

# Proposal for Strategic Plan Development

## New Fairfield Public Schools

### What is strategic planning in the world of education?

The overarching charge to school leaders is to develop and support learners: student learners and adult learners. In doing so, districts constantly build the capacity of individuals to succeed in all their endeavors and build the capacity of the system to continuously grow and evolve to meet the new demands of our complex world. To work and behave consistently as a true learning organization takes planning, precise execution, regular assessment, and persistence. To be the best learning organization possible also takes creativity, courage, excellent communication, and boundless commitment.

Choices, decisions, goals, and allocation of resources cannot be haphazard, inconsistent, changing frequently and/or communicated poorly. Goals must be aspirational and must truly reflect the world for which we are preparing today's learners. Thus, the need for an ambitious but focused strategic plan that is well communicated-- repeatedly-- for all constituents.

Which goals and strategies will enable the New Fairfield School District to fulfill its mission? In what ways can resources be best directed to impact the mission? How can talents be best tapped to maximize capacity for student and adult learning? Research on effective leadership is clear that *focus* matters tremendously. Placing effort and energy into the agreement of *which goals, which actions and which timelines* makes focus a possibility and success a reality.

*"Challenging but attainable goals improve productivity and create a high performance culture. They foster engagement and encourage focus on the most important tasks."* Dick Grote, Harvard Business Review Tools

### **Critical to this work are the following components:**

- A facilitator who is thorough and able to work well with all participants to bring the best ideas and plans to the table
- A clear understanding of the current strengths and needs of the district
- An understanding of what students need to experience and be able to do to be successful learners today and throughout their lives
- An understanding of professional learning and leadership
- A process that is transparent, robust, and productive
- Active committee members who are student-centered, visionary, and of good-will

### **The Process and Stakeholder Engagement:**

- Electronic surveys tailored for New Fairfield for each of the following groups: parents, students in grades 5-12, faculty, support staff, administrators, and community residents without children in the schools (12 versions in total)
- Review of school data, trends, and key issues
- Individual interviews with Board members
- Individual interviews with key administrators and district leaders *as identified by the superintendent*; (central office leaders, principals, directors, coordinators, assistant principals, PTA leaders, etc.)
- All information and collected data summarized in preparation for a two day, six hours per day, goal setting process with a diverse leadership planning team of approximately two dozen (no more than 30) people invited by the superintendent to be people of good will and vision who are devoted to contributing to the development of goals for the next 3-5 years of district growth and improvement
- Finalization of goals
- Development of possible action plan objectives and steps
- Formation of action plan teams with co-chairs
- Launching of the teams with process and protocols; Timelines and product expectations
- Measurable benchmarks for each action step and for overall goals
- Communication plan for the final product

- Annual review and renewal process delineated
- Final components of a full strategic plan include: Goals; Action Plans with objectives, action steps, resources, accountable personnel, timelines, budget and assessment/measurement benchmarks; Communication plan; Review and renewal process

The full process of goal development takes four months depending on the availability of staff and what the starting month is. My work takes the process through the adoption of goals and the launch of the action plan teams with guidance and resources provided throughout the action plan development. Action plan development and approval typically take three months.

### **Qualifications and Recent Experience**

In the past eight years I have led the strategic planning process in many high performing districts in the tri-state region. I know that the superintendents, Board leaders, and plan participants in those districts would be happy to serve as references for my work. A reference sheet and resume are attached.

**Specific areas of expertise include:** Interview skills; Large and small group facilitation skills; Public speaking; Planning for implementation and accountability; Ability to work well with diverse groups of people and diverse thinkers; Written communication; Collaboration; Ability to move people and organizations toward their aspirations.

### **Timeline:**

August/September	Interviews and Survey Development
October	Surveys Administered
November/Early December	Core Group Goal Planning; 2 consecutive days
Action Plan Training	December/Early January
Action Plan Development	January – Early April