



GOALS FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

OUR MISSION:

To empower a community of learners who will change the world!

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Welcoming New Leaders (Superintendent, Department of Teaching and Learning)

This year we are bringing several new administrators into our central office and school buildings. Our top priority is making sure that the transition goes smoothly for students and families. We will invest significant time coaching these new leaders, helping them add their talents to our culture, build relationships, and get up to speed quickly so there is no disruption to the work that matters most.

Building Our Teaching and Learning Department (Department of Teaching and Learning)

We are creating a dedicated Department of Teaching and Learning that will provide cohesive instructional leadership across all grade levels, K-12. Two new Coordinators of Teaching and Learning will help connect curriculum, instruction, and professional development in ways that are consistent from school to school.

Updating Our Anti-Bullying Approach (Jennifer Korn, Toya Spencer)

We will review and update our anti-bullying practices to make them clearer, more consistent, and easier for students and families to understand. The revised guidelines will spell out exactly what bullying is, how it is addressed, and how we communicate with those involved.

Deepening Our Work with Artificial Intelligence (Jennifer Korn, Jeff Collett)

We have been thoughtful about bringing AI into our schools, and this year we go further. We will put our Board-approved AI policies into full practice, measure whether AI tools are actually improving learning and reaching all students equitably, and make sure students have a real voice in how this technology is used. We will continue training our staff, engage families and community partners in the conversation, and form an AI task force to keep this work transparent and grounded. Through it all, we will make sure AI supports the skills our students need most: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and adaptability.

Strengthening Behavior Support in Elementary Schools (Rob Messenheimer, Nathan Kellenberger)

Over the past three years, we have built a strong foundation for supporting student behavior in our elementary buildings. This year, we will go deeper. We will form a committee focused specifically on identifying students who need extra behavioral support before a problem becomes a crisis, and we will make sure we have consistent, research-based approaches in place across every elementary school to help those students get what they need.

COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

Planning the Future of Our Elementary Schools (Jeff Maddox, Vicki Gnezda, Jeff Eble, Rob Messenheimer)

This year we begin the next major phase of our facilities master planning work, turning our attention to our eleven elementary schools and Sutter Park Preschool. We will form an advisory committee that reflects the full range of our community to lead this process. The conversations will be honest and inclusive, honoring the things our community has historically valued most, like neighborhood schools, walkability, and small learning environments, while also being realistic about costs, the long-term life of our buildings, and being open to changes in community preferences. The goal is to build the shared understanding and trust that a future ballot initiative will require.

Strengthening Family Engagement (Toya Spencer, Emilie Greenwald, Rob Messenheimer)

We want every Worthington parent and caregiver to feel informed, connected, and genuinely involved in their child's education. This year we will build a more consistent, district-wide approach to family communication and engagement, creating more opportunities for two-way conversation and making sure the right information reaches families at the right time.

Communicating More Effectively as a District (Vicki Gnezda, Don Taylor, Cory Carter)

We recently completed a communications audit, and this year we will act on what we learned. Our communications team will focus on telling our district's story more clearly, building community trust through greater transparency, and creating more opportunities for residents to engage with us rather than simply receive information from us.

The StyleDrop Boutique: Making It Permanent (Toya Spencer, Michael Kuri)

What began as a seasonal event is becoming something lasting. We are transitioning our StyleDrop clothing resource into a permanent, year-round free boutique available to any Worthington student or family who needs it. When a student has clothes that fit and shoes that aren't worn through, they come to school ready to learn. Dignity is a prerequisite for learning, and this resource helps provide it.

INSTRUCTION

New Middle School English Curriculum (Steve Griffin)

We are implementing Amplify ELA as our core English Language Arts curriculum in all five middle schools. Teachers will receive training and ongoing coaching to make sure this knowledge-building curriculum is taught consistently and well across every building.

Expanding Special Education Intervention at the Secondary Level (Jake Guthrie, Renee Brinson, April Walsh)

We are continuing our multi-year effort to build a stronger intervention system for secondary students with disabilities, as part of our response to a special education audit. This year we will expand math intervention support into seventh, eighth, and tenth grades while continuing to refine what we already have in place. We will also begin planning reading and writing intervention supports to launch those in 2027–28. The through-line in all of this is making sure students with IEPs have access to strong core instruction and the targeted support they need alongside it.

Expanding Early Intervention at Sutter Park Preschool (Renee Brinson)

Our special education team and preschool staff will work together to identify students at Sutter Park who need some additional support but do not qualify for special education services. We will explore ways to expand the targeted interventions available to those children so that more of our youngest learners get help early, before challenges have time to grow.

Supporting Students with Disabilities Through to Graduation (Malika Jefferson, Jake Guthrie)

We will put a formal process in place to monitor every high school student with an IEP each semester, reviewing their credits, course performance, and progress toward graduation. Our goal is straightforward: make sure no student with a disability falls behind without us noticing, and make sure we are doing everything we can to help them cross the finish line.

INSTRUCTION

Improving the Elementary Special Education Experience (Malika Jefferson, Renee Brinson, Jake Guthrie, April Walsh)

Our special education teachers do their best work when they are teaching in areas where they are skilled and when their workload is fair and clearly defined. This year we will continue to evaluate how our elementary special education staff is assigned across the district, working to best match each teacher's strengths to their role and make sure no one is carrying more than their share. Our goal is an elementary special education experience that our staff is proud to be part of and that our families can count on to consistently meet their children's needs.

RESOURCES

Completing the High School Construction Projects (Jeff Eble, Michael Kuri)

We are in the final stretch of our high school construction work at Thomas Worthington and Worthington Kilbourne. This year we will focus on finishing strong, holding our contractors accountable to every detail, working through the punch list rigorously, and securing all long-term warranties to protect this investment for decades to come.

Extending the Impact of our Current Funding Through 2028 (Trent Bowers, Vicki Gnezda, TJ Cusick)

Our financial goal is simple to state and requires discipline to achieve: manage our resources carefully enough that we do not need to ask voters for an operating levy until 2028. We will follow our responsible staffing plan as the roadmap to get there, and we will communicate regularly and transparently with staff and the community about where things stand and why. Our taxpayers have trusted us with a significant investment, and we intend to honor that trust.

Building a Modern System for Tracking Our Buildings and Assets (Michael Kuri, Jeff Eble)

Right now, too much knowledge about our facilities—which boiler is aging, when the roof on a particular building was last replaced—lives in individual people's heads. We are going to change that by building a technology-based asset management system that documents every major building component, its condition, and when it is likely to need replacement. This will allow us to plan and prioritize capital investments with far greater accuracy and confidence.

GOVERNANCE

Reviewing Supplemental and Performance Contracts (Jeff Maddox, Steve Griffin, Emilie Greenwald)

Through collective bargaining, the district and the Worthington Education Association agreed to a full review of all supplemental and performance contracts this year. A mutually agreed-upon third party will conduct the review, working alongside a joint committee of administration and Association representatives. Recommendations will be ready for implementation in the 2027-28 school year.

Elevating Onboarding for Our Support Staff (Tiena Miller)

About 30% of our workforce consists of classified support staff, paraprofessionals, secretaries, custodians, food service workers, and others. We want them to feel as valued and well-supported as anyone in our organization. This year we will launch a quarterly orientation program designed specifically for support staff, helping them understand our culture, how their compensation works, and how they fit into our mission of serving students and families.

Strengthening Our Cybersecurity Practices (Jeff Collett)

We will launch a program to assess the security practices of the third-party vendors who work with our student data. As we rely more heavily on outside technology tools, we have a responsibility to make sure the companies we partner with are protecting student information with the same seriousness we expect of ourselves.



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