

Strategic Planning Setting Direction Retreat Meeting – Wednesday, November 7, 2018

MINUTES

Steve Olson, Superintendent, welcomed all those in attendance. Mr. Olson commented on this being the final full day meeting – moving forward to the next level with possible change to some traditions/habits.

Perry Soldwedel, Consortium for Educational Change (CEC), briefly explained the folder of documents provided to all members and the Setting Direction Retreat Agenda which included the day's activities. It was noted that members would be revisiting the 8 Characteristics of a Great Preferred Future Statement to develop a shared understanding of the current mission, vision, core values and strategic themes - building upon those ideas to move the district forward. Mr. Soldwedel further explained that the Setting Direction Retreat is all about goals (“Where do we want to be five years from now that is different than where we are today?”) and that the day's activities would verify Long-range Goals and Measures and Prioritize the Strategies that need most attention to move the district toward continuous improvement. It was noted that potential changes include additions, deletions, and refinement. The final product will be a draft of the Strategic Plan. Mr. Soldwedel explained that goals are the “What” and strategies define “How we're going to get there” with the district to produce an action plan to achieve the goals. It was noted that Board of Education members will be continuously updated throughout this process.

Shannon Podzimek, Director of Communications, explained the process used to receive strategic plan feedback (mission, vision, core values) from various groups. Emails were sent offering feedback to assist with the final development of the Strategic Plan. Strategic Planning Team members received a copy of all responses.

Perry Soldwedel, CEC, explained Activity One: Review stakeholder feedback from the draft of the Preferred Future Statement from the Vision Retreat. Members were to consider any additions, deletions and/or refinements in the draft of the Preferred Future Statement; referring back to the Characteristics of a Great Preferred Future Statement (Future Focus, Directional, Specific, Relevant and Purpose-Drive, Values-Based, Challenging, Unique and Memorable, and Inspiring). Mr. Soldwedel also shared themes that he will use to put all ideas together (creating a second draft). It was noted that, currently, the three main words of the Mission are Inspire, Empower, and Achieve. Mr. Soldwedel explained that Vision encompasses Personalized Learning; Commitment to the Whole Child; Real World Relevance; College, Career, and Life Readiness; Partnerships with the Community; Targeted Resources; and Engaged and Digital Citizens. Members received information on the following Core Values which are nonnegotiable and will guide our behaviors and actions: Adaptability and Open to Change; Diversity and Individual Differences; Safety and Respect; Growth and Continuous Improvement; Resilience and Perseverance; and Collaboration and Communication. A chart was provided to each table to reflect any suggested changes. One representative from each table then summarized and shared their table team findings aloud to all in attendance.

Activity Two – Reflect on the articles read (homework assignment). Two members from each team table were assigned to read one of the following articles: Teaching: Respect but dwindling appeal; Leadership Perspective on Public Education; and Redefining Ready. Mr. Soldwedel explained why these three articles were chosen and shared background information of each article which included being aware of what is happening outside of the district, but still having an impact on the district; looking at public opinion and alternatives to public education; and preparing students for the future with real world applications. Three groups were formed to discuss each of the articles. It was noted that each group was to record and identify five key concepts from the article that the Strategic Plan Team could use as it identifies long-range goals and key strategies to set direction. Article concepts were then shared with table teams.

Activity Three – Review current long-range goals. Consider revised strategic goals. Mr. Soldwedel explained the difference between a goal (“What”) and a strategy (“How”). Member were informed that a goal is what we want to achieve and if we achieve all goals, we will fulfill our mission and vision. A strategy is what is most urgent for us to address and do differently to achieve our goals. While a strategy is

aligned directly to a goal, a strategy may have impact on more than one goal. It was noted that actions plans will be developed following strategic planning for all strategies. Mr. Soldwedel further explained that goals vary the least and that some goals may be common while other goals may be unique. Goals may involve Workforce; Financial, Facilities, Technology; Learning Conditions; Student Achievement; and Partnerships. It was noted that Technology is a tool that should be integrated with every goal (not by itself). Table teams were provided with suggested strategic themes (five goals) and a draft of strategic long-range goals aligned to themes based on SWOT and Preferred Future Statement for each of the five goals. Discussion was held amongst tables to determine how wording of these goals may be improved as well as understanding the difference between a goal and a strategy.

Activity Four – Provide feedback on POSSIBLE goal indicators and measures to be used to measure, progress monitor and report performance. Learn about Key Performance Indicators. Notice how the Key Performance Indicators align with College, Career, and Life new readiness standards. Understand how IL Empower and ESSA requirements are met through goals and indicators/measures. Discuss targets. Each table was provided with a chart that showed High School Goals (Students Growth and Achievement; Learning Environment; Staff and Organizational Effectiveness; Family and Community Connections; and Resources and Partnerships) along with Possible Indicators/Measures for each goal. Table members then shared and discussed their thoughts/ideas with one another which included any additions, deletions, and/or refinements. It was noted that Measures are the “input”.

Activity Five – Reflect on SWOT analysis and Preferred Future Statement to identify most urgent strategies for action. Reflect on SWOT analysis, Preferred Future Statement and critical unfinished strategies from current plan. Identify 6-12 strategies that are the most urgent to address and that if addressed will move the district toward further accomplishment of its preferred future mission, vision, values/commitments and goals. It was noted that strategies are gaps that currently are not yielding the results that are necessary and, if addressed, would present the most probable return on the investment of time, people and other resources. Strategies must be few in number and comprehensive in action. Members were informed that strategies are identified by the Strategic Plan Team at the district level but are turned over to action plan teams who are best qualified and certified to identify how the organization will go about closing the gaps. Table teams then discussed and shared their thoughts on the Long Rang GOALS (Student Growth and Achievement; Learning Environment; Workforce; Family and Community Connections; Resources; and Other) and wrote these thoughts on the provided chart as associated with a draft of new strategies based on SWOT and Preferred Future Statement.

Activity Six – Examine the strategies identified by all table teams. Look for those strategies consistently identified. Prioritize strategies. Describe each strategy and provide rationale why it was selected. Perry Soldwedel explained that strategies are not just statements of desire or where you hope to end up but rather, they identify and improve data which, in turn, improves the goal (turning weaknesses into strengths). The eight or fewer goals/strategies which had been determined by each table were placed on a chart and then displayed for all teams to view. One representative from each table read aloud a goal/strategy listed on the chart to determine if similar language appeared on any of the other team’s charts (determining similarities) and explained why selected. It was noted that statistics will show an 80% similarity and a 20% difference in goals/strategies amongst teams. Mr. Soldwedel will now prepare, from similar goals/strategies listed on these charts, a rough draft of the Strategic Plan. Once completed, a draft of this Strategic Plan will be shared with all team members. In addition, the Core Team will seek feedback from stakeholders.

Steve Olson, Superintendent, thanked everyone for their input/participation in this heartfelt process. A draft of this Strategic Plan will be presented at the November 20, 2018 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting.

The final meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 12, 2018. This meeting will focus on finalizing the district’s Strategic Plan. The agenda and documents/information will be shared prior to this meeting.