

## **Browning School District No. 9 Strategic Plan, 2025–2030**

### **Niitsiittupi Education: Honoring Our Ways, Shaping Our Future**

#### **Introduction and Purpose**

Browning School District No. 9 (BPS), located at the heart of the Blackfeet Reservation, serves as a central institution for advancing educational opportunity, cultural continuity, and community well-being. Rooted in the history, values, and sovereignty of the Blackfeet Nation (Niitsiittupi), the District recognizes education as both a pathway to individual success and a cornerstone of self-determination.

The 2025–2030 Strategic Plan provides a unified roadmap to guide district decision-making over the next five years. Developed through a comprehensive, Indigenous-centered planning process that included a landscape analysis, districtwide leadership engagement, and a two-day strategic planning retreat in April 2025, the plan reflects shared commitments to academic excellence, cultural relevance, holistic wellness, and strong community partnerships.

#### **Community and Educational Context**

The landscape analysis revealed a complex and evolving educational environment across BPS's nine schools. Student enrollment remains relatively stable, with the vast majority of students identifying as Native American. Many students present increased social-emotional and behavioral needs, including impacts associated with early childhood trauma and prenatal substance exposure. These realities require schools to prioritize care, regulation, and relationship-building as essential foundations for learning.

Family structures within the community are also shifting. A growing number of grandparents and extended family members serve as primary caregivers and play an active role in students' academic and extracurricular lives. Their deep investment underscores the importance of family-centered policies, clear communication, and meaningful engagement strategies.

District staff demonstrate strong dedication but face mounting demands related to student needs, staffing shortages, and recruitment and retention challenges. In response, BPS has begun implementing wellness supports and trauma-informed practices to sustain workforce capacity. At the same time, the District has made significant investments in school safety, technology infrastructure, and partnerships with tribal, county, and behavioral health agencies.

Attendance and graduation data point to gradual improvement following the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, though persistent barriers remain. Together, these conditions highlight the need for a coordinated, culturally grounded, and sustainable strategic response.

#### **Shared Vision**

The planning process culminated in a collective vision that will guide Browning School District No. 9 through 2030:

*“By 2030, Browning School District No. 9 will lead a student-centered transformation of our educational system, rooted in culture and holistic learning. Through strong collaborations between communities and schools, we will empower every PK–12 student with personalized pathways to honor lifelong success.”*

This vision emphasizes educational sovereignty, whole-child development, cultural vitality, and shared responsibility between schools and the broader community.

## **Key Obstacles and Challenges**

Participants identified four major challenges that must be addressed to achieve the shared vision:

1. **Funding Allocation and Stability** – Uncertainty and reductions in funding complicate long-term planning and strain efforts to support academics, wellness, and culturally relevant programming.
2. **Meeting Needs with Limited Resources** – Staffing shortages, recruitment challenges, and economic disenfranchisement place schools in the role of addressing wide-ranging social, emotional, and academic needs.
3. **Clarifying Community Expectations** – Misalignment around academic rigor, discipline, accountability, and holistic learning can create tension and disengagement without clear, consistent communication.
4. **Relationships and Communication** – Historical trauma, cultural disconnects, and limited trust underscore the need for intentional relationship-building and transparent, respectful engagement.

These challenges informed the design of the District's strategic pillars and implementation priorities.

## **Strategic Pillars and Outcomes**

The Strategic Plan is organized around four interrelated pillars, each supported by measurable outcomes and action steps:

### **Pillar 1: Develop a Comprehensive Implementation and Launch Plan for the Vision**

BPS will ensure that the strategic vision is widely understood and embraced. By 2030, at least 95% of staff will be able to articulate the vision, and more than 1,000 community members will be engaged through events, outreach, and ongoing dialogue.

### **Pillar 2: Identify Sustainable Funding Strategies for the Five-Year Plan**

To strengthen financial stability, the District will pursue diversified revenue streams, including grants, partnerships, alumni engagement, and innovative uses of district assets, with a goal of generating 7–10% of the annual budget through new sources.

### **Pillar 3: Design a Community and District-Wide Wellness Plan**

Recognizing wellness as foundational to learning and teaching, BPS will establish a comprehensive model grounded in the Medicine Wheel. The goal is to create a district culture that is nurturing, safe, inclusive, and responsive to the physical, mental, social-emotional, and spiritual needs of students, staff, and families.

### **Pillar 4: Provide Training in Imaginative Digital Literacy**

Building on strong technology infrastructure, the District will expand digital literacy and creative technology use among students, staff, and community members. By 2030, 80% of stakeholders will demonstrate digital literacy proficiency as measured by district surveys.

## **Implementation, Accountability, and Next Steps**

Each strategic pillar is supported by a detailed implementation plan that identifies action steps, responsible leaders, timelines, and required supports. Progress will be monitored through quarterly reviews, annual updates to the Board of Trustees, and ongoing engagement with staff and community stakeholders.

The launch of the Strategic Plan includes formal adoption, leadership orientation, community presentations, and alignment with district operations beginning in the 2025–2026 school year. Through shared leadership, transparent communication, and sustained commitment, Browning School District No. 9 will use this plan as both a roadmap and a living document—guiding continuous improvement while honoring Niitsiittupi ways of knowing and being.