

Our Strategic Plan

Learning For All...
Whatever It Takes!

Dunkirk City School District





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Superintendent's Message:

We are pleased to present our new five-year Strategic Plan with its emphasis on Learning For All: Whatever It Takes! Our plan establishes a renewed vision, mission, core values and strategic long-range goals for the Dunkirk City School District. The plan also establishes an operational blueprint to achieve those goals and guide decision-making for years to come.

Throughout this process, stakeholder involvement was extremely important because the entire Dunkirk City School District community has a vested interest in the success of each and every child we serve. The development of our plan was guided by a Core Team of stakeholders with representation by the Board of Education, teachers, administrators, support staff, district office, parents, business community and community members in general.

The Core Team had the opportunity to look back at where we've been, envision where we want to be, and examine our strengths as well as areas of need. They identified three fundamental areas where they saw the greatest opportunity to achieve meaningful progress for our students: Literacy and Numeracy, Attendance and Family Engagement.

The Dunkirk City School District has a long and proud history. We are a unique and diverse school district that is one of the largest in Chautauqua County, New York. Our future is filled with opportunity and promise, and we hope everyone shares our excitement as we embark on this new chapter.

Here in Dunkirk, teachers are being challenged to broaden their repertoire of teaching strategies to meet the needs and strengths of students from a tremendous diversity of backgrounds and cultures. The ways in which we teach our young people exert a powerful influence on their linguistic, social, cognitive and general educational development. Demographic data from the Dunkirk City School District reveals that we have an increasingly large number of economically disadvantaged students as our families struggle economically. The data also shows that we have, over the past decade, become a culturally diverse community as well.

Students of poverty face challenges that are unique to their life experiences. The reported difference in the number of words heard between an average four year old child from a "professional" family and an average four year old from a "low-income" family is 30 million words (Hort & Risley, 1995). This astounding statistic underscores the oral language divide that exists within the children who attend our schools. As Ruby Payne states, "We can neither excuse students nor scold them for not knowing; as educators we must teach them and provide support, insistence and expectations" (A Framework of Understanding, 2001).

We believe that this plan provides a blueprint to ensure that a Dunkirk education is the tool that will give each of our children "life choices" that will enable them to be successful. Our educational community believes that all students can learn and is dedicated to see that all children do learn: Whatever It Takes.

Dr. James Tracy
Superintendent of Schools



From Our Facilitators:

Dear Community of Dunkirk,

It has been our pleasure to have served the Dunkirk City School District as facilitators of its new Strategic Plan. We began our journey with Dunkirk in the fall of 2017 to develop a plan for student success. During that time, we worked with a committed Core Team and three Task Forces to determine the needs of the district.

Through thoughtful discussion of district policies, procedures and review of student data, we created a comprehensive plan to support staff in developing a dynamic path forward. This plan is designed to support excellent outcomes for students as Dunkirk continues to strengthen its highly-valued culture.

To focus on the direction of the district over the next five years, Strategic Intent (goals with clear areas of measurement) were constructed. Clear indicators of progress and success are connected to these measurable goals. The district mission, vision and values are aligned to these goals to move Dunkirk forward in the best interest of students.

As a result of the Task Forces reviewing research, data and best practices in developing strategies and action plans to reach established goals, we expect systematic implementation over the next five years. The practices, which are a part of the plan, are constructed to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Each year, the district will review the results and plan accordingly, for the next set of targets and action plans.

Dunkirk's Strategic Plan is a wonderful blueprint to move the district into the future. We are honored to have been a part of guiding this important work. We look forward to hearing the many success stories as the community unites in purpose in the fulfillment of the plan.

Congratulations to the Dunkirk City School District on completing this work for future success and best wishes for smooth implementation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Corliss Kaiser, Co-Facilitator
Dr. Margaret Jones-Carey, Co-Facilitator
PLC Associates, Inc.



Our Vision...

One Dunkirk
One Community
One Goal...learning for all.

Our Mission...

Maximize potential for all students, for all times....
Whatever it takes.





Our Beliefs/Aspirations...

Trust and mutual respect are essential.

Literacy and Numeracy are the foundation of all learning.

Data and research are the heart of all decision-making.

We are partners in learning with our families.

We must all be flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of students, our community, and the world.

Vision allows us to act from a proactive stance, moving toward what we want. Vision empowers and excites!

Ken Blanchard



Strategic Intentions...

1. By 2023, our rank will be 13th or better on the BOCES region ranking, based on the grade 3-8 literacy and numeracy assessments and Regents exams.
2. By 2023, 80% of classroom instruction will be differentiated by classroom walkthroughs and lesson plans, including literacy and numeracy.
3. By June 2023, the daily district attendance rate in each building will increase to 95%, as evident by yearly attendance reports.
4. By June 2023, we will decrease the number of K-12 students with chronic (greater than 10%) absenteeism by 50%.
5. By 2023, 90% of families will return the Family Engagement Survey completed, by school. Additionally, on the Family Engagement Survey, the following Performance Benchmarks will be at the Asset Level, measured by district and school:
 41. Our school actively engages our family in conversations around needs/progress.
 44. Our school has programs for families so we can help our children at home.
 50. As a parent/family member, I feel connected to our school.



Literacy and Numeracy





Curriculum Strategic Plan

Theory of Action:

If educators implement an aligned curriculum that articulates common, well-defined learning outcomes with a focus on differentiated and personalized instruction, as well as rigor and relevance, then students will be prepared for the next level of learning.

LN Goal 1:

Develop and consistently implement an articulated, aligned, adaptive and standards-based K-12 curriculum in all content areas.

Needs Statement:

The district currently lacks an articulated and aligned curriculum for any content area. While work had been done on this in the past, the document was not a “living” document and not only did teachers not reference it in planning and preparation, few could locate it when asked. Also lacking district-wide, are common formative assessments that can be used to assess student progress and communicate needs to the teacher in order to allow for appropriate differentiation. While some grade levels and departments have begun to create these, there is no formal assessment map nor time to discuss results collaboratively to make appropriate changes.

Activity	Targeted Outcome
Develop ELA and Math Curriculum Councils made up of teachers from each grade band (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12) and administration to develop initial curriculum documents and plan activities to implement the curriculum consistently across the district. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Curriculum documents should contain the main topics, standard, common assessment, and time-frame. ○ Curriculum Councils to disseminate information, collect data and lead the curriculum development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of a Curriculum Council of teacher leaders dedicated to providing input, communicating to peers and assisting in the district work of curriculum development. ○ Development and dissemination of an aligned K-12 curriculum document. ○ Development of common periodic assessments to be used to measure student progress toward grade level expectations and to adapt the curriculum. ○ All teachers will set professional goals on how their content area connects with the ELA/Math curriculum.
Develop Social Studies and Science Curriculum Councils made up of teachers from each grade band (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12) and administration to develop initial curriculum documents and plan activities to implement the curriculum consistently across the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development and dissemination of an aligned K-12 curriculum document. ○ Development of common periodic assessments to be used to measure student progress toward grade level expectations and to adapt the curriculum accordingly.
Development of Curriculum Councils for Art/Music, World Languages, Business/Technology/FACS and Physical Education/Health to develop initial curriculum documents and plan activities to implement curriculum consistently across the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development and dissemination of an aligned K-12 curriculum document. ○ Development of common periodic assessments to be used to measure student progress toward grade level expectations and to adapt the curriculum accordingly.



Instructional Focus Strategic Plan

Theory of Action:

If educators implement evidence-based, high-quality instructional practices focused on differentiated and personalized instruction as well as rigor and relevance, and systematically measure, analyze, and act upon student learning data, then all students will be challenged to grow as individuals and global citizens.

LN Goal 2:

Implement evidence-based, high quality instructional practices focused on differentiated and personalized instruction, as well as rigor and relevance.

Needs Statement:

While the district has invested considerable time and resources in providing professional development around differentiation, higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), student engagement and other instructional strategies, there is little evidence of comprehensive implementation of those strategies across the district. Yearly district-led reviews using the DTSDE rubric indicate that instruction is primarily teacher driven and lacks evidence of purposeful planning for differentiation. The district has developed a “look for” tool to be used by all administrators during informal walkthroughs of classrooms and has begun to give feedback, but is still developing a method to gather and share data based on those reviews to make plans for improvement of instruction.

Activity	Targeted Outcome
Define and support effective differentiated, personalized instruction as well as rigor and relevance through instructional staff engaging in ongoing, focused discussion and collaborative reflection on the effectiveness of instructional practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Submission and review of lesson plans by building administration for feedback aligned to building/district goals.○ Continued use of administrative walkthrough tools reflecting instructional focus in order to provide meaningful and relevant feedback to teachers and help determine district focus.○ K-5 grade level meetings as well as 6-12 department meetings at least 4 times/year to review data, share resources and develop action plans to remediate/accelerate.○ K-12 Curriculum Council meetings to be held at least 2 times/year to review data vertically and develop action plans to remediate/accelerate as well as adapt the developed curriculum.
Develop and sustain effective and efficient use of all resources for improved student achievement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Convene district Instructional Support Committee to review and update current AIS and Rtl plans.



LN Goal 3:

Systematically measure, analyze and act upon student learning data.

Needs Statement:

The district does not have a systemic method to gather, share and analyze data in order to discuss progress of students and make instructional changes. Additionally, common formative assessments have not been created or identified, nor a system for administration and collaboration developed in order to use the data appropriately.

Activity	Targeted Outcome
Instructional staff will develop assessments and evaluate student work based on a common understanding of mastery level learning outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of common periodic assessments in core content areas beginning Summer, 2018 (Reference: Curriculum Plan.) ○ Professional development and coaching on assessment literacy for all teachers.
Staff will examine student data, including student work, to evaluate and monitor student learning and evaluate instructional practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ K-5 grade level meetings in ELA/Math at least 4 times/year. ○ 6-12 department meetings in core subject areas at least 4 times/year. ○ K-12 vertical meetings in all content areas at least 2 times/year.
Students will consistently receive constructive, targeted feedback as well as guidance on how to improve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase constructive, targeted feedback provided to students on their work and progress towards learning targets.
Improve data systems to enable data-driven decision-making at all levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify data that needs to be collected district-wide, school-wide, program-wide and in classrooms. ○ Identify/create data systems to collect and manage data.
Develop a comprehensive and balanced assessment system designed to deliver high quality, differentiated instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of curriculum in all content areas with aligned common periodic assessments.

Values describe how we intend to operate, on a day-to-day basis, as we pursue our vision.

Kouzes and Posner



LN Goal 4:

Interface technology to support student learning, enhance student engagement, and work toward developing innovative instructional practices.

Needs Statement:

While the district has begun a 1:1 pilot program, there were not sufficient measures put into place to determine the technology integration effectiveness or use of the devices. In order to ensure effective use of the technology to support student achievement, the Technology Committee will need to develop a plan to guide the implementation.

Activity	Targeted Outcome
Convene District Technology Committee to revise current Technology Plan.	○ Updated Technology Plan reflecting current district goals.
Support and train staff in integrating technology into the classroom environment that supports and engages students.	○ Increase number of district staff who participate in technology-based professional learning. ○ Increase number of district staff collaborating and communicating using technology. ○ Increase number of teachers using technology for instructional purposes.
Establish district-wide expectations to implement and monitor the use of technology tools to support instruction and organizational efficiency.	○ Design and deliver resources to promote digital citizenship among staff and students.

For tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.

African Proverb



Professional Development Strategic Plan

Theory of Action:

If staff is consistently provided with professional learning that enhances their content knowledge and their pedagogy is enriched through collaboration with staff across all schools in the district, then educators will be able to implement effective educational practices that will improve the learning and growth of all students.

Needs Statement:

Given the focus from the strategic planning process, the district will need to update plans in order to reflect the anticipated needs and outcomes moving forward. A focus on teachers who are new to the district, ensuring they are provided with support to meet the district goals and a plan to retain high quality teachers is essential, given the turnover in the district in critical areas.

LN Goal 5:

Fully develop professional learning which includes high-quality, job-embedded professional development aligned with district, school, and educator goals.

Activity	Targeted Outcome
Reconvene the Professional Development Committee to update district Professional Development Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated Professional Development Plan (PDP) to reflect current district goals.
Convene District Technology Committee to revise current Technology Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated Technology Plan reflecting current district goals.

LN Goal 6:

Recruit, develop, support, and retain effective teachers and school leaders.

Activity	Targeted Outcome
Convene Mentoring Steering Committee to update current District Mentoring Plan and New Teacher Induction program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated Mentoring Plan reflecting current district goals. ○ Two day New Teacher Orientation. ○ Monitoring of Mentor/Mentee placements.
Increased and focused recruitment efforts for high needs areas in the district: English as a New Language (ENL), special education and special subjects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early identification of quality candidates.



Attendance





Attendance Strategic Plan

Theory of Action:

If we develop a system to track attendance in the district and if we are able to provide interventions for those who are chronically absent, then our student achievement rates will increase.

Needs Statement:

The district does not have a consistent method for coding, counting and tracking attendance at all grade levels. The district also lacks a policy and a plan to address chronic attendance issues across the various buildings. From the data that is available, it appears that some cohort groups have greater attendance issues than others which needs to be addressed.

A Goal 1:

Reduce absenteeism and maximize our daily attendance rate across the district and by school.

Activity	Targeted Outcome
Create a consistent structure to code, count, track, and share attendance data across the district with the development of an Attendance Task Force. The task force will also be charged with developing a set of interventions for those who are chronically absent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Creation of Attendance Task Force.○ Development of data collection plan for attendance and interventions.
Research possible interventions to use with students with excessive absences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Create consistent, tiered intervention lists based on number of absences.
Develop a focus group to identify cohorts with greatest number attendance issues, identify root causes and develop plan to address absenteeism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Decrease in chronic absenteeism for identified cohorts.

Genius is initiative on fire!

Holbrook Jackson



Family Engagement





Family Engagement Strategic Plan

Theory of Action:

When families are respected and valued as full partners in the learning and healthy development of students, student attendance, learning and achievement will be positively impacted.

Needs Statement:

While the importance of family engagement is recognized and several attempts to increase engagement have been made in the past, the district does not currently have a systemic way to collect data related to family and community engagement or to develop a comprehensive plan to address the issue.

FE Goal 1:

Develop a system to track family engagement in a systemized approach which will demonstrate that staff actively engage families as measured by a set of explicitly identified performance indicators.

Activity	Targeted Outcome
Create a Family Engagement Council representative of the district schools and community to include administration, teachers, staff and parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Development of a Family Engagement Plan and method for tracking data.
District leadership to research, explore and pilot new methods of engaging parents in the school community including use of technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Increased two way communication between school and home.○ More positive perceptions of school reported on Family Engagement Survey.

Where the willingness is great, the difficulties cannot be.

Machiavelli



Thank you to all who worked so diligently!

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