researching what key tenets should be incorporated into the plan
 - Presented to the board - the project team didn't create the plan, but identified critical pieces that should be keystones of the strategic plan

- Concurrent to this research being done, they created a Strategic Action Team to own the creation of the strategic plan- they included some CAC members in that group
 - This group was formed while the research was still being done- so there was almost a back-and-forth feedback loop on the plan as the research was being done
- They didn't really have to do specific evaluation criteria or implementation follow up as the board went into it knowing they wanted to implement, it was just about how to do it
- CAC was paused after the two projects, and a Community Action Team was then formed to specifically focus on facilities to study and make recommendations that partnered with the architecture firm - more knowledgeable people with experience in the community
- The CAC is coming back again and will be tasked to deep dive into school finance in light of the state funding and the implications to the budget and what they need to do accordingly. Help the district understand the reality of where they are - and make recommendations of what to do
 - For this project, they are re-activating some folks who served on the first two projects, but also recruiting new folks who are committed to helping the district figure this out - they are looking for broad perspectives
 - Will be looking for recommendations on how to engage with community at large to educate them on what's going on with finance
- The people that have participated on the project teams, they get a lot of satisfaction with participating in the Strategic plan and seeing it come to fruition
 - Ellie thinks that the school finance project will be the first project that will be similar to the situation where we are facing where there will be recommendations that may or may not be implemented
- Biggest learning is to define what the role of the CAC in the topic/project vs. what it isn't - so people are clear on how far they can take the recommendations, scope, make decisions, etc. - this eliminates frustration within the group
- Keeping the CAC updated after the 2 projects:
 - Strategic plan group - they made their recommendations to the board - invited the CAC to provide feedback on the strategic plan as it was being developed. A series of follow-up meetings as it was being implemented to keep the CAC engaged and updated on what was going on
 - Middle school start time - just kept in touch as they were doing the work with scoping out the feasibility of moving the start time. They will also reach back out to the team that worked on that project as they re-evaluate it in the context of the school finances
 - Will be formalizing more of a process to gain feedback/measure progress against key projects like the strategic plan
 - Stakeholder/focus groups, surveys, etc.

KEY LEARNINGS:

- Group is leveraged when needed with select projects/questions - increases the depth, rigor, implementation, and satisfaction of the groups
- Tenure is not forced. 2 years is manageable for people to commit to; they can choose to stay on longer if they like
- For high-intensity projects where expertise is needed, they also created special project team with the right expertise
- During the implementation, they engaged back with the team that owned the project to get their feedback and drive transparency on where they were in the process
- They focus on very clearly defining the role of the CAC in the project and what is needed from them

Dave Bergan - Madeira Assistant Superintendent

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513-985-6070

Links:

<https://www.madeiracityschools.org/district-office/board-of-education/planning-commission>

Call Notes - 1/16/26:

- Dave has been with Madeira for 7 years. He lives in Sycamore with 2 kids attending the district (Sophomore & 7th grade)
- Planning commission has been going for 75 years
- Membership:
 - Makeup of their group is staff members and parents - try to get cross-section of newer and older parents
 - They typically don't have folks reaching out to join; they have to actively recruit people when they have openings
 - They aim to have good representation/perspectives; cross-section of new & long-time in the district, mix of theatre, athletic, music parents, mix across the buildings
 - They don't have people on the group that aren't parents or staff
 - They do not have terms; people stay on as long as they want or until their kids graduate
 - Their group is a lot smaller because their district is smaller in general. They assign no more than 5 - 6 people per project
- Projects:
 - Link at the top has past projects listed if we want more background
 - Typically stick to no more than 4 projects a year, sometimes fewer. They prefer to be smaller in scope/focused to get better results
 - They are very intentional with what they pick to study. Off the bat, they are topics that have a high likelihood of getting implemented in some form so they haven't struggled with implementation really
 - A few projects are recurring:
 - Salary study happens every year. They are non-unionized, so that project team works with the treasurer to do a benchmarking study against what's been negotiated in neighboring districts to make sure they are competitive and inform raises, etc.
 - Graduate survey is another recurring project to inform future work and get their feedback post-graduation (every 4 years)
 - Other project examples:
 - Facility improvements/feasibility studies- this project is as-needed (i.e. science labs, music facilities, etc.)
 - All of the other studies they have done come from the brainstorming of the district as a whole - a collaborative process (see below)
 - They have a format of how their projects are presented
 - Statement of problem / what needs to be solved
 - Current situation - what is happening in the district today
 - What are benchmark districts doing
 - Recommendations on what should be done going forward
- Project Process:

- At the end of the year (week after school ends), they have an “Instructional Leader Retreat” with a mix of staff and administrators. Purpose is to recap the year, set goals for the next year, **and they collectively brainstorm topics for the commission to look at the next year**
 - For example, they realized they need to take a look at K-8 electives and they designated that as a project for the following year
- After they brainstorm the list at the retreat, they take the topics to the board for approval
- The group does the research in the following fall, then present back in January, February, and March
 - Survey is sent out at the beginning of the school year to ask members to select projects and to solicit project leaders
 - They have a “launch event” at the Board President’s house in October where they get project assignments and kick off
 - They meet monthly throughout the school year. The project teams will meet outside of those standing meeting to work on the projects
 - Nov-Dec meetings are where the building leads and student services present updates. During this, they update the commission on anything that got implemented from their recommendations and how it’s going/the effectiveness
 - Jan - March are the project presentations - main focus of the meetings but also have updates from the board/superintendent
- The first presentation is to the Planning Commission first - this allows for the group to poke holes, ask questions, make revisions, etc.
- Then they present to the board, have a dialogue, then the board will approve/reject the project recommendations
- Then at the end of the year, the Superintendent presents all of the project findings/recommendations at the Instructional Retreat, and they find a way to work them into the plans/goals for the following year (this ensures execution/implementation)
- During the school year, the admin team meets every 2 weeks to review their 90-day plan, and that will include a review of where they are on the projects implementation and what needs to happen to ensure it gets done
- They don’t have a process yet on communicating back to the Commission on how things are being implemented, but a lot of times they can see it first hand what’s being implemented
- They are very intentional when communicating to the community at large or rolling out changes by giving the Planning Commission credit for how they impacted/influenced what is being done

KEY LEARNINGS:

- **Could a smaller, more focused group be beneficial?**
- **Sycamore differs with having city representation and those who may not have kids in the district, which provides a unique perspective**
- **Collaborative, district-wide involvement in brainstorming projects increases relevancy, buy-in, and likelihood of some form of implementation**
- **We have an extremely high requirement for terms - should that be shortened or removed altogether?**
- **A process where the commission work is embedded into the district’s process/goal setting throughout the year not only gets higher quality projects, but also creates accountability and better execution for the project outcomes**

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Links:

<https://www.wyomingcityschools.org/about/partnership-opportunities/citizens-advisory-committee-cac>

Call Notes - 1/21/26:

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Information:

- Purpose:
 - Through the use of expert community resources, the committee will be responsible for conducting studies and investigations and reporting such findings and making suggestions or recommendations, if any, in areas of school programs and operations as those areas of study or investigation are identified by the Board of Education and the committee members with the approval of the Board of Education.
 - The Committee will assist in maintaining active and informed school-community relations through the discussion of general educational issues affecting the community of Wyoming.
- Applications via Microsoft Forms - due by July 31 for the following school year
- 2-year terms; monthly meetings (separate meetings as needed for projects)
- Applicants encouraged to include a resume with their application; aim to have diverse community representation
- Publish member names on their website:
 - 6 Community members
 - 2 staff members
 - 1 - 2 Board Members (formal committee that Board members get assigned to)
 - 3 Administrators (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent & Director of Communications)
- Focus on 2 studies per year usually (no more than 3) -they don't have capacity for much more - too much to manage
- Publish current studies on their website for visibility:
 - Young Alumni Survey
 - Homework & Study best practices
- Also publish past presentations. Topics have included facilities, social media, AI, foodservice, internships, gifted services, bullying, financial planning, school start times, strategic plan

Process:

- They set clear expectations that the CAC is a commitment to do research on important topics which is immensely valuable, but it may not translate into actions or implementation. Some projects are intended to be informative in nature
- The Superintendent keeps a running list of project ideas throughout the year. They may come from staff, parents, community, hot topics, etc.
- Ownership of determining what gets implemented and the next year's projects lies with the Board:
 - At the end of the year, the Board has a Summer retreat where they review the research & recommendations that were just presented to them, and determine what elements (if any)

- should be executed, who should own it, the resourcing, timing, etc. It is then given to administration to implement as directed by the Board
 - They also align on goals and objectives for the following year and look at the list of topics that was generated, and then pick the 2 highest priority projects for the following year
 - Anyone technically has input into the project ideas, but ultimately the decision rests with the board
 - They make sure that the topics that are picked align to their goals and strategic plan so it doesn't have the potential to derail them from those goals
 - They will also take time to reflect on past projects and understand what's been implemented and what's left to do - that could get embedded in the next year's planning as well
- They know which projects are more actionable and which ones are more information gathering in nature - but they've only had a couple of studies that were paused or nothing came out of it. All of the work is valuable, but not all of it is actionable

Communication:

- Every month, the Board members who are on the CAC committee do a report out at the Board meeting to keep the community aware of what's going on with the CAC
- The Superintendent does a monthly update to the broader school community, so that is also a space where he can update the community on what the CAC is doing or call out something that was a result of their work
- When they are implementing a change or taking an action, they will call out that it was a direct result of the CAC's work (gives them credit and visibility to the community whenever possible to reinforce that their involvement and the work they do is meaningful)
- They will communicate back to the groups who did the projects to let them know what the board plans to implement - keep them in the loop, continue to consult with them if needed
 - i.e. on their AI project, they invited CAC members to serve on the administration team that carried it forward
 - For their bullying project, they weren't going to implement anything right away but they let the project team know what the plans were and the timeline for when they would take action
- They keep their projects tight - will generally have 2 per year. Will have 4 community members per team, plus pull in teachers and an administrator as a sponsor
- At the end of the school year, they will have a debrief meeting with the CAC to gather their feedback. They consistently hear they want focused projects & teams

KEY LEARNINGS:

- CAC projects, implementation, and communication is embedded in monthly and annual activities of the administration and Board; this is a significant opportunity for SAC
- Ownership of project selection, implementation, and accountability lies with the Board
- Tenure is only 2 years (seems standard). Our 6 year terms are very long by comparison. Should it be revisited?
- They are intentional about setting expectations that not all projects are intended to be implemented
- Smaller committee and focused projects tied to their goals/strategic plan results in the best execution
- Keeping a running list of project ideas from a broad range of stakeholders makes it seamless when the time comes to evaluate what should be chosen (not trying to brainstorm on the fly)