

# Cascade Public Schools

## Strategic Plan

2016

### Overview

**The Cascade Public Schools (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 Cascade 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.

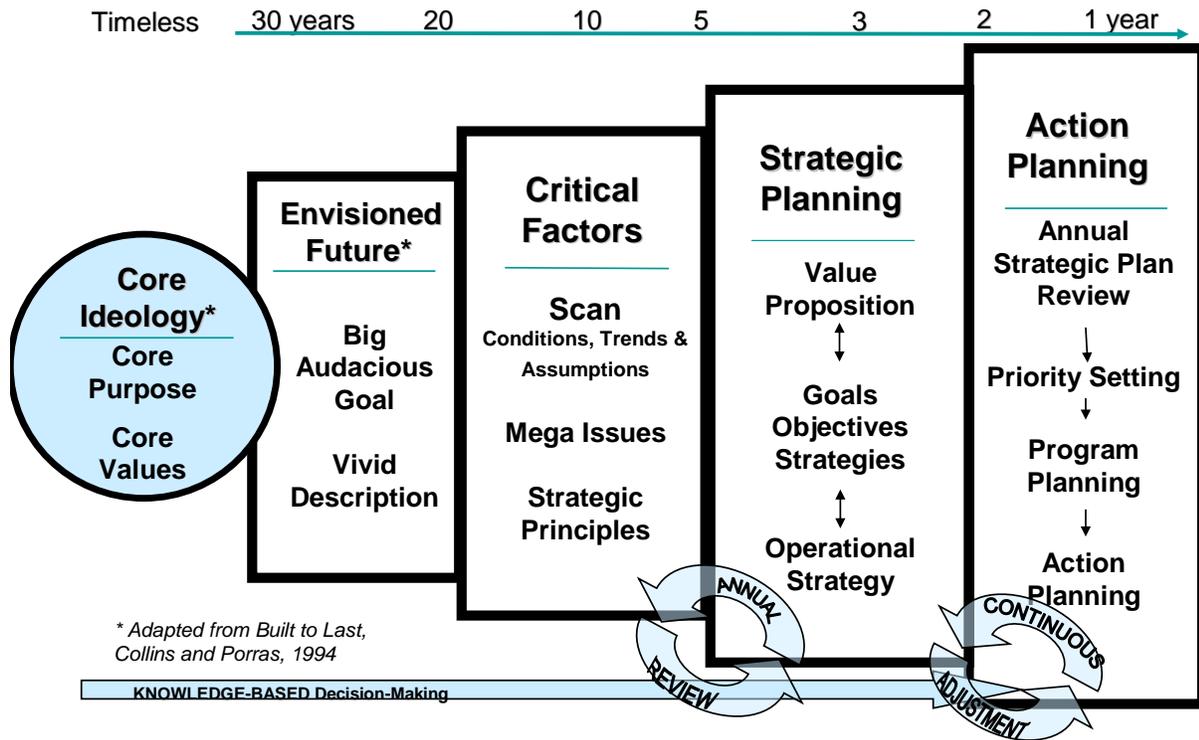
On January 19, 2016, the Cascade Public Schools Board of Trustees formally adopted its new strategic plan.

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



# **Core Ideology of the Cascade 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.

## **The Core Purpose of Cascade Public School District:**

Through collective efforts of our community and school, we strive to be an innovative educational system committed to excellence and focused on developing responsible citizens.

## **Core Values of the Cascade Public School District:**

Promoting Excellence for all Students through

- Engaging Curriculum with Rigor and Relevance
- High Quality Instruction
- Technology and Innovation
- Personal and Academic Pride
- Community and Collaboration

## **15-20 Year Planning Horizon**

## **Envisioned Future of the Cascade Public Schools**

### **Big Audacious Goal:**

Cascade Public Schools is the catalyst for excellence in education in collaboration with other surrounding school districts for the betterment of the students and the communities served.

### **A Vivid Description of the Desired Future:**

- We have not only withstood the changes in the dynamics of our community and surrounding areas, but we have successfully used these changes to our advantage and for enhanced opportunities for our students.
- Our small class size allows our staff to provide an individualized education for each student and each student progresses according to the student's level.
- We collaborate effectively with the communities of Ulm and Wolf Creek to ensure that all students have the best education and other opportunities possible.

- We provide exceptional opportunities for our staff to develop professionally. As a result our staff is highly qualified and enthusiastic about the difference they can make for our students and the contributions they bring to the District.
- We are an environmentally conscience school that strongly supports recycling, reusing and repurposing sustainable resources.
- The District and our students are actively involved in all aspects of Hydro and Aquaponics.
- Our facilities meet the contemporary and ongoing needs of our students, families and our community. Pee wee sports (t-ball, flag football, soccer, volleyball).
- We have successfully developed a program where older students provide guidance and mentorship to the younger students.
- Our summer programs cultivate enhanced learning opportunities and activities for our students.
- We have developed and operate a community garden that helps us with healthy meals and snacks for students and supports community nutritional needs.
- We have programs in place to assist children with school readiness.
- Our schedule supports the needs, preferences and schedules of students and families.
- We have enhanced our opportunities to recognize and celebrate the hard work and dedication of our students, staff and community members.
- Because of our high expectations and the transparent culture that we have created, with our students, there is trust both within the school and with our community and as a result we have had great success in the past 15 years.
- In collaboration with our community and surrounding areas, we now have a community wellness center that provides for the needs of our students, staff and community.
- We are known for being a school that utilizes technology and other innovations in our programs and services offered to students and in making needed enhancements to our community and the surrounding areas. One example of this is our exceptional vocational programs where students are provided with a variety of opportunities for hands-on projects. Another example of this is the way in which we have addressed the issue of school housing by having our students involved in all aspects of this initiative.
- We have vast after-school programs, co and extra curricular opportunities that are an extension of our exceptional programming and provide students with additional opportunities for growth and success.
- Our educational offerings are fully integrated so students can see and experience the connection to other subject matters and real-life issues.
- Our students are taught life skills and healthy habits at an early age to allow them to develop needed skills for success.
- Our students have expanded advanced learning opportunities, including but not limited to college prep classes, AP classes and other global learning opportunities.
- Our students have a menu of electives in which to choose from that support the preferences and skills of our students.
- We have a 100% graduation rate and each of our students is prepared for the next chapter in their lives.
- Every student is fluent in at least 1 foreign language before they graduate.

## **5-10 Year Planning Horizon**

### **Assumptions Regarding the Relevant Future for the Cascade Public School District**

In order to make progress against the 20 year Envisioned Future, Cascade Public School District 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 the Fall of 2015, the Cascade 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 Cascade Public Schools

## **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 Cascade Public Schools 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 Cascade School Board, Staff Leadership Team, and faculty.

## **Goals of the Cascade Public School District**

### **Goal Area 1: Student Achievement**

**Statement of Intended Outcome, Five years:** As a result of our high expectations and rigor and our exceptional programs and services for students, our students are enthused about school and are thriving.

### **1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:**

- We will enhance real life experiences for our students through job shadowing, internships, project-based learning and other opportunities.
- We will provide enhanced opportunities for students in upper grades to mentor and assist students in lower grades to create a cohesive and nurturing environment for all students.
- We will enhance the alignment and integration of our curriculum to ensure smooth transitions of students and to allow for projects that involve multiple hands-on applications across the curriculum.
- We will instill in our students high expectations, a love of learning and motivation to always improve.
- We have implemented a program that provides students with community service projects as an alternative to certain forms of discipline.

### **Goal Area 2: Collaboration**

**Statement of Intended Outcome, Five years:** We have a positive relationship with our parents, community and local businesses. We have also collaborated with outlying schools to enhance the educational opportunities for our students and to ensure integration and a smooth transition into our schools.

### **1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:**

- We have collaborated with Ulm and Wolf Creek to schedule PIR days to align with our curriculum and offerings.
- We have user-friendly information available to our community and surrounding communities using technology and other strategies to enhance our relationships and knowledge of parents, community members and others.
- We have collaboration between the boards of trustees of Cascade, Ulm and Wolf Creek Public Schools to enhance teaching and learning opportunities and for the sharing of resources.
- We have integrated student activities to enhance the opportunities for students in Cascade, Ulm and Wolf Creek.

### **Goal Area 3: Environment/Facilities**

**Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years:** We have successfully integrated environmentally friendly initiatives into our school and have taken steps to ensure regular updating of our school buildings in a environmentally responsible manner.

### **1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:**

- We will explore alternative means of energy sources, including but not limited to windmill and solar power to free up existing funds that directly support students.
- We will initiate a school recycling program that will include instruction and/or information on the importance of environmental responsibility.

- In performing upgrades to our facilities and infrastructure, we will do so in an environmentally responsible manner.
- We will embark on an initiative to enhance our facilities with the intended goal of being a Community Facility that is welcoming, inviting and provides for community activities, events and learning opportunities.
- We will initiate a School Farm program that will provide enhanced educational opportunities for our students, enhance the nutritional offerings at school and provide a needed service for our community.

#### **Goal Area 4: Communication and Community Engagement**

**Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years:** Through our efforts in enhancing our communication to our parents, community and surrounding communities, we have a positive reciprocal relationship with our community.

##### **1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:**

- We will enhance the frequency and effectiveness of our communication with the goal of reaching as many parents, community members, businesses and others in surrounding communities.
- We will enhance our engagement with the community by providing additional opportunities for the community to visit, utilize and otherwise interact with our District. Our goal is to have a Community Wellness Center, an Adult Education program, computer labs that are accessible to the community and enhanced opportunities for the community to use our facilities.
- We will initiate a public relations campaign with a focus on the positive programs and effects we are having on students, our “green” initiative and our commitment to addressing issues using a collaborative, knowledge-based decision making process.

#### **Goal Area 5: Technology**

**Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years:** We have effectively incorporated technology into all aspects of the District to enhance our educational opportunities for students, our community outreach initiative and to ensure that our students, parents and community have access to technology that improves their lives.

##### **1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:**

- We will make improvements to our connectivity in our buildings so that our students, staff, parents and community have enhanced access to courses, opportunities, information and resources using technology.
- We will enhance our staff training on technology and technology tools that enhance student learning.
- We will develop a Technology Plan that puts us on a path of consistent and meaningful upgrades in technology.
- We will explore the options available to provide our students with connectivity outside of the school setting to enhance their learning opportunities.

The Board, Staff Leadership Team and Staff will be developing action plans identifying the key activities/events, primary person(s) responsible for championing each activity/event identified and the timeline(s) for implementing and/or completing each activities/event.

## Appendix “A”

### Megatrend Analysis to Help Inform and Assess Cascade 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 Cascade 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 Cascade Public School District

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Creating the Assumptions - during the Strategic Planning meetings, the Cascade 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 Cascade Public Schools' Strategic Plan.

#### Assumptions about the future

##### Demographics

- We anticipate that there will always be a need for people to work our local farms and ranches.
- We anticipate the median age of our population and our staff to increase over the next few years.
- We do not anticipate a significant increase in the number of families with children moving into our community.

##### Business and Economic Climate

- We anticipate a lack of suitable housing for teachers and for families that may be interested in moving to our area.

- We anticipate that aquaponics will be a growing opportunity for our community, district and our students. We anticipate a continuing need for a nursing home in our community so that our aging residents can remain here in Cascade.
- If the Air Force Base closes, we do not know what impact this will have on our District.
- We do not anticipate growth in local businesses, with the exception of fishing-related businesses. With that said, we believe that there are opportunities for our District and our students to participate in local businesses.

#### Politics and Social Values

- We anticipate continuing trends of social issues, including but not limited to, bullying, non-traditional family structures, emotional and behavioral needs of students.
- We anticipate voting trends to continue towards absentee and possibly on-line voting. We will have to make adjustments to ensure that our voters understand the District's needs in order to ensure that our levies are supported by the community as we assume that we need local support to provide a quality education to our students.

#### Technology and Science

- We anticipate a continuing need for upgrades to connectivity to ensure that our District has sufficient bandwidth to support our programs.
- We anticipate that with technological advancements and greater integration of technology into the classroom, we will have to accommodate students who do not have internet access at home.
- With the continued emphasis on science fields, we will need to ensure that our students have access to programs that support advancements in science to prepare them for their futures.

#### Legislation and Regulation

- We anticipate continued regulations and assertion of external control with more reliance on local taxpayers to fund and support our schools.
- We anticipate continued advocacy for forced consolidation of schools.
- We anticipate continued advocacy for the formation of private charter schools with funds intended for public schools.
- We anticipate a need for greater regulation over families that opt for home schooling their children.
- We anticipate a greater need for Title I funds based upon student's needs at an earlier age.

## 5-10 Year Planning Horizon

### Mega Issues facing the Cascade 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 Cascade Public Schools' 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.