

Community Consolidated School District 181 2016 Strategic Plan

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Background

Community Consolidated School District 181 (the “District”) serves approximately four thousand students from Hinsdale, parts of Clarendon Hills, Oak Brook, Burr Ridge, and Willowbrook. The District includes seven elementary schools and two middle schools and is located 20 miles southwest of Chicago.

CCSD 181 is one of the highest performing elementary school districts in the state, and the District has a proud history of residents moving to the community specifically for the schools. Stakeholders are well-educated and value education. The community expects that high achievement and school quality will continue to positively impact their property value. Students come to school ready to learn, and parents are involved in their children’s education. Community-based schooling is ingrained in the community, and the resulting school cohesiveness is valued.

During the 2015-2016 school year, the District partnered with ECRA Group, Inc. (ECRA), a third-party research firm, to develop a strategic plan to document the current state of the District and determine a future direction based on stakeholder values and best practices. Involvement of stakeholders from every corner of the community resulted in the establishment of a strategic plan to support decision-making and align workforce and resources around student outcomes. In all, over twelve hundred stakeholders provided input during the process.

The strategic planning process was designed to authentically engage stakeholders – including students, parents, teachers, administrators, staff, and community residents without children enrolled in the District – in articulating organizational priorities and stakeholder values. The research-based method of strategic planning adopted by CCSD 181 will allow the District to create their own future, focused on students, through rigorous organizational assessment, followed by operational execution.



Strategic Planning Process

The model below is a visual representation of the strategic planning process. It identifies the level of engagement involved in the development of various components of the strategic plan.

PHASE I: Conduct Research

Document the current state of reality and the desired future position of the District.

- ✓ Conducted 14 Board of Education and administration interviews.
- ✓ Conducted 17 focus groups with key stakeholder populations.
- ✓ Reviewed mission and vision of the District.
- ✓ Reviewed archival data and reports provided by the District.
- ✓ Administered surveys of key stakeholder populations (1,157 surveys completed).
- ✓ Performed rigorous analysis of student achievement data.

PHASE II: Develop Strategic Plan

Create a framework for broad direction and priorities for the future in a formal strategic plan document.

- ✓ Documented mission and vision, guiding principles, and the future direction desired by stakeholders.
- ✓ Developed a draft strategic plan document to serve as a broad outline to guide the future direction of the District. The strategic plan contains:
 - Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles
 - Research Findings
 - Strategic Goals
 - Objectives
- ✓ Facilitated a Board of Education work session to review goals and objectives and finalize the strategic plan.

PHASE III: Develop Implementation Plan

Develop and document specific steps that will be taken in order to accomplish the goals and objectives identified in the strategic plan.

- Facilitate administrator planning meetings to guide implementation.
- Support the development of an implementation matrix, which contains the following:
 - Objectives
 - Metrics
 - Actions
 - Timelines
 - Responsible Persons
 - Resources
- Develop a district dashboard to monitor progress toward goals.

✓ **Indicates Completion**



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Data Sources

Table 1 through Table 5 highlight the data sources used to develop the components of the CCSD 181 Strategic Plan.

Table 1: Archival Reports Incorporated

Archival Reports (Sorted Alphabetically)
Board Report: Engagement and Research Report (2015)
CCSD 181 2015 Community and Staff Online Research Study (2015)
CCSD 181 2015 Community Telephone Research Study (2015)
CCSD 181 Annual Report (2014)
CCSD 181 Profile (2014-2015)
Digital Learning Initiative (2015)
District 5-Year Plan (2013-2018)
Facilities Master Plan Development (webpage)
Facilities Podcast (2015)
Hinsdale CCSD 181: Illinois Youth Survey Results (2014)
Learning for All Plan (2015)
Math Pilot Presentation (2014)
Philosophy of Teaching & Learning (2012)
Social Emotional Learning for Academic Success (webpage)
Spring Survey Presentation (2015)
Strategic Plan (2014-2015)
Superintendent Candidate Profile (2014)

Table 2: Interview Participants

Stakeholder Group	Number of Participants
CCSD 181 Board of Education Members	7
CCSD 181 Superintendent	1
CCSD 181 Foundation Member	1
D86 Board of Education Members	2
D86 Administrators	3
TOTAL	14

Table 3: Focus Group Participants

Stakeholder Group	Number of Participants
Parents	36
Students (Current and Former)	34
Teachers	30
Administrators	24
Support Staff	6
Community Leaders	6
TOTAL	136

Table 4: Survey Respondents

Stakeholder Group	Survey Responses	Number of Invitations	Response Rate
Parents*	708	2,306	31%
Employees	313	586	53%
Community Members**	65	----	----

* The parent response rate was calculated for unique households. In all, 779 parent surveys were completed.

** Community members refers to residents in CCSD 181 enrollment boundaries who do not currently have students enrolled in district schools.

Table 5: Student Assessment Data

Assessment Sources
Illinois State Report Card data
2013-2015 AIMSweb assessment data
2013-2015 NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment data
2007-2015 EPAS (EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT) assessment data



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Global Findings

CCSD 181 is a high performing district. Students perform well on assessments compared both to the nation and to students attending comparable, surrounding districts. Student academic growth is also consistent from one year to the next. Evidence shows that some achievement gaps are closing, while others require additional attention. Overall, stakeholders believe the District provides a high quality education. However, there is room for improvement in some curricular areas, particularly science and world languages. In focus groups and survey responses, parents identify meeting the needs of students identified as advanced learners as an area for improvement.

District teachers are described by parents, community members, and other employees as dedicated, enthusiastic, and high performing. Overall, the majority of employees agree the District is a *great place to work*. Additional emphasis on enhancing the sense of trust in the District, including a work environment where employees feel trusted to perform their jobs in a manner consistent with their professional experience, may further improve employee satisfaction. High administrator turnover has been a concern. Parents and employees note that stability in leadership is a necessary component to achieve excellence in the District and highlight communication and decision making processes as areas for strategic focus.

When asked to describe their preferred picture of the District in the future, parents, employees, and community members share the desire for a common vision that will allow the District to stand by initiatives and accomplish their desired outcomes. In the classroom, stakeholders describe student-driven instructional strategies, including project-based and cooperative learning, which allow for students to develop and pursue their passions and creativity through interdisciplinary and in-depth exploration of content. CCSD 181 graduates currently in high school shared that they would have benefitted from a greater focus on learning good time management skills and study habits in middle school. Greater use of technology in the classroom is seen as desirable to support personalized and on-demand learning. As a “light house” district, parents want all students to be appropriately challenged through rigorous courses, while community members identify a globally focused education as essential for future success.

The following sections provide a summary of the findings and research that emerged throughout the strategic planning process. Findings are organized around the following themes: academic success, organizational excellence, culture of community, operational integrity, and stakeholder priorities. Additional details can be found in a separate document titled *Strategic Plan Supporting Evidence*.



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Academic Success

CCSD 181 graduates are well prepared for high school and outperform both the nation on NWEA MAP and their peers at Hinsdale Central High School on the ACT. Students enrolled in the District achieve academic growth consistent with historical, local norms. Achievement gaps are present in CCSD 181 among students designated as Limited English Proficiency (LEP), students identified as low income, and students with IEPs. Students who historically achieved at lower levels must experience higher than expected growth in order to reduce existing achievement gaps. An examination of student growth by subgroup finds students identified as LEP achieve higher than expected growth in math indicating that the achievement gap is closing. However, additional focus is required to accelerate the growth of students identified as low income, students with IEPs, students identified as Hispanic, and particularly students identified as Black.



Eighty-seven percent of parents and 97 percent of employees rate the overall quality of education in CCSD 181 as good or excellent. Stakeholders, particularly parents, would like the District to focus on providing a consistent, high quality curriculum for all students. Parent ratings of core programs, as well as services for special populations, are generally lower than employee ratings of the same programs. The quality of the English/Language Arts program is rated favorably overall, while there is an opportunity for improvement in the science program and programs for English Language Learners. Fifty-four percent of parents agree that teachers differentiate instructional strategies to address individual learning needs. Some parents express concern that higher achieving learners are not making adequate growth, and some employees express concern that the District is not providing an appropriate continuum of services for students identified for special education services. Among parents who identified a child as above grade level, 57 percent rate the quality of the program for advanced learners as good or excellent. Among parents of children who receive special education services, 73 percent rate the quality of the services as good or excellent.

Students, parents, and employees are proud of the District's encore classes and specials. However, some stakeholders would like to see additional emphasis on world language instruction. CCSD 181 graduates currently in high school cited science and world history as areas the middle school could improve upon. Stakeholders would like CCSD 181 students to have developed social and emotional skills upon graduation. Currently, 82 percent of parents and employees agree teachers facilitate the development of students' social and emotional skills. District schools are viewed as safe and conducive to learning. However, technology is cited as an area for improvement with the potential to further enhance student learning.



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Organizational Excellence



Parents agree that teachers provide quality instruction to students. In interviews and focus groups, stakeholders share that District teachers are dedicated, enthusiastic, and high performing. Seventy-eight percent of employees agree that CCSD 181 is a *great place to work*. At the same time, low employee ratings of trust indicate room for improvement in the current work environment. Among employees, 63 percent agree that they have adequate opportunities for relevant professional development, and most teachers agree that they have opportunities to collaborate with their colleagues to enhance student learning. The District recently restructured professional development and has integrated Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to guide collaboration among employees and increase the effectiveness of professional development. Although teachers agree that assessment data is used to improve

instruction, there is concern noted from both educators and students about the amount of time devoted to preparing for and administering assessments. Employees would like to have greater access to resources, tools, and support such as additional special education staff, so they can provide the highest quality education to students.

Culture of Community

Sixty-four percent of parents, 49 percent of employees, and 31 percent of community members agree there is transparent communication across the District. Enhancing communication and transparency for all stakeholders are key areas for strategic focus. District leaders, parents, and employees express a desire for a commonly-held, focused vision for the future that would allow for the prioritization of initiatives and effective decision-making. Among parents and community members, 38 percent agree the Board of Education represents their needs and expectations. Among parents, 45 percent agree that the Board of Education and Superintendent work as a team in operating the District, and 49 percent agree that District leadership makes decisions in the best interest of students. Seventy-seven percent of parents agree that the District provides ample opportunities to get involved, and 68 percent of parents agree the District provides parents ample opportunities to engage in a dialogue about the District. Eighty percent of employees agree their interactions with parents support student learning.



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Employees would like to see greater transparency in how and why decisions are made and would like to have more involvement in decisions that affect their work. Employees would also like to see the Board focus more on creating a vision and policies for the District and trust educators to manage their daily responsibilities in the schools. Among community residents without children in the schools, newspapers, neighbors, and friends are their most important sources of information about the District. Overall, communication and stakeholder involvement are key improvement areas for strategic focus.

Operational Integrity

The District has a strong financial base. Among stakeholders, 61 percent agree that the District is fiscally responsible, although there is concern about the state's financial instability and potential challenges on the horizon. Community members and employees remark that a new Hinsdale Middle School and continuous maintenance on buildings are necessary to create positive learning environments. Currently, 70 percent of stakeholders agree that district facilities support student learning. Forty-three percent of parents report they will definitely support a referendum to rebuild Hinsdale Middle School, and another 35 percent of parents indicate they will probably support a referendum. Among community respondents, the largest percentage indicate they would definitely not support a referendum, which indicates additional district effort is necessary to ensure residents support the referendum.

Stakeholder Priorities

Stakeholders were asked to select their highest priorities for the District. The top five priorities that emerged across stakeholder groups include:

- Hiring and retaining quality teachers.
- Developing students' critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- Ensuring that all student populations maximize their academic potential.
- Hiring and retaining quality administrators.
- Providing science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs.



Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles

Vision Statement

A vision statement reflects the District's preferred future. Vision statements describe how the future will look if the organization achieves its ultimate aims. The research and stakeholder feedback gathered as part of the strategic planning process was used to develop the following vision statement adopted by the Board of Education.

Vision Statement

To be a community school district where students develop the skills they need to change the world and the confidence they need to do it.

Mission Statement

A mission statement is a statement of the overall purpose of an organization. The mission should say what you do, for whom you do it, and the benefit. The following mission statement adopted by the Board of Education incorporates stakeholder values and priorities that emerged in the research phase of the strategic planning process.

Mission Statement

To provide a premier educational experience that teaches students to be critical thinkers and enables them to achieve their full potential – academically, socially, and emotionally



Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are the beliefs that set the foundation for how an organization will operate. The principles are accepted guidelines that capture the District's values and priorities and provide direction for employees as they go about their daily work. The CCSD 181 guiding principles are presented below.

10 Guiding Principles

We value academic excellence and believe it is best achieved through:

- Curriculum: Research-based, results-oriented educational programs reflective of community expectations.
- Critical Thinking: Fuels academic success and the development of 21st century skills.
- Creativity: Recognizes the whole child and fosters personal achievement in the arts, athletics and extracurricular activities.
- Competition: As a healthy measure of preparedness and self-motivation.
- Courage: Doing the right thing guides behavior and builds confidence.
- Curiosity: Life-long learners are curious about the world around them.
- Community: Parental and community involvement results in better outcomes; responsible and equitable resource management strengthens our schools and community; and good citizenship is modeled through service to others.
- Collaboration and Communication: Open, transparent and respectful dialogue with and among stakeholders about decisions and the decision making process reinforces trust and improves outcomes.
- Continuous Improvement: Setting high standards allows students and staff to meet their full potential and excel.
- Consistency: In personal performance as well as offerings between schools and within schools, an integral element to success at all levels.



Strategic Goals and Objectives

The goal areas presented below are based on the themes that emerged throughout the strategic planning process. The four areas that emerged are academic success, organizational excellence, culture of community, and operational integrity. The figure below visualizes the proposed goals with student success presented as the central focus.



Strategic Goals

The objectives under each goal area are presented below. The objectives are based on the research findings and are aligned with the District’s proposed mission, vision, and guiding principles.

Academic Success
Maximize the academic and social-emotional growth of each student

1. Provide a high quality curriculum that enables all students to achieve their full academic potential and develop 21st century skills.¹
2. Offer a continuum of services that considers student development and learning readiness and provides all students an appropriate level of academic challenge in a supportive environment.
3. Identify and address curriculum and cohort strengths and weaknesses.²
4. Design and implement a meaningful and balanced assessment system to monitor individual and cohort student growth and inform continuous improvement.³
5. Provide adequate and equitable resources and targeted professional development to support teaching and learning.⁴
6. Develop processes and procedures necessary for continuous improvement.

Organizational Excellence
Attract, develop, and retain high quality staff

Continue to hire and retain high quality staff to address organizational needs and build in-house expertise.⁵

Establish an environment of trust and exemplary professional practice.⁶

Culture of Community
Engage all stakeholders through transparent, respectful communication and collaboration

1. Enhance respectful communication, dialogue, and transparency with all stakeholder groups.⁷
2. Continue to enhance partnerships with parents and the community.

Operational Integrity
Ensure fiscal stability and appropriate resources for programming and facilities

1. Align financial budgets with the goals established in the strategic plan.
2. Evaluate the return on investment of programs and expenditures as it relates to student outcomes.⁸
3. Maintain balanced and sustainable short and long-term budgets.⁹
4. Maintain quality facilities that support student learning.
5. Continue to stay informed about potential state and federal impacts on funding, and represent District needs and community expectations where possible.¹⁰

¹ The Board would like technology, STEM, world languages, and social studies to be incorporated in the implementation plan for this objective as well as making decisions based on research from similar districts and populations.

² The Board would like the implementation plan for this objective to include the identification and addressing of program weaknesses for advanced learners and special education populations.

³ The Board would like this objective to include the monitoring of individual student performance, growth, and preparedness for high school as well as the creation of a data dashboard.

⁴ The implementation plan for this objective should include cultivating productive and collaborative employee relationships through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

⁵ The implementation plan for this objective should include the immediate need for a permanent, full time Assistant Superintendent of Learning.

⁶ The Board would like addressing all levels of trust including among employees, parents, community, leadership, and the Board to be incorporated in the implementation plan for this objective.

⁷ The implementation plan for this objective should incorporate communicating decision making processes (including alignment to the strategic plan and impact on students learning), effectively communicating and following through with initiatives, and appropriately involving employees in decisions that affect their work.

⁸ The Board would like the implementation plan to include an evaluation of the impact of math content specialists, coaches, smaller class sizes, and consultants utilizing quantitative and qualitative data around academic and social-emotional student outcomes.

⁹ The Board would like the implementation plan for this objective to include regularly conducting a top-down analysis to identify efficiencies and eliminate waste.

¹⁰ The implementation plan for this objective should consider indirect or potential impacts on funding like PARCC as well as direct legislative changes with funding implications.

