

# St. Regis Public Schools' Strategic Planning Process 2015

## Overview

**The St. Regis Public School District (St. Regis Public Schools)** 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, St. Regis Public Schools 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 St. Regis Public Schools moves into the future. This strategic plan is intended to help St. Regis Public Schools in focusing its resources in a manner that will best benefit the children enrolled in St. Regis Public Schools.

The St. Regis Board of Trustees, Staff Leadership Team, and faculty 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.

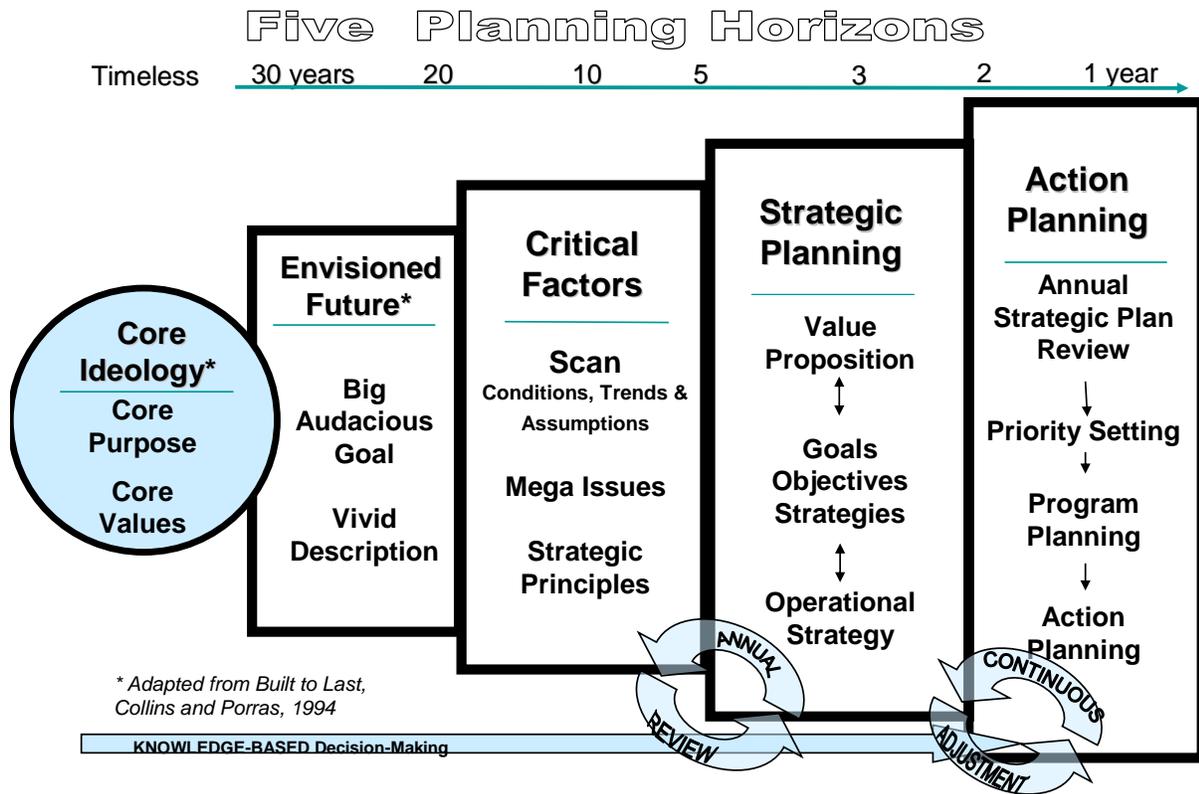
As part of its preparation for strategic planning, St. Regis Public Schools brought in Debra Silk and Joe Brott of the Montana School Boards School to help facilitate the strategic planning process.

The St. Regis School District Board of Trustees initially adopted its new Strategic Plan in 2009. The Board and Staff Leadership Team has periodically updated the Strategic Plan with the last update being completed in March/April of 2015.

St. Regis Public Schools' Board, Staff Leadership Team, and faculty view 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 St. Regis Public Schools.

## Strategic Planning Framework

The framework used by the St. Regis Public Schools 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.



## Core Ideology of the St. Regis 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.

### Core Purpose of the St. Regis Public School District:

*St. Regis Public Schools, in partnership with the community, exists to provide rigorous, diverse, and individualized education programs to ensure that every student is confidently prepared for the future.*

### Core Values of the St. Regis Public School District

**S**tudents First: The interests and needs of students will always come first and all decisions will be premised on which is best for students.

**T**iger Pride-Students are proud of our School: We are committed to ensuring that our students pride in school and community through high academic standards, extra-curricular activities and being civic minded.

**R**igorous-Excellence in Academics: We are committed to ensuring that all students receive a rigorous, well-rounded, high quality education that confidently prepares students for their future.

**E**ffective-Highly Qualified and Committed Staff: We are committed to recruiting, retaining and supporting highly qualified and committed staff that fully support our students and the mission of our District.

**G**oal Driven-Continuous School Improvement: We are committed to a rigorous path of continuous improvement through strategic planning and governance and knowledge-based decision making to meet the ongoing needs of our students, staff, parents and community.

**I**ntegrity-Accountable, Transparent and Fiscally Responsible: We believe that espousing to the highest level of integrity is vital to the success of our students and our school district. We are transparent and fiscally responsible in everything we do.

**S**afe-Positive Learning Environment: We firmly believe a safe, positive environment is the cornerstone for students to achieve their highest level of education. We are committed to ensuring that all students develop an acceptance of others regardless of differences.

## 20 Year Planning Horizon

### Envisioned Future of the St. Regis School District

#### Big Audacious Goal:

St. Regis is the school of choice. We have the highest of educational standards. The St. Regis community fully supports the school. Our students are confident in their abilities and capable of succeeding in their future.

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

- Our students excel because of our high expectations.

- Our class sizes fully support student achievement and an individualized approach to education.
- Every student has an individualized plan of education that addresses the needs and promotes the talents and aspirations of each student.
- Our educational programming supports students learning at their own pace.
- Our school environment fully supports student achievement. Our school environment is safe, clean, enjoyable and structured in a manner that meets the educational needs of the students.
- Our students have access to a variety of diverse and dynamic educational opportunities that include courses provided in our school buildings, technology-based learning opportunities, project-based programs, and exposure to real-life issues that require critical thinking skills.
- We have high quality extra-curricular opportunities that instill a sense of pride in our students.
- We have a strong early childhood development program.
- Technology is innate in every aspect of our education programs and the operations of our schools.
- Our environment is one where openness, transparency and change are embraced.
- We have a progressive recruitment and retention program. We attract and retain only the very best. As a result of our efforts, our staff thrive in our school environment.
- We provide our staff with the flexibility and accommodate their requests to have their setting reflect an environment that stimulates teaching and learning and excites students in their learning.
- Our facilities fully support our initiatives.
- We have full parent integration and engagement. Parents want to be here and be involved. Parent involvement is valued and needed.

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

### **Assumptions Regarding the Relevant Future for the St. Regis Public School District**

In order to make progress against the 20 year Envisioned Future, St. Regis 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 St. Regis Public Schools 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 2015 Strategic Planning meeting, the St. Regis School Board, Staff Leadership Team, and faculty 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 St. Regis Public Schools' strategic plan.

## **Assumptions about the future**

### **Demographics**

- We anticipate that our population will increase, but the increase will primarily be people that are retirees who do not have children in our schools.
- We anticipate that our student enrollment will fluctuate based on local economic status.
- We anticipate that the St. Regis community will continue to be a desirable place to live.
- We anticipate an aging local population.
- We anticipate that we will always have a segment of our population that is at-risk and/or below the poverty levels.
- We anticipate that rural areas in Montana, like St. Regis, will likely be a desirable alternative to living in larger communities.

### **Business/Economic Climate**

- We anticipate that our local economy will continue to improve as the national economy improves.
- We anticipate that our timber and tourism industries will continue to be the primary source of employment.
- We anticipate little to no growth in government (e.g., USFS, Highways, County) and healthcare (e.g., Hospital) jobs.
- We anticipate the continued development of alternative energy sources.
- We anticipate that with enhanced connectivity (i.e. fiberoptics), more people will be working from home.
- We anticipate a continued high unemployment rate in our local community compared to the state of Montana and nationally.
- We anticipate that affordable housing will become more available.
- We anticipate continued growth in our tourism industry.

### **Legislation/Regulation**

- We anticipate that unfunded mandates will continue.
- We anticipate that health insurance regulations at the federal and/or state level will impact the district and the community.
- We anticipate the continued need for participation by local trustees in the legislative process.
- We anticipate that the privatization movement will continue in Montana and that there will be continued stresses on public funds.

### **Technology /Science**

- We anticipate that incorporating emerging technology will continue to be an issue for our District.
- We anticipate the continued need for technology and data in decision-making.
- We anticipate that technology will be embedded in all courses (Pre K-12).
- We anticipate that traditional teaching styles will continue to move towards a more facilitate approach, but that there will always be a need for high quality teachers.
- We anticipate a continued move towards project-based learning.
- We anticipate there will be a higher expectation of post-secondary skills of our students.
- We anticipate a continued need to integrate technology with other learned skills.
- We anticipate an increase in on-line opportunities for our students.
- We anticipate a continued move away from textbooks and towards e-books or web-based instruction.

### **Politics and Social Values**

- We anticipate that our teaching staff will have to continue teaching social skills to our students. We also anticipate that parents will continue to depend on the school district to teach social skills.
- We anticipate that parents will continue to expect the school to take on the responsibilities of parents in parenting their children.
- We anticipate that there will be a continued need to balance technology with the need for face-to-face social interaction and communication.
- We anticipate a continuation of ethical, value and character issues within the school and the community.

## 5-10 Year Planning Horizon

### **Mega Issues facing the St. Regis 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 St. Regis 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-Issue Questions:**

1. Given the diverse demographic make up of our community, how do we increase our parent and community engagement?
2. What can we do to fully integrate technology into our classrooms without spending resources on equipment, tools and programs that quickly become obsolete as the latest and greatest technologies emerge?
3. How can we work with the community leaders to better promote the community of St. Regis to ensure economic stability in our local area and our District?
4. What can we do to overcome the barrier of having to teach acceptable social skills, ensuring that all students understand the necessity of treating others with respect, and celebrating (as opposed to criticizing) the diverse characteristics of others?

## **Knowledge-Based Decision Making Questions**

The Board should prioritize the above-referenced mega issues and decide which of these issues require immediate attention on the part of the Board. Once the identified mega-issues are prioritized, the Board will set aside time at scheduled meetings to analyze a particular mega issue. At such meetings, the Board's primary focus will be on the mega-issue at hand. All other business (routine or otherwise) will be conducted at the end of the meeting once the dialogue and deliberation on the mega-issue has been concluded for that meeting. When analyzing mega issues, the Board will utilize a knowledge-based decision making process. This will keep the focus of the Board on relevant factors to consider as it develops strategies to overcome particular impediments/barriers that may impact the Board's strategic direction. The Board will analyze mega-issues by answering the following questions:

1. What do we know about the wants, needs and preferences of our constituents that are relevant to this decision?
2. What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics facing our constituents / community that is relevant to this decision?
3. What do we know about the capacity / strategic position of our school district that is relevant to this decision?
4. What are the ethical implications of our choices?

## **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 St. Regis 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. One Strategic Objective will be reviewed monthly for a report and discussion on progress in conjunction with established timelines. Strategic Objectives in their entirety are reviewed annually by the St. Regis School Board, Staff Leadership team and faculty.

## **Goals of the St. Regis Public School District**

### **Goal Area 1: Technology**

**Statement of Intended Outcome, Five years:** We have been strategic in our approach to integrating technology in the classroom to enhance student learning. As a result of our efforts, we have systems in place that provide students and staff with access to contemporary technologies while maximizing the resources we expend on technology.

#### **Strategic Objectives:**

1. We will continually make progress towards our 5 year technology plan by:
  - a. expanding and enhancing the use of technology in the classroom;
  - b. expanding and enhancing the use of technology in the overall operations of the District, including safety measures;
  - c. expanding the District's 1-to-1 technology device initiative;
  - d. increasing the District's bandwidth capabilities;
  - e. exploring, expanding and maximizing the use of web-based programs.
  - f. maximize the use of E-rate funds to upgrade technology and infrastructure that supports technology; and

### **Goal Area 2: Rigorous and Individualized Academic Opportunities**

**Statement of Intended Outcome, Five years:** The academic opportunities available to our students are vast, rigorous and individualized and are designed to meet the needs of each student, enhance the talents and aspirations of each student, and to enrich the overall educational experience for all of our students.

#### **Strategic Objectives:**

1. We will increase career readiness/vocational opportunities for students.
2. We will enhance college-readiness requirements/opportunities for students.
3. We will enhance hands-on, project-based, critical-thinking curriculum and opportunities for students.
4. We will enhance opportunities for high-ability students.
5. We will develop and enhance a K-12 cohesive writing curriculum.
6. We will utilize independent, outside assessments of the District's overall performance.
7. We will extend summer opportunities for students.
8. We will develop an individualized approach to education for each student.

### **Goal Area 3: Student growth and responsibility**

**Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years:** We have successfully developed a culture where students take part in the development of their own education plans and take ownership of their successes and failures. As a result of this shift in culture, our students understand and appreciate the value of education and how that plays a vital part in their success in life.

#### **Strategic Objectives:**

1. We will enhance the tools available to students to celebrate their successes and to give them greater awareness of the importance of education.
2. We will increase the responsibilities of students to take part in the development and implementation of their own education plans.
3. We will increase our efforts and focus on providing a positive school climate that instills a sense of pride and belonging in all students.
4. We will enhance social/life skills through “Leader in Me” K-12 with an emphasis in grades K-6.
5. We will enhance and expand our high-quality, diverse extra-curricular programs available to students.

### **Goal Area 4: Community Involvement**

**Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years:** Through our efforts, we have enhanced our relationship with the community and with the parents of our students through outreach initiatives and open communications. Our schools are inviting and are viewed as the center of our community. The level of volunteerism in our schools is at an all-time high.

#### **Strategic Objectives:**

1. We will increase parental information and awareness giving parents the tools to effectively advocate and be involving in their child’s education.
2. We will enhance community outreach opportunities and opportunities for the community to come into our schools.
3. We will enhance our communication with the community by promoting the great work and success of our students.
4. We will increase the knowledge and understanding of the community on the District’s needs and priorities.

### **Goal Area 5: Facilities**

**Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years:** Through our planning process, we have adequately maintained and maximized our present facilities to enhance the educational environment for all students and ensure that the school is a safe and healthy learning environment.

#### **Strategic Objectives:**

1. We will continue implementation of the Facilities Plan developed by CTA and continue maximizing the use of available grant funds, including but not limited to:
  - Upgrading our safety and security measures

- Enhancing our flexible learning environments that promote student achievement and other opportunities for students;
  - Continuing our partnerships with other community organizations for outdoor activities; and
  - Making progress towards the construction of a new bus barn.
2. We will maximize opportunities for financial resources that put the least financial burden on local taxpayers.

### **Goal Area 6: Highly Effective and Committed Staff**

**Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years:** We have successfully embarked on a program of recruiting and retaining highly effective and committed staff. As a result of our efforts, our staff are enthused and fully support our initiatives and are students are achieving at unprecedented levels.

#### **Strategic Objectives:**

1. We will increase professional development opportunities and training programs for staff, including but not limited to, training on the proficient use of technology to enhance student achievement.
2. We will increase incentives for the purpose of recruiting and retaining high quality staff that support our programs, services and opportunities for students.
3. We will increase the effective use of technology in the classroom that enhances student learning.
4. We will enhance opportunities for recognizing and celebrating outstanding performance and/or contributions of staff.
5. We will increase the Board's knowledge of what is happening in our schools by having staff periodically report to the Board on the progress that is being made on this Strategic Plan.

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.