

Proposal for Facilitating Crosslake Community School Strategic Planning Process

January 25, 2023

TO: Holly Amaya, Director of Online Learning

FROM: Laura Connelly and Ed Zabinski

We are presenting a proposal to assist the Crosslake Community School board of directors and staff in developing a comprehensive strategic plan that is informed by key stakeholders, including students, faculty, board members and community members.

About unTapped, LLC

unTapped, LLC is a consulting business committed to closing gaps between what people need and what communities, organizations and institutions provide. Our approach to helping organizations and communities address the challenges they face—big or small—is regenerative. A regenerative approach seeks broad inclusive and equitable participation, and is rooted in the lived experiences of people while considering the impacts of decisions on people and the planet.

- *Engage & Learn*
We listen to and learn from the people most impacted by ideas, solutions and decisions; this is critical to informed, equitable decision-making.
- *Strategize & Innovate*
We explore and analyze the changes institutions, organizations, and communities want to affect in order to achieve their mission. We encourage people to think broadly and differently about ways to achieve their goals, with a focus on the triple bottom line (people, planet and prosperity) to measure, benchmark, set goals, improve, and eventually evolve toward more sustainable systems and models.
- *Act & Connect*
Every action either moves toward a desired outcome or away from it. We help people create a process that will put them on a problem-solving trajectory. We encourage them to use community networks and cross-sector collaboration to accomplish their goals.
- *Impact & Reflect*
We help people design processes that continuously analyze outcomes and produce insights. We do this by helping people analyze the impact they intend to create, the actions they will take, as well as identifying metrics to ensure they are creating the impact they intended.

Strategic Planning Process: Crosslake Community School

Understanding that Crosslake Community School has experienced a significant increase in enrollment and multiple leadership transitions, we propose the following strategic planning process to create an ambitious, forward-thinking strategic plan informed by input from the school board, staff, students, families, and community partners.

Step 1: Engage stakeholders

We will use a variety of methods to engage and learn from key stakeholders, including telephone interviews, focus groups, and an online SWOT survey for the board and staff. We will analyze what we learn, identify insights and themes, and then compile a report to inform the strategic planning process.

Step 2: Facilitate strategic planning process

During our first meeting with the board and planning team, we’ll generate a short list of strategic goals to be accomplished over the next three to five years.

- What achievements or strengths do you want to build on?
- What weaknesses or risks do you need to address or remedy?
- What new opportunities should you pursue?

Once the goals are established, we’ll help the team identify strategies and accountabilities:

- How can we achieve these goals?
- What courses of action might enable us to attain them?
- Who will do what, and by when?
- How will we measure our progress?

After completing the process of setting strategic directions, goals and strategies, we’ll prepare a plan document identifying key actions to achieve the goals, the people assigned to lead the efforts, the timelines for each initiative, and measurable outcomes to confirm the goals have been achieved.

Project Timeline

We propose to conduct the stakeholder engagement process during March and April; facilitate the strategic planning process in May; and submit the final plan document before the end of June. We will, of course, adjust this timeline to accommodate the school’s schedule.

Estimate of Cost

Our estimate of costs for the stakeholder engagement and strategic planning process is shown below.

Deliverables	Cost
Step 1: Engage stakeholders	\$ 12,800
Review available CCS information	
Prepare & distribute board SWOT survey	
Compile SWOT survey findings	
Interview 12 community leaders	
Interview 8 parents	
Facilitate & summarize 3 seat-based student focus groups	
Facilitate & summarize 2 online student virtual focus groups	
Prepare summary document	
Step 2: Facilitate strategic planning process	\$ 7,200
Facilitate meeting #1: identify strategic direction & objectives	
Prepare notes and draft plan document	
Facilitate meeting #2: create an operational work plan	
Prepare notes and finalize plan document	
Other	\$ 900
Travel to Crosslake (3 trips)	
Total	\$ 20,900

Similar Projects & References

Bigfork Valley Hospital (Bigfork, MN)

Facilitated community engagement, visioning and strategic planning processes in 2019 and 2022. Community engagement included ideation sessions, focus groups, community surveys, staff surveys and hospital leadership interviews; this data was the basis for developing strategic plans utilized by elected board members and hospital executives.

Contact: Aaron Saude, CEO

East Range Academy of Technology and Science (Eveleth, MN)

Coordinated stakeholder engagement processes (2018 and 2020) to inform the school's accreditation process. Feedback from stakeholders (including parents, students, faculty and community members) was gathered through online surveys, phone interviews and focus groups.

Contact: Tara Lere, Executive Director

Independent School District 318 (Grand Rapids, MN)

Facilitated an extensive community engagement process in 2021-22 of ISD 318's service area using focus groups, human centered design ideation sessions, online surveys and phone interviews. This data will be used by school administration and elected board members to develop a strategic plan.

Contact: Matt Grose, ISD 318 Superintendent

Itasca Waters (Grand Rapids, MN)

Facilitated a two-year process (2019-2020) for an Itasca County nonprofit to: 1) learn from a diverse range of community interests about the economic and social significance of clean water, and 2) to create a community-generated vision about preserving water quality and action plan to help the vision become reality.

Contact: Jesse Davis, Board President

North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District (Virginia, MN)

Conducted environmental scan and SWOT analysis; facilitated a strategic planning process with board and staff participation; and facilitated creation of the strategic implementation plan in 2022.

Contact: Anita Provinzino, District Administrator

Wabana Township (Itasca County, MN)

Facilitated the grass-roots development of Wabana Township's Comprehensive Plan throughout 2020, including an all-residents community survey, key stakeholder feedback, two public hearings and preparation of the final plan document.

Contact: Steve Melin, Township Clerk

The Consulting Team

Laura Connelly is a co-founder of unTapped, LLC. Through unTapped, Laura is building upon her long-term advocacy for rural people and place by using a variety of tools, including human-centered design, popular education, strategic consultation, participatory research, storytelling, and community engagement.

In addition to unTapped, Laura has worked to end domestic violence through volunteer work, direct client services, and systems-level advocacy. She provides consulting services and expertise to organizations based around the United States that are working on initiatives related to domestic violence. She has co-authored two nationally used curricula and consults on design and implementation of group work with people who use violence in their intimate partner relationships.

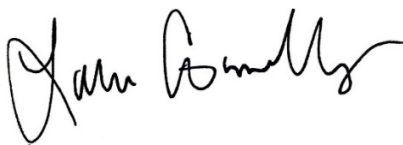
Laura holds the Master of Advocacy and Political Leadership degree and a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Women's Studies, both from the University of Minnesota, Duluth. She was a 2015 Bush Fellow, and focused her work on positive leadership, human-centered design, social justice and social innovation. In 2019, she was elected to the Blandin Foundation board of trustees.

Ed Zabinski is a cofounder of unTapped, LLC. His private sector experience includes executive roles in strategic planning, communications, and human resources management at a large manufacturing company and a community bank. He has volunteered extensively with various non-profit organizations in Itasca County and northern Minnesota. He has also started up two businesses (a business-to-business e-commerce company and a Grand Rapids brewpub) and two consulting practices.

Ed was elected to two terms on the Grand Rapids City Council and served 20 years on the Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority, 12 of those as chair.

Ed holds a Master of Public Affairs degree from the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, a Bachelor of Arts degree in government from St. John's University, and an Associate of Arts degree from Vermilion Community College (Minnesota North College).

Please let us know if you have any questions about the proposal.



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