



Woodland Community Consolidated
School District 50

Strategic Plan Update Report Year 3

December 17, 2020

Executive Summary

Year three of the Strategic Plan is underway, and this report will provide an update on the progress toward the strategic plan goals. With the adoption of the Strategic Plan in 2018, the Board of Education created a roadmap for moving the district forward. Since that time, the entire school community has been working collaboratively to bring that plan to life. This report summarizes recent accomplishments from July-December, 2020 with contributions from school staff, school leaders, district department leaders, parents and community members. We have attempted to present accomplishments in an easy to read narrative to help explain the work of the committees beyond what a bulleted list can do.

As the Board is aware, much of the work the committees did was realigned due to COVID-19 and remote learning. The report will be placed on the website for public viewing following the December 2020 Board meeting.

Vision Statement

Together, inspiring tomorrow's creators, thinkers and leaders

Mission Statement

Woodland District 50 empowers our children to reach their potential by providing exceptional learning experiences that foster critical thinking in a nurturing learning community.

Goal 1 - Differentiate instruction with a focus on rigor and relevance to foster student growth

Goal 2 - Create enriched and meaningful student centered learning experiences

Goal 3 - Build positive, personal connections and relationships among staff and students

Goal 4 - Create learning opportunities for stakeholders addressing the physical, mental, emotional and social needs of the "Whole Child"

Goal 5 - Enhance the district's fiscal position and achieve annual state financial recognition

Goal 6 - Focus on sustainability as facilities are updated

Goal 7 - Build instructional capacity to meet student learning and well being goals by engaging staff in high quality, effective professional development.

Goal 8 - Recruit highly qualified staff that are innovative and mirror the student population.

Goal 9 - Promote the Woodland District 50 brand and infuse this initiative into opportunities to connect and give back to the community.

Student Learning

Initiative 1B: Establish an improved system for measuring and reporting individual student learning.

Summary of major milestones:

Due to the pandemic, the Student Learning committee has refocused efforts on the alignment of common grade-level assessments in grades Kindergarten through fifth grade in English Language Arts, Spanish Language Arts, and Mathematics. At the Middle School, the team will focus their efforts in all core subject areas including: Science, Social Studies, Mathematics, English Language Arts, and Spanish Language Arts.

Accomplishments July - Dec 2020:

- September 23, 2020 - Committee Chairs met to create year-long plan to identify assessments in specific grade levels
- October 26, 2020 - Committee Chairs met with Principals to share update regarding differentiation action plan when students and staff return later finalized future meeting dates to meet with Reading and Math Specialists (K-5) and Middle School Department Leaders
- November 11, 2020- Committee Chairs created a district-wide assessment documentation warehouse.
- November 13, 2020 - Committee Chairs met with Reading and Math Specialists to share a short presentation about the necessities of common grade level assessments provided the documentation warehouse to be completed by winter break.

Looking ahead:

Committee Chairs will be meeting with Middle School Department Leaders to share the assessment warehousing document; staff will complete this document in January. After review, the committee will develop a timeline with specific target dates to common formative assessments district-wide beginning of the 2021-22 school year.

Student Well-Being:

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Initiative 3B: Investigate and create opportunities within the school day to build personal relationships between staff and students and their peers.

Summary of major milestones:

In addition to the accomplishments listed below, the committee is investigating how the opportunities created during remote learning can transfer over to in-person learning and be incorporated into daily routines and practices.

Accomplishments July - Dec 2020:

- A Student Well-Being committee met throughout the summer to create opportunities to build personal relationships between staff and students as well as their peers during remote learning.
- In the beginning of the school year, the Student Well-Being and District PBIS committees combined in order to continue work on building relationships more consistently.
- Each school created a master schedule that provides for Social Emotional Learning and classroom connections daily during remote learning.
- Each school created opportunities outside of the schedule to build relationships, such as lunch buddies, “recess” time, social connections, and breakout rooms.
- Equity and Inclusion Actions
 - The district invested in devices, learning software and connectivity for all students to address the inequities that occurred with our previous Remote Learning. Every student was provided a device for Remote Learning 2.0. The purchase of a second learning management system for our younger students enabled consistent access for students remotely. All students without internet access were provided with detailed information on how to connect with Comcast Essentials reduced rate program. Where necessary the district has provided hotspots to address the short-term needs of ; the district has also provided vouchers to more than 30 families who are unable to participate in the Comcast Essential program.

Looking Ahead:

- The district will be adding eight Equity School Improvement Leaders with two at each school site. This hiring process begins in December. These Equity leaders will on curriculum issues and instruction needs at the school and classroom level, provide staff development as appropriate, and act as a collective resource for the community as we broaden our work with Equity
- Woodland has scheduled Beyond Diversity training with Glenn Singleton’s Pacific Education Group. The first Beyond Diversity training will be with the senior leadership of the district (EST and Principals) on January 14th and 15th.

Initiative 4B: Investigate current support systems that address the academic, behavioral, emotional and social needs of students and make improvements based on the findings.

Summary of major milestones: The Committee Chairs have completed the initial investigative portion of the goal and are working to create a comprehensive plan that includes ways to improve current practices based on the findings.

Accomplishments July - Dec 2020:

- Each school updated current academic and behavioral supports provided during remote learning.
- Committee Chairs met with each school's administrative team to collect initial data on the current support systems being used to address the academic, behavioral, emotional and social needs of students.

Looking Ahead:

- Committee Chairs will be meeting with the leads of the PBIS and SEL Committee to review data collected from administrative team meetings regarding district-wide support systems..
- Guided by the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) model of support, Committee Chairs will form a district committee, to include representatives from all stakeholder groups, to review data and create an action plan for improvement.

Finance and Facilities

Initiative 5A: Establish a legislative action committee to advocate for school funding and reduce unfunded mandates.

Summary of major milestones:

Woodland Board members and Administration continue to pursue relief via litigation for revenues lost to Prairie Crossing Charter School. Legislative avenues have been momentarily halted due to Covid-19, but the Delegate Assembly continues to support the charter school resolutions brought forth by Woodland SD 50.

Accomplishments July - Dec 2020:

- September 16, 2020 - Woodland filed a complaint against the Illinois State Board of Education regarding the Prairie Crossing Charter School renewal ruling.
- November 5, 2020 - Delegate Assembly 2020 adopted the following resolutions:
 - Creation of a funding methodology for State Authorized Charter Schools which does not negatively impact host districts
 - A definition of the special expectations of charter schools to educate at-risk students
 - Procedures to allow host school districts to participate in the charter school renewal process

Looking Ahead

Once the State legislature resumes normal activity, Woodland will pursue a legislative solution to ease the stress of lost revenue. Woodland will continue to work with Illinois Association of School Administrators in an attempt to reopen conversations with the Illinois Network of Charter Schools. At the same time, Woodland will be an active participant in the ongoing court case challenging ISBE's renewal ruling.

Initiative 5B: Prioritize expenditures to support the district's mission, vision and goals while also maintaining long term fiscal health.

Summary of major milestones:

Responsible oversight of district operating funds led to a "Financial Recognition" designation by ISBE on the FY 21 Annual Financial Report.

Accomplishments July - Dec 2020:

Class size remains at the forefront of the district's mission. In FY21, the district maintained lower class sizes while also battling additional Covid-19 related expenditures. As remote learning continues to be extended, expenditures have been reduced accordingly. Administration has been able to utilize numerous grants to mitigate deficit spending while also enhancing the technology needed to deliver remote learning effectively.

Woodland Administration negotiated shared surplus funding from Waukegan TIF#11 with the City of Waukegan. The development of a casino in this property has the potential to bring significant revenue to taxing bodies. The 33 ⅓ surplus share is estimated to bring between \$430,000 and \$1.3M in new revenue to Woodland within the next three years.

The Woodland Board of Education approved an "Intent to Issue Working Cash Bonds" in order to capitalize on low interest rates and secure funds for larger capital projects on the horizon. A bond hearing on December 17th will be followed by a January 5th vote. Depending on interest rates, Woodland will issue up to \$22M in Working Cash Bonds.

Looking Ahead

The extension of remote learning into calendar year 2021 will result in lower spending than proposed in the September budget. The hiring freeze, lack of need for guest teachers, and fuel savings are three areas where Woodland will experience significant reductions in traditional expenditures. Despite temporary savings, the Administration and the Finance Committee are continuously searching for ways to reduce spending to flatten anticipated future deficits.

Initiative 6B: Optimize the use of district facilities to benefit and support students, staff and community.

Summary of major milestones:

The district implemented a "work order" system to track assets, and material and labor costs associated with the largest capital expenditures. The scope of the system encompassed emergency work orders as

well as preventative maintenance work, so all maintenance work - unplanned, scheduled, and contracted - is being tracked to help establish true costs of operations for the district's largest assets.

Accomplishments July - Dec 2020:

The "work order" system has been implemented and is in process with the maintenance team; the grounds with the custodial staff will start utilizing the system by the end of December.

Looking ahead:

Individual schools will begin using this system in January, starting with a pilot at Elementary East and West. The program will allow all staff to have full access to the work request process for their space(s). A series of videos is available to support staff development in this area. The requester will receive feedback automatically from the program when work has been assigned and completed so s/he will know the status of every request.

Staff Recruitment and Development

Initiative 7B: Create and implement a targeted high quality, effective multi-year professional development plan for both certified and support staff that is aligned to district goals.

Summary of major milestones:

The changing landscape of how teachers are now delivering instruction has provided myriad challenges to the professional development planning process. Amid these challenges; however, the Teaching and Learning Department remains committed to supporting both remote and hybrid instruction for the 2020-2021 school year.

Accomplishments July - Dec 2020:

We established and offered the highly successful Summer 2020 *PDpalooza!*, offering 40 remote classes over two sessions. Over 800 participants engaged in professional development summer learning.

In preparation of Remote Learning 2.0, we developed Hybrid Learning Modules: Overview, Planning and Lesson Design, Activities and Tasks, Student Engagement and Management. Professional development modules included videos, templates, resources and supporting articles.

We collaborated with the Technology Department and Technology Integration Specialists to create hybrid learning technology-centered professional development for staff.

We created and administered a Non-Certified *Staff Professional Development Needs Assessment* with feedback from administrators and non-certified staff and *Non-Certified Staff Professional Development Needs Assessment* to all Woodland non-certified staff members.

Looking ahead:

We will be working to analyze and communicate *Non-Certified Staff Professional Development Needs Assessment* results to all non-certified staff and administration.

The district's Non-certified Professional Development committee will be convened to work on the development of goals in the spring 2021.

We remain committed to providing the remote and hybrid learning professional development our staff needs to help every one of our students be successful.

Initiative 8A: Develop a recruitment and selection plan that aligns to the district's mission and vision with a focus on increasing the diversity of our staff.

Summary of major milestones:

Human Resources continues to focus on diversifying our workforce. Since the end of the 2019-20 school year, the district began attempting to fill 40 vacancies due to resignations, retirements, leaves, and newly approved positions. The following is a breakdown of these efforts:

- 30 positions filled (75.0%)
- 10 current vacancies
- Of the 30 filled, 11 are diverse candidates (36.7% diverse)
- Of the 30 filled, 24 speak a language other than English (80.0%)
- Of the 24 that speak another language, 12 are Caucasian (50%)

(Note: For the purpose of this report, diverse is defined as race/ethnicity)

As in the past, administrators attended several education job fairs. The number attended this year was three fewer than last year due to several COVID-related event cancellations.

Accomplishments July - Dec 2020:

We began building relationships with Historically Black Colleges and universities, with a primary focus on their teacher training programs. We have also provided notice of job openings to the Pan-Hellenic Council of Lake County, in which a number of minority sorority and fraternity members participate. Human Resources will focus on expanding contacts with these two entities.

Human Resource has also started using social media to fill some of our hard-to-fill positions. We utilized Facebook and the district's website to advertise hard-to-fill positions.

Also, to bring attention to our open positions in the Latinx market, we have posted recruitment notices in Hispanic papers (La Nueva Semana and Puro Futbol News).

The pandemic altered the way in which screening and interviewing of candidates occurred. Human Resources focused on virtual interview/screening process and the improvement of diversifying the workforce, as well as working with the Equity Committee, to develop staff-related initiatives to improve equitable workforce selection, hiring and retention of diverse staff.

Community Relations and District Pride

Initiative 9B: Utilize various media forums to promote student and staff achievements, celebrations and school events. Increase the audience to include students, parents, and community members.

Summary of major milestones: One of the goals in the Woodland District 50 Strategic Plan is to promote the Woodland brand and infuse this initiative into opportunities to connect with the community. In July, we started a new social media campaign called “Friday Feature” to welcome new faces and to celebrate the unique and interesting stories and people that make #LifeintheW the Woodland way. Sharing these stories with the public built a stronger connection with our community and helped personalize our district from a large entity down to a small family. Woodland staff members celebrated the person that we featured, and parents were proud to share how that staff member contributed to their child’s education. Community members often posted notes to thank the featured staff member for their service. The comment section was always full of positive comments and interaction between our stakeholders. The Friday Feature has been a wildly successful campaign. The next step will be to incorporate the “Friday Feature” profiles into a #LifeintheW section on the district website to give the recognition a more permanent home.

Accomplishments July - Dec 2020:

#LifeintheW has sustained a strong presence during the pandemic. We can celebrate that this year we have consistency with following the branding guidelines and a firm process in place for getting any #LifeintheW apparel or merchandise approved before release.

While we have limited opportunities to take pictures of students and staff as we are in a unique setting, our staff and families continue to use our hashtag for positive shout outs and celebrations of learning and growing in District 50. Our PTA has followed all branding guidelines for their new spiritwear for the 2020-2021 school year, which promotes our brand to families and staff in a visual way. In addition, staff continue to receive items like computer stickers, notepads, bags, lanyards and more with our brand front and center. Our district food drive has made District 50 a valuable resource for our community and our families.

Life in our district looks different this year for our students and families, and this is exactly what our brand represents. The #LifeintheW spirit has unified our learning community and it is the driving force keeping us connected even when we must stay apart.

We have had strong support from our community through donations. Even during a pandemic, businesses in our community have been generous to our schools. Donations have included pumpkins for our students at Primary during the Halloween parade, gift cards for our staff during American Education Week, and much more!

Initiative 9C: Increase and promote volunteer opportunities for all students.

Initiative 10A: Create opportunities to develop relationships with all community stakeholders by inviting and increasing their presence in the schools.

Initiative B: Increase Woodland presence in events and gatherings outside of the schools.

Summary of major milestones: The following initiatives were placed on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions. We were unable to invite volunteers into our buildings as our setting has been remote since August. If the restrictions during the pandemic change, we will follow the guidelines allowed to introduce these opportunities into our schools. Our priority is for the health and safety of all students and staff members.