







STRATEGIC PLAN »»» 2018-2023

2021-2022 Priority Initiatives

PRESENTED: FEBRUARY 2022

STATUS UPDATE KEY:

-  OPERATIONAL
-  COMPLETED
-  SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS
-  STEADY PROGRESS
-  SOME PROGRESS
-  CANCELLED



Student Achievement and Development



01 Increase student connections through the addition of new, varied extracurricular activities, with emphasis on the addition of culturally relevant activities, clubs and organizations.

- »» The Student Advisory Committee met in November to have an initial conversation about this topic.
- »» Additional student participation is being gathered this spring to continue progress on this initiative.



02 Focus current and future student programming to meet the unfinished learning needs of students as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

- »» CORE+ teachers at the elementary level, and interventionists at the middle and high school levels, continue to work with students to differentiate learning needs and provide targeted instruction to address missed student learning.
- »» This work is continuing with data-driven decisions made on a per student basis throughout the year.
- »» MTSS professional learning in August and October at the secondary level focused on teachers closing gaps.
- »» Secondary principals, assistant principals, student needs facilitators and instructional coach professional learning in February focused on next steps for MTSS and improving the effectiveness of each school's Collaborative Learning Communities.
- »» Professional learning and curricular offerings continue to support addressing unfinished learning of students.



03 Enhance teaching strategies to support student voice and choice in coursework, while delivering curricular content that connects with student experiences and interests.

- »» Elementary principals, specialists and coaches will participate in part two of differentiated professional learning of student profiles through the Bureau of Educational Research in April to help enhance efforts towards this initiative.
- »» The elementary English language arts study group has completed over 20 hours of learning, reviewing, and planning with curricular options to identify materials that best foster student engagement in achieving the Iowa Core standards in an equitable manner.
- »» Elementary building leadership teams will participate in the Self-Assessment of MTSS Implementation on April 5 and 7 to identify next steps in school improvement to best address student and community needs to close the achievement gap.
- »» Instructional Rounds at Hempstead in September focused on gathering baseline classroom data about the balance of teacher talk versus student talk.
- »» Twelve high school students in the new Employability Skills with Job Shadowing class will complete a minimum of four, four-hour job shadows in a field of their interest, which leads to a second-semester internship.
- »» Professional development in differentiation to engage students in areas of interest and connected experiences has been developed for all elementary classroom teachers.
- »» District staff participated in the State of Iowa "21-Day Phase on Small Group" module to develop differentiated student work with opportunities for choice in independent, connected activities.



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- 04 Develop a continuum of social, emotional and behavioral health supports through the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) process to meet student needs.

 - » The Brain Health Retreat Rooms at Dubuque Senior High School and Hempstead High School are completed, staffed and currently serving students.
 - » Audubon Elementary School and Prescott Elementary School have joined the Second Step pilot and the other six elementary schools are meeting with building leadership teams to determine next steps to meet Iowa competencies through social-emotional curriculum.
 - » A Youth Mental Health First Aid train-the-trainer session is planned for early June, during which 14-16 district staff members will be trained to offer Mental Health First Aid sessions to staff next school year.
 - » The new Family Resource Center is now open at the Alta Vista Campus, with full-time staff leading the effort and working to provide referrals of families in need of support.
 - » A coalition on suicide prevention, intervention and postvention has been established and is scheduled to meet three times this spring to review current practices and make recommendations for updates on existing guidelines.
 - » Forty-five social-emotional learning leaders from across the district (PreK-12) attended the Iowa BEST (Behavioral, Equitable, Social-Emotional, Trauma Informed) Summit offered by the Department of Education and the University of Iowa Center for School Mental Health, focused on supporting MTSS with participants able to select research-based learning to inform and enhance the MTSS work of their own teams.
 - » Funding from the GEER II grant has supported strengthening of our universal tier through the addition of three experienced part-time educators to support social-emotional curriculum selection, implementation, and fidelity checks at all levels.
 - » The Social Academic Emotional Behavior Risk Screener (SAEBRs) is providing a new data point to support social emotional health at Eisenhower, Irving, Marshall, Lincoln, Fulton and Jefferson.
 - » There is renewed focus on Second Step curriculum at the preschool level along with new supplementary books focused on social, emotional, and behavioral wellbeing to complement curriculum in each district preschool.
 - » Screener results and other student data is being used to help building-level teams plan for individual student, grade-level and building-wide social, emotional, and behavioral health needs.
- 05 Educate and coach students regarding various career pathways while increasing opportunities for hands-on, career-focused experiences.

 - » School-based Collaborative Learning Communities along with the Educational Support Team are working toward the creation of common summative assessments in the core courses.
 - » Each Collaborative Learning Community focuses on data discussions around common formative and summative assessments to help reduce learning loss, providing academic supports for each student.
 - » Two VERTEX Coaches were hired to promote the VERTEX Initiative to students and to support staff in career and college readiness efforts.
 - » Four Welding Registered Apprentices are currently working to attain their 2,000 hour, competency-based certificate with four different businesses.
 - » A new education pathway has been developed with NICC and Clarke University and will begin next school year.
 - » At district high schools, Post-Secondary/Career Readiness Teams (PCR) made up of administrators, counselors, and teachers from various content areas are starting to implement guaranteed post-secondary readiness activities that meet the five essential components of Iowa's Individual Career and Academic Planning (ICAP) requirements.

TOGETHER.

- WE inspire.
- WE teach.
- WE engage.
- WE learn.
- WE challenge.
- WE empower.
- WE live.
- WE rise.
- WE succeed.

Together, we shape a future of success.

FOR ALL.

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- 06 Implement and evaluate a virtual education program for the 2021-2022 school year for students who desire this option and can be successful in it.
 - » The district has officially applied to the Iowa Department of Education for approval to offer a virtual school for students in grades 6-12 for the 2022-2023 school year, and currently awaits a decision on that application.
- 07 Develop new and enhance current computer science learning opportunities and coursework in high school, middle school and elementary schools.
 - » Enrollment in computer science classes (Computer Science Essentials, Computer Science Principals I and II, and AP Computer Science) is seeing steady growth, up 14.5% for next school year compared to this school year.
 - » All 8th-grade students engaged in a hands-on computer science/robotic experience led by the high school robotics team. Students learned about the computer science pathway and course options available in high school prior to registering for the next school year.
 - » Coding coursework has been implemented in all fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms across the district.
 - » A grant application for the Iowa Computer Science Professional Development Incentive Fund has been submitted with the goal of broadening coding in second- and third-grade classrooms, as well as enhancing robotics in preschool, kindergarten and first-grade classrooms.
 - » First Lego League teams are underway at five elementary schools (various grades) and one middle school (6th grade) and First Tech Challenge is ongoing at two middle schools (7th and 8th grade).
 - » First Robotic Team at high school level visited fifth-graders in December to do a hands-on showcase.
 - » Staffing to support First competition teams have been moved from volunteer to a paid stipend structure to ensure equity across the district.
 - » Robots have been ordered for all 8th-grade exploratory classes for an experience this year, with an emphasis on creating integrated lessons within the exploratory curriculum for the 2022-2023 school year.



Community Engagement

- 08 Reconnect and reengage families to their school communities following the COVID-19 pandemic, recognizing this engagement positively impacts school attendance and achievement.
 - » Transportation loop routes are continuing for Title I schools, with adjustments made based on student needs. Identified students are picked up at designated locations and dropped off at their school of attendance.
 - » The district was awarded the BELIEF (Blended Early Learning in Educational Foundations) Grant to begin the exploration of working with community partners to develop a full continuum of preschool programs that blend childcare and early-learning experiences.
 - » Transportation was identified as a barrier to attendance by Title I staff and a new loop route will be implemented to pick up identified students and drop them off at school to support attendance.
 - » The district is exploring partnerships with Regional Transit Authority (RTA), which is seeking grant funding to support targeted transportation from specific community housing locations needing support.
 - » Elementary schools offered fall orientation meetings for all students and have offered opportunities for family engagement through outdoor events and/or indoor events that were socially distanced.

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- 09 Refocus the vision and programming for student mentoring following the COVID-19 pandemic, including updated training and protocols for community/business mentors.
- » A committee was convened to review best practices in student mentoring and review the district application for state certification. Committee recommendations are in the process of being incorporated into the program.
 - » Data was collected from schools to identify existing mentors and district training sessions were held for these mentors, who are matched by school.
 - » Programming is restarting and mentors are returning to meet with students in-person.
 - » Ongoing work includes reviewing mentoring curriculum, school-specific mentor training and recruitment of new community and business mentors.



- 10 Systematize the process for cultivating and sustaining school-business partnerships to support career opportunities through the VERTEX Initiative.
- » VERTEX Coaches, along with College and Career Coaches from Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC), have developed a coaching model to connect with students based on their Kuder Navigator (Career Information System) interests, skills, and values, in an effort to better help students plan for their future goals.
 - » The District, NICC, Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, and Dubuque Area Labor Management Council have developed a process to connect with employers, get their information into the work-based learning database, and begin one-on-one intake processes.
 - » VERTEX Initiative program members are meeting on a regular basis to develop a systematized method for connecting with current and new partners and to streamline communication.
 - » The VERTEX team continues to build partnerships with area businesses in collaboration with its partners, Northeast Iowa Community College, Dubuque Area Labor Management Council, and Greater Dubuque Development Corporation.
 - » A Work-Based Learning Database was launched in October, allowing for the team to continue to build and organize business partners.
 - » This database will also allow staff to track student experiences systematically to allow for better tracking and reporting of data to support program development.



Effective Resource Management



- 11 Continue the planning and input process for creating operational efficiencies across district facilities.
- » Research is currently being conducted on building efficiencies and will be part of forthcoming strategic planning conversations.
 - » The topic of operational efficiencies will be a significant portion of the School Board's March Support Services/Facilities Committee agenda.



- 12 Plan for and maximize funds available through the American Rescue Plan to ensure the most significant impact on student success.
- » The district has developed a comprehensive plan, which included stakeholder input, to maximize the use of American Rescue Plan funds to support student success in the most-needed areas.
 - » The plan focuses on efforts in Social-Emotional Learning/Brain Health; Unfinished Learning/Addressing Learning Loss; Addressing the Access Gap/Student Services; Community/Family Engagement; and Operational Support.

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- G 13 Enhance collaboration across the district through the implementation of Microsoft Teams.
 - » All staff have received training in Microsoft Teams.
 - » Virtual Parent-Teacher Conferences were hosted through the Teams platform.
 - » Training has been delivered to all 19 technology coaches to deliver at their respective buildings, with accompanying documentation.



Employee Excellence

- ✓ 14 Provide professional learning and growth opportunities for administrators aligned with the launch of the new Iowa Leadership Standards.
 - » Professional learning for all administrators has been provided on the new Iowa Leadership Standards and how these standards can be incorporated into their work.
 - » This 15-hour training contributes to the ongoing licensure renewal of the administrator.
- D 15 Enhance and refine common, quality secondary course experiences for students by aligning essential standards and common assessments.
 - » Educational support team members and each school's Collaborative Learning Community are working to ensure that core classes have common summative and formative assessments.
 - » Blueprint courses were launched in Canvas for all secondary students, with positive feedback received from students on the common navigation. Use of Mastery Connect continues to grow in the English language arts, science and world language content areas.
 - » Professional learning at the beginning of the year and at ongoing Friday morning meetings has been aligned with essential standards, assessment and instruction.
 - » At the school level, instructional coaches are working with Collaborative Learning Communities of teachers to analyze formative assessment data in order to improve instruction and student supports at tier 1 and tier 2 levels.
- G 16 Provide ongoing professional development for digital resource tools to enhance instruction.
 - » Ongoing professional development sessions in content areas at all levels across the district shows the use of integrated digital tools to enhance student engagement.
 - » Integrated professional development around use of digital tools was delivered to teachers this fall with a recap of district-supported tools available and ideas for application in the classroom.
- D 17 Implement the new ACHIEVE system to enhance the educational experience for students eligible for special education services.
 - » ACHIEVE is the new Individualized Education Plan (IEP) system being developed by the state.
 - » The district has designated its launch date as August 1, 2022.
 - » A professional development plan has been established to ensure that special education teachers receive the necessary training beginning in August.
 - » Professional learning has been delivered to all special education teachers and administrators to build a common language and understanding of the IEP process to assure a strong foundation for the adoption of the new system when implementation begins.

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Deliver intensive professional development and coaching to support staff in the design and delivery of Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) for students with significant disabilities and preschool students eligible for special education services.

- » District leaders and Keystone AEA staff are meeting to enhance preschool programming through early access identification of student needs.
- » Initial training is continuing with designated groups, and a scale-up plan has been developed for fall 2022 to deliver training to the rest of the special education teachers in the significant disabilities and preschool programs.
- » In collaboration with Keystone AEA, district teams including staff from the district office and Hempstead, Senior, Washington, Eisenhower, and Table Mound are completing the second year of training.
- » During the first part of this year, work has focused on specially designed instruction (SDI) in the areas of literacy and communication.
- » For preschool, in collaboration with Keystone AEA, a team consisting of staff from Audubon, Irving, Prescott, and the district office are focusing on embedding skill instruction throughout the preschool day.



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Enhance efforts to diversify staffing that mirrors the Dubuque community through review of future job descriptions, interview questions and recruitment efforts.

- » The district is working on a “grow-your-own” initiative through an Iowa Workforce Grant to help with paying for schooling for paraprofessionals to obtain a teaching degree.
- » District representatives are attending a variety of career fairs this spring, as well as speaking at both high schools during career days to talk about job opportunities within the school district.
- » In a time of staffing challenges, the district is recommending a retention payment for all employees on contract on or before February 1 of the 2021-2022 school year.
- » Recruitment efforts continue to be focused on areas seeing the greatest labor shortages, especially substitutes, bus drivers, paraprofessionals and food service workers.
- » The district joined HBCUCareers.com to share job postings and attend upcoming job fairs with students graduating from the nation’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- » Advocacy efforts are underway at the district level and Urban Education Network level to encourage the state Board of Educational Examiners to remove barriers for licensure.
- » Six district paraprofessionals are currently participating in a Grown-Your-Own education program through the University of Dubuque LIFE Program.
- » Enhanced financial incentives were added to support the hiring of substitute teachers in the district to ensure open positions are filled daily.