

Big Sandy Public Schools

Strategic Plan

2017

Overview

The Big Sandy 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 Big Sandy 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.

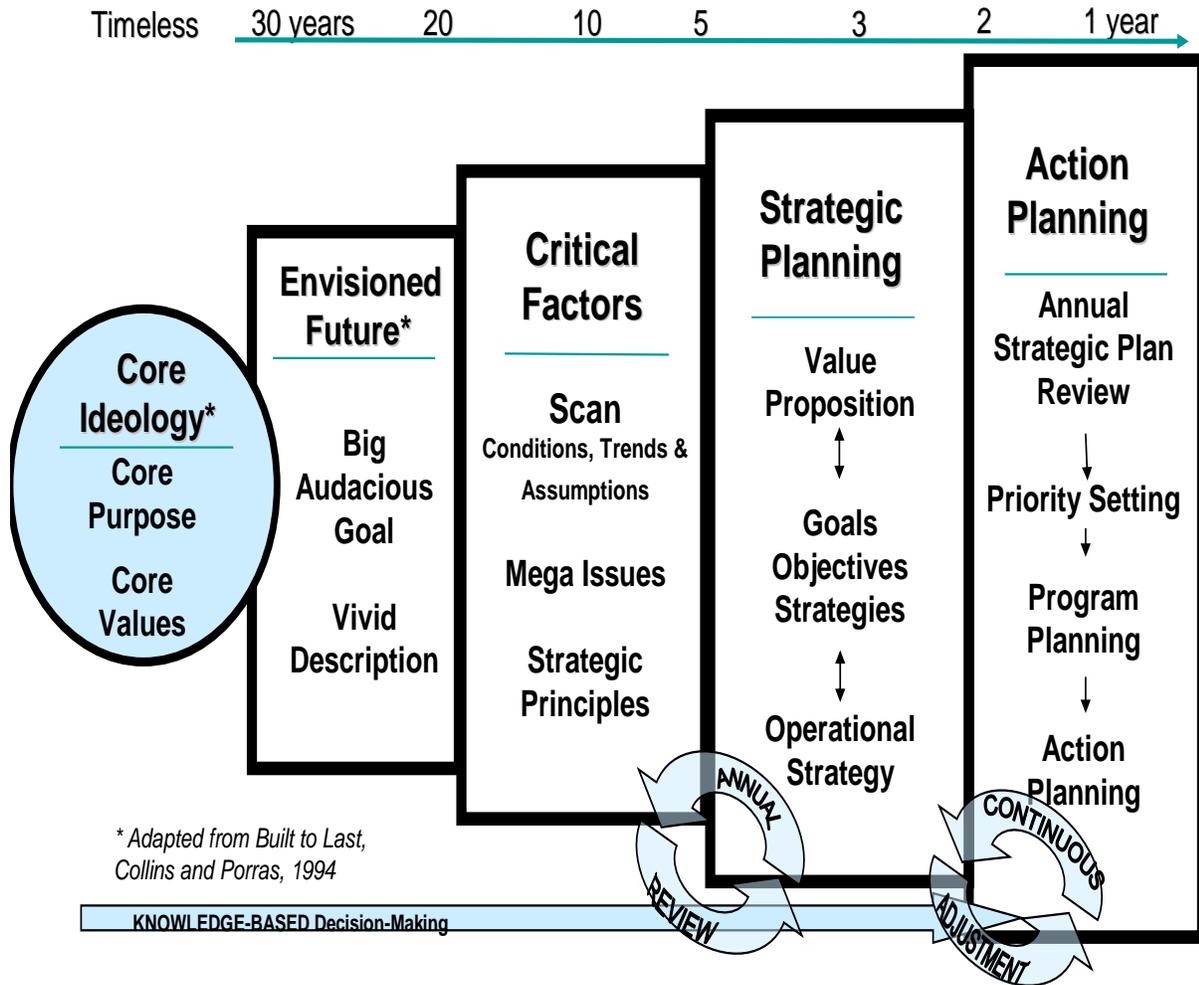
On May 16, 2017, the Big Sandy Public Schools Board of Trustees formally adopted its new strategic plan.

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 Big Sandy 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 Big Sandy Public Schools is to provide a quality education and environment for each student to be successful in life.

Core Values of the Big Sandy Public Schools:

Purposeful – *As a District, we are committed to do what is best for our youth and for the community we serve.*

Respectful – *Our District and our Community value showing one another respect at all times and being respectful in everything we do.*

Inspiring – *We value being role models for our students and inspiring them to reach their full potential.*

Determined – *As a District and a Community, we are strong-willed and will persevere through challenging times and celebrate our successes.*

Encouraging – *We are a positive, encouraging community that believes our youth are the keys to our future success.*

15-20 Year Planning Horizon

Envisioned Future of the Big Sandy Public Schools

Big Audacious Goal:

Big Sandy Public Schools is and has a reputation of excellence. We represent the epitome of public education.

Students:

- Academically our students excel, are highly competitive and are ranked very high compared to other school systems.
- We have up-to-date facilities that meet the contemporary needs of our students, staff, parents and the community we serve.
- We have individualized our education and opportunities for all of our students, e.g., we address the special needs of students and provide unique opportunities for students with exceptional talents.
- Our students have ample opportunities to take college-level/post-secondary vocational courses while in our system.
- Because of our exceptional programming, we have many students from out of the area that attend or desire to attend school here.
- We have systems and programs in place that support the emotional and physical wellbeing of our students.
- Our students have exposure to and are provided with hands-on experiences with a wide array of career options.

Community/District:

- The relationship between the school and community is one in which we fully support one another. We have embarked on a community-wide plan for success. As a result, our school and community are thriving.
- Because of the local opportunities available to our youth, many of our students have chosen to live in Big Sandy on a long-term basis.
- Through sound fiscal management, innovations and flexibilities, the District has managed to have the financial and other resources to successfully reach its long-term envisioned future.
- Our school pride (academically and in extra-curricular programs) is the strongest it's ever been.

Staff:

- We recruit and retain the best of the best.
- We have quality and affordable housing opportunities for our staff.
- Our staff utilize state-of-the art methods of instruction to support the contemporary educational needs of students.

Facilities:

- We have an up-to-date K-12 facility that meets the needs of our students, staff, parents and the community we serve.

Technology:

- Our infrastructure and programming fully supports the contemporary technology needs of our students and staff.
- We have fully integrated technology district-wide and no longer use hard copy instructional materials or paper in our operations.
- Each of our students is provided with contemporary technology tools that supports their educational programming and prepares them for a world beyond Big Sandy.

5-10 Year Planning Horizon

Assumptions Regarding the Relevant Future for the Big Sandy Public Schools

In order to make progress against the 20 year Envisioned Future, Big Sandy Public Schools 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 2016, the Big Sandy Public Schools 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 Big Sandy 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 Big Sandy 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 Big Sandy Schools Board, Staff Leadership Team, staff and community.

3-5 Year Goals of Big Sandy Public Schools

Goal Area 1 – Exposure, Opportunities and Expectations: *Statement of Intended Outcome* – Through our ongoing focus on what is best for our students, we have successfully exposed our students to a multitude of career choices, provided vast opportunities to students, and have created a culture District-wide, where expectations are set high. As a result, each student in our District reaches his/her full potential.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

- We will identify & build relationships with individuals, businesses, organizations and other educational institutions to provide enhanced alternative educational opportunities and career options for our students.
- We will implement curriculum mapping to identify the students we are reaching, how we are best reaching students, and to identify those students with whom we need to provide enhanced systems of support.
- We will identify the technology needs district-wide to ensure that technology is used as a tool to improve & enhance educational opportunities.

Goal Area 2 -- School/Community Relations: *Statement of Intended Outcome* – We have successfully enhanced the relationship between the school and the community. As a result our school and community are thriving.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

- We will enhance our outreach to the community utilizing available technologies and other strategies.
- We will develop enhanced opportunities for personal interactions between the school and the community, enhanced support of the community, and enhanced opportunities for our students.
- We will increase our District's media coverage.
- We will enhance the opportunities to celebrate the successes of our students.
- We will enhance opportunities for greater community and parent involvement and engagement at the high school level.

Goal Area 3 -- Recruitment and Retention: *Statement of Intended Outcome* -- Because of the District's progressive recruitment and retention program, we have successfully retained highly effective staff and have recruited quality staff who are committed to our District, our community and our students.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

- We will enhance our mentorship programs to assist staff in the performance of their duties.
- We will enhance the professional development opportunities for our staff to provide additional growth opportunities for staff and to ensure maximum positive impacts on students.

- We will explore options to increase appropriate housing for staff.
- We will enhance the promotion of our school and our community.
- We will provide enhanced opportunities for our staff, board and community to interact creating a greater understanding of perspectives, improve our unity, celebrate our small, intimate school and community, and to support younger generation staff.
- We will explore options to enhance the tangible and intangible benefits for our staff.
- We will explore options and implement strategies to address staff burnout.
- We will explore alternatives to our traditional school calendar that would further enhance student achievement.

Goal Area 4 – Pride: *Statement of Intended Outcome* – We have instilled a great sense of pride in our school and our community. Our pride is apparent in everything we do from being united in celebrating our successes to resolving the challenges facing us.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

- We will provide enhanced opportunities to showcase our successes, individual student achievements and to provide greater exposure to the positive attributes of our school and our community.
- We will increase the understanding of what it means to be a Pioneer and the high expectations associated therewith.
- We will initiate an alumni outreach program to bring enhanced opportunities for our students, to showcase the successes of our alumni and provide opportunities for alumni to share their Big Sandy experiences.

Appendix “A”

Megatrend Analysis to Help Inform and Assess Big Sandy 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 Big Sandy 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 Big Sandy Public School District

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

Assumptions about the future

Demographics

- We anticipate stable enrollment in the elementary grades.
- We anticipate an increase in enrollment of American Indian students.
- We anticipate continued disparities in the socio-economic status of families and students.
- We anticipate that our transient population will continue to fluctuate from year to year.
- We are experience an increase in out-of-district students. We are uncertain as to whether this trend will continue.
- We anticipate continued changes in the family structure/dynamics.
- We current have an aging local population, but we are seeing a trend of 30-40 year olds coming back to our area.

- We anticipate a certain segment of our population to continue home schooling their children.
- We anticipate continued challenges with recruitment and retention. As people retire or leave our school system for other opportunities, it has and will continue to be a challenge to find replacement staff. We also have the challenge of having a younger workforce population connect with our community and commit to staying in Big Sandy on a long-term basis.

Business and Economic Climate

- We anticipate diversification of opportunities in the agricultural area.
- We anticipate that with technological advancements, adults and children will have vast opportunities for career options while living in our community.
- The trend has been for smaller farming and ranching operations to be bought by larger operations. We anticipate this trend to level off.
- We anticipate that our local hospital will continue to be a positive attribute of our community. However, they are experiencing the same recruitment and retention issues as our school.
- The agricultural and oil/gas industries have fluctuated. This impacted the fluctuations of people moving back into the area.
- We are seeing a trend of people starting new local businesses. We are hopeful that this trend will continue but are uncertain as to whether that will, in fact, happen.

Politics and Social Values

- We anticipate that the issue of allowing part-time students to participate in activities will continue to be a challenge.
- In our community there is currently a gap between conservative and liberal viewpoints with not a lot of gray areas. We anticipate a need to work on bridging the gaps.
- We anticipate that social media is and will continue to have an impact on politics, social values and issues that impact our school and students.
- We are seeing a positive trend of not having a lot of student disciplinary issues. We are hopeful that this trend will continue.

Technology and Science

- Currently, we are ahead of the curve on technology infrastructure. We anticipate that our infrastructure will support our technology advancements.
- We currently have a 1-to-1 technology initiative. We anticipate this trend to continue, although it might be a challenge keeping up with contemporary technology devices.
- Our staff are doing phenomenal things with technology. The challenge with some staff is mechanical in nature, i.e., what to do when the technology does not work the way that it should.
- We have a state-of-the-art science program and anticipate that we will continue to maintain this program.

Legislation and Regulation

- The last 2 legislative sessions have provided us with needed flexibility and efficiency. We are hopeful that this trend will continue.

5-10 Year Planning Horizon

Mega Issues facing the Big Sandy 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 Big Sandy 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.

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

Mega Issues for Consideration

- How do we effectively recruit and retain quality staff who are committed to our school and our community on a long-term basis and to ensure that our educational programs and services meet the ongoing needs of our students and expectations of our community?
- What do we need to do to ensure that we are effectively utilizing contemporary technology applications and that our students have access to every opportunity available through technology and other means?
- How do we bridge the gap and ensure that our students who are at-risk have the supports and opportunity to succeed?
- How do we ensure that we are connecting to and meeting the needs, desires and skill-sets of each student attending Big Sandy Public Schools?