

Community High School District 99

Strategic Plan Development

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Background

In Fall 2021, Community High School District 99 (District 99) kicked off a process to update its Strategic Plan. The current plan, which articulates the long- and short-term goals and areas of focus was originally adopted in 2011. [Annual review](#) of accomplishments and progress on identified goals has continued since the plan's original adoption. For the last several years (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic), the district's strategic focus was on its [Master Facility Plan](#).

With construction and renovations complete and approaches to learning returning to more in-person experiences, the district launched the first phase of the strategic planning process. A comprehensive set of [stakeholder engagements](#) was held in November 2021. These engagements provided community insights and direction for the Strategic Plan Core Planning Team, which convened in February 2022. This representative committee — including current District 99 students and graduates, current, future and past District 99 parents, teachers and community members — reviewed the stakeholder data collected in the fall engagements, as well as progress on previous strategic goals and objectives.

On February 16-17, 2022, CESO Communications facilitated the Core Planning Team in a series of strategic planning workshops focused on identifying a practical vision for the district's future, an investigation of barriers that could impede attainment of the vision, and the development of specific, innovative actions (strategic directions) to address these barriers and move the district closer to vision.

Once strategic directions are finalized, specific action plans will be developed by district leaders and faculty, moving from analyzing and thinking about what could be done to making decisions about what will be done. The end result will be specific and concrete accomplishments for each strategic direction for 2022-2023 and beyond. The goal of this strategic planning process is to enable the district to be more agile in responses, more creative in implementation, and better able to encourage and develop broad-based initiative and responsibility.

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Current District 99 Mission*

* The mission statement and a new vision statement are also under review and revision and will be aligned with the new strategic plan.

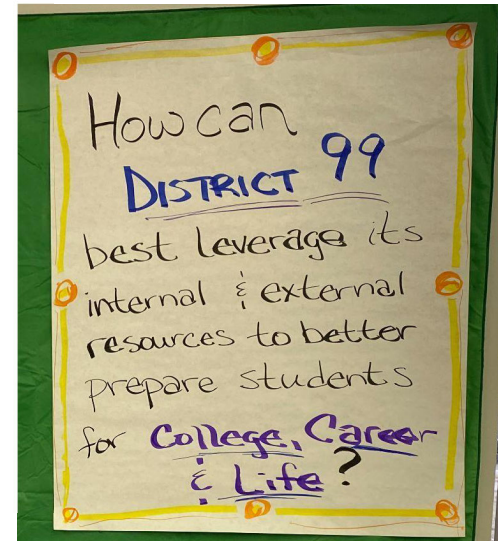
The mission of District 99 is to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students in a caring, "student centered" environment.

Strategic Planning Focus

As part of the strategic planning process, the Core Planning Team was presented with the following focus question to help concentrate the attention of the team on critical issues, while allowing creative responses.

FOCUS QUESTION:

How can District 99 best leverage internal and external resources to better prepare students for college, career and life?



Practical Vision

Participants shared their hopes and aspirations for the future of District 99. The vision arose from current experiences that are currently just beyond the grasp of the district. It is important to note that the vision is not the district's mission, nor is it a goal. This workshop helped the team step beyond what could be, leading to the development of a plan that can help bring that vision into reality.

In 3-5 years, District 99 will be a district focused on

Beyond the Walls of District 99			Beyond Academics			Active and Engaged Learning	
Rethinking Student Agency	Engaged Citizenship	Career Exploration	Building Community	Supporting the Whole Student	Access	Flexible Learning	Assessment of Learning
<i>As evidenced by ...</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More students moving in and out of the building Enhancing student leadership curriculum for all students (e.g. PE Leader program) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eco-friendly perspective Discussing current events Responsible and critical consumers of media Teaching students how to have respectful dialogue Supporting students in solving the problems they see Volunteering Student engagement with adults in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early exposure to range of career paths Career- ready after HS Electives that cover different careers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentorship programs for students needing help Dedicated time for relationship building Opportunities for community building between students and staff Build peer support (cultures, languages, academics) Less division between college bound and non-college bound students More ungraded debate/ discussion Student involvement in school and district decisions Respond to student feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social worker in each class Lower student to counselor ratio Rethink structure of support services for greater effectiveness Prioritize mental health Catch more student that need more supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation solutions (e.g. staggered arrivals, shorter bus routes, smaller buses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blended learning options Time for flexible scheduling to respond to student needs Project-based learning out of classroom Community experience during the day Diverse student teaching Less homework, more engaged learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills focused reporting and grading Passing classes based on mastery of standards Increased student ownership of their learning experience Alignment and consistency across disciplines Collaboration with all departments

Strategic Directions

Strategic Directions are broad directions or proposals that impact the future by:

- Using existing strengths and opportunities within an organization
- Overcoming impeding perceptions, beliefs, assumptions and habits, as well as outmoded patterns, structures and policies
- Catalyzing movement in the direction of the organization's vision

Strategic directions are aimed primarily at the underlying contradictions (barriers) rather than the vision in order to keep strategies related to the real situation — not to a future that does not yet exist. Focusing on barriers make this process strategic because they are at the heart of the impediments to change. They reveal patterns and assumptions that are important to understand as the organization crafts ways to move forward effectively.

Strategic directions are neither the implementation plan for the vision, nor the latest good ideas detached from the underlying contradictions. They set directions *toward* something, rather than imposing a set of goals or abstract ideas onto the future. Strategic directions funnel the countless things that can be done into innovative yet practical courses of action or programs that serve as a framework to help leaders steer their efforts toward their vision. Well-crafted strategic directions develop shared ownership and commitment, and the clarity to move forward.

The following strategic directions will focus the district's efforts and better prepare students for college, career and life ...

1) Validating change through data and regular feedback	2) Increasing connections and alignment with post-secondary option for greater visibility and awareness	3) Evolving traditional educational experiences in partnership with stakeholders	4) Increasing student voice and ownership (i.e., agency)	5) Supporting and empowering staff in reimagining their roles and responsibilities	6) Expanding student access while ensuring safety
Examples of specific actions that will move the district toward vision					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal testimony from those living the changes Explore other districts farther along in rolling out their plans Testimonials Getting student input on the details of implementation Student participation in planning & advertising Set up visits to other schools that are already doing some of these things Create programs, events and presentations on what other schools are doing to show that it works and how it works, and create excitement in everyone Stats on how this new way of learning is ultimately helpful for students Compelling campaigns (e.g., how music helps in math) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborations with schools who are participating in this new way of learning Announce changes WITH an external partner Advocating to outsiders, colleges why our school changing is beneficial and important Most colleges are already changing or are open to change and our school changing will only help students adapt to changes in college Get input from colleges, trade schools, employers to show how changes align with what they are looking for Communicate flexibility and admin support (e.g., in colleges) Hybrid assessments (high school success, college requirements, trade requirements) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find small pilot group to get things started and model for others Communicate and celebrate early, small wins Detailed and specific plan available Explain our plan from the beginning; reforming our words into not what we're losing, but what we're changing for the better Slow rollout of plan – quick wins first, break into component parts Phased rollout of open campus (e.g. more opportunities for upper class students) Meditation/Yoga events, other ways to help create calm and regulate students and staff Communicating to everyone why this plan can work - creating a detailed plan that can help people manage stress and understand what might be causing the stress from the new schedule Slow rollout Have parents shadow students or new version of curricular night Making adjustments to our plan based on how certain changes are affecting people Career Path Plan Initiative (course that focuses on skills you are good at/exploring that throughout all four years) Highlight issues with current/traditional approaches and focus on how the plan addresses those issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student-led leadership program for Access periods Teaching students how to be successful with new expectations Student Influencer Initiative Virtual connections/ learning opportunities Getting student input on the details of implementation Student participation in planning & advertising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand staff recruiting Rethinking of staff roles and responsibilities Coaches to help staff with implementation Administrative support and visibility through implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> App that students and parents can share to ensure student safety "Tracking" system for student whereabouts during school (e.g., scanning IDs?) School transportation for outside programs Working with the Village to address traffic & pedestrian crossing safety Food delivery program for underclassmen; off-campus for seniors in good academic standing Shorter bus routes



NEXT STEPS

Plan Refinement

The next steps in developing a strategic plan are to review and identify gaps or needed modifications to the strategic directions to ensure barriers are being addressed and the work over the next few years is focused on the vision.

1. **Stakeholder Engagement** - Once the Core Planning Team finalizes its DRAFT ROADMAP, the district will bring it to the community for feedback. Specifically, stakeholders will be invited to share their reactions to the draft strategic directions, including identifying opportunities for improvement.
2. **Administrative Review** - Similarly, the district's leadership team will also review the draft roadmap and share their insights. They will also review draft mission and vision statements in alignment with the strategic plan.
3. **Roadmap Refinement** - The Core Planning Team will reconvene and review the collected insights to revise and refine the strategic roadmap and begin identifying and prioritizing key accomplishments from which district leaders will create implementation plans.
4. **School Board Presentation (March 21)** - Members of the Core Planning Team will share their experience with the process and draft plan to the School Board for a first reading and discussion. The Board will also review draft mission and vision statements as part of the first reading.
5. **Administrative Revision** - Superintendent Thiele and other members of the leadership team will incorporate feedback from the School Board and stakeholders, refining the strategic plan for approval by the Board in April.
6. **School Board Approval (mid-April)** - The School Board will act on the revised strategic plan at a meeting in mid- to late April.
7. **Development of Implementation/Action Plans (spring 2022)** - Once approved by the School Board, district leaders will develop implementation plans for each strategic direction, to include major accomplishments for the first 18 months. Leaders will move from analyzing and thinking about what *could* be done to making decisions about what *will* be done. Since not everything can be done at once, it will be important to focus and prioritize actions within each strategy. The agreed-upon actions for each strategic direction require the commitment of a representative and inclusive work team focused on its implementation in cooperation with other strategic direction teams.