



STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

JUNE 2018



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INTRODUCTION

The 2015-2018 Strategic Plan has guided Upper Arlington Schools in the implementation of many important projects and program improvements. While there is much to celebrate, there is also work left to accomplish in a one-year extension of the plan. This document provides an update on each of the five goals, rationale for the extension and an outline of the collaborative process to create the next strategic plan.

THE 2014 PLANNING PROCESS

From April through November 2014, the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan was developed through an innovative new planning process that combined the best aspects of private-sector and public-sector planning models. The process involved broad and deep inquiry and engagement and resulted in five goals that focus on what matters most for students and the community.

The first phase of the planning process involved study groups comprised of staff members and Upper Arlington residents who produced reports on the critical issues of accountability, results, and efficiency. The second phase involved district-wide community and staff meetings, conversations on the quality of learning experiences at every building, and online feedback around the three study group reports and the first draft of the plan. The total process involved more than 3,800 in-person and online engagements. Student voices were captured through surveys, focus groups, and online feedback. A Strategic Coordination Group composed of community members and business leaders, parents, and school staff guided the work from beginning to end. Documentation of all of this work is available on the district website, www.uaschools.org/strategicplan.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2015-2018 Strategic Plan includes five goals: performance, personalization, accountability, efficiency and ownership. While each goal includes a small set of objectives and strategies, the overall plan centers on three big moves. First, an investment in personalized learning strategies that reinforce the district's strengths, such as highly effective instruction, and move forward with greater student choice and ownership of learning. Second, the implementation of the Upper Arlington Quality Profile that supports efforts to increase performance, personalization, accountability, efficiency, and ownership. Third, a commitment to constantly identify and act on operational and facility efficiencies to build the reserves necessary for making strategic investments.



In addition to these commitments, the plan includes both a vision statement and a mission statement. The mission statement, *Challenge and support every student, every step of the way*, is meant to represent the district's core beliefs and current state. The vision statement, *Uniquely accomplished students prepared to serve, lead and succeed*, is meant to describe the future of learning in Upper Arlington Schools.

IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

PERFORMANCE GOAL

The performance goal is based upon the idea that, although a great number of Upper Arlington students are achieving at a high level, the district can do even better. In particular, data indicates the district must be more attentive to early literacy and numeracy skills, intervention services and real-world problem solving. The performance objectives and strategies are designed to bolster teaching and learning by bringing more coherence to core instructional, curriculum, and assessment practices.

Among the first steps was the creation of curriculum maps in mathematics and English language arts. Teams of teachers collaborated on these maps, which include student-learning targets and have been implemented in classrooms across the district.

Teachers also have implemented the comprehensive literacy framework created to meet the specific needs of Upper Arlington learners and become proficient in the use of STAR, a progress-monitoring tool that tracks students' progress and provides information that can be used to individualize instruction.

In the coming year, educators will work to implement a comprehensive mathematics framework, move ahead with common assessments and further define and refine the response-to-intervention (RTI) process.

PERSONALIZATION GOAL

The personalization goal builds upon the district's tradition of seeing and serving the whole child by personalizing learning through the use of technology, helping students engage in activities beyond traditional classwork and supporting the district's commitment to service learning.

The district formed digital conversion teams for the elementary and secondary levels comprised of teachers and parents. These teams researched the type of devices they felt would be most effective for the various grade levels and the type of professional development that would be needed to prepare staff members to use the new tools. The two-year implementation plan began midway through the 2015-2016 school year by providing laptops to secondary students. The rollout was completed in the fall of 2016 by providing either an iPad or laptop to elementary students.

Moving ahead the importance of continuous professional development on the use of the devices cannot be overstated. Frameworks and surveys will help develop new evaluation processes in



order to ensure that students and teachers are getting the full benefit from this investment in technology.

In the coming year, the district will continue its work with cultural competency and mental wellness. The district also will increase tracking of service learning opportunities and student participation in extracurricular activities. This data will allow the Teaching and Learning Department to focus in on how to provide additional supports in both areas.

ACCOUNTABILITY GOAL

The heart of the accountability goal is the Upper Arlington Quality Profile, which goes beyond state assessments designed for external accountability and includes metrics that inform and develop how we address the unique needs, talents and abilities of our students. The Quality Profile also allows the district to regularly engage students, parents, staff and the community in a conversation about how Upper Arlington defines and pursues quality.

The Upper Arlington Quality Profile debuted as a prototype in the fall of 2015 and presented data from the 2014-2015 school year. Each year a full report is prepared and published electronically in the fall. The following January, an executive summary of the report is mailed to all Upper Arlington residences, and a feedback survey is made available online.

The Upper Arlington Quality Profile has become a model for others in the state, with many districts using the electronic publication as a template or starting point for their own reports.

This fall the district will survey the community to gauge its level of success in using the Quality Profile as an accountability tool and communicating with residents about it.

EFFICIENCY GOAL

The efficiency goal represents a set of operational commitments that are important as part of a broader strategy to improve educational performance and direct as many resources as possible to classroom and more personalized instruction.

In the fall of 2013 the district committed to enacting \$4.5 million worth of efficiency measures by the summer of 2017. The goal was surpassed by the fall of 2016, at which time \$4.7 million worth of efficiency measures had been put in place. After meeting the goal, the district continues to seek out and enact efficiency measures.

In early 2015 the district launched a community driven facilities master planning process. After two-and-a-half years of collaboration with students, staff and community members, a master plan was created and voters agreed to the financial support needed. Stakeholders are now deep into the design process for all six of the projects included in the first phase of the master plan, and construction on the initial pieces of this complex plan began in May 2018. Four buildings should be complete and open to students during the 2020-2021 school year; Upper Arlington High School and Windermere Elementary School are scheduled to be open to students during the 2021-2022 school year. Throughout the design and construction process, the district will ensure all projects stay on budget.



The district has also met other priorities outlined in the efficiency goal. In collaboration with the Upper Arlington Education Association and the Ohio Association of Public School Employees (OAPSE) Local 201, changes were made in the structure of staff salary and benefits. In addition, the district debuted its Annual Financial Update in 2016 and has released new editions each spring.

OWNERSHIP GOAL

The planning process for the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan involved a large number of students, staff and community members, and the ownership goal represents the importance of continuing that collaborative engagement.

Internally, the district has created a team of certified staff members from across the district called the Teaching and Learning Team (TLT). This group is meant to provide the teacher voice to the implementation of the strategic plan and ensure it has a positive impact at the classroom level. The group also provides feedback to inform decisions regarding leadership structures and professional learning.

In addition to the TLT, the Upper Arlington Education Association (UAEA) Communications Committee helps to identify the level of staff engagement across the district through the use of the Gallup Q12 survey. The committee reviews the results of the Q12 and works directly with the superintendent to identify measures to strengthen areas of weakness.

Externally, the district uses all of its communications tools to provide updates to the community on the implementation of the strategic plan. These tools include, but are not limited to, the Quality Profile, the Quality Profile Executive Summary, the Annual Financial Update, the UAiNSIGHT community newsletter, community postcards, guest columns in UA News, social media and direct emails to parents. The broad coverage provided by utilizing all communications tools toward a single goal has yielded positive results such as high approval ratings in surveys and two Ohio School Public Relations Association Best of the Best Awards for communications planning.

In the coming year, the district will continue to focus on all these areas as well as personal communication with students and families to ensure positive results.

NEXT STEPS

The 2015-2018 Strategic Plan is both focused and ambitious. While much has been accomplished in the past 3 years, it is recommended that the Board of Education extend the plan for one year to provide time for all goals to be met.

During this extension year, the planning process will begin for the next strategic plan. The district will again bring together work teams of students, staff and community members to study three areas of focus. This time those areas will be well-being, performance/personalization and accountability.



The yet-to-be formed well-being team will have an important set of issues to research including, but not limited to, safety, mental health, bullying prevention, cultural competency, substance abuse prevention, and stress reduction. This team will provide a briefing paper for the Board of Education, which will be translated into a set of objectives and leading strategies to address each identified area.

The performance/personalization research will be conducted by the TLT and community members with experience in the field of education. They will build upon the goals laid out in the 2015-2018 plan, further extending the reach and the positive impact on students.

The accountability team will also build upon many of the goals laid out in the current strategic plan, including a review and update of the Quality Profile, recommendations on future efficiency measures, and a focus on the responsible use of resources to cover the needed staffing and program changes for the district's quickly-growing enrollment numbers.

The Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) will include representation from each of the three work teams as well as additional community and staff members. This team helps to provide comprehensive oversight for the research into all three areas of focus.

Dr. Brad Mitchell of Battelle for Kids and Dr. Jenny Hensley of Dynamix will facilitate the planning process.

CONCLUSION

The 2015-2018 Strategic Plan has been instrumental in the district making great strides both academically and operationally in a period of just three years. With an additional year of focus on these goals, Upper Arlington Schools can meet the commitments made in collaboration with its community during the planning process back in 2014.

Upon approval of this report, the district will move ahead with completion of the existing plan and will dive into the planning process for the next strategic plan. Upper Arlington Schools looks forward to once again working hand in hand with the community to set lofty and worthy goals for the benefit of Upper Arlington students.