

DeSmet Elementary Public School

Strategic Plan

2016

Overview

The DeSmet Elementary Public School (hereinafter referred to as “District”) has created a new direction for the school district to strategically focus its resources on identified wants, preferences, and needs of its community. As part of this process, the District has begun a strategic planning and thinking process that will lead to a stronger and more vital school district. This process will be ongoing as the District moves into the future. This strategic plan is intended to help the District in focusing its resources in a manner that will best benefit the children enrolled in the District.

The DeSmet Elementary Board of Trustees and staff began the strategic planning and thinking process necessary to fit with its commitment to children, to community engagement and to knowledge-based decision making processes.

As part of its preparation for strategic planning, the District brought in Debra Silk of the Montana School Boards Association to help facilitate the strategic planning process.

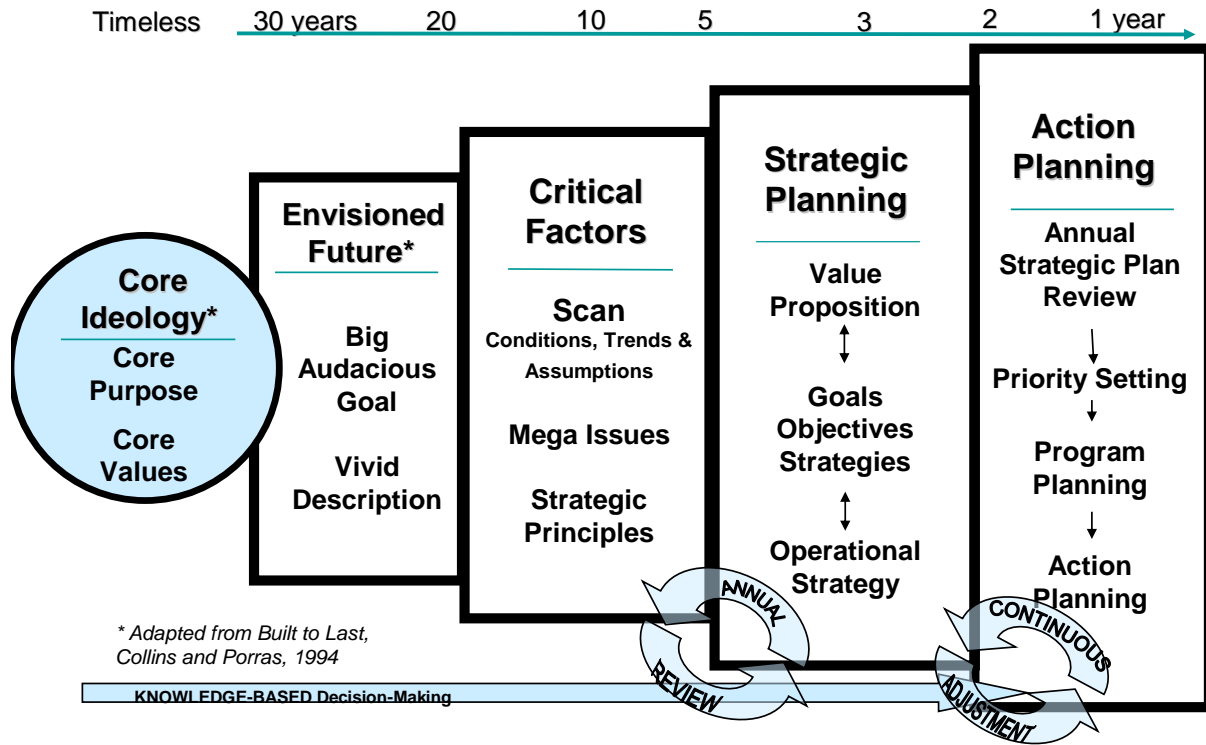
On April 18, 2016, the DeSmet Elementary Public School Board of Trustees formally adopted its new strategic plan.

The District views the process of strategic planning as an ongoing process within the school system. This is not a "strategic planning project" that is completed. Adoption of a plan is an affirmation of the general intent and direction articulated by the Core Ideology, Envisioned Future and Goals and Strategic Objectives. It is understood that progress toward achieving plan strategic objectives will be assessed at least annually, and the plan will be updated based on achievement and changes in the needs of the children served by the District.

Strategic Planning Framework

The framework used by the District for its strategic planning process was adapted from a model developed by Jim Collins, author of “Built to Last” and “Good to Great.” The Board focused on five different planning horizons, starting with the long term issues first to provide focus to shorter term efforts.

Five Planning Horizons



* Adapted from *Built to Last*, Collins and Porras, 1994

Core Ideology of the DeSmet Elementary Public School District

Core ideology describes a school district's consistent identity that transcends all changes related to its relevant environment. It consists of two elements - **core purpose** - the school district's reason for being - and **core values** - essential and enduring principles that guide a school district. **Envisioned future** conveys a concrete yet unrealized vision for the school district. It consists of a **big audacious goal** - a clear and compelling catalyst that serves as a focal point for effort - and a **vivid description** - vibrant and engaging descriptions of what it will be like to achieve the big audacious goal.

DRAFT CORE PURPOSE

The Core Purpose of DeSmet Elementary Public School District is to nurture and educate our children in a small, intimate setting that sets the stage for their future success.

DRAFT CORE VALUES

RESPECT – *We value having and outwardly showing respect for others at all times.*

COMMUNITY – *We value our small community where people genuinely care for one another. We value the involvement of our students, staff, parents and community members in our school.*

HONESTY – *We believe in and expect open, honest communications at all levels.*

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY – *We believe in being fiscally responsible and accountable to the community we serve.*

15-20 Year Planning Horizon

Envisioned Future of the DeSmet Elementary Public School

Big Audacious Goal:

DeSmet Elementary is a Destination School of Choice. Regardless of academic ability or socioeconomic circumstances, DeSmet Elementary Public School fosters knowledge and provides students with rich learning experiences and tools necessary for each child to reach his/her potential and to succeed today and into the future.

A Vivid Description of the Desired Future:

- Our small, intimate school meets the individual needs of each student.
- We are a standout elementary school in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) components while remaining strong in core subjects.
- Our students are provided vast outdoor opportunities.
- We offer school-wide thematic units that involve and are in collaboration with our community.
- Our students learn through a variety of mediums (e.g., face-to-face, digital, etc.) and in various settings (e.g., individually, groups, outdoors, other experiential, etc.).
- We meet the needs and skills of all students on their terms.
- We have a strong performing and practical arts program.
- We teach life-long skills at all levels.
- We offer students a variety of extra and co-curricular opportunities.
- Our facilities meet the contemporary needs of our students and our community:
 - We have a state-of-the-art physical education center;
 - We have a large sports field that supports all of our outdoor activities;
 - We have a performing arts center;
 - We have playground and other equipment that meets the needs of our students and our community; and
 - We have an outdoor learning classroom garden that meets the needs of our school and our community.
- Our technology infrastructure and applications meet the contemporary needs of our students.
- We have a highly engaged staff that makes learning fun and exciting for our students.
- Our staff have vast professional development opportunities and the time necessary to be innovative and to devote individualized instruction and our students.
- We have a remarkable pre-school program that supports the needs of our youth and their families and prepares children for their futures.
- We have a fully funded after-school program that includes tutoring and other educational activities that supplement our regular educational programs.
- Our parents are fully engaged in the education of their children.

- We have a strong relationship with surrounding businesses and our community. As a result they fully support our programs and services.

5-10 Year Planning Horizon

Assumptions Regarding the Relevant Future for the DeSmet Elementary Public School

In order to make progress against the 20 year Envisioned Future, DeSmet Elementary Public School must constantly anticipate the strategic factors likely to affect its ability to succeed, and to assess the implications of those factors. This process of building foresight about the future will help the District to constantly recalibrate its view of the relevant future, a basis upon which to update the strategic plan on an annual basis. As the outcome-oriented goals that will form the basis of the long-range strategic plan will be based on this foresight, annual review of these statements will be an appropriate method of determining and ensuring the ongoing relevance of the strategic plan.

Creating the Assumptions - during the Strategic Planning meetings held in 2015, the DeSmet Elementary Public School Board of Trustees, Staff Leadership Team, and faculty made many assumptions about the future. While many different assumptions were made, see Appendix “A” to this Plan for those assumptions that are likely to have the greatest influence on the success of DeSmet Elementary Public School.

Five-Year Planning Horizon

Outcome-Oriented Goals and Strategic Objectives

The following thinking represents goals for the next five years. They are areas in which DeSmet Elementary Public School will explicitly state the conditions or attributes it wants to achieve. These outcome statements will define, "what will constitute future success." The achievement of each goal will move the school district toward realization of its Envisioned Future.

Strategic Objectives provide direction and actions on how the school district will accomplish its articulated goals. All strategies included in the strategic plan should be considered accomplishable at some point in the future. Strategic Objectives are reviewed annually by the DeSmet Elementary School Board, Staff Leadership Team, and faculty.

Goals of the DeSmet Elementary Public School

Goal Area 1: Expanded Educational Opportunities

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five years: DeSmet Elementary Public Schools has greatly enhanced educational opportunities for all of the youth in our community. As a result of our success, our students are flourishing.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

- We will enhance the early childhood opportunities for the children in our community.
- We will enhance project-based, real-life opportunities for students that expand across several areas and subject areas, e.g., new theme each year.
- We will enhance the after-school programs and opportunities for students and seek out alternative funding and human sources to support these programs.
- We will enhance extra-curricular opportunities for students.
- We will enhance the intimate, caring setting of our school environment.

Goal Area 2: School Climate/Community Outreach

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: We have successfully enhanced our positive school climate, our image and reputation, and our community outreach. As a result of our efforts, our District, community, students and staff enjoy vast opportunities that have not been possible in the past.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

- We will enhance our positive school climate.
- We will enhance our efforts in reaching out to the resources/businesses in the area to provide students with enhanced learning opportunities and to improve our relationships with the community and local businesses.
- We will enhance the positive image of the District through enhanced communication to the community sharing the great things that are happening in our schools.
- We will increase the participation of the staff, parents and community in the strategic planning process.

Goal Area 3: Facilities

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: We have maintained our existing facilities to meet the needs of our students, staff and community, while also planning for the future facility needs of the District and the community.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

- We will research and plan for the long-term facility goals of the District by exploring conceptual plans, funding, and alternative funding sources.

Goal Area 4: Technology

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five years: We have effectively incorporated technology into our curriculum and other educational opportunities for students.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

- We will enhance the technology that is available to each student to positively impact teaching and learning.
- We will enhance the integration of technology into the classroom and across all levels of instruction and curriculum.
- We will enhance the professional development/mentoring opportunities for staff to uniformly, consistently and effectively use technology to enhance student learning.

Appendix “A”

Megatrend Analysis to Help Inform and Assess DeSmet Elementary Public School District’s Strategic Plan

Assumptions about the future (5-10 years)

Assumptions: The following are 5-10 year assumptions concerning the key external trends, challenges, or issues facing DeSmet Elementary Public School District in the future. They may represent either future opportunities or threats to the District.

5-10 Year Planning Horizon

Assumptions Regarding the Relevant Future for the DeSmet Elementary Public School District

In order to make progress against the 20 year Envisioned Future, DeSmet Elementary Public School must constantly anticipate the strategic factors likely to affect its ability to succeed, and to assess the implications of those factors. This process of building foresight about the future will help DeSmet Elementary Public School to constantly recalibrate its view of the relevant future, a basis upon which to update the strategic plan on an annual basis. As the outcome-oriented goals that will form the basis of the long-range strategic plan will be based on this foresight, annual review of these statements will be an appropriate method of determining and ensuring the ongoing relevance of the strategic plan.

Creating the Assumptions - during the Strategic Planning meetings, the DeSmet Elementary School Board, Staff Leadership Team, faculty and community made many assumptions about the future. While many different assumptions were made, what follows are those assumptions that are likely to have the greatest influence on the development of DeSmet Elementary Public School's Strategic Plan.

Assumptions about the future

Demographics

- We do not anticipate any significant increase in student enrollment.
- We anticipate that many people who reside in our District do not know of the District’s existence. We need to better actively promote the District to the parents that reside in our District.
- We anticipate continue attrition of students in upper elementary grades due to families moving to larger homes as their children get older.
- We anticipate an increased aging population in our District.
- We anticipate an increased number of college students renting housing in our District given the increased rental costs within Missoula.

Business and Economic Climate

- We anticipate that the trend of having industrial-type businesses in our District will continue. We do not anticipate other types of business or economic growth in the future.
- In the past, we could anticipate growth from Missoula expanding into our District. However, the current trend is for growth within the city of Missoula. We anticipate this trend to continue.

Politics and Social Values

- We anticipate that the trend of Missoula being fairly liberal will continue. However, our District is much more conservative. This dynamic plays into the passage rate of bonds and levies.
- We anticipate that we will need to better promote the positive values of our District (e.g., small, intimate school setting, welcoming environment for families, etc.).
- We anticipate that we will need to address the perception that in our K-8 school system all of the students are grouped together as that is not the case.
- We anticipate that the trend of our staff spending more time on behavior and other social issues will continue.
- Based upon anticipated need, we anticipate that the trend of the District providing certain social services (e.g., food, clothing, supplies, etc.) will increase.
- We anticipate that we will continue to serve a population of students and families that experience socio-economic challenges.

Technology and Science

- We anticipate a continuation of a 1:1 student technology initiative.
- We anticipate the need to hire additional staff that are well-versed in technology and available at all times to assist with our technology needs.

Legislation and Regulation

- We do not anticipate any significant increases in funding for public schools at the state or federal level.
- We anticipate that unfunded mandates will continue.
- We anticipate that the trend of doing more with less funding will continue.

5-10 Year Planning Horizon

Mega Issues facing the DeSmet Elementary Public School District

Mega issues are issues of strategic importance, which represent choices the school district will need to make in defining the ultimate direction of its long-range plan. These issues represent potential impediments to achievement of the Envisioned Future, and form a basis for dialogue about the choices facing the school district. These questions can serve as an ongoing "menu" of strategic issues that, using a knowledge-based approach in gathering insights relative to DeSmet Elementary Public School' strategic position and directional choices for each of the issues, can

be used by the Board to create regular opportunities for strategic dialogue about the future issues facing the school district.

Note: The questions are not necessarily arranged in priority order.

Mega Issues for Consideration

- How do we effectively promote the District to the parents that reside in our District and the businesses that are located within our District, and to our community at large?
- What can we do to better serve the needs of those students and families that continue to experience socio-economic challenges?
- How can we improve the District's overall technology program to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the District, our students, staff, parents and community?