

Strategic Plan 2011-2016

Introduction

The Millburn School District 24 Strategic Plan is in the process of being developed in partnership with the community during the 2011-12 school year, and the final version of the plan will be approved by the Board of Education in February of 2012.

The feedback offered by community members and district staff was indicative of a community that is passionate about education and supportive of Millburn Schools. There were 270 community members and 66 staff members that provided valuable survey feedback that has been used to help the strategic planning committee set priorities for future decision-making for Millburn 24. There were also over 60 stakeholders that participated in a community engagement day held in May of 2011 that provided additional information to be used as guidance.

Millburn 24 expects the administration, staff, board members, and the community to refer to the Strategic Plan as decisions are made. The Strategic Plan will be used as a roadmap as Millburn 24 continues to build on our successes, seek creative solutions to challenges we face, and partner with the community in the fulfillment of our mission.

Mission Statement

In cooperation with our communities, District 24 will prepare students efficiently to become productive, responsible members of a changing world. We will provide a nurturing environment and rigorous educational experiences that promote individual potential and excellence in achievement

Vision Statement

I. Our students will become productive members of a changing world by:

- Becoming engaged in discovery learning;
- Developing computer awareness and competency across the curriculum;
- Enhancing the skills of communication through multimedia;
- Valuing the work, ideas, and opinions of others; and
- Sharing their diverse perspectives, cultural insights, and personal experiences.

II. Our teachers and staff will provide a nurturing environment that stimulates students' voluntary desire to learn by:

- Fostering a safe, secure, and nurturing environment;
- Providing a teaching and learning environment that reflects and celebrates the positive accomplishments of students and staff;
- Accommodating students' various learning styles and ranges of ability;
- Providing students with diverse experiences and approaches to learning; and
- Encouraging students to value lifelong learning.

III. Our teachers will provide for educational experiences that promote the realization of students' individual potential by:

- Varying the types of communication strategies for clarity, coherence, and relevance when presenting new ideas;
- Aligning educational strategies with students' needs and tasks;
- Aligning educational strategies to the ability levels and learning styles of students;
- Providing opportunities for students to develop effective learning habits and test-taking skills;
- Providing opportunities for students to participate in complex problem solving tasks;
- Encouraging creativity in varying learning situations; and
- Encourage students to learn independently.

IV. Our teachers and staff will create opportunities for students to achieve and demonstrate excellence in a number of domains by:

- Facilitating learning and high levels of student engagement;
- Using technology and various display tools;
- Providing access to and use of contemporary resources (not just computers);
- Providing processes that allow students to build upon their prior learning experiences and approaches to learning; and
- Celebrating the accomplishments of all in our District

Background and Process

Millburn Schools have seen tremendous change since the last strategic plan was developed in 2005. District 24 has seen the addition of a second school, rapid enrollment increases, and the fall of the housing market in the time since the last plan was developed. Therefore, the Board of Education decided it was time to reengage the community in a strategic planning process.

The Millburn School District 24 Strategic Plan was developed in partnership with the community during spring and fall of 2011, and approved by the Board of Education on February 22, 2012. The school district will strive to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan over the next five years. The Strategic Planning document was designed as a guideline for district activities, and it has the ability to be flexible as the educational landscape changes in the next several years. The strategic planning committees will continue to meet on a regular basis to evaluate progress toward their goals and to adjust strategies to meet those goals as needed.

Consultant named, steering committee developed

During the 2010-11 school year, the superintendent and school board entertained proposals from several potential consultants to help guide the district in creating an updated Strategic Plan. The board chose to work with Linda Hanson of School Exec Connect to guide the process.

After choosing Linda Hanson to lead the process, an initial steering committee was formed to begin the activity of engaging stakeholders. The committee included board members, administrators, teachers, and community members. The committee worked to develop the survey questions and the community engagement forums in order to get the plan off the ground.

Focus Areas Emerged, Co-Chairs Chosen

As a result of the community survey and community engagement day, four areas for future focus emerged. The four major areas of focus are, Student Learning, Culture and Climate, Facilities and Finance, and Communications.

After the four areas of focus were established, co-chairs were chosen to lead each of the sub-committees. A teacher and a community member chair each sub-committee.

In addition to the four committees representing the four focus areas, there was a committee established as an oversight committee for the entire process. The oversight committee includes the superintendent, a board member, external consultant, and a co-chair from each sub-committee.

Focus Area:	STUDENT LEARNING
--------------------	-------------------------

GOAL 1: *Research and explore opportunities to develop the most skilled students and staff.*

Objective 1A: Millburn teachers and students will be provided access to current technology and instructional resources to reflect best educational practices within the classroom.

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- Articulate with high schools to determine the technological readiness needed for academic success in secondary education
- Continual research on best educational practices
- Gather information from walk throughs – both about teacher directed technology use and student directed technology use
- Research support of instructors, resources needed
- Select and implement resources dependent on results and available finances

Objective 1B: The District will provide appropriate training and staff development.

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- Survey teachers at end of teaching year about what they are most interested in receiving training for the following year
- Base professional development on data collected about the school as well as identified needs of teachers in the school
- Make general data available from walk-throughs for teaching staff to share. “This is what I observed today”
- Assess professional development activities for effectiveness

GOAL 2: *Improve student achievement with rigor and relevance with appropriate challenge and real world application.*

Objective 2A: Teachers will continue to monitor student achievement using assessment data and report findings to the appropriate population.

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- Research avenues for parent communication
- Teacher self-evaluation anonymous survey
- Research development of central database for easy access of information about students for teacher use
- Investigate expansion of websites to help communication regarding homework

Objective 2B: Teachers will use collaborative time to modify curriculum and instruction to meet individual student needs.

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- Research time set aside for collaboration and use
- Research number of teachers unable to make team meetings because of commitments (such as crossing multi grades, teaching during that time, and specials teachers) and how to insure information is shared
- Research the value and use of teachers as leaders

Objective 2C: Teachers will create an educational environment with appropriate learning opportunities that reflect students' right to learn.

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- Survey teachers as to resources needed
- Research and provide professional development to foster independent learning
- Research how to support the professional development with time and resources

Objective 2D: Research “real world applications”.

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- Investigate other school/states on how they are incorporating development and implementing real world problems in the classroom
- Research performance based activities that will address real world situations.

GOAL 3: *Research and explore additional class offerings for students embracing 21st century skills and core curriculum.*

21st century skills are:

- Learning and Innovation Skills – 4Cs (Critical thinking and problem solving, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity)
- Life and Career Skills
- Information, Media and Technology Skills
- Core Subject Expertise – Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, fused with the above referenced skills

Objective 3A: Millburn School District #24 will research the creation and offering of electives such as foreign language, subject acceleration, public speaking/drama, and Project Lead the Way.

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- Weigh the option of offering Foreign Language as an elective for Middle School Students while reviewing non-mandated classes
- Weigh the option of offering Project Lead the Way courses as an elective for Middle School Students while reviewing non-mandated classes
- Review positioning of current electives in Middle School
- Review current use of Middle School Resource time
- Look at past survey results for input regarding electives and resource time

Objective 3B: Research and develop further embedding of 21st century skills.

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- Research current use of established AIM pullout projects
- Explore block scheduling and the possibility of blocking math/science and reading/writing classes together
- Explore the Elimination of Middle School Recess providing additional class time
- Explore increasing academic instruction to above 67% of the school day in Middle School
- Research 21st century skills relative to core curriculum, higher and lower learners

FOCUS AREA:	Culture and Climate
--------------------	----------------------------

GOAL 1: To create a positive culture and climate that supports student learning where parents, students and staff are involved and feel valued.

Objective 1: Increase recognition and appreciation of all school community members

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- Reward behaviors with Millburn Money, raffles, and Part Mart Cart
- Celebrate school-wide successes
- Celebrate individual achievements via school announcements, Millburn website, and press releases
- Recognition of students and staff at Board Meetings
- Recognize staff members monthly at staff meetings and shared staff interviews
- Staff appreciation activities
- Volunteer of the month spotlighting a volunteer
- Volunteer appreciation event at the end of the year
- Create a “grateful chain”
- Planned morale boosters

Objective 2: Utilize parent resources

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- Volunteer Corp
- Compile master parent specialty list with parents who have expertise to share
- Create a master list of ways co-workers are using volunteers

GOAL 2: To create an environment where all students and staff are safe and responsible for their own behavior.

Objective 1: Present expected behaviors for various environments within the school day.

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- Matrix and Cool Tools
- Second Step

Objective 2: Provide opportunities for students to participate appropriately in school-wide decision-making (for example, create a student advisory board, provide seats on the handbook committee, etc.)

GOAL 3: Create a spirit of serving others in the Millburn school community.

Objective 1: Create opportunities for students to work with others within the structure of the school day.

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- Book Buddies
- Helpful Hands for grade level projects or needs (i.e., boot brigade, Kindergarten walk-in, etc.)

Objective 2: Plan for support student transitions

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- New student welcome team
- Transition team for 5th graders to middle school

FOCUS AREA:	Facilities and Finance
--------------------	-------------------------------

GOAL 1: Maximize the utilization of facilities and faculty to enhance and/or maintain the quality student learning.

Objective 1: Based on a comprehensive investigation of both financial and non-financial costs associated with the building configurations provide the school board a recommendation supported by a complete list of pros and cons.

Strategies:

Financial considerations

- Transportation Costs
- Building Upgrades/Enhancements
- Staffing

Non-financial considerations

- Equity among students regardless of school
- Class Size
- Quality of Education

Objective 2: In an effort to maximize staff productivity implement volunteer program(s)

GOAL 2: In an effort to remain fiscally responsible develop a process to ensure short and long term financial strategies are addressed.

Objective 1: Assist in the creation, document and communication of short and long-term financial goals.

Strategies: Preventative maintenance plan

GOAL 3: Effectively document and communicate the budgetary process to all district stakeholders.

Objective 1: Provide a process for community involvement and prioritization in the budgetary process

Objective 2: Explore opportunities to increase revenues while considering new sources where available.

Strategies: Research creative ways to finance technology

Objective 3: Investigate all cost cutting opportunities.

Objective 4: Work with the board to assist in building trust within the community regarding fiscal responsibility.

FOCUS AREA:	Communications
--------------------	-----------------------

GOAL: Consistent, two-way communication between school its’ “publics” – parents, non-parent community members, staff, students, and board of education.

Objective 1: Increase visibility and awareness of schools to broader community

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- Provide consistent opportunities for dialog between community and administration/board
- Hold quarterly “town hall meetings” with several topics of discussion
- Build a comprehensive database of district residents
- Research additional ways to communicate with district residents
- Develop a public relations program
- Post information in public places
- Promote and share information about school board meetings
- Involve students in community-focused activities
- Create student page on website

Objective 2: Develop strategies to maintain and enhance the district’s strong reputation and pride.

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal

- Maintain transparency through open, honest, consistent communication
- Develop a public relations program

Objective 3: Enhance and expand communication opportunities with parents

Strategies: The following strategies will be used to accomplish the goal:

- Make parents better aware of communications mediums
- Develop understanding of public’s expectations for parent communication systems
- Identify possible improvements to web-based communications
- Investigate calendar subscriptions for parents
- Develop quarterly newsletter
 - Use phone/email automated system to send messages