# SANTA CLARA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## NORTH STAR Student Learning and Achievement

### VISION

We commit to academic excellence and preparing all students to succeed in a diverse and interconnected community.

### MISSION

We provide an engaging and equitable education where each student reaches their full potential and is prepared for work and life.

### CORE VALUES

**Excellence and Continuous Improvement**
We pursue high levels of student learning by aligning our work, measuring results, and continuously improving practice.

**Equity and Social Justice**
We support every student and staff member by upholding our commitment to equity, access, and inclusion.

**Student Voice and Empowerment**
We elevate student voices and guide our decisions by what best supports learning and academic growth.

**Communication, Empathy, Respect**
We build trust through clear communication, compassionate listening, respect for diverse opinions, and ethical stewardship of our resources.

**Collaboration**
We work together with students, staff, families, and community partners to improve student outcomes in safe learning environments.

## PILLAR 1
Academic Excellence and Instructional Coherence

### PILLAR 1 PRIORITIES

**FOCUS 1: Equity, Access, Inclusion, and Justice**

- Monitor the consistency of MTSS Tier 1 instructional strategies and academic language supports across all classrooms
- Implement and monitor the Equity Framework
- Identify and implement best practice strategies to support multilingual learners

**FOCUS 2: Student Success**

- Identify and implement priority standards for all grade levels and content areas
- Develop plans to improve attendance, graduation rates, CTE, and A–G participation (college readiness) rates

**FOCUS 3: Engaging Curriculum and Effective Instruction**

- Provide professional learning, coaching, and mentoring to ensure standards-aligned, board-adopted curriculum is taught in every classroom
- Develop formative and summative assessments that will monitor learning and ensure continuous improvement across all district schools

## PILLAR 2
Safe and Inclusive Environment

### PILLAR 2 PRIORITIES

**FOCUS 1: Social and Emotional Learning**

- Create safe, respectful, and inclusive environments by implementing an MTSS framework, integrating mental health, behavior expectations, and social-emotional learning
- Adopt and implement a comprehensive Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum
- Conduct and align safety protocols that support the physical, digital, and mental health needs of our students and staff

**FOCUS 2: Family and Community Partnerships**

- Strengthen community partnerships to support student academic success, safety, and well-being
- Enhance family engagement through diverse activities and multi-strategy communication
- Standardize and monitor outreach via annual engagement calendars and district events

## PILLAR 3
Organization Alignment and Fiscal Stewardship

### PILLAR 3 PRIORITIES

**FOCUS 1: Financial Management, Resource Efficiency, and Sustainability**

- Develop and implement clear organizational structures that are supported by best practices
- Implement a valid and reliable position-control system aligned with district staffing formulas
- Allocate and monitor resources to advance equitable student outcomes and other support programs

**FOCUS 2: Workforce Capacity, Stability, and Professional Growth**

- Recruit and retain a diverse and high-quality staff
- Support all staff by providing professional learning and building leadership capacity
- Enhance organizational integrity and mitigate legal risk through supervisor training on workplace investigations and progressive discipline
- Strengthen continuous growth and professional development among district administrators by utilizing educational partner feedback to provide a well-rounded view of leadership competencies

## PILLAR 4
Systems, Communication, and Accountability

### PILLAR 4 PRIORITIES

**FOCUS 1: Transparent Systems and Two-way Communication**

- Strengthen internal and external trust through clear, consistent, and timely communication and opportunities for engagement

**FOCUS 2: Data Literacy and Continuous Improvement**

- Implement integrated data systems to support instruction, operations, and decision-making
- Build staff capacity in data literacy and use data to drive continuous improvement
- Establish clear accountability measures and monitor progress toward district goals

**FOCUS 3: Accountability and Reporting**

- Ensure transparency and regular reporting to educational partners
- Establish governance structures that clarify roles and drive sustainable organizational growth
- Cultivate a labor partnership with clear roles that sustain organizational growth

## GOALS / OUTCOMES

- Increase Academic Achievement
- Improve Student Well-Being and Safety, and Strengthen Family, Staff, and Community Partnerships
- Ensure Fiscal Responsibility and Operational Excellence
- Build Systems of Accountability and Continuous Improvement

**2026-2027** Foundation → **2027-2028** Implementation → **2028-2029** Monitor and Adjust → **2029-2030** Sustain and Improve

Santa Clara Unified School District

**TOGETHER, WE SUCCEED!** Through a shared commitment to our students, staff, families, and community, we will achieve our **North Star** — Student Learning and Achievement.

# NORTH STAR At-a-Glance & Glossary

## PILLAR 1
Academic Excellence and Instructional Coherence

### WHAT THIS MEANS

- Same proven teaching strategies in every classroom
- Tiered support for students who need more help
- More college-prep course access and graduation support
- Consistent learning expectations

**ASK YOUR SCHOOL**
*What extra support is available if my student falls behind?*

## PILLAR 2
Safe and Inclusive Environment

### WHAT THIS MEANS

- Mental health staff and counselors at every school
- Social-emotional learning in all classrooms
- Facility and safety upgrades as needed
- Stronger partnerships with families and community

***ASK YOUR SCHOOL***
*What mental health resources does my student have access to?*

## PILLAR 3
Organization Alignment and Fiscal Stewardship

### WHAT THIS MEANS

- Clearer staffing and organizational structures
- Resources directed to equity and student support
- Annual budget summaries published at santaclarausd.org
- Diverse, high-quality staff recruited and retained

***ASK YOUR SCHOOL***
*How is our school's budget used to support students most in need?*

## PILLAR 4
Systems, Communication, and Accountability

### WHAT THIS MEANS

- Public progress reports are published every year
- Data systems track how schools are performing
- Clear, timely communication from the district
- Community forums to share your feedback
- Leadership structures foster alignment

***ASK YOUR SCHOOL***
*Where can I find the progress report for our school's goals?*

## KEY TERMS EXPLAINED

**A-G**
The University of California and California State University subject requirements that high school students must complete to be eligible for admission.

**BEHAVIOR**
Behavior is a skill that can be taught, hence it is a teachable, measurable, and functional skill rather than just an inherent personality trait.

**COHERENCE**
The intentional alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment across grades and subjects to ensure consistent, connected learning experiences for all students.

**CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)**
CTE equips students with the academic, technical, and workplace skills needed for future careers.

**CURRICULUM**
State adopted and board-approved instructional materials to be used when providing content-specific instruction to students.

**EQUITY**
Educational equity means that every child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential. (National Equity Project)

**FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**
Formative assessment is a deliberate process used by teachers with students during instruction that provides actionable feedback that is used to adjust teaching and learning strategies to improve students' attainment of learning targets and goals. Formative assessment is a process, not a test. (SCUSD K-12 Assessment Types)

**INCLUSION / INCLUSIVE PRACTICES**
An approach to education based on the premise that all students (e.g., typically developing students, students with disabilities, English learners, students from varying income levels and backgrounds) should be accepted and valued for their unique abilities and included as integral members of the school. Schools that practice inclusion make an effort to include every student in the general education classroom and in extracurricular activities. (Vanderbilt University)

**LABOR PARTNERSHIP**
A collaborative relationship between district leadership and employee unions focused on shared decision-making to improve outcomes for students and staff.

**MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)**
Schooling structure that brings together educators' knowledge of context, science, and systems, resulting in positive benefits for each and every student. It is a three-tier organizing framework that uses specific data sources to inform decisions, coordinating diverse academic, behavioral, and social resources to meet the needs of each and every student in a dynamic and timely fashion. Tier 1 serves all students, Tier 2 provides targeted support for some students, and Tier 3 delivers intensive intervention for a few students with the greatest needs. (Leading Equity-Based MTSS for All Students, McCart, A. & Miller, D., 2020)

**POSITION-CONTROL SYSTEM**
A budgeting and staffing system that tracks and manages each authorized employee position, and its associated cost, within a district to ensure fiscal accountability.

**PRACTICES**
General, evidence-based methods used throughout the school to support academic and behavioral success. They are often foundational, school-wide efforts that apply to all students, particularly in MTSS Tier 1.

**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)**
Reflects the critical role of positive relationships and emotional connections in the learning process and helps students develop a range of skills they need for school and life. SEL skills include the ability to: set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and understand and manage emotions. (California Department of Education)

**STANDARDS**
The academic knowledge and skills students are expected to learn at each grade level, as defined by the state of California.

**STRATEGIES**
Specific evidence-based methods, techniques, or instructional approaches applied within an MTSS tier to improve student outcomes. Often more specific than a practice, but can be applied by teachers or specialists to target a skill deficit.

**SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT**
Summative assessments are given to students at the end of a course and should measure the skills and knowledge a student has gained over the entire instructional period. Summative feedback is aimed at helping students understand how well they have done in meeting the overall learning goals of the course. (Teaching Commons and SCUSD K-12 Assessment Types)