

Strategic Planning Overview

Tony Frontier, PhD

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Proposal for D. Russo, District Administrator, Lincolnwood School District 74

Purpose of Strategic Planning:

Strategic planning allows schools and districts to efficiently utilize resources to meet each child's, and the community's, expectations for excellence in educational programming and student learning. Strategic planning prioritizes district, school, and individual efforts toward identified areas of focus in pursuit of specific goals.

Charge to Planning Committee:

- Guide the development and/or affirmation of the district's mission, vision, values, and shared commitments. Inform staff, administration, and the board of challenges and opportunities in the near future to provide direction and clarity for effort and resources aligned to the district's strategic plan. Identify a manageable number of areas of focus that are most likely to help administration, staff, and students prioritize their strategic efforts to lead, teach, and learn.

Norms for Committee Processes Related to Planning:

- Strive to see the district, schools, and classrooms through a systems perspective. Anecdotes inform day to day perceptions; patterns, trends, data, and research inform strategic planning.
- Strive to see the district, schools, and classrooms through the eyes of students. Ultimately, the changes that matter most are those that better support each student's strategy and effort to learn.
- Be empathetic; strive to understand ideas and perspectives from a range of stakeholders in the community.
- Honor the fact that the administration and board of education are entrusted as stewards of the community's limited financial resources.
- Honor the fact that public schools, and the resources that support them, are an asset that provides value-add for the well-being of each child, the stability of the community, the future of our economy, and the stability of our democracy.
- Be respectful of others and of the planning process; listen carefully and ask clarifying questions.

Phases Related to the Strategic Planning Process (and associated consulting time):

Phase I: Initial Data Collection and Capacity Building

(.5 days discussion of planning process, gathering relevant data, description of local context with District Administrator, 1 day off-site review of previous strategic plan & local data, and .5 day on-site for initial meeting with Strategic Planning Committee. Total for Phase I = 2.0 days)

- Internal and public data are collected that describe the current state of finances, resources, programs, and achievement, and are shared with the consultant. A synthesis of these data will be shared with the Planning Committee to ensure a systems view of the district and its schools. These data are provided by the administration.
- Initial meeting with the planning committee. The purpose of this meeting is to 1) share the charge to the committee with the Strategic Planning Committee, 2) begin to build the capacity of the committee to establish a shared-language for the planning process, and 3) develop a shared understanding of trends and current research in K-12 education.

Phase II: Data Collection and Synthesis

(Focus groups; 1 student group, 1 community group, 1 teacher/staff group, 1 building-level leadership group, 1 district-level leadership group; (.5 days x 5 to conduct each focus group approx. 90 minutes per group, .5 days x 5 to summarize and analyze each focus group, followed by synthesis across all groups.

Total for Phase II = 5 to 7* days)

- The purpose of the qualitative data collection process is to collect information from stakeholders to clarify perceptions and beliefs related to existing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. This will be done through a series of interviews and focus groups.
- Data from the focus-groups will be summarized and analyzed by the consultant to describe the current perceptions of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges as perceived by each of the focus groups. In the next phase, these will be shared with the Planning Committee to ensure a systems view of the perceptions of the district and its schools.
- ***Optional Component; Student Engagement Survey:** Survey of all students grades 4 to 8 on emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement. This survey provides unique insights into students' perceptions of their schooling experience in a manner that transcends measures of achievement. **(.5 days setting up survey for local administration, .5 days survey administration fee, 1 day preparation of comprehensive, disaggregated reports by race/ethnicity, grade-level, and gender = 2.0 days)**

Phase III: Synthesis of Data and Identification/Affirmation of Mission, Vision, Values, and Shared Commitments by Strategic Planning Committee

(.5 days agenda planning with District Administrator, 1 day on-site retreat with Strategic Planning Committee, 1 day off-site synthesis. Total for Phase III = 2.5 days)

- Strategic Planning Committee convenes to review student achievement data and other internal district metrics.
- Strategic Planning Committee reviews data collected in Phase II that describe the current perceptions of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges from focus groups (and, if administered, student engagement survey data) are shared with the Strategic Planning Committee to ensure a systems view of the perceptions of the district and its schools.
- Data from bullet-points above are synthesized by the planning committee to begin to articulate Areas of Focus and the Mission, Vision, Values, and Shared Commitments.

Phase IV: Articulation of Strategic Plan, Areas of Focus, and Indicators

(.5 days agenda planning with District Administrator, .5 days on-site with planning committee, .5 days off-site synthesis, .5 days off-site Zoom with committee, .5 days off-site synthesis, .5 days electronic poll of the committee to finalize details of the Strategic Plan, .5 days finalize details with District Administrator & finalize communications/details with Strategic Planning Committee and plan for presentation to School Board. Total for Phase IV = 3.5 days)

- Information and data from Phases II & III are further synthesized by the consultant and draft statements are reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee to finalize elements of the strategic plan including establishing consensus as related to Mission, Vision, Values, Shared Commitments, and Leading and Lagging indicators for areas of focus.
- Final details of the planning document are established in coordination with the Strategic Planning Committee and the District Administrator.
- Final details for communicating the proposed plan to the Board of Education are determined.

Cost of Strategic Planning Process and Development of Plan:

- **Phase I** – Collection of Existing Data, Charge to Committee, and Capacity Building = 2 days
- **Phase II** – Data Collection from Stakeholder Groups, Analysis, and Synthesis = 5 to 7* days
- **Phase III** - Synthesis of Data and Identification/Affirmation of Mission, Vision, Values, and Shared Commitments = 2.5 days
- **Phase IV** - Articulation of Strategic Plan, Areas of Focus, and Indicators = 3.5 days
- **Project Management** = 2.0 days

Total Days* = 15 (*17 days with Student Engagement Survey)

Cost per day = \$3500

⇒ **Total Project Cost = \$52,500 (*\$59,500 with Student Engagement Survey)**

(*Note: Additional focus groups beyond the 5 groups in this proposal can be added at a rate of 1 group per day)

About the facilitator

Tony Frontier, PhD is an award-winning educator who works with teachers and school leaders nationally and internationally to help them prioritize efforts to improve student learning. With expertise in student engagement, evidence-based assessment, curriculum development, effective instruction, teacher reflection, data analysis, and strategic planning, Frontier emphasizes a systems approach to build capacity to empower leaders and teachers to improve their capacity to serve others. His most recent book is *Teaching With Clarity: How to Prioritize and Do Less So Students Understand More* (ASCD, 2021).

Frontier is also co-author of the ASCD books *Five Levers to Improve Learning: How to Prioritize for Powerful Results in Your School* with Jim Rickabaugh, *Effective Supervision: Supporting the Art and Science of Teaching* with Bob Marzano and David Livingston, and *Making Teachers Better not Bitter: Balancing Teacher Evaluation, Supervision, and Reflection for Professional Growth* with Paul Mielke. He is also co-author of Corwin's *Creating Passionate Learners: Engaging Today's Students for Tomorrow's World* with Kim Brown and Don Veigut. Frontier is a frequent contributor to the flagship journal *Educational Leadership*, his most recent articles include, "How to Provide Better Feedback Through Rubrics" with Jay McTighe, (April, 2022) and "Taking a Transformative Approach to AI" (June, 2023). His books have been translated and published in Korean, Mandarin, and Arabic.

As a former classroom teacher in Milwaukee Public Schools, an Associate High School Principal, and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Whitefish Bay School District, Director of Teacher Education Programs at Cardinal Stritch University, Frontier brings a wealth of experience as a classroom teacher, building administrator, central office administrator, researcher, and consultant to his workshops, writing, and research.

Praise for *Five Levers to Improve Learning: Prioritizing for Powerful Results in Your School*

The five levers articulated by Frontier and Rickabaugh are elegant in their simplicity. They provide administrators and teacher leaders with a comprehensive framework for understanding and analyzing the effectiveness of their efforts and practical strategies for making an immediate impact in areas of need.

Robert Marzano
CEO Marzano Research

Praise for *Making Teachers Better not Bitter: Balancing Evaluation, Supervision and Reflection for Professional Growth*

Too often it is assumed that observation leads to improvements in student learning. Valid and reliable evaluation can 'measure' what teachers do, but the emphasis too often is on accountability not improvement. Building on trust, Frontier and Mielke address this imbalance. By providing the processes and protocols that empower educators to effectively reflect on their professional practice, teachers can actually improve their teaching. Here's how to optimize the impact on student learning.

John Hattie
Laureate Professor, Director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute
Melbourne Graduate School of Education

Praise for *Teaching with Clarity* – *Teaching With Clarity* would be an important book at any time, but it is especially timely today. As the education world emerges from the pandemic's grip and looks to establish a "new normal," the long-existing problems of clutter and lack of clarity have been starkly exposed. Tony Frontier properly addresses these as systems' problems, including a lack of clarity about priority goals resulting in an overcrowded curriculum and inconsistency in the assessment of all important outcomes. The book's value lies not only in its analysis of these systemic problems, but in the specific solutions it offers for prioritizing the curriculum, clarifying success criteria, and establishing systems to eliminate the clutter. If you read one book to guide your thinking about constructing the "new normal," let it be this one.

Jay McTighe
Educational author and consultant; Co-author, *Understanding by Design*