

The Whitefish Bay School District



An Exceptional Place To Learn



VISIONING AND PLANNING REPORT



May 2011

Executive Summary

Overview

The School District of Whitefish Bay is a forward thinking education system dedicated to serving the educational needs of its students.

The school district is comprised of two elementary schools serving students in grades 4K-5, a middle school serving grades 6-8, and a high school serving grades 9-12. The needs of its 2,982 students are met by approximately 216.44 professional staff and over 94 support staff members. The District, governed by a seven member elected School Board, supports its programs with an annual budget of approximately \$31 million dollars.

This document describes the process and products of Visioning and Planning conducted by 167 stakeholders (33 on the visioning team and 134 in focus groups) from Whitefish Bay from March through May, 2011. The resulting draft vision and goals is based on an assessment of organizational purpose and status, as well as potential for further growth and development.

The Planning Process

Visioning and planning is a process that facilitates communication about organizational direction and goals. In essence, it is a planning approach for further shaping and advancing the mission and future of the organization. The planning process involves: clarification of purpose, assessment of status, focusing of priorities, alignment of vision, goals and action, and monitoring of progress. It is a process that engages stakeholders in active conversation around five guiding questions: 1) Who are we? 2) Where are we? 3) Where are we going? 4) How will we get there? 5) How will we know we are there? The focusing effect of the five questions is that they necessarily address questions within the questions:

1. Who are we? (Core values, defining qualities)
2. Where are we? (Strengths ,weaknesses, threats and opportunities?)
3. Where are we going? (Vision and Goals)
4. How will we get there? (Strategies and Actions)
5. How will we know we are there? (Monitoring and Reporting)

Planning Committee

A representative committee drawn from the Whitefish Bay School District and community, including community members, parents, teachers, staff, and students conducted the Visioning and Planning process. Dr. Nancy Blair and Dr. Peter Jonas, external consultants, facilitated the process. Members of the planning committee were:

- Cardinal Stritch Facilitators: Dr. Nancy Blair and Dr. Peter Jonas
- Whitefish Bay High School: Bill Henkle, John DeRose
- Whitefish Bay Middle School: Lisa Gies, Matthew Skinner and Nicholas Collins
- Whitefish Bay Elementary Schools: Jayne Heffron, Mark Tenorio, Gail Pollock and Janann Miller
- District Representatives: Dr. Mary Gavigan, Laura Myrah, Mark Kapocius, Shawn Yde, and Kent Stahlman
- School Board: Pamela Woodard, Kathy Rogers and Cheryl Maranto
- Union Representatives: Mark Yanisch
- Advocacy/School Support Organizations: Phyllis Richards, Joanne Desien, Lori Kampschroer and Terri Hart-Ellis
- Students: Abby McGovern, George Papajohn, Courtney Richards and Andrew Gegios
- Parents: Sandy Saltzstein, Renee Rooney, Jane Friesch, Pam Bednarczyk and Marilyn Weiss
- Village Representative: Ron Stefanski
- Community Members: Sandra Kuehn and Bruce Kestelman

In addition to the planning committee, who met for a day an a half in both February and May, 134 stakeholders contributed to focus groups to provide input to the Visioning and Planning process from the end of April through early May. The focus group make up was as follows:

Stakeholder Groups	Number of Attendees
Parents (five groups)	51
Staff (three groups)	24
Students (four groups-one at each school)	37
School Board (one group)	6
Community (one group)	16
TOTAL	134

Description of Process

Beginning in summer of 2010, Dr. Gavigan and the Board of Education determined that a visioning process was timely for the School District of Whitefish Bay for the following reasons:

- The current Focus Plan is 10 years old and provides a strong foundation for an updated plan
- The state of education is rapidly changing
- The dynamic and global marketplace requires school districts to examine their readiness to prepare students for the future that awaits them

The school district solicited a proposal for a planning process from Cardinal Stritch University. This proposal was discussed with the school board and administrative team, modified to meet the needs and culture of Whitefish Bay Schools and to build on the current strengths of the district's Focus Plan. The resulting process had four phases.

In Phase One, the school district began discussions with key stakeholders about the need for visioning in light of the current Focus Plan and other current initiatives that had already begun (i.e., Cultural Competency, a Communications plan, etc.). The administrative team met to discuss the planning structure and prepare a data review that could be accessed on a WIKI to inform the planning effort and to stimulate communication. Stakeholder groups were contacted to nominate representation for the Visioning and Planning Team. A team was created with representation from all key stakeholder groups in the Whitefish Bay School District community.

In Phase Two, the Visioning and Planning team gathered for a day and a half at Cardinal Stritch University and started the process by establishing ground rules for their work together.

- Listen for understanding
- Share your ideas openly
- Avoid judgments that shut down conversation
- Stay open to new "truths".

The Visioning and Planning team examined the current state of Whitefish Bay schools via presentations from school officials and a thorough examination of facts and data regarding the district. In addition, an analysis of the current Focus Plan generated the following observations:

- Evident and actually living, in action
- Students in middle of logo—maybe window can be wider. All students have unique needs
- Diversity in on logo and needs to be defined and how it has changed in district –what is district doing about diversity
- Some gaps in implementation of Focus Plan
- A lot of Focus Plan is happening in district, with many changes over the years
- “create environment of undo stress and pressure” This may not be happening at this time.
- Self assessment needs to be more explicit
- Collaboration is now the operational norm—cornerstone of curriculum and instruction
- Teachers have seen identifiable change in district expectations
- Kids say they are better prepared than peers
- External and internal issues have effect on Focus Plan

After examining the current state and the Focus Plan, the team then created a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) for use in brainstorming elements of a proposed vision for the district moving forward. See Appendix A.

Following the SWOT analysis, the visioning team brainstormed elements that they consider important for a vision for Whitefish Bay Schools.

Name and Definition of Vision Element
Profound, Authentic Learning: Engaging students anywhere and anytime with higher and deeper levels of learning through rich and diverse learning experiences
Serving All Students: Providing access to excellent learning opportunities for all students through a commitment to equity and cultural competence
The Whole Child: Supporting the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual capacity and well being of our students
Healthy Environment: Creating a safe and secure learning environment that balances achievement and stress.
All Children Learn: Providing individualized and customized teaching (differentiation) that maximizes each child’s potential.
Innovation: Using technology and creativity in the redesign of the delivery of curriculum to expand and improve learning experiences
21st Century Learning: Preparing students for the future by developing their creativity, responsibility, global awareness, higher order thinking and civic and economic literacy.
Stakeholder Engagement: Insuring strong communication and involvement with students, teachers, parents, alums, and community (local and state)
Continuous Improvement: Using data to inform decisions about improvements in teaching and learning at the district and classroom levels
Resources: Coupling efficient management of current resources with an increase in alternate funding sources in collaboration with the community

Subsequently, fourteen focus groups were held to solicit further community and stakeholder input into the current perceived strengths and weaknesses of Whitefish Bay Schools, respond to elements in the vision, and increase communication regarding the visioning process. The Visioning and Planning team reconvened to examine focus group data (Appendix B) and draft the vision and goals for the school district.

Draft Vision for Whitefish Bay School District

The School District of Whitefish Bay is student-centered with a tradition of educational excellence. We respect the diversity of our students, and engage them as individual learners. Our dynamic, caring, inclusive, and innovative learning community addresses the needs of the whole child, enabling students to attain the knowledge, skills, and character necessary for success in a changing and global environment.

Draft Goals and Suggested Strategies

Goal #1: Environment

Each student will experience a dynamic, caring, and inclusive learning environment that supports a balance of physical, social, emotional, intellectual capacity and well-being by 2013-2014.

Strategies:

1. Develop an operational definition for the concept of “whole child”.
2. Provide professional development for all staff members about developing/nurturing the whole child.
3. Develop a student assessment (feedback) process that informs the continuous improvement of a dynamic, caring and inclusive environment.

Goal #2: Standards Based Curriculum

Effective with the 2014-2015 school year, every student will meet or exceed dynamic 21st century learning standards that ensure future success within our global society on at least an annual basis.

Strategies:

1. Develop 21st century standards-based curriculum and assessment utilizing the current curriculum development and program evaluation process.
2. Develop and implement data-driven differentiated instruction at the classroom, school, and district level.
3. Develop comprehensive support systems including RTI.

Goal #3: Technology

Ensure students and staff have access to reliable, secure, and sufficiently robust technology infrastructure that aligns with, and facilitates, the plans for the continuous development of a dynamic 21st century curriculum, instruction, and assessment system and the district's communication plan. (The timeline is driven by other goals.)

Strategy

Create, implement, and assess plans, including budget and human resources for the acquisition, maintenance, replacement and ongoing support for an integrated technology infrastructure in the following areas:

1. Reliability and security
2. Internal and external communication
3. Professional development
4. 21st century curriculum, instruction, and assessment

Next Steps

In Phase Three, the district will solicit further feedback and input into the vision and goals from internal stakeholders (teachers, administrators, and school board) to finalize the vision, goals, and strategies that will guide the district's work in the future.

The Visioning and Planning team will reconvene in December of 2011 to view the final version of the documents and celebrate the visioning process.

In Phase Four, the district will implement the resulting goals, strategies and action plans and evaluate progress on an annual basis.

Appendix A
SWOT Analysis for Whitefish Bay School District: 3/17/2011

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Advanced education levels (and support) of community Ahead in technology Alumni support Collaboration within schools Educating the whole child Engaged staff Extensive parent involvement Extra-curricular and art programs show commitment to whole child Extra-curricular involvement Family and community support FOVA/Music/Civic foundation Healthy support of school community High achievement High ACT scores High community and school values High expectations High graduation rates Motivated and engaged student base Pride and support of schools Quality professional development Quality staff Relative affluence of community Renovated buildings Safe community School and community strive to improve Sound curriculum Sound monetary resources Stable resident enrollment Strong leadership (Board and Administration) Strong school culture Student-centered education Students appear to have healthy diets Students are school ready Students have high character and low level of “high-risk” activities Teacher’s willingness to help and openness of staff WFB Education Foundation</p>	<p>Achievement gap (failure to equally educate all students) Bandwidth of some buildings Communication between buildings Communication, i.e., schools with those in community not connected to school Content coverage vs skills Department isolation District is too complacent Emergency preparedness Housing in community = older Infrastructure for technology Lack of diversity in community Lack of diversity in district, especially among staff Land locked Limited ability to generate revenue Nine-month school year Normal/average is not good enough? Not reaching all students Regional depressed economy Resistance to change can mean long time for change to happen Safety preparedness Scores/grades vs learning Structure can limit growth Student pressure and stress Student’s perception of benefit of education Successful district means it is harder to change things—no urgency Technology capacity Traditional vs best practices Weakness in technology maintenance</p>

Opportunities	Threats
<p>Achievement gap reduction via current initiatives</p> <p>Alumni connections</p> <p>Art programs! Creative side enhances others</p> <p>Budget challenges Channel community energy</p> <p>Community resources to bring into school</p> <p>Continue professional development</p> <p>Current state is going to force innovation</p> <p>Engage community in school happenings</p> <p>Global learning (content/connections-context)</p> <p>Highly engaged student—readiness for learning</p> <p>Increase generational connections</p> <p>Increasing best practice following from higher quality/more persuasive educational research</p> <p>Increasing flexibility in program options afforded through legislative changes</p> <p>Increasing global competition</p> <p>Increasing opportunities, and options, for success</p> <p>Increasing skill acquisition students need to succeed/thrive in today's, and tomorrow's world</p> <p>Increasing state-of-the-art technology use</p> <p>Innovative use of technology</p> <p>Learn anytime/anywhere</p> <p>More personalized engaged learning supported with technology</p> <p>New hires</p> <p>New spaces and construction (new buildings)</p> <p>New, updated curriculum</p> <p>Opportunity to develop our cultural and global awareness</p> <p>People state-wide focusing on how we educate</p> <p>Political change may bring new opportunities</p> <p>Reduce bullying</p> <p>Referendum update will enhance programming</p> <p>Reflect on past, plan for future</p> <p>Smart board technology</p> <p>Strengthen district in systemic way</p> <p>Student-centered/student-driven learning opportunities (project lead the way and digital music/photo</p> <p>Vision Team</p>	<p>Achievement gap</p> <p>Aging population in community</p> <p>Alignment to college requirements</p> <p>Competitive environment: academic, economic etc.</p> <p>Complacency of some staff and/or community members: “we are good, why change?”</p> <p>Concern for established practices – “sacred cows”</p> <p>Different levels of accountability</p> <p>Economic constraints</p> <p>Failure prone sewage system of village</p> <p>Fear of unknown in collective bargaining</p> <p>High taxes and community intolerance for this</p> <p>How to incorporate technology in positive way</p> <p>Increased (and growing) global competition</p> <p>Increasing schooling options available</p> <p>Lack of alignment between in/out of school technology access and use (policy)</p> <p>Laws and mandates from state or national level that are opposite of research-based practices</p> <p>Limit on ability to raise revenue</p> <p>Loss of deep, quality pool of teaching professionals due to future of schooling</p> <p>Loss of local control</p> <p>People moving to other districts</p> <p>Reduced access to “preferred” colleges (admission criteria and cost)</p> <p>Reduction in public school funding: Budget repair bill</p> <p>Resistance to change among staff, parents, and/or community</p> <p>State legislation increasing subsidized private/choice school attendance</p> <p>Technology disparity between districts</p> <p>Unknown long-term effects of budget repair bill</p> <p>Unstable economic issues nationally and globally</p> <p>WFB currently does not have 1:1 devices (students)</p>

