

Executive Summary – Proposed Superintendent Goals 2026–27

The proposed superintendent goals for 2026–27 are intended to build on the progress of the past several years while preparing the district for the decisions ahead. The three areas; facilities, financial planning, and communication, reflect a common philosophy: take care of what has been entrusted to us, plan before challenges become crises, and maintain the relationships needed to make difficult decisions well.

Goal 1: Long-Range Facilities and Asset Stewardship

The district has completed most of the major projects identified in the 2022 facilities analysis. We are now entering a different phase. Existing LTFM bond payments limit the funding available for major new projects for several more years, while we also know there are building needs that will require attention.

For that reason, I am recommending that we begin the next cycle of facilities analysis and long-range planning. The goal is not simply to identify projects or spend additional dollars. It is to understand the condition of our buildings, identify problems before they become more expensive, and prioritize work based on safety, need, cost, and available resources.

Some needs may be manageable within LTFM, Health and Safety, Operating Capital, grants, or other existing resources. Others may require the board to consider whether limited General Fund support is appropriate to address deferred maintenance or prevent larger future costs.

Our community has made a significant investment in our schools. We have a responsibility to take good care of the buildings taxpayers have provided. Responsible maintenance is not spending for the sake of spending; it protects a public investment and can prevent much larger costs in the future.

Goal 2: Integrated Fiscal and Decision Planning

The district remains financially stable, but the next two budget years are projected to be tighter. The current model projects the 2026–27 budget near break-even, followed by a minor deficit in 2027–28. While the fund balance remains healthy, the margin between revenues and expenditures is becoming smaller.

Enrollment will be one of the most important variables. Thunder Online Academy, along with enrollment changes at the elementary and secondary schools, could meaningfully affect district revenue. Early indicators suggest the online school may have a positive impact on overall enrollment. However, hiring by local businesses, housing availability, and broader population trends have traditionally caused enrollment to fluctuate throughout the year.

This planning becomes especially important as we approach the next round of negotiations affecting the 2027–28 school year. The goal is to give the board clear projections, assumptions, risks, and options early enough to make thoughtful decisions while remaining both fiscally responsible and competitive in the labor market.

This is ultimately about making thoughtful investments of district resources. Some decisions may have an upfront cost but produce a strong long-term return. Other actions may appear to create savings, but losses in enrollment, missed opportunities, or negative effects on the classroom may outweigh; or even erase, those savings. Good planning helps us understand those tradeoffs and likely outcomes so decisions can be based on the best information available.

Goal 3: Communication and Community Relationships

This goal continues the work of the previous year. Communication, visibility, and approachability have become significant strengths and have received positive feedback from both staff and the community. They are also consistently identified as qualities people value and want maintained.

For 2026–27, the emphasis is less on increasing the number of activities and more on sustaining meaningful presence, two-way communication, and a shared understanding of where the district is going. Continued work toward one unified vision remains important, particularly as the district works through facility, financial, and educational decisions.

Together, these goals are about responsibility to our community: care for what we have, understand what is coming, communicate clearly, and make decisions today that preserve opportunities for tomorrow.