Bethany
Public School District

Learning with purpose. Growing with intention. Thriving together.





District Strategic Plan 2026-2031





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Acknowledgment & Appreciation

This Strategic Plan is the result of thoughtful collaboration, sustained inquiry, and shared responsibility. Bethany Public Schools extends sincere appreciation to the members of the Strategic Planning Committee whose time, care, and commitment shaped this work.

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Across multiple phases of dialogue, data review, surveys, and focus groups, committee members engaged deeply with the realities of the district and the aspirations held for its students.

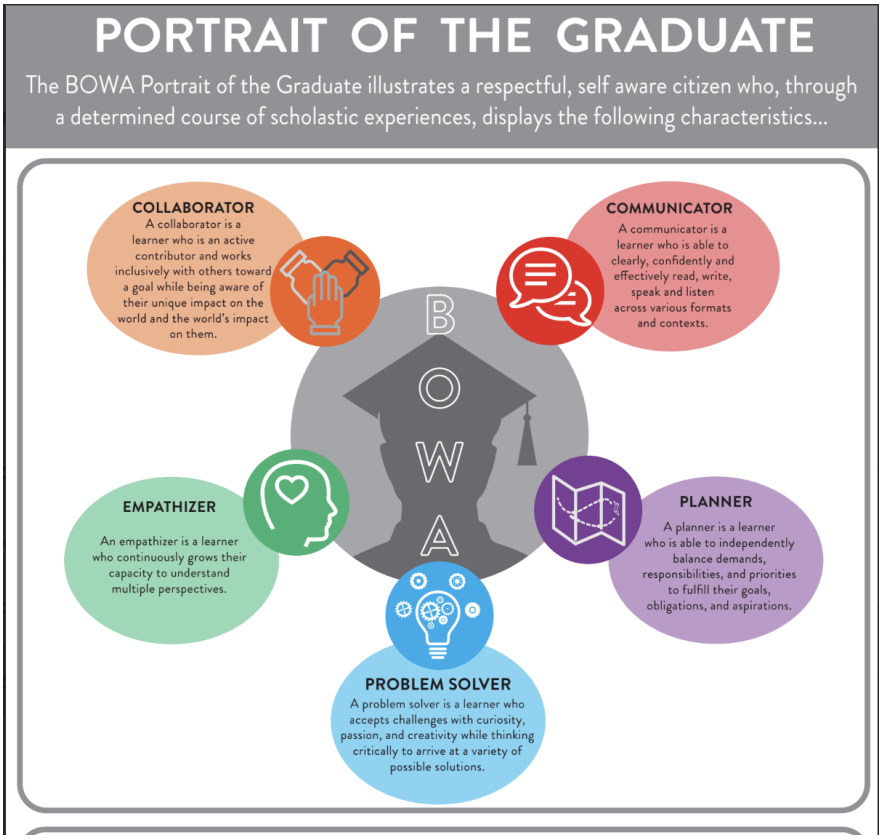
This plan also reflects the voices of students, families, educators, and community members. Their perspectives informed both the direction and substance of the work. The collective nature of this process is essential. The future of Bethany Public Schools depends on shared ownership, mutual trust, and a common commitment to student success.

Purpose and Context

Bethany Public Schools undertook this strategic planning process with intention and urgency. The purpose was not to produce another static document or to satisfy a compliance requirement, but to create a shared, living roadmap that clearly articulates who we serve, what we value, and how we will prepare students for what comes next.

At its core, this work is about alignment. The plan is designed to strengthen coherence across the district so that curriculum, instruction, culture, and systems all work together to build the competencies described in the Portrait of a Graduate. It is about ensuring that learning experiences, relationships, and systems across the district are intentionally connected to a common vision for student growth. Rather than focusing on a collection of initiatives, the planning process centered on clarifying purpose, sharpening focus, and aligning efforts around what matters most: the development of students as learners and people, as defined by the Portrait of a Graduate.

Figure ___



Throughout the process, the Strategic Planning Committee engaged in deep and deliberate work. Members examined district and school data, reviewed survey and focus group findings, and participated in structured dialogue that surfaced both strengths and challenges. The committee affirmed what is working well, named areas requiring greater attention, and resisted the temptation to oversimplify complex issues. Through dedicated discussion and review, patterns emerged that broadened our collective understanding of both our commitment to students and the systems needed to fully support that commitment.

Most importantly, the committee repeatedly returned to a central, unifying question:

How well are we preparing our students to thrive not only academically but also as people?

This question became the anchor for the entire plan. It pushed the work beyond academic outcomes alone and toward a more holistic understanding of student success. It led directly to a renewed commitment to the Portrait of a Graduate as the guiding framework for decision-making, reflection, and improvement. Strategic plans often describe what schools will do. This plan focuses on who our students will become.

This Strategic Plan represents a shared commitment to our students, families, educators, and community that Bethany Public Schools will continuously improve how we support every learner in developing the knowledge, skills, and character defined by the Portrait of a Graduate. It is designed to help Bethany Public Schools move forward with clarity and coherence, grounded in shared values and focused on the long-term growth of every student.

Our North Star: The Portrait of a Graduate

The Portrait of a Graduate defines the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students across the Amity Regional School District must demonstrate by the time they graduate. It articulates the outcomes expected of learners at the conclusion of their K–12 experience and serves as a shared vision across the region.

As a PK–6 district within the **Bethany-Orange-Woodbridge_Amity (BOWA)** region, Bethany Public Schools plays a critical and distinct role in this continuum. While Bethany does not “graduate” students in the traditional sense, it is responsible for laying the essential foundations that allow students to grow into the graduates envisioned by the BOWA Portrait. The work of Bethany Community School is developmental and deliberate: building skills, habits, and dispositions early so that students can successfully transfer, deepen, and apply them as they progress into the regional district.

The competencies identified in the Portrait - ***Collaboration, Communication, Planning, Problem-Solving, and Empathy*** - are not reserved for the final years of schooling. They are cultivated over time through intentional learning experiences, explicit instruction, and meaningful practice. In Bethany, these skills are introduced, modeled, reinforced, and refined so that students enter the next phase of their education prepared to engage, adapt, and thrive.

Throughout the strategic planning process, the ***Portrait of a Graduate*** served as the primary lens for analysis and decision-making. Data were examined through its framework, and practices were evaluated based on how effectively they supported the early development of these outcomes. Each strategic priority in this plan explicitly advances the Portrait by focusing on the experiences and conditions Bethany students need to build skills that will transfer seamlessly into the Amity Regional School District.

Rather than organizing around programs or departments, this plan organizes around students—who they are becoming, how they are growing, and how Bethany Public Schools prepares them for the next stage of their learning journey.

How the Plan Was Developed

This Strategic Plan was developed through a deliberate, phased process designed to ensure both depth of understanding and clarity of direction. From the outset, the Strategic Planning Committee committed to building a plan that reflected not only data and trends, but the lived experiences, aspirations, and concerns of the Bethany community.
Over the course of multiple three-hour committee meetings spanning several months, members engaged in structured analysis, dialogue, and reflection to ensure the work was thoughtful, disciplined, and inclusive.

The committee organized its work across four planning categories:

- Curriculum & Instruction
- Student Performance
- Culture, Climate & Belonging
- Communication & Access

These categories provided structure for analysis, but they did not confine the thinking. Rather, they served as entry points into broader conversations about student growth, system effectiveness, and the conditions necessary for long-term success.

To ground the work in evidence, the committee reviewed academic and behavioral data, district and school survey results, and focus group feedback from students, staff, and families. These sources were examined carefully and revisited across meetings to identify patterns, surface areas of strength, test assumptions, and uncover gaps. The process was intentionally iterative. Themes were not accepted at face value; they were discussed, challenged, and refined until there was shared understanding.

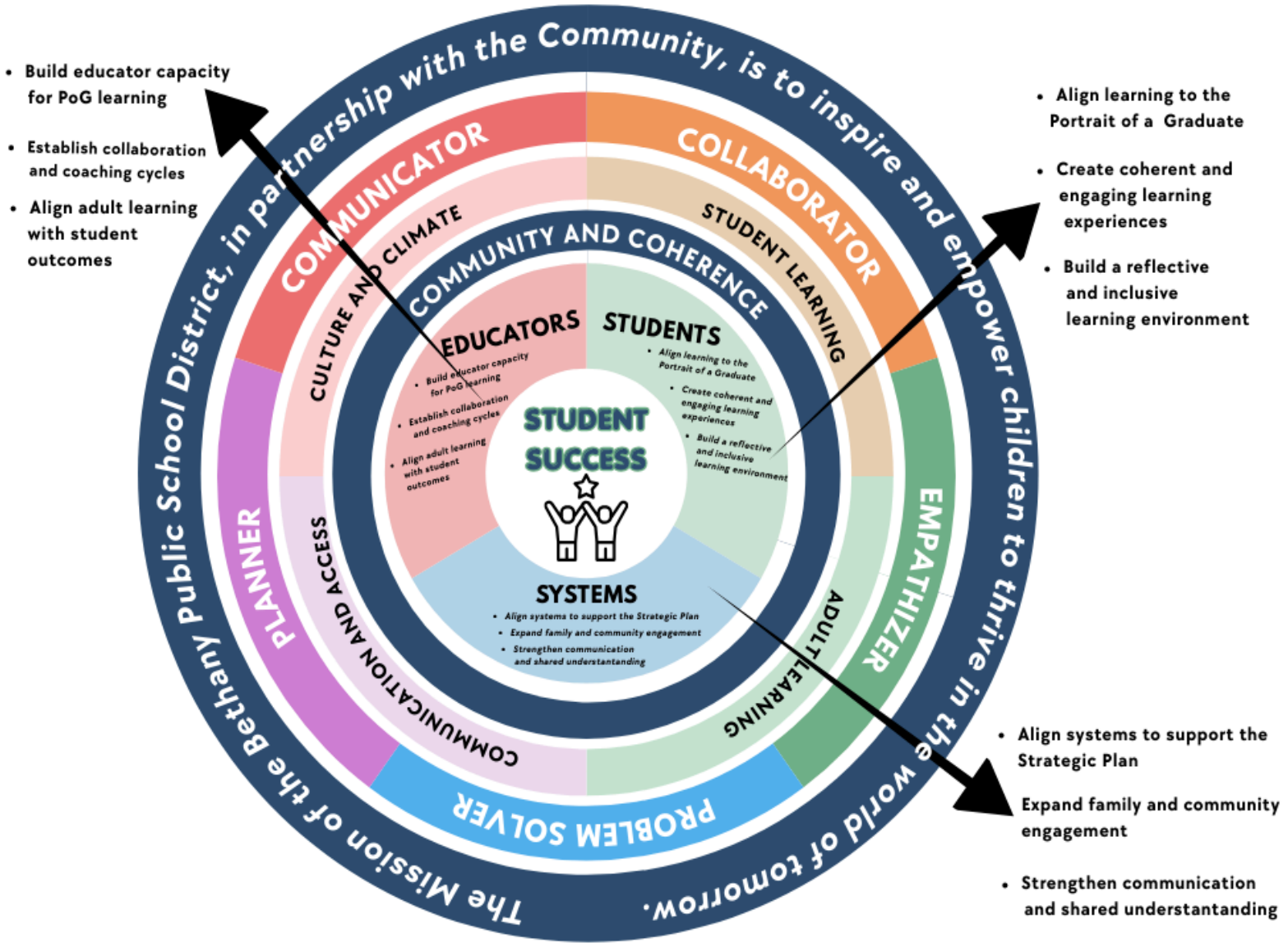
Early phases of the work focused on validating findings and asking the right questions. What does the data reveal? Where are experiences consistent? Where are they uneven? Whose voices are amplified, and whose perspectives require greater attention? These discussions broadened collective understanding of both the district's commitment to students and the systems needed to fully support that commitment.

As the work progressed, the committee moved from analysis to prioritization. This was a critical shift. Rather than attempting to address every possible improvement area, the committee made intentional choices about what matters most. The prioritized areas in this plan reflect shared agreement about where focused effort will most meaningfully strengthen student capacity toward the Portrait of a Graduate.

The final phase translated these priorities into strategic goals and measurable actions, supported by clear timelines, responsibilities, and indicators of success. The result is a Strategic Plan shaped by community voice, disciplined by data, and anchored in a shared commitment to student growth. It represents not a collection of initiatives, but a clear declaration of what Bethany Public Schools will prioritize in order to prepare every student for success as defined by the Portrait of a Graduate.

From Planning Categories to Strategic Priorities

Four Strategic Priorities will guide Bethany Public Schools over the next five years.



As the committee's work evolved, it became clear that meaningful improvement requires integration rather than silos. Curriculum & Instruction and Student Performance were consistently discussed together as drivers of student learning. Culture, belonging, and communication emerged as foundational conditions rather than standalone initiatives. This understanding led to four Strategic Priorities. Each represents a synthesis of the committee's work and is explicitly aligned to the Portrait of a Graduate. Together, they form a coherent framework connecting student experiences, adult practice, and system design. The framework addresses our core mission and ensures that every student's success is the primary driver of all that we do in Bethany Public Schools.

Strategic Priorities

The Strategic Priorities that follow represent Bethany Public Schools' most important commitments for the next five years. They are not programs to be adopted or initiatives to be layered on. They are calls to action that ask the district to align learning experiences, relationships, and systems around a shared purpose: preparing students to grow into the learners and citizens described in the Portrait of a Graduate.

These priorities identify the areas where focused effort will have the greatest impact on student learning and development. Together, they create a clear path toward realizing the Portrait of a Graduate.

Each priority is grounded in evidence gathered through surveys, focus groups, and data review, and shaped through sustained dialogue among members of the Strategic Planning Committee. Through this process, the committee examined patterns, affirmed strengths, and identified the conditions necessary for students to thrive.

Taken together, these priorities define how Bethany Public Schools will intentionally build student capacity over time so that students leave PK–6 prepared to transfer, deepen, and apply their learning as they continue into the Amity Regional School District.

Ultimately, these priorities ensure that decisions about curriculum, instruction, culture, and systems remain centered on one purpose: strengthening the learning experiences that prepare Bethany students for success beyond our classrooms.

Strategic Priority: Student Learning & Success

Call to Action:
Design and deliver learning experiences that intentionally build the knowledge, skills and dispositions student need to grow into the Portrait of a Graduate

Student learning is the core mission of Bethany Public Schools. The intent of this priority is to make certain that every classroom experience across grade levels and content areas are thoughtfully developed to ensure academic knowledge and the transferable skills identified in the Portrait of a Graduate. This means designing learning that is rigorous, developmentally coherent, accessible to all learners, and aligned to a shared vision of what students must know and be able to do by the time they leave Bethany and continue into the Amity Regional School District.

Throughout the strategic planning process, stakeholders consistently valued student engagement, problem-solving, and meaningful learning experiences. At the same time, the data and discussions revealed unevenness in experience across classrooms and grade levels, varying clarity of expectations, and inconsistency in how explicitly Portrait of a Graduate competencies are taught and reinforced. These findings make clear that strong learning must be both engaging and deliberately structured.

This priority calls Bethany Public Schools to strengthen vertical alignment across curriculum and instructional practice. Curriculum maps and learning progressions will clearly articulate how knowledge and skills develop over time, ensuring students build foundational competencies that transfer into later grades. Instruction will consistently reflect clear learning intentions and success criteria so students understand what they are learning, why it matters, and how to improve. These practices support the development of student ownership of learning, where students monitor their progress, reflect on their growth, and take responsibility for improving their work.

High-quality instruction under this priority will include:

- Explicit modeling and practice of collaboration, communication, planning, problem-solving, and empathy
- Opportunities for inquiry-based learning, discussion, and authentic application of learning that encourage students to ask questions, investigate ideas, and construct understanding.
- Formative assessment practices that provide timely feedback and support student ownership
- Performance-based tasks that require students to apply knowledge and skills in authentic or real-world contexts.
- Developmentally appropriate and safe use of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence tools, to support student inquiry, problem-solving, and personalized feedback while strengthening digital responsibility and critical thinking.
- Structures that ensure equitable access to rigorous learning experiences for all students

Importantly, the competencies outlined in the Portrait of a Graduate will not be treated as implicit outcomes. They will be intentionally embedded in instructional design, classroom discourse, and assessment practices. Students will be asked not only to master content, but to reflect on how they are developing as collaborators, communicators, planners, and problem solvers.

As a PK–6 district within the regional continuum, Bethany plays a foundational role. The work of this priority ensures that students leave sixth grade with strong habits of thinking, learning, and interacting—habits that allow them to transfer skills confidently into the regional district and continue deepening them through graduation.

Strategic Goal (Linked to PoG Outcome):

Ensure vertically aligned, accessible curriculum and instructional practices that develop students as collaborators, planners, problem solvers, communicators, and empathizers.

Core Actions	Key Performance Indicators
• Establish vertical curriculum and • Strengthen data team meetings ○ Strengthen vertical alignment across grade levels in each curriculum area	• Classroom walkthrough observations aligned to Portrait of a Graduate practices • Curriculum audit demonstrating alignment to Portrait of a Graduate competencies

• Align curriculum maps to the Portrait of a Graduate • Observe for and support development of clear success criteria and “I Can” learning targets ○ Introduce families understanding of learning goals • Develop shared vocabulary across content areas • Increase student reflection connected to Portrait of a Graduate competencies • Embed Portrait of a Graduate skills into daily instruction • Create opportunities for authentic application of learning • Ensure professional learning aligns to curriculum changes • Create mentorship or cross-grade learning opportunities • Introduce families to build an understanding of the Portrait of a Graduate	• Evidence of student reflection, articulation of learning goals, and increasing student ownership of learning. • Increased consistency in learning experiences across classrooms • Student engagement and participation data

Strategic Priority: Culture, Climate & Belonging

Call to Action:

Create environments where every student, staff member, and family feels valued, included, and empowered to contribute to learning.

The intent of this priority is to ensure that belonging is not incidental, but intentionally cultivated through daily practices, adult modeling, and inclusive systems. Learning cannot thrive without psychological safety, mutual respect, and meaningful connection.

Data collected during the planning process revealed strong overall student belonging, with over 90% of students reporting feeling connected to school. Crea

At the same time, disparities emerged between staff and family perceptions regarding respect for differences, inclusion, and courageous communication. Demographic differences between students and staff further surfaced the need to strengthen culturally responsive practices and adult modeling.

These findings make clear that belonging must be actively designed. Students learn collaboration, empathy, and communication not only through instruction, but through the relationships and systems adults create. This

priority calls Bethany Public Schools to align restorative practices, SEL instruction, inclusive curriculum, and community engagement into a coherent approach that reflects the dispositions of the Portrait of a Graduate.

Strategic Goal (Linked to PoG Outcome):

Strengthen belonging across students, staff, and families to develop collaborators, communicators, and empathizers.

Core Actions	Key Performance Indicators
• Increase communication and engagement around the Portrait of a Graduate and Strategic Plan • Strengthen staff capacity through professional learning focused on modeling belonging • Implement restorative practices across the school • Implement culturally responsive practices across the school. • Embed SEL practices into daily academic experiences • Develop measures of belonging and engagement • Trial and identify new approaches for family engagement • Identify barriers to participation • Strengthen parent and staff connections so both partners feel respected and heard. • 'Provide varied opportunities for community engagement ○ Identify barriers to participation	• Reduction in perception gaps across students, staff, and families on climate surveys • Increased student attendance • Increased staff attendance • Increased family participation in a variety school events • Increased engagement with family communications • Students able to articulate their sense of belonging and connection to school

Strategic Priority: Adult Learning, Capacity & Support

Call to Action:
Invest in adult learning so educators and staff can intentionally model and develop the skills students are expected to demonstrate.

The intent of this priority is to ensure that professional learning, collaboration, and evaluation systems are intentionally aligned to student outcomes. Adults are the primary drivers of student growth. If students are expected to collaborate, communicate, plan, and problem solve, educators must consistently model and intentionally teach those competencies.

Planning discussions emphasized the need for coherence across curriculum, SEL, restorative practices, and professional development. Staff expressed a desire for clearer alignment between district goals and classroom-level practice. There were questions about how skills such as planning and problem solving are measured and reinforced.

This priority calls for structured professional learning cycles, collaborative planning time, coaching support, and feedback systems aligned to the Strategic Priorities. Professional learning will also support educators in the safe and effective use of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, to increase instructional efficiency, strengthen feedback practices, and enhance opportunities for student learning. Adult learning will be embedded in the School Improvement Plan and connected directly to measurable student outcomes.

Strategic Goal (Linked to PoG Outcome):

Cultivate a culture of continuous adult learning in which professional learning, collaboration, and feedback are aligned to the Strategic Priorities, enabling all educators to consistently deliver high-quality learning experiences that build student capacity toward the Portrait of a Graduate.

Core Actions	Key Performance Indicators

• Create structures for teacher collaboration and vertical alignment
  ○ Develop common instructional practices across grade levels
• Develop shared understanding of PoG competencies across staff
  ○ Align professional learning to Portrait of a Graduate competencies
• Model PoG competencies
• Implement coaching cycles focused, PoG, student engagement and learning
• Conduct classroom observations aligned to the Strategic Priorities
• Implement continuous adult learning cycles aligned to the Strategic Plan
• Communicate the purpose of adult learning opportunities clearly
	• Academic growth measures
	• Improved attendance for students and staff
	• Increased evidence of PoG-aligned instructional practices
	• Staff survey results reflecting greater clarity and collective efficacy
	• Increased consistency in instructional practices

Strategic Priority: Systems, Communication & Access

Call to Action:
Build clear, coherent sustems that make expectations visible, communication accessible, and purpose shared.

The intent of this priority is to ensure that the district's operational systems and communication practices reinforce, rather than fragment, the work of building student capacity.

Planning discussions highlighted inconsistencies in communication platforms and vocabulary across stakeholders. While students often reported confidence accessing support, families and staff identified confusion and uneven clarity. Questions surfaced about shared definitions of collaboration, communication, and student success.

This priority calls for streamlined communication systems, shared PoG vocabulary, transparent reporting structures, and alignment between the Strategic Plan, District Improvement Plan (DIP), School Improvement Plan (SIP), and Board reporting cycles. As part of this work, the district will also explore the responsible use of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, to improve organizational efficiency, communication clarity, and access to information for students, educators, and families. When used responsibly, AI can support instructional efficiency, enhance learning experiences, and strengthen decision-making while maintaining educator judgment and ethical safeguards. Systems must reduce complexity and increase clarity so educators can focus on instruction and families can confidently engage.

Strategic Goal (Linked to PoG Outcome):

Create coherent, accessible communication systems grounded in the Portrait of a Graduate.

Core Actions	Key Performance Indicators

• Develop structured, coherent systems, inclusive of Annual DIP/SIP
  ○ Establish clear expectations for communication
  ○ Align communication systems with Strategic Plan goals
  ○ Ensure accessibility and transparency of district information
• Develop shared district language connected to the Portrait of a Graduate
• Identify primary communication platforms
	• Stakeholders consistently using shared PoG language
	• Increased use of identified communication platforms
	• Improved clarity of communication across stakeholder groups
	• Evidence of alignment between Strategic Plan, DIP, SIP, and Board reporting

○ Expand access to school communication/events/activities through a variety of platforms	

From Vision to Action

This Strategic Plan establishes a clear direction for Bethany Public Schools grounded in shared purpose and a deep commitment to student growth. It defines the priorities that will guide how the district strengthens learning experiences, relationships, and systems so that every student develops the knowledge, skills, and dispositions described in the Portrait of a Graduate.

Rather than functioning as a static document, this plan is designed to guide continuous improvement over time **(See Figure ___).** The Strategic Priorities establish the long-term focus for the district, while annual planning processes translate that focus into specific actions, benchmarks, and measures of progress.

Each Year, the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and School Improvement Plan (SIP) will be developed and reviewed through the lens of the Strategic Priorities. In this way, the Strategic Plan provides the long-range direction for the district, while annual plans allow educators and leaders to respond to current needs, emerging data, and the evolving realities of students and staff. This structure ensures coherence between long-term goals and the daily learning experiences that occur in Bethany classrooms.

Routine reflection and review will remain central to the district's work. Through the DIP and SIP cycles, Bethany Public Schools will examine evidence of student learning, gather feedback from stakeholders, and assess progress toward the priorities outlined in this plan. These regular opportunities for reflection allow the district to strengthen successful practices while identifying areas where adjustments are needed to better serve students.

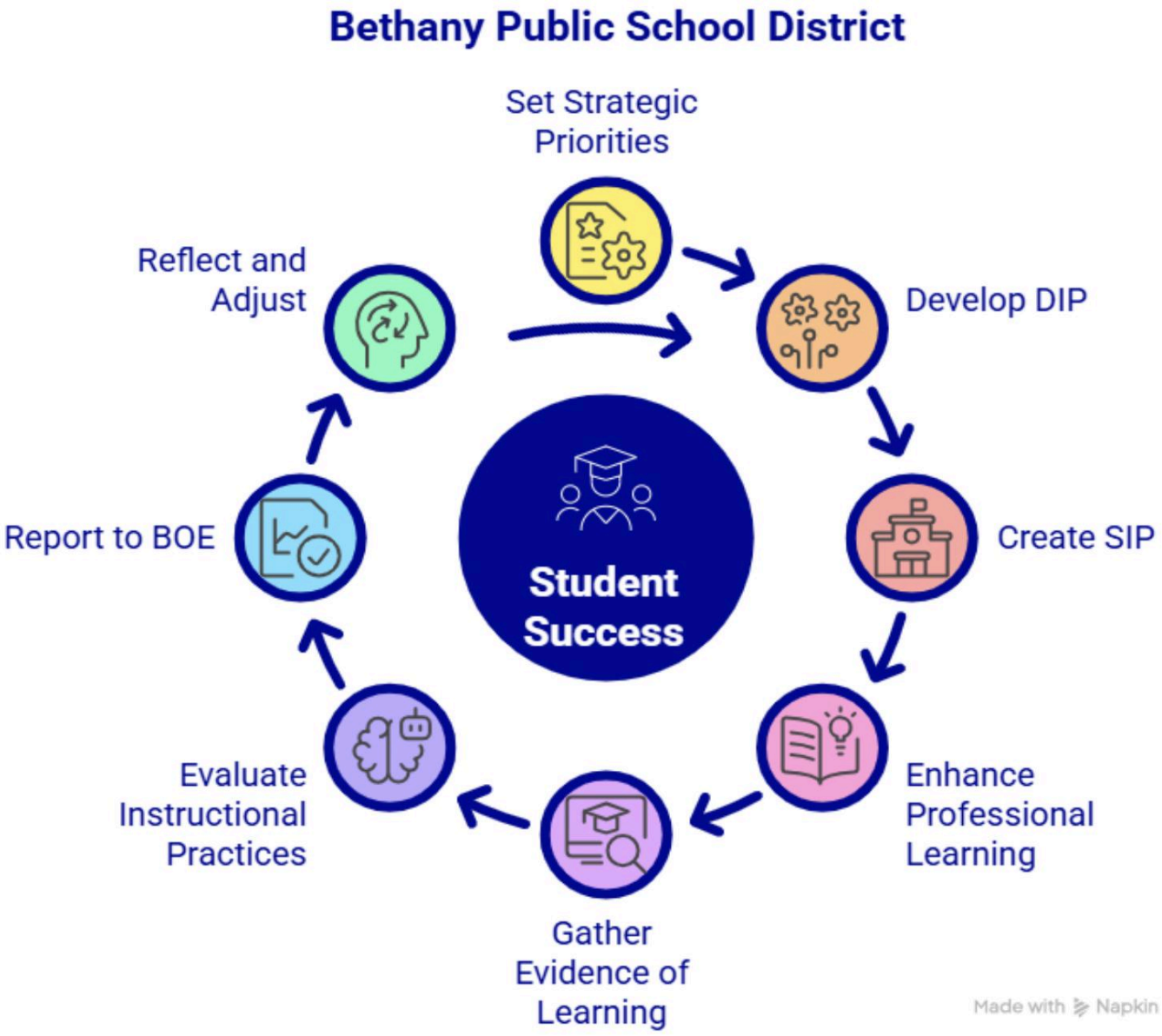
As educational practices and technologies continue to evolve, Bethany Public Schools will thoughtfully evaluate emerging innovations, including artificial intelligence tools, to determine how they can responsibly support teaching, learning, and organizational effectiveness while maintaining strong human-centered instructional practice.

Progress toward the Strategic Priorities will be formally reported to the Board of Education on a bi-annual basis. These updates will highlight evidence of progress, emerging needs, and opportunities for refinement, ensuring transparency and shared accountability across the district and community.

Professional learning for teachers and administrators will also remain closely aligned to the priorities articulated through the DIP and SIP processes. By connecting adult learning directly to the goals of the Strategic Plan, Bethany Public Schools ensures that educator growth strengthens the learning experiences that prepare students to meet the expectations of the Portrait of a Graduate.

Through disciplined implementation, reflection, and collaboration, this Strategic Plan will remain an active guide for improvement. It will shape decision making, support continuous learning, and keep the district focused on its most important work: preparing every Bethany student for success in school, in community, and in the future.

Figure ___



Principles for Implementation

As Bethany Public Schools implements this Strategic Plan, the district will remain guided by several core principles that ensure the work remains focused, coherent, and responsive to the needs of students.

Coherence Across Systems
Decisions about curriculum, instruction, professional learning, communication, and resource allocation will remain aligned to the Strategic Priorities and the Portrait of a Graduate.

Continuous Learning and Improvement
Progress will be regularly examined through data, reflection, and dialogue so that the district can learn from its efforts, refine its practices, and strengthen student outcomes over time.

Student-Centered Decision Making
All planning and improvement efforts will remain grounded in a central question: How does this work strengthen learning experiences and opportunities for Bethany students?

Shared Responsibility
Achieving the goals of this Strategic Plan requires the collective effort of educators, administrators, families, students, and the Board of Education working together in service of student growth.

Ultimately, the success of this plan will not be measured by the strategies described here, but by the learning experiences our students carry with them long after they leave Bethany classrooms.

Glossary

Essential Strategic Terms

Portrait of a Graduate (PoG)
A shared framework defining the knowledge, skills, and dispositions students are expected to develop by graduation within the regional district. At Bethany (PK–6), this includes foundational development of collaboration, communication, planning, problem-solving, and empathy.

Strategic Priority
A focused area of sustained commitment over the life of the Strategic Plan, selected through data analysis and stakeholder input, that guides decision-making, resource allocation, and improvement efforts.

Strategic Goal
A long-range outcome aligned to a Strategic Priority that defines what the district aims to accomplish.

Core Actions
High-leverage actions designed to advance a Strategic Goal and produce measurable progress.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
Specific, measurable indicators used to monitor progress toward a Strategic Goal over time.

District Improvement Plan (DIP)
The annual district-level plan that operationalizes the Strategic Priorities and aligns resources, professional learning, and system-level initiatives.

School Improvement Plan (SIP)
The annual school-level plan that translates Strategic Priorities into actionable goals, instructional focus areas, and professional learning commitments.

Continuous Improvement
An ongoing cycle of planning, implementation, reflection, data review, and adjustment designed to improve student outcomes over time.

Educational Practice Terms (Recommended)

Vertical Alignment
Intentional coordination of curriculum and skills across grade levels to ensure coherent progression of knowledge and competencies.

Formative Assessment
Ongoing assessment practices used during instruction to monitor student understanding and provide feedback that improves learning.

Restorative Practices
Approaches to discipline and relationship-building that focus on accountability, reflection, and repairing harm rather than punitive measures.

Culturally Responsive Practices
Instructional and relational approaches that recognize, value, and reflect students' diverse cultural backgrounds in curriculum and school climate.

Student Ownership of Learning
The ability of students to understand learning goals, monitor their progress, reflect on growth, and take responsibility for improvement.

Collective Efficacy
The shared belief among educators that through collaborative effort they can positively impact student outcomes.

Performance-Based Tasks
Learning experiences that require students to apply knowledge and skills in authentic or real-world contexts.

Inquiry-Based Learning
An instructional approach that encourages students to ask questions, investigate, and construct understanding through exploration.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Education
Artificial intelligence tools that assist with tasks such as research, feedback, data analysis, and communication. When used responsibly, AI can support instructional efficiency, enhance learning experiences, and strengthen decision-making while maintaining educator judgment and ethical safeguards.

Governance & System Terms

Alignment
The intentional coordination of goals, actions, resources, and evaluation processes to ensure coherence across systems.

Benchmarks
Interim milestones used to measure progress toward a longer-term goal.

Stakeholder
Individuals or groups with an interest in the district's success, including students, families, staff, administrators, and community members.

Equitable Access
Ensuring that all students have fair and consistent access to high-quality learning opportunities and supports.

