



**TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 113  
STRATEGIC PLAN**

# TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 113 STRATEGIC PLAN

CULTIVATING PASSION, UNLOCKING POTENTIAL, INSPIRING EXCELLENCE – EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE

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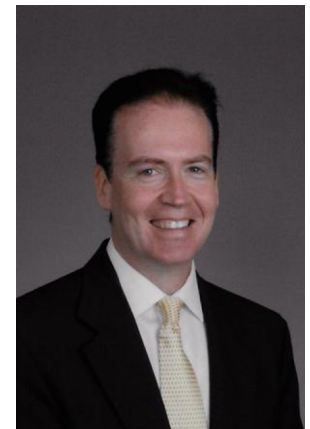
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## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

On behalf of the Board of Education and all District 113 staff, I am proud and excited to share the Strategic Plan for Township High School District 113, “Cultivating Passion, Unlocking Potential, Inspiring Excellence – Everyone, Everywhere.” On a daily basis, we strive to provide each and every one of our students with a high quality education, a safe environment in which they can learn, and the resources that will enable them to achieve their greatest potential as students and citizens of our community, our country, and the world. This plan emphasizes our commitment to quality education with goals for our students, staff, curriculum, and instruction over the next three years.

This plan was developed with input from over 1,000 stakeholders across our five communities. It represents the beliefs of our students, parents, teachers, staff, and community on how, together, we can implement best practices, build more effective and efficient systems, and most importantly, serve our students.

We will implement this plan during the 2017-2018 school year and will continue reviewing it during the three-year cycle to ensure our plan is a true, living document. I look forward to working with our entire learning community as we push the limits of how great our schools and District can be. Thank you for allowing me to serve alongside all of you as we work together to inspire excellence for everyone, everywhere.



Dr. Christopher Dignam  
Superintendent of Schools

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Dignam'.

Christopher Dignam, Ed.D.

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## **DISTRICT 113 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Township High School District 113 consists of two comprehensive high schools – Highland Park High School and Deerfield High School – and serves the communities of Highland Park, Deerfield, Highwood, Bannockburn, and Riverwoods. District 113 is governed by a seven-member school board. District 113 serves approximately 3,683 students, and is one of the highest performing school districts in Illinois and the nation.

District 113 has a proud history of residents moving to the community specifically for the schools. Stakeholders are highly engaged and well educated, placing a high value on quality education. Students come to school ready to learn and have great expectations from staff. Parents are highly involved in their children’s education. In addition to providing an excellent academic education, parents expect the schools to offer a comprehensive extracurricular program and variety of other services. The vast majority of students are college-bound, most of whom plan to attend a competitive university.

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## **DISTRICT 113 HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

For over a decade, the District 113 community has developed long-range plans and strategies to demonstrate their commitment to a learner-centered system. Out of this work, two blueprints emerged: The Guiding Principles and the Equity Action Plan.

The Guiding Principles (2005) promoted a vision of culture defined by a desirable environment for students, staff, and parents, with the focus being to “develop and sustain healthy relationships to create caring communities.” Furthermore, the principles advanced a vision of teaching and learning that valued educational practices for all learners encouraging the community to “seek new information and use our discoveries to change understanding.” The Guiding Principles have been embedded throughout the Strategic Plan to ensure the Beliefs and Values of the plan emphasize relationship building.

With The Guiding Principles as a framework, the Equity Action Plan (2011) sought to increase achievement levels for all students regardless of race, gender, ability, or socio-economic status; to eliminate predictability of outcomes across student groups; and to provide opportunities for all students while working to eliminate barriers. To meet the objectives of the plan, belief statements, strategies, and action steps were created and delineated for all staff members by staff members.

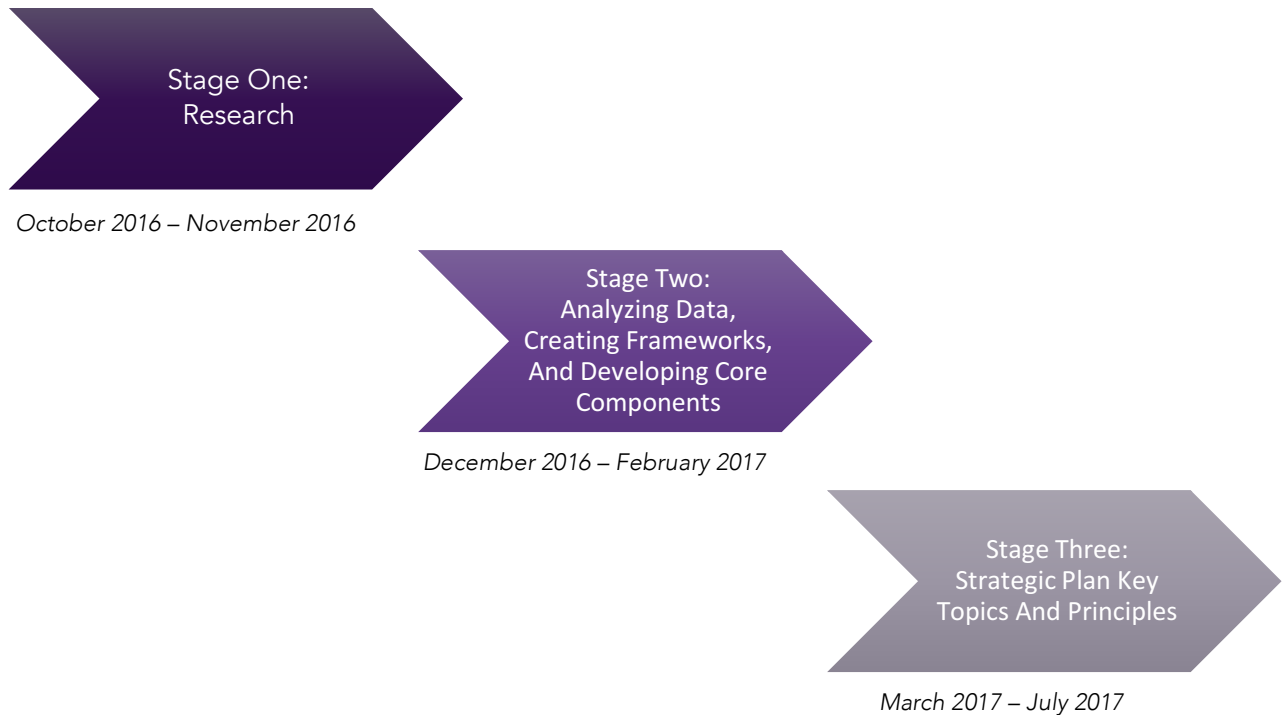
The Strategic Plan described in this document acknowledges the work that came before by embodying the long-held beliefs and values of the community. This Strategic Plan is not a departure from the past, instead it is meant to guide future work. The Strategic Plan is a roadmap and “strategic view” for communicating standards for excellence without standardizing professional practice.

## THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

### STRATEGIC PLANNING ENGAGEMENT:

During the 2016-2017 school year, the District partnered with Felicity Educational Services, LLC (FES), a third-party consulting firm, to develop a strategic plan to document the current state of the District and determine future direction based on District and community stakeholder values as well as best practices in K-12 education. Engagement of both internal and external stakeholders resulted in the creation of a strategic plan to support systemic and school-level decision-making and to align personnel and resources around student outcomes. In all, over 1,000 stakeholders provided input during the process. The faculty and staff of the District also had several opportunities to contribute both in the beginning stage and the development stage of the engagement.

The strategic planning process was designed to authentically engage stakeholders – including the Board of Education, administration, principals, students, parents, teachers, staff, and community residents who may or may not have children enrolled in the District – in articulating organizational values, beliefs and goals. The research-based method of strategic planning adopted by District 113 will enable it to determine its own future, which focuses on the variety of student needs, the development of rigorous academic programs, and effective operational execution.



THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

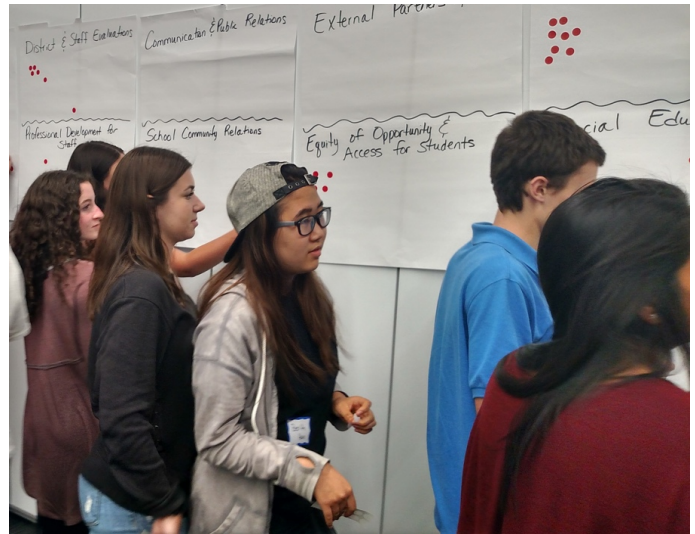
STAGE ONE:  
RESEARCH



# THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Strategic planning participants were engaged in a rich stakeholder engagement process: group meetings with school staff and community members, an online survey, interviews with school leaders, and a review of public documents about the District.

**Group Meetings** were held – 24 focus group meetings in all – with well over 500 total participants including teachers, support staff, parents, students, community members, and representatives from local organizations and government agencies. During these group sessions, participants engaged in dialogue around values and core beliefs, possible District mission statements, guiding principles and visions of the community, and the future direction of the District.



Beginning on September 19 and continuing through October 26, 2016, meetings took place at both high schools and the District office. Each building held several sessions for their respective staff, two sessions open to parents and two sessions designed specifically for students. Each school also held a meeting designed for its respective community partners or community members. At the District office, there were two meetings for community partners and the public as well as an additional meeting for District administrative staff and the Board of Education. The last meeting for community members and parents was held in Spanish.



**Community-Wide Meetings** proved insightful with students, parents, community members, and community support organizations providing an in-depth glimpse of their “take” on the District. Local community organizations often began their sessions stressing the importance of external partnerships, the specific impact of the schools on them, and the tax base of the

communities, only to shift to student-focused concerns as the meeting progressed. The more the District was examined, the more attention was directed towards students. This shift is what should happen but frequently does not because of myopic perspectives.

**School-Wide Meetings** held during professional development time gave staff of both schools an opportunity to provide feedback on the strengths and areas of need in the District. The school meetings followed the same format as the ones with the community, with staff able to reflect on their individual thoughts and then share them in small groups. After the release of the final draft version of the plan in September 2017, daylong school visitations/data collection opportunities were provided for staff to share additional thoughts and feedback.

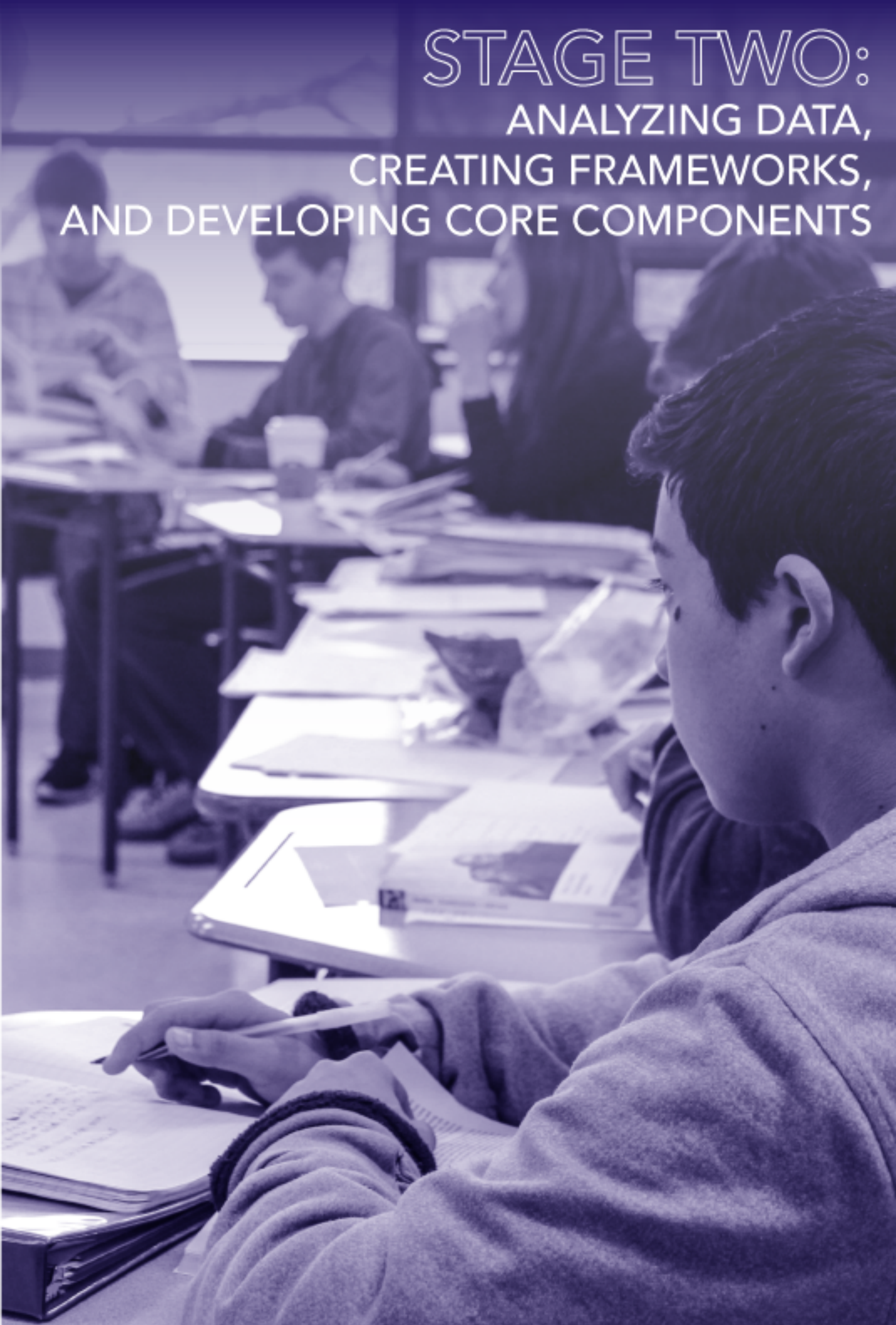
**Online Survey** of key stakeholder populations (employees, parents, and community members) was open for responses for over a month during September and October 2016 for community members that were unable to attend any of the face-to-face meetings. This provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to have a voice in this critical process. The nearly 500 unique visitors represented a cross section of District stakeholders. Students represented the largest cohort of responders, providing important perspective and balance to the findings. In addition, a survey was provided for all staff to share additional input regarding the Strategic Plan draft in August/September 2017. This afforded all District employees an opportunity to contribute further to the plan before final adoption by the Board of Education.

**Individual Interviews** were held to aid in understanding the culture, climate, and history of a district and individual schools, which is important in developing a pathway to the future. One-on-one meetings occurred with the Assistant Superintendent for Finance, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Communication, Superintendent, Principals, as well as others, while small group discussions with additional staff helped provide a more complete perspective.





# STAGE TWO: ANALYZING DATA, CREATING FRAMEWORKS, AND DEVELOPING CORE COMPONENTS



Stage Two of the strategic planning process involved a complete data review of all surveys, meetings, and resources to develop overarching themes, beliefs, and value statements for future work. During this phase, administrators and teachers were able to draw upon the research and offer suggestions to expand upon these ideas to create a robust and comprehensive plan, potential implementation strategies, and metrics for measuring success.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

EMERGING THEMES AND BROAD THEMES

**Social Emotional Experience**

For a growing number of schools and districts, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has become a framework for how educators, families, and communities partner to promote students' social, emotional, and academic learning. SEL was the most commonly discussed topic in stakeholder engagement sessions, with many expressing a desire that the District focus on SEL.

**Instruction**

District 113 has demonstrated a track record of high performance, rigorous course content, and great teaching. As the District looks to the future, stakeholders were firm in their belief that the District needs to continue to grow, continue to recruit and retain great teachers, and continue to challenge students to be the best they can be, both in the classroom and beyond.

**Climate and Culture**

As the nation struggles with the challenge of keeping our schools safe for our students, District 113 consistently responds to the need to maintain a safe environment that is conducive to increased student performance, while at the same time, creating a climate and culture that foster the values of service, global citizenship and supporting one's peers.

**College and Career Readiness**

Like many high performing school systems across the country, the District 113 community expects its students to attend and graduate from a four-year college or university, and/or achieve great success in a career. Whether it is a college or career path, District 113 provides the foundation, skills, and tools for personal, academic, and professional growth.

**Consistency Between Schools**

Both internal and external stakeholders also expressed a desire to have certain commonalities within and between district schools. Suggestions included having common courseware, course offerings, extracurricular opportunities, and common outcomes across courses, departments, and schools.

**Communication**

While communication was not a consistent topic among stakeholders, groups agreed that all District programming, policies, practices and protocols need to be clearly and concisely communicated to the community.

## EMERGING VISION, MISSION, CORE BELIEFS, AND VALUE STATEMENTS

Data collected through strategic planning stakeholder sessions resulted in the formation of the following Vision and Mission statements:

### VISION

Cultivating passion, unlocking potential, inspiring excellence – everyone, everywhere

### MISSION

Township High School District 113 has an unwavering commitment to providing all students opportunities to realize their unique potential through a rigorous and engaging curriculum, meaningful relationships, varied experiences, a positive school culture, and the cultivation of individual passion and resilience.

### CORE BELIEFS

Four Core Beliefs emerged from discussions, written feedback, and relevant data that best represent what District 113 believed in its core and represented how the District would lead and manage moving forward.

**BELIEF 1:** We believe in developing the potential of all students and offering supports to help realize this potential.

**BELIEF 2:** We will hire, support, recognize and retain a dedicated and exceptional staff that best meets the needs of our students.

**BELIEF 3:** We believe that we should communicate and lead in an honest, transparent, and collaborative way that develops, reinforces, strengthens, and sustains relationships.

**BELIEF 4:** We believe that District resources must be used optimally to create the greatest benefit.

# STAGE THREE: PLAN KEY TOPICS AND PRINCIPLES



The statements below represent a robust list of key topics and principles consistent with the research and community-wide findings above and vision, mission, and belief statements. Within each of the Four Core Beliefs are value statements that form the foundation of each belief. The following beliefs and value statements frame the basis of District goal setting for reaching the District's Vision and Mission.

**BELIEF 1:** We believe in developing the potential of all students and offering supports to help realize this potential.

### VALUE STATEMENTS

- ❖ Provide and engage all students in a rigorous, relevant, and engaging research-based curriculum
- ❖ Integrate instructional technology meaningfully into the curriculum
- ❖ Ensure college and career readiness for all students
- ❖ Ensure students in different sections of the same course will have similar curricular experiences
- ❖ Provide resources for students that may need additional academic, social, and emotional supports
- ❖ Support all students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, physical and mental abilities, religion, political beliefs, location, or any other unique factor(s) through cultural responsiveness
- ❖ Support extracurricular and athletic activities for all students as well as opportunities for community involvement
- ❖ Have fair, equitable disciplinary policies that focus on restorative justice practices when appropriate
- ❖ Support social and emotional learning to address student self-management, risk-taking, and the consequences of substance abuse

**BELIEF 2:** We will hire, support, and retain a dedicated and exceptional staff that best meets the needs of our students.

## VALUE STATEMENTS

- ❖ Expect all staff to be passionate about teaching and learning; committed to establishing and maintaining caring, positive relationships; student-centered; culturally proficient; and dedicated to enlarging their knowledge of pedagogy and subject matter
- ❖ Align Professional Development (PD) to support a rigorous, relevant, and engaging curriculum
- ❖ Collaboratively create hiring and accountability protocols that ensure we select and develop the best staff possible
- ❖ Mentor new staff to help them develop individually and to maximize their contribution(s) to the District
- ❖ Successfully implement PERA via measured guidelines and monitoring (timely, accurate, critical feedback)
- ❖ Recognize the value of best practices of other districts and research

**BELIEF 3:** We believe that we should communicate and lead in an honest, transparent, and collaborative way that develops, reinforces, strengthens, and sustains relationships.

## VALUE STATEMENTS

- ❖ Build relationships with all students, families, staff, and the community to foster educational excellence and maintain caring relationships
- ❖ Embrace collaboration and seek consensus on District and school initiatives
- ❖ Construct and implement a communications plan that keeps the community and staff informed through increased transparency and open communication; including initiatives such as e-newsletters, social media, updates on District websites, administration newsletters to staff
- ❖ Articulate with sender districts and continue participation in intergovernmental meetings
- ❖ Explain Board governance procedures and practices in public documents, execute best practices as they pertain to Board governance, and develop mechanisms that stimulate a collaborative exchange of ideas between Board and stakeholders

**BELIEF 4:** We believe that District resources must be used optimally to create the greatest benefit.

## VALUE STATEMENTS

- ❖ Ensure that the use of District resources aligns to the vision, mission, and beliefs of the District outlined in the Strategic Plan
- ❖ Identify and achieve cost containment to mitigate potential financial challenges from impacting students or the classroom
- ❖ Provide and maintain exceptional facilities to ensure an optimal learning environment
- ❖ Continue to utilize District resources responsibly and efficiently. Examine current and potential District financial risk and new revenue streams, such as local, state and federal sources, to ensure current base revenue while maintaining a strong financial standing