



Strategic Plan

2013-2018

Response to Survey Feedback on the Mission Statement, Objective, Philosophy, and Beliefs

Mission

Responses were very favorable to keeping our existing mission. A couple of responses concerned electives and the next steps after high school, which will be addressed in the Academic Agenda of the 2013-2018 strategic plan. A couple of responses desired alignment to the idea of being prepared for career, community, and college and having contributing community members, but the, "...to achieve his or her academic and personal potential" aspect of the mission incorporates preparing students for those next steps.

Objective

A couple of changes were made. "The School District of Fort Atkinson **strives to be** recognized and acknowledged..." uses "strives to" in place of "will" to soften the tone. Finishing the objective, "... as **an exemplary** school district and leader in providing educational excellence," uses "exemplary" in place of "beacon." While a small distinction, "exemplary" may be more clear and conveys that we strive to be worthy of imitation, rather than being a guide to others.

A couple of responses concerned academic and operational ideas that may be considered in those agendas. Some questioned how the District would be recognized or acknowledged, so as to measure our success towards the objective. These recognitions and acknowledgements may come in achieving the outcomes of the goals of our three agendas; in positive feedback and inquiries from those outside the District, such as other districts, educational organizations, and families selecting our District. One response felt the objective was too broad, but this is normal for an objective, with the supporting agendas' goals containing the measurable specifics.

Educational Philosophy

A few changes were made for a consistent style and correct grammar. The third bullet, concerning electives, was changed to not limit the list of possible electives, and to acknowledge that these offerings also provide development of skills learned in core classes. In addition, life skills were added as another outcome of our electives.

The fifth bullet, concerning student needs and learning, was broadened to include physical needs, so as to match our culture / environment belief, and to include the pace of learning. The sixth bullet, concerning diversity, was broadened to be inclusive of those surrounding our learning community. The eighth bullet, concerning the next step after high school, was reworded to be more clear and inclusive. Four responses concerned academic and operational ideas that may be considered in those agendas.

Beliefs

Culture / Environment

There were many positive responses on these beliefs. The first bullet, concerning a "...safe, welcoming, and non-disruptive learning environment," uses the term "non-disruptive" to suggest that appropriate behaviors will be taught, not that students with disabilities or behavior challenges would be isolated. The third bullet, concerning student needs, was changed to include social needs. The sixth bullet, concerning professional development, replaced "job embedded" with "integral to the work of educating students" to clarify the significance of this development.

Community

All responses on these beliefs were positive.

Academics

There were several positive responses on these beliefs. The sixth bullet, concerning educational methods, was broadened to include "differentiated," as we strive to individualize the way each student receives the curriculum to meet the learning style and pace of the student. This also addresses a concern over how we address an unmotivated student who is not meeting standards in these beliefs, and that is by providing various interventions that are a fit for that student to correct the course of his or her learning. A seventh bullet concerning 21st century teaching methods and technology utilization was added. A few responses concerned the next step after high school and grading, which are covered in the academic agenda goals.

Operations

The responses were overwhelmingly positive on these beliefs. A couple of responses concerned specific ideas on operational activities rather than operational beliefs. There was a concern about rising class sizes, but rather than state a belief on specific student to teacher ratios, which are stated in Board policy as guidelines, the fifth bullet, concerning creative ways to avoid more than minimal impact on programs and services from financial constraints placed upon the District, incorporates the desire to manage these ratios carefully.

Communications

The responses were overwhelmingly positive on these beliefs. There were responses wanting greater communication with parents and between grade levels, which we feel is incorporated within the first bullet point concerning communication with all of our stakeholders.

Additional Thoughts & Feedback

There were several responses in the various areas wanting more specifics and measures of accountability. This section only addresses beliefs, while the upcoming academic, operational, and communication agendas will complete the strategic plan by providing more specific goals and, where possible, measurable outcomes. It is these actions that are measurable expressions of our beliefs.

There also was some uncertainty of what the strategic plan was and how it impacted the District, specifically the daily educational activity in the classrooms. In short, this strategic plan is a vision of what we want our schools, educators, and students to be in five or so years, as well as a road map for governance of our District by future boards and administrators to ensure we reach the vision.

This leads to another response expressing some concern over the pace and quantity of initiatives already underway and those resulting from this plan. While the Board and administration desires a balance of growth and challenge without overwhelming our capacity to perform in the most effective ways possible, we are having many initiatives dictated and

paced by national and global educational efforts. We will continue to monitor this balance and address the additional professional development time necessary for all of these efforts as best we can during the life of this plan.

Finally, there were many positive and appreciative responses for drafting a strategic plan, providing a feedback method, and using the feedback to improve the final plan. As the changes detailed here attest, we welcome and use the feedback, believing the plan improves and is owned by all of us when crafted in this way. Please continue to share your thoughts and suggestions on all aspects of the plan as their drafts are released in the coming months. Thank you

School District of Fort Atkinson Board of Education