

Rationale for Five District-Level Collective Priorities

During its regularly scheduled meeting on Aug. 14, the board was asked to discuss the recommended Vital Signs of Student Learning for the 2018-2019 school year. The original intent was to bring the list of SY19 desired outcomes for student learning back to the board for approval on Sept. 4.

Based upon the conversation that took place at the board table, I thought it would be helpful to provide additional information about the process that was used to identify our district-level priorities for this year. That information is below. As a result, we have decided to postpone the vote approval of the SY19 desired outcomes (with revisions) until Sept. 25.

Feb. 21, 2018

We held a full day pre-planning session for SY19. In preparation for our session, we asked the central office team to read the Vision97 4ALL plan. After reading the plan, they were asked to share two WOWs and two WONDERINGS. They were also asked to propose two to three SY19 priorities, including a brief description that outlined:

- *The name of the project*
- *A brief summary of the project*
- *Its impact*
- *Its feasibility*
- *Whether the project was a game changer, an improvement to something we have already started, or something we have to do for compliance or maintenance*

We then worked together to take the list of 50 proposals we created and narrow it down to nine “collective initiatives.”

March 2018

Before our Ad Leadership meeting on March 19, we identified “champions” for each of our nine “collective initiatives.” Each champion was asked to complete a “Getting It Done!” template, which required them to outline all of the sub-projects, key tasks and milestones related to their initiative. The completed documents were uploaded to a folder for future review.

Meanwhile, our schools were gathering data and reflecting on their 2017-2018 plans. With input from our principals and further consideration of our capacity (financial and human resources), we narrowed the list from nine “collective initiatives” to five “district-level collective priorities” for 2018-2019. By collectively focusing on these five priorities, we will:

- *Increase the percentage of students who feel like they “belong”*
- *Increase the percentage of students who are reading at or above grade level by the end of grade 3*
- *Increase the percentage of students who are “projected college ready”*

Finally, we believe a collective focus on these five priorities will strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of our operations and infrastructure as a whole, which will enable our schools and students to thrive. We are excited to see how our collective actions this year will bring us closer to achieving our four universal goals for our students.

Five District-Level Collective Priorities for 2018-2019

Priority	Description	Rationale
1 Strengthen Literacy Instruction	We will strengthen K-5 literacy instruction through a balanced literacy approach that addresses student learning styles, incorporating student voice and promoting instruction responsive to student needs.	We all know how important strong foundational literacy skills are in terms of future learning. Beginning this year, we are fully implementing writing and reading units of study in our K-5 classrooms and are piloting a word study curriculum. Additionally, we have hired three additional MTSS Interventionists so our larger elementary schools (Holmes, Longfellow, and Lincoln) will each have an additional teacher to better support our Tier 2 and Tier 3 students.
2 Strengthen Middle School Instruction	We will revise International Baccalaureate units for cognitively demanding student-centered experiences in grades 6-8.	Our middle schools are preparing for IB reauthorization (2020). With reauthorization, we must support Brooks and Julian staff with development of unit plans that will ensure the successful accomplishment of our goals.
3 Middle School Behavior: Tier 1 PBIS and Culture/Climate Supports	We will build collective understanding and the capacity of school culture/climate teams to lead and monitor implementation of Tier 1 Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS).	We selected this priority because improving Middle School Tier 1 PBIS/Culture & Climate supports were identified as a need by our staff, students and families. We added a PBIS coach for our middle schools last year. We also began piloting HERO (a tool to recognize, reward and reinforce behavior). This year, we want to continue to strengthen Tier 1 and our PBIS system by developing a reliable data system that will be used with fidelity regarding student referrals and positive behavior tracking in order to support data-based decision making in our schools.
4 Social-Emotional Supports	We will refine and expand targeted social-emotional supports that address all aspects of a student's development through caring and respectful relationships.	Last spring, the board of education approved hiring four additional social work positions and one additional psychologist to our team. Now, both middle schools have one social work per grade level and Longfellow, Holmes, Irving, and Lincoln each have 1.5 social workers. Finally, each middle school has one full time psychologist. These additional positions will enable the district to more effectively support students who are in crisis, who may need short term therapy, or who receive services per the provision of an IEP.

5 **Co-teaching
Expansion
(Inclusive
Teaching
Practices)**

We will broaden implementation of inclusive practices that support that support meaningful access to general education learning environments, curricula and experiences for students with disabilities

D97 teachers identified the need for providing more inclusive service delivery modes to support students with disabilities. We designed pilot programs at both of our middle schools in 2013; and last year, we piloted co-teaching in two of our elementary schools (Whittier and Irving). Last spring, the board of education approved hiring four additional special education teachers in order to expand the co-teaching pilot fully at Whittier and Irving. We have also been able to add an additional co-taught kindergarten classroom at a Julian feeder school (Beye).