

SCHOOL DISTRICT 197

Nurture. Inspire. Prepare. Together, We Thrive.

2025-26 Superintendent Goals: Mid-Year Update

Goals approved by School Board on October 10, 2025

This document will provide a mid-year update on the Superintendent's goals for the 2025-26 school year.

Goal 1

The superintendent will oversee the implementation of operational plans in support of the strategic plan's focus areas of social and emotional learning, equitable systems and support, and career exploration and preparation.

Update:

Progress toward Goal 1 is monitored through separate, scheduled Board presentations aligned to each focus area of the district's Strategic Framework. Those reports provide detailed updates on implementation targets for social and emotional learning, equitable systems and support, and career exploration and preparation. As a result, this mid-year goal update does not revisit Goal 1 and instead focuses on Goals 2 and 3, where a consolidated progress summary is most useful.

Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA) Superintendent Evaluation Rubrics

The actions below are drawn directly from superintendent board updates provided throughout the first half of the 2025-26 school year. They are organized using the **MSBA Superintendent Evaluation Rubric descriptors** approved by the School Board for this year's evaluation.

For each goal, actions are grouped under the **"Highly Effective" performance descriptors** associated with that goal's rubric elements, allowing the Board to clearly see how the work aligns to the standards you adopted.

Goal 2

The superintendent will continue to put in place budget procedures and policies that will enhance long-term fiscal stability, further implementing the cost containment strategy design in FY 25.

Goal 2 Related MSBA Rubrics:

- Standard 2: School District Finances – Element A (Budget Development and Maintenance)
 - Standard 3: Communication and Community Relationships – Element C (Inform the Community as a Whole)
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Highly Effective Descriptor: Engages in timely budget planning and actions that consider current and long-range information and data; seeks balance to meet students' current and future needs and be fiscally responsible to the community.

- Designed and launched a structured cost-containment process for the 2026–27 budget cycle
 - Grounded budget planning in current financial data, inflationary cost pressures, and updated enrollment projections
 - Connected district-level budget decisions to statewide demographic and fiscal trends through MASBO, MASA, and AMSD engagement
 - Applied long-range fund balance considerations alongside immediate budget reduction needs
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Highly Effective Descriptor: Seeks balance to meet students' current and future needs and be fiscally responsible to the community; distributes resources to meet immediate and long-range objectives.

- Spent approximately two weeks visiting school sites and meeting with frontline staff to listen and create space for input
- Invited staff feedback on what must be protected for students and where deficiencies or inefficiencies exist in current systems
- Used frontline perspectives to pressure-test cost-containment ideas before formal reduction proposals were developed
- Held individual and small-group meetings with cabinet members to identify efficiencies while protecting core student experiences

- Facilitated follow-up sessions to refine and stress-test proposals rather than relying on across-the-board reductions
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Highly Effective Descriptor: Distributes resources in light of school district goals and immediate and long-range objectives.

- Integrated cost-containment planning with the district's strategic priorities rather than treating it as a standalone exercise
 - Ensured director proposals reflected alignment to district values, equity commitments, and instructional priorities
 - Used enrollment and demographic trend analysis to inform staffing and program conversations early, not reactively
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Highly Effective Descriptor: Actively keeps community informed with appropriate, regular communication on a variety of school district topics, issues, and/or concerns, allowing the school board to meet its responsibilities.

- Regularly updated the Board on enrollment trends, fund balance context, and structural budget pressures
 - Communicated budget realities and tradeoffs during PTA visits and community conversations
 - Provided ongoing legislative and fiscal context through AMSD and MASA updates to support informed governance
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Goal 3

The superintendent will increase staff engagement and feedback through one-on-one interviews with all district staff within 4-6 years. Each year, this will require approximately 150-200 interviews.

Related MSBA Rubric:

- Standard 6: Teaching and Learning – Element E (Culture of Cooperation)
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Highly Effective Descriptor: Develops and supports open, productive, caring, and trusting relationships among staff.

- Completed more than 50 one-on-one staff interviews since the start of the school year across schools and district office departments
 - Maintained steady progress toward the annual interview target in support of the 4–6 year commitment
 - Prioritized presence in buildings and direct engagement with staff across roles and sites
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Highly Effective Descriptor: Encourages open, productive, caring, and trusting environment among staff.

- Created confidential, relational spaces for staff to share concerns, ideas, and celebrations
 - Reinforced trust by listening without defensiveness and focusing on themes rather than individual complaints
 - Supplemented formal interviews with Coffee with the Superintendent and informal engagement opportunities
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Highly Effective Descriptor: Supports open, productive, caring, and trusting environment among staff.

- Used recurring themes from interviews to inform District Office CARES training and service expectations

- Connected staff feedback to improvements in communication, responsiveness, and workflow support
- Strengthened cross-role and cross-site relationships through intentional relationship-building activities