



Northern Cass School District

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-23

PLANNING FOR 2020-2025

*Prepared for the Northern Cass School Board by the Strategic Planning Committee
(compiled by Dr. Cory Steiner, Crysta Schenck, Doug Margerum, Luke Bush, Tom Klapp, and Jessica Stoen)*

October 20, 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Northern Cass is a consolidated district serving the communities of Arthur, Argusville, Erie, Gardner, Grandin, and Hunter. The district began operations in 1999. The district serves 685 learners in PK-12. Thirty-two percent of learners open-enroll into the district. Northern Cass employs 60 certified and 36 non-certified staff including a Director of Personalized Learning, a Personalized Learning Coach, an Activities Director, Dean of Learners, Director of College, Career, and Life Readiness, Director of Technology, Literacy Specialist, and two certified preschool educators. Northern Cass has operated a self-funded preschool program which served up to 26 learners.

The district takes pride in providing big school opportunities in a small school environment. In the past four years, Northern Cass has been engaging in a transformation to a personalized competency-based learning (PCBL) system. PCBL has become a foundation for a system which values every learner as an individual while focusing on the whole learner. The system values learning above all else and continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of our learning community.

Northern Cass is committed to having a world class culture. To achieve this, the district (spring of 2022) engaged in a culture survey, focus groups, and interviews to gather information related to perceptions of culture. From this data, a change to the strategic plan was made to include culture as a goal which focuses on every educator feeling valued, heard, and seen.

Northern Cass has committed to becoming a Full Service Community School (FSCS). The Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) program provides support for the planning, implementation, and operation of full-service community schools that improve the coordination, integration, accessibility, and effectiveness of services for learners and families. This includes the hiring of a Site Coordinator and Family Case Manager.

Northern Cass has developed multiple partnerships which have enhanced course offerings, including the Cass County Career and Technical Education Center (CCCTEC), KnowledgeWorks, Transcend Education, Valley City State University (VCSU), University of Jamestown (UJ), the Burgum Foundation, Mastery Transcript Consortium (MTC) and the United Way. The district was one of the recipients of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant which focuses on increasing literacy skills across all levels. Since the fall of 2018, we have led a major state grant focusing on awareness and the understanding of dyslexia characteristics.

At the Northern Cass Public School District, we believe it is important for families, communities, and schools to work together to support learner success. In 2020, a committee of educators, administration, parents and community members was formed to focus on planning for the future. The Long-term Strategic Planning Committee was led by Dr. Cory Steiner and in consultation with Dr. David Flowers. The committee created a plan which provided the district with a roadmap for the future. An environmental scan consisted of educational trends, community demographics, learner data, strengths and weaknesses which were able to provide insight and direction on priority areas. This strategic plan makes our priorities clear, ensures transparency, and provides measurable outcomes to hold us accountable for maintaining focus on what will benefit learners.

The future is bright for the Northern Cass Public School District. We believe learners thrive in a school where they are the number one priority and supported by a community. The Northern Cass community is invited to join us as we prepare learners to change the world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following individuals provided leadership and input into the development of the Strategic Plan. Thank you for your time, feedback, and participation in the process that focused on allowing every learner to change the world.

Northern Cass School Board (current)

- Brad Bjerke, President
- Sean Jalbert, Vice President
- Travis Moser
- Penny Johnson
- Chris Murch
- Todd Olson
- Lori Steffes

Northern Cass Public School Strategic Original Planning Committee

- Dr. Cory Steiner, Superintendent
- Doug Margerum, Secondary Principal
- Crysta Schenck, Elementary Principal
- John O'Day, Activities Director
- Luke Bush, Dean of Culture
- Susie Carlson, School Board President
- Chris Murch, School Board Member
- Jeanine Allmaras, Parent
- Tim Allmaras, Parent
- Britt Breiland, Educator
- Megan Engelke, Educator
- Patti Hall, Parent
- Matt Hovdesnes, Parent
- Heather Hovland, Parent
- Abby Husar, Parent
- Ashley Krinke, Educator
- Bryce Laxdal, Educator
- Megan Margerum, Educator
- Linda Mayer, Parent
- Stephanie Pearson, Parent
- Beth Podoll, Educator
- Sarah Savrnoch, Educator
- Alicia Severson, Parent
- Jessica Regner, Educator
- Christian Thompson, Educator
- Kim Treibwasser, Parent
- Angie Vaagen, Parent

Note: Dr. Cory J. Steiner served as the facilitator while Dr. David Flowers served as a consultant adding depth to the development of the plan.

Why plan for the future?

Planning for the future is an essential strategic process for an organization as it sets the course for the future, embraces inevitable change, helps to keep the organization current and relevant, and creates a proactive versus reactive organizational environment.

The three main tenets of the school district organization are board governance, strategic planning, and operational planning. The following definitions help clarify the roles each plays in a strategically aligned school district.

Board Governance

The governance of a school district is provided by the school board, which is tasked with supervising the superintendent, overseeing the finances of the school district and monitoring results. School boards across the nation differ in the methods used to govern a school district, with options including traditional oversight to an overarching policy governance model.

Strategic Planning

A strategic plan is used to communicate the organization's goals, the priorities needed to achieve those goals, and evidence used to assess progress. The plan outlines a 'why', Collective Commitments, values, and strategic initiatives for a three to five-year period. A focused strategic plan strengthens operations and ensures that educators, board members, and stakeholders are all working toward common goals. Once strategic goals are established, the strategies for achieving the goals are developed. These are generally three to five-year strategies.

Operational Planning

An operational plan focuses on the work of the district during one school year and is the mechanism used to implement a strategic plan. It is directly aligned and includes evidence to assess the progress of the strategic plan. A one-year operational plan becomes the strategic assignments for administration and educators to address. The operational plan emphasizes both the academic and operational aspects of the school district. This integration provides the proper balance between planning and acting to assure forward movement.

Annual Work Plan

The annual work plan includes the following: Superintendent meeting with every board member individually 2 times per year, professional learning for board members, board self-evaluation, strategic plan review, results, evaluation of Superintendent, governance policy monitoring, and an annual retreat. The annual work plan will ensure the district creates a systemic process to guide the work of the district.

An aligned district has a governing board that approves policy and budget while monitoring results and adopts a strategic plan. The administration executes an annual operational plan to carry out the initiatives in the plan.

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-23

The Northern Cass Public School strategic plan was developed by the Long-Term Strategic Planning Committee in conjunction with the administrative team. The committee conducted an environmental scan by reviewing qualitative and quantitative data and engaged in multiple discussions to review our 'why', values, and Collective Commitments. The committee also developed strategic themes. Furthermore, the strategic priority areas were developed to guide the district focus to achieve positive outcomes.

Our Why

We believe every learner can change the world; therefore, we will provide a world class education.

Our Values

Northern Cass will commit to purposefully build trust, develop authentic relationships, and engage in innovative practices which will empower learners to be choice ready.

Collective Commitments

1. We are dedicated and passionate about relationships, teaching and learning, acknowledging greatness, self-reflection, and service to the Northern Cass community.
2. We are dedicated to continuous improvement.

Our Strategic Themes and Priority Areas

Choice Ready -Theme 1

- a. Priority Areas: Culture, Portrait of Learner, Signature Learning Experiences

Evidence-Based Decision Making-Theme 2

- b. Priority Areas: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Academic and Behavioral

Personalized Learning-Theme 3

- c. Priority Areas: Social Emotional Learning, Learner Agency, Competency-Based Education

Stakeholder Engagement-Theme 4

- d. Priority Areas: Family Engagement

High Reliability Schools

The Northern Cass School District will achieve its 'why' through the successful implementation of its strategic plan. The development of being a High Reliability School will permeate this plan as Northern Cass continues its goal towards being certified in all five levels. As of the start of the 2022-23 school year, Northern Cass was certified in Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Level 1: Safe, Supportive, and Collaborative Culture (certified spring 2018)

Districts explore specific strategies for shared decision making and developing collaborative processes that clarify the work of teacher teams and help schools operate as a cohesive network of teams clearly focused on curriculum, instruction, assessment, and achievement for all students.

Level 2: Effective Teaching in Every Classroom (certified winter 2019)

Districts learn the concept of establishing a district or schoolwide model of instructional practice and how it can be used to create a culture of pedagogical growth for all teachers.

Level 3: Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (certified spring 2019)

Districts understand the concept and processes for establishing a guaranteed and viable curriculum, which includes establishing a district or schoolwide comprehensive vocabulary program.

Level 4: Standards-Referenced Reporting (certified spring 2020)

Districts understand critical aspects and strategies for implementing a standards-referenced grading and reporting system in your district or school.

Level 5: Competency-Based Education

Learn specific aspects of competency-based education and review strategic initiatives schools should consider implementing competency-based education.

Crosswalk of High Reliability Schools, Northern Cass Strategic Themes, and Priority Areas		
High Reliability Schools Level	Strategic Theme	Priority Area
Level 1: Safe and Collaborative Culture	Stakeholder Engagement Evidence-Based Decision Making <small>theme 2</small> Personalized Learning <small>theme 3</small> Stakeholder Engagement <small>theme 4</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture • Social Emotional Learning • Social Emotional Learning • Family Engagement
Level 2: Effective Teaching in Every Classroom	Evidence-Based Decision Making <small>theme 2</small> Personalized Learning <small>theme 3</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTSS-A & B • Learner Agency
Level 3: Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum	Choice Ready <small>theme 1</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portrait of a Learner • Signature Learning Experiences
Level 4: Standards-Referenced Reporting		
Level 5: Competency-Based Education	Personalized Learning <small>theme 1</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competencies • Continue Transition to Proficiency-Based Education

LEVEL 1: SAFE, SUPPORTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

Theme 4: Stakeholder Engagement

Priority Area 1: School Culture

School culture is a group's shared beliefs, customs, and behaviors. School climate are the things we do on a daily basis which impact and maintain a positive school culture. A positive and nurturing school culture will be the outcome of our efforts ([see page #9 of the NC Operation Plan 2022-23](#)).

Goals

1. Northern Cass will retain 95% of non-certified educators in like positions during the 2022-23 school year.
2. Northern Cass will retain 95% of certified educators who remain in the profession (i.e.--lateral move in education).
3. Increase the average scores in the four assessed areas from the School Perception survey.
4. Northern Cass will implement a Staff Advisory Council which includes representatives equally from both certified and non-certified educators to meet monthly.
5. By the end of the 2022-23 school year, there will be over 2,500 combined greatness cards sent to learners and educators.

Objectives

1. Complete the School Perception survey on an annual basis. Focus group interviews will be conducted again in the 2023-24 school year.
2. The Northern Cass Board of Education will recognize educators and learner greatness on a monthly basis via the regular Board of Education meetings.
3. Create a one-pager sharing pay and benefits from like districts for certified, non-certified and extracurricular positions.
4. Conduct exit interviews for educators who leave Northern Cass.
5. Develop a pipeline to teaching for non-certified educators who are interested in becoming a certified educator.
6. Redesign Staff Advisory Council to represent certified and non-certified staff equally.
7. Create a committee representing the Northern Cass Education Association (NCEA), leadership, and the Board of Education to meet four times per year to discuss concerns, questions, and potential issues.
8. Will conduct a mock threat assessment at least once per year including table top activities.
9. Will conduct active shooter or options-based training yearly.

Monitoring

1. Record the number of greatness cards sent out to learners and educators.
2. Review of the exit survey data to identify themes of strengths and areas for improvement.
3. Record the percentage of educators (certified and non-certified) who remain at Northern Cass.
4. Record the percentage of educators who leave Northern Cass for a lateral position.
5. Review the results of the School Perceptions survey with the School Culture Team.
6. Identity action items from the committee meetings of NCEA, leadership, and the Board of Education.
7. Identity action items from the Staff Advisory Council.

LEVEL 2: EFFECTIVE TEACHING IN EVERY CLASSROOM

Theme 2: Evidence-Based Decision Making

Priority Area 1: Multi Tier System of Supports (MTSS)-Academic and Behavioral

Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) is a framework to provide all learners with opportunities to succeed academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally in school. MTSS-A focuses on providing high-quality instruction and academic interventions in reading and math matched to learner needs while monitoring progress frequently. MTSS-B focuses on providing high-quality instruction and social, emotional, and behavioral interventions. Evidence is used to allocate resources to improve learning and support implementation of effective practices. The Strategic Planning Committee identified the need to continue developing a system of support for learners to ensure academic achievement ([see page #8 in the Northern Cass Operation Plan 2022-23](#)).

Goals

1. By the end of each academic year, 100% of learners will be able to define 80% of their guaranteed vocabulary with appropriate accommodations.
2. By the end of each academic year, the number of learners from Tier III will decrease.
3. By the end of each academic year, the number of learners in Tier II will decrease.
4. By the end of each academic year, the number of Tier I learners will increase.

Note: Learners who make growth which closes the gap by at least $\frac{1}{2}$ (moving from one tier to another) will not count against the percentages referenced above. Learners whose gap increases by at least $\frac{1}{2}$ (moving from one tier to another) will count against the percentages above.

Objectives

1. Educators will continue to implement tiers for English Language Arts in Levels K-12. Educators in Levels 9-12 will implement those courses with support.
2. Learners will be benchmark assessed according to the assessment calendar.
3. Educators will identify and assess guaranteed vocabulary.
4. All educators will be trained in content-area reading strategies.
5. District will utilize ALEKS in Levels 3-12 (through Algebra II).
6. Age level discipline matrices will be established, adhered to, and continually reviewed.
7. Northern Cass Public School will provide ongoing training opportunities for current staff and new educators to ensure implementation of CHAMPS in the district via mini-lessons ('speed dating') and mentor meetings.
8. The district will continue to offer training sessions on the Nurtured Heart Approach.
9. Northern Cass educators will develop their learning center 'Collective Commitments' and/or CHAMPS with learners. They will post, reference, and revisit on a regular basis.
10. Northern Cass certified educators (at elementary, middle, and high school) will identify the tight/loose learner behavior for PK-12.

Monitoring

1. Meetings, including classroom educators, intervention educators, and administration, will occur after each benchmarking period to evaluate each learner's placement.
2. Educators will document the pre and post assessment scores for guaranteed vocabulary..
3. Discuss progress monitoring evidence at professional learning community meetings.
4. Number of learners achieving proficiency in ELA.
5. Review of Insights.
6. Track learner progress every two weeks in ALEKS.

7. Utilize instructional rounds to provide feedback on the use of CHAMPS in the learning center.
8. Utilize observations to provide feedback on the three identified areas of focus.
9. Track discipline occurrences via PowerSchool.
10. Track any discipline consequences which are outside of the discipline matrix.

LEVEL 1: SAFE, SUPPORTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

Theme 3: Personalized Learning

Priority Area 1: Social Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. The Strategic Planning Committee identified a need to develop a system to address expectations for learner behavior and to ensure a positive school culture ([see page #5 of the Northern Cass Operational Plan 2022-23](#)).

Goals

1. By the end of the 2022-2023 school year, there will be a 5% increase in learners who will identify Northern Cass as a safe, supportive, and collaborative culture.

Objectives

1. The leadership team will apply for grants to help fund the School-Based Mental Health Program as well as continue to send referrals as needed.
2. The counseling department will continue their partnership with NDSU Counseling.
3. The counseling department will conduct needs assessments of all learners in order to offer support services.
4. The counseling department will utilize Second Step as an SEL curriculum for learners PK-5.
5. Northern Cass will offer a Social Emotional Learning course co-taught by counselors and a learning center educator for high school learners.
6. Northern Cass will utilize the Close Gap app in Levels 6-8 to assess and support learner wellness.
7. Northern Cass will identify social emotional learning best practices and provide training on implementation in the learning centers.

Monitoring

1. Educators will review survey data throughout the year.
2. The counselors will review the needs assessment data during the first quarter.
3. Review of feedback before and after the practices are used.
4. Review of therapist data from pre and post assessment.
5. Review of the number of families who utilize services from the Cook Institute.
6. Present for board education one time per year the learners from the Social Emotional Learning course.

Level 1: Safe, Supportive and Collaborative Culture

Theme 4: Family Engagement

Priority Area 1: Full Service Community Schools

Northern Cass has committed to becoming a Full Service Community School (FSCS). The Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) program provides support for the planning, implementation, and operation of full-service community schools that improve the coordination, integration, accessibility, and effectiveness of services for learners and families. A FSCS coordinates comprehensive supports for learners and families through partnerships in the following pipeline service areas: Early Childhood Development, Remedial & Academic Enrichment Activities, Family Engagement, Community-Based Supports, Wellness, Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, Workforce Readiness & Development and Mentoring & Other Youth Development Programs. This includes the hiring of a Site Coordinator and Family Case Manager ([see page #10 of the Northern Cass Operational Plan](#)).

Goals

1. By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, Northern Cass will create a community leadership team comprised of individual community members and a team of leaders to work with all the pipeline service areas and a team of leaders to plan and implement additions/changes in policies and programs to continue the transition to a FSCS.
2. By the end of the 2022-2023 school year, Northern Cass will develop a protocol for identifying and screening age 3 learners residing in the district in a variety of developmental areas.
3. By the end of the 2022-2023, Northern Cass will provide appropriate intervention services to 100% of identified age 3 learners residing in the district.

Objectives

1. Continue our FSCS Implementation Team monthly meetings.
2. Revise the Gearing Up for 'K' program based on community feedback.
3. Northern Cass will provide on-site therapy for three days per week.
4. Provide parenting coaching and support via the Cook Institute.
5. Host an annual Early Learning Fair which includes PK screening for all 3 and/or 4 year old learners.
6. Create and host a PK Learner Shadow to introduce Northern Cass to future learners.
7. Explore further partnerships with community-based organizations to provide services.
8. Expand the wellness pantry to serve all communities in the district.
9. Create and host a PK Learner Shadow Day to introduce Northern Cass to future learners.

Monitoring

1. The number of learners receiving early childhood special education services versus the learners being referred in kindergarten and level 1 for special education services.
2. The number of 3 year old screenings will be compared to the 'K' enrollment.
3. Review of ripple map at FSCS Implementation Team meetings.
4. Number of learners being serviced by our Family Case Manager.
5. Number of people who utilize the Northern Cass Wellness Pantry.

LEVEL 1: SAFE, SUPPORTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

Theme 4: Stakeholder Engagement

Priority Area: Family Engagement

Engagement is defined as interacting with the school environment which includes, but is not limited to, attending events, reading communications, participating in committees, volunteering at the school, and donating time or resources. We have identified a gap between engagement and involvement. We have strong involvement but must build our engagement. Effective engagement with all internal and external stakeholders is critical in maintaining a quality school culture. The Strategic Planning Committee identified the need to improve engagement, both internally and externally, with the many different communities served by the school district ([see page #8 of the Northern Cass Operation Plan 2022-23](#)).

Goal

1. By the end of the 2022-2023 school year, there will be a 5% increase in families will identify as being engaged in the school setting.

Objectives

1. Northern Cass Public School will develop a communication plan to ensure consistent and timely communication using a variety of platforms to allow access for all stakeholders. Northern Cass Public School will continue to use Facebook, Twitter, the Cass County Reporter, the school website, Empower, SeeSaw, community meetings, and a newsletter to dispense information.
2. Northern Cass will host a variety of events including, but not limited to 'Grandparents Day', Book Fair, Senior Tour Day, and Business Luncheon to engage stakeholders.
3. Host site visits for families and community members to observe teaching and learning.
4. Host two Northern Cass State of the District addresses to update progress on current district commitments.
5. Continues use of the weekly memo (via the Superintendent) updating the district on upcoming events and/or issues.
6. Northern Cass coaches/advisors will utilize the Remind App for communication during activities.

Progress Monitoring

1. The HRS team will collect and analyze parent/guardian and stakeholder engagement data.
2. Number of parents who volunteer at Northern Cass.
3. Number of participants for State of the District address.

LEVEL 2: EFFECTIVE TEACHING IN EVERY CLASSROOM

Theme 3: Personalized Learning

Priority Area: Learner Agency

Learner agency is a learner's willingness and capacity to identify and balance when, what, why, and how they will learn, and who they need to learn with in order to develop self-efficacy and empowerment. Learners will develop voice, choice, and ownership over their learning ([see page #6 of the Northern Cass Operational Plan 2022-23](#)).

Goals

1. By the end of the 2022-23 school year, Northern Cass will increase the percentage of learners who identify school as relevant to 40% (from 35%).
2. By the end of the 2022-23 school year, Northern Cass will increase the percentage of learners who believe they have active self-direction in their learning to 50% (from 45%).

Objectives

1. Educators will visually track learner progress during the 2022-23 school year.
2. Northern Cass will implement middle school studios, Level 3/4 studios, and continue with the high school pilot.
3. Educators will survey learners at the end of all priority standards to solicit feedback to inform future instruction.
4. Educators will engage learners in an interest survey as part of developing a learner profile.
5. Educators will facilitate learners practicing and developing their ability to independently set goals.

Monitoring

1. The HRS team will collect and analyze perception data via the LEAPS survey questions.
2. The HRS team will collect and analyze feedback related to the studio experiences.

LEVEL 3: GUARANTEED AND VIABLE CURRICULUM

Theme 1: Choice Ready (College, Career, Military, and Life)

Priority Area 1: Portrait of a Learner Attributes and Competencies

Competencies are a combination of observable and measurable skills, abilities, and personal attributes. A focus on competencies leads to learners who are choice ready. Learners will engage in gateway presentations showcasing their growth towards proficiency on the competencies throughout their academic career leading up to their capstone presentation ([see page #2 of the Northern Cass Operational Plan 2022-23](#)).

Goals

1. By the end of Level 12 (2022-23), 100% of learners will defend their level of proficiency in all 5 attribute areas.
2. By the end of Level 8 (2022-23), 100% of learners will provide evidence of proficiency in 5 of the 5 attribute areas.
3. By the end of Level 5 (2022-23), 100% of learners will provide evidence of proficiency in 3 of the 5 attribute areas determined in collaboration with their educator.
4. By the end of Level 3 (2022-23), 100% of learners will provide evidence of proficiency in 1 of the 5 attribute areas as identified by educators.
5. By the end of the 2022-2023 school year, 100% of learners will be provided feedback on two competencies.

Objectives

1. Personalized professional learning support will be provided for educators on the Portrait of a Learner attributes and the corresponding competencies.
2. Educators will provide feedback to each learner on 1 competency for each Portrait of a Learner attribute.
3. Educators will identify a Portrait of a Learner attribute and corresponding competency for every priority standard.
4. Educators will utilize scales and provide feedback when explicitly teaching Portrait of a Learner attributes and competencies.
5. Portrait of a Learner is referenced on a regular basis.
6. Educators will implement gateway projects and processes for Levels 3, 5, and 8 which are directly linked to the Portrait of a Learner.
7. Educators will provide feedback and assess learners on their Capstone presentation in Level 12.
8. District will develop a policy for creating a pathway (SB 2196) towards graduation based on competencies.
9. Educators will guide Level 9 and 10 learners to utilize the Mastery Transcript.

Monitoring

1. Educators will require learners to submit evidence demonstrating proficiency of the identified competency areas for their priority standards (in Empower).
2. All Level 12 learners will demonstrate proficiency in their capstone presentations.
3. The Elementary and Secondary Principals will provide feedback during the observation and evaluation process on the instruction of competencies.
4. District will prepare their SB 2196 policy to be reviewed by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (prior to the start of the legislative session).

LEVEL 3: GUARANTEED AND VIABLE CURRICULUM

Theme 1: Choice Ready (College, Career, Military, and Life)

Priority Area 2: Signature Learning Experiences

Northern Cass Public School District believes learners deserve the opportunity to engage in authentic learning experiences. This includes, but is not limited to, job shadows, internships, college visits, and military presentations. These opportunities will allow learners to not only understand what they may want to do in the future, but also understand what is not the right fit for them. A key intention of this goal is to create partnerships between Northern Cass, local businesses, colleges, and the military ([see page #3 of the Northern Cass Operation Plan for 2022-23](#)).

Goals

1. By the end of the 2022-23 school year, 100% of PK-5 learners will be introduced and interact with a variety of careers.
2. By the end of the 2022-23 school year, 100% of all Level 5 learners will participate in a job shadow off-site.
3. By the end of the 2022-23 school year, 100% of all Level 6-8 learners will identify strengths and interests.
4. By the end of the 2022-23 school year, 100% of all Level 9-12 learners will begin a four year choice ready plan.
5. By the end of the 2022-23 school year, 100% of all Level 12 learners will participate in either two job shadows and/or one internship.
6. By the end of each academic year, enrollment in the Cass County Career and Technical Education Center (CCCTEC) and local Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses will increase.
7. By the end of each academic year, 100% of all learners who want to engage in an internship are provided the opportunity.
8. By the end of each academic year, Northern Cass will increase the percent of choice ready learners.

Objectives

1. The district will develop an articulated and aligned career curriculum for Level PK-12.
2. The counseling and CTE departments will develop career pathways linked to current course offerings.
3. The district will continue and expand authentic CTE experiences (ie: the Game of Life simulation; Amazing Shake).
4. The district will create a playlist in Empower for learners who will be engaging in an internship.
5. The district will develop a robust internship program including developing business partnerships throughout the region. This will include a formal evaluation of the program.
6. The district will submit for the articulation of credit for experiences outside of the traditional learning center via HB 1478 on an ongoing basis for all formal partnerships.

Monitoring

1. The HRS team will review pathways and ensure they are aligned with current course offerings.
2. The Director of College, Career, and Life Readiness will review internship evaluation.
3. Record the number of enrollments in CCCTEC courses annually.
4. Record the number of enrollments in local CTE courses annually.
5. Number of sponsoring entities for HB 1478.
6. Number of learners meeting the graduation requirements for job shadows/internships.

LEVEL 5: COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

Theme 3: Personalized Learning

Priority Area: Continue Transition to Proficiency-Based Education

A competency-based system is a system of instruction where learners advance to higher levels of learning when they demonstrate mastery of concepts and skills regardless of time, place, or pace. Learners demonstrate proficiency in a combination of competencies and priority standards to ensure they are progressing towards being choice ready ([see page #7 of the Northern Cass Operational Plan](#)).

Goals

1. By the end of the 2022-23 school year, the percentage of learners who are proficient in all priority standards will increase.

Objectives

1. The PCBL will develop a strategic plan for personalized competency-based learning.
2. All educators will utilize competency-based best practices ([Northern Cass Instructional Framework](#)) in their learning center.
 - a. Educators will start each standard by identifying 'why'.
 - b. Educators will utilize a rounds/station model in their learning center to meet the individual needs of learners.
 - i. Coaching
 - ii. Conferencing
 - iii. Collaboration
 - iv. Independent/Reflection
 - c. Educators will utilize seminars for whole group instruction as needed.
 - d. Educators will reflect on the framework and work toward the districtwide goal.
3. Educators will identify/revise matrices for all content.
4. Educators will update Habits of Work and pacing in Empower (as deemed appropriate based on level) on a weekly basis.
5. Northern Cass will develop a four year strategic plan for transitioning to full competency-based learning.

Note: The operational plan will be utilized to implement the strategic plan

 - a. Educators will reflect on the vision and set a professional goal.
6. Every educator will identify learners who have not made adequate progress towards proficiency on a priority standard and develop an intervention plan to help them reach proficiency.
7. Educators will develop multiple pathways to proficiency.
8. District will build a systematic process for the immersion (i.e.--backfilling) of standards.

Monitoring

1. Review of PCBL strategic plan at all PCBL meetings.
2. The HRS team will gather evidence to submit for certification at Level 5.
3. The HRS team will gather evidence to submit for certification for Cognia.
4. Northern Cass will review data on learners who have not achieved proficiency according to educator-developed matrices and develop a plan to reach proficiency.
5. Leadership will review the graduation tab in Empower on a monthly basis.
6. Administration will conduct regular observations to provide feedback on the instructional framework.

ACCREDITATION & ACCOUNTABILITY: HIGH RELIABILITY SCHOOLS

The Northern Cass Public School District is committed to making evidence-driven decisions to ensure continuous improvement and accountability. The school will engage in a comprehensive process of building and district level evaluation and accreditation. This will be accomplished by using the Cognia District Improvement and Accreditation Model. Cognia has defined three standards and corresponding indicators to assess overall school district performance. The three standards are: 1) Leadership Capacity 2) Learning Capacity 3) Resource Capacity.

NORTHERN CASS PUBLIC SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN ANNUAL REVIEW

The Northern Cass Public School Strategic Plan will serve as a guide to maintain the priorities, goals, and achievements of the school district. This plan responds to growth and opportunity, the sustainability of programs, and community needs. After the plan receives formal approval by the Northern Cass Board of Education, the administration will begin developing an operational plan to put the strategic plan into action. At the end of each year, the plan will be reviewed by the administrative leadership team and presented to the board to consider adjustments to the plan.

Cognia Accreditation Standards 2022

Key Characteristic 1: Culture of Learning

What It Means

A good institution nurtures and sustains a healthy culture for learning. In a healthy culture, learners, parents, and educators feel connected to the purpose and work of the institution as well as behave in alignment with the stated values and norms. The institution also demonstrates evidence that reflects the mission, beliefs, and expectations of the institution.

Keys to A Culture of Learning

A healthy culture is evident where:

- Stakeholders are actively engaged and supportive of the institution's mission
- Learners' academic and non-academic needs and interests are the focal point
- Stakeholders are included and supported

STANDARD 1

Leaders cultivate and sustain a culture that demonstrates respect, fairness, equity, and inclusion, and is free from bias.

STANDARD 2

Learners' well-being is at the heart of the institution's guiding principles such as mission, purpose, and beliefs.

STANDARD 3

Leaders actively engage stakeholders to support the institution's priorities and guiding principles that promote learners' academic growth and well-being.

STANDARD 4

Learners benefit from a formal structure that fosters positive relationships with peers and adults.

STANDARD 5

Professional staff members embrace effective collegiality and collaboration in support of learners.

STANDARD 6

Professional staff members receive the support they need to strengthen their professional practice

Key Characteristic 2: Leadership for Learning

What It Means

The ability of a leader to provide leadership for learning is a key attribute of a good institution. Leaders who engage in their own learning while tangibly supporting the learning process for learners and teachers have a significant positive impact on the success of others. Leaders must also communicate the learning expectations for all learners and teachers, continuously, with consistency and purpose. The expectations are embedded in the culture of the institution, reflected by learners', teachers', and leaders' behaviors.

Keys to Leadership for Learning

Leadership for learning is demonstrated when school leaders:

- Communicate expectations for learning
- Influence and impact the culture in positive ways
- Model and engage in learning while supporting others to do so

STANDARD 8

Leaders guide professional staff members in the continuous improvement process focused on learners' experiences and needs.

STANDARD 8

The governing authority demonstrates a commitment to learners by collaborating with leaders to uphold the institution's priorities and to drive continuous improvement.

STANDARD 9

Leaders cultivate effective individual and collective leadership among stakeholders.

STANDARD 10

Leaders demonstrate expertise in recruiting, supervising, and evaluating professional staff members to optimize learning.

STANDARD 11

Leaders create and maintain institutional structures and processes that support learners and staff members in both stable and changing environments.

STANDARD 12

Professional staff members implement curriculum and instruction that are aligned for relevancy, inclusion, and effectiveness.

STANDARD 13

Qualified personnel instruct and assist learners and each other in support of the institution's mission, purpose, and beliefs.

STANDARD 14

Curriculum and instruction are augmented by reliable information resources and materials that advance learning and support learners' personal interests.

STANDARD 15

Learners' needs drive the equitable allocation and management of human, material, digital, and fiscal resources.

Key Characteristic 3:

Engagement of Learning

What it means

A good institution ensures that learners are engaged in the learning environment. Learners who are engaged in the learning environment participate with confidence and display agency over their own learning. A good institution adopts policies and engages in practices that support all learners being included in the learning process.

Keys to Engagement of Learning

Engagement is demonstrated when all learners:

- Are included in the learning process
- Participate with confidence
- Have agency over their learning

STANDARD 16

Learners experience curriculum and instruction that emphasize the value of diverse cultures, backgrounds, and abilities.

STANDARD 17

Learners have equitable opportunities to realize their learning potential.

STANDARD 18

Learners are immersed in an environment that fosters lifelong skills including creativity, curiosity, risk taking, collaboration, and design thinking.

STANDARD 19

Learners are immersed in an environment that promotes and respects student voice and responsibility for their learning.

STANDARD 20

Learners engage in experiences that promote and develop their self-confidence and love of learning.

STANDARD 21

Instruction is characterized by high expectations and learner-centered practices.

STANDARD 22

Instruction is monitored and adjusted to advance and deepen individual learners' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.

STANDARD 23

Professional staff members integrate digital resources that deepen and advance learners' engagement with instruction and stimulate their curiosity.

Key Characteristic 4:

Growth in Learning

What It Means

A good institution positively impacts learners throughout their journey of learning. A positive impact on the learner is reflected in readiness to engage in and preparedness for the next transition in their learning. Growth in learning is also reflected in learners' ability to meet expectations in knowledge and skill acquisition.

Keys to Growth in Learning

Growth is evident when:

- Learners possess non-academic skills that ensure readiness to learn
- Learners' academic achievement reflects preparedness to learn
- Learners attain knowledge and skills necessary to achieve goals for learning

STANDARD 24

Leaders use data and input from a variety of sources to make decisions for learners' and staff members' growth and well-being.

STANDARD 25

Leaders promote action research by professional staff members to improve their practice and advance learning.

STANDARD 26

Leaders regularly evaluate instructional programs and organizational conditions to improve instruction and advance learning.

STANDARD 27

Learners' diverse academic and non-academic needs are identified and effectively addressed through appropriate interventions.

STANDARD 28

With support, learners pursue individual goals including the acquisition of academic and non-academic skills important for their educational futures and careers.

STANDARD 29

Understanding learners' needs and interests drives the design, delivery, application, and evaluation of professional learning.

STANDARD 30

Learners' progress is measured through a balanced system that includes assessment both for learning and of learning.

1. Assessment:

- a. **Obtrusive assessments:** The final demonstration of learning proficiency. Demonstration can occur in multiple formats. Learners may have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.
 - i. Examples can include tests, quizzes, projects, presentations, essays, and research papers.
- b. **Unobtrusive assessment:** An assessment that allows educators and learners to gauge understanding and drive instruction. These assessments occur throughout the learning process. Feedback is a primary goal of unobtrusive assessment. Unobtrusive assessments are not included in the final scoring of the learner's proficiency.
 - i. Examples can include worksheets, activities, learning center discussions, quizzes, and labs.

- 2. **Authentic:** There is a real world or outside of the classroom connection.
- 3. **Immersion:** Systematic opportunity to return to previous content, either to reach proficiency or delve deeper into learning.
- 4. **Benchmark Assessment:** An assessment that measures a learner's level of achievement. This assessment may be used to determine placement in the learning progression.
- 5. **Capstone:** A project, which is a graduation requirement, where learners provide evidence of Portrait of a Learner competencies to demonstrate readiness for college, career, or military.
- 6. **Coaching Session:** Additional instruction and support given based on learner needs provided in a small group setting.
- 7. **Attributes:** The Northern Cass Portrait of a Learner skills.
- 8. **Competencies:** A combination of observable and measurable skills and abilities.
- 9. **Competency-Based Education:** [Competency-based education](#) is a system in which:
 - Learners are empowered daily to make important decisions about their learning experiences, how they will create and apply knowledge, and how they will demonstrate their learning.
 - Assessment is a meaningful, positive, and empowering learning experience for students that yields timely, relevant, and actionable evidence.
 - Learners receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs.
 - Learners progress based on evidence of mastery, not seat time.
 - Learners learn actively using different pathways and varied pacing.
 - Strategies to ensure equity for all students are embedded in the culture, structure, and pedagogy of schools and education systems.
 - Rigorous, common expectations for learning (knowledge, skills, and dispositions) are explicit, transparent, measurable, and transferable.
- 10. **Conferencing:** Additional instruction and support given based on learner needs provided one to one..
- 11. **Courses:** A cluster of standards that, when combined, link to a specific credit granted by the state of North Dakota for graduation.
- 12. **Educator:** Formerly known as a teacher; an educator is a certified professional who guides

personalized learning experiences.

- 13. Equity (in education):** Ensures all learners develop the knowledge and skills they need to be engaged and become productive members of society. More importantly, the system will ensure all learners are met at their appropriate academic and behavioral level.
- 14. Extended Learning:** Learning which requires learners to demonstrate their skills at a level above proficiency. This is referred to as a Score '4'.
- 15. Gateway:** A project where learners begin to demonstrate Portrait of a Learner competencies. This is a requirement for transitions at social levels 2, 5, and 8.
- 16. Habits of Work:** These are the citizenship grades that are used for eligibility determination and will be recorded in Empower. They include:
 - a. Respect - treating others and self with honor and dignity.
 - b. Preparedness - make sure oneself is ready for learning while also meeting deadlines.
 - c. Engagement - the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, motivation, and passion learners demonstrate when they are engaged in the learning process.
- 17. Jag Time:** An afterschool program for learners in social levels 3-12 that provides additional opportunities for learners to complete coursework and receive additional intervention or enrichment. This program can be voluntary or mandatory depending on learner needs.
- 18. Learner:** Formerly known as a student. A student was a 'receiver' of information; however, a learner is an active participant in their learning.
- 19. Learner Agency:** A learner's willingness and capacity to identify and balance when, what, why, and how s/he will learn, and who s/he will need to learn with in order to develop self-efficacy and empowerment.
- 20. Learning Center:** A place where learners come together at a learning level. This was formerly known as a classroom.
- 21. Learning Level:** Learners are not placed into traditional age-based grade levels. Instead, they are placed in the academic level they are currently achieving.
- 22. Learning Management System (LMS):** Platform used by educators, learners, and parents to access learner progress, class material, and data. Empower is the learning management system at Northern Cass.
- 23. Learning Steps:** The steps a learner takes towards demonstrating proficiency.
 - a. **iLearn:** Learners are introduced to content.
 - b. **iPractice:** Learners practice the content and seek feedback on their proficiency.
 - c. **iAssess:** Learners demonstrate their final proficiency on the content through a summative assessment.
- 24. Learning Target:** Skills and knowledge that guide daily learning center instruction and are necessary to be proficient in priority standards.
- 25. Mastery Transcript Consortium:** Network of public and private schools who are introducing a digital high school transcript that opens up opportunity for each and every student — from all backgrounds, locations, and types of schools — to have their unique strengths, abilities, interests, and histories fostered, understood, and celebrated.

- 26. Microcredential:** A learning opportunity for educators to engage in personalized professional learning by implementing a Problem of Practice which will positively impact learner achievement and educator practices.
- 27. Pace:** The expected length of time for a learner to reach proficiency in a standard. The levels of pacing are:
- a. On pace
 - b. Behind Pace
 - c. Ahead of Pace
- 28. Pathway:** Options in the learning process utilizing learner agency, voice & choice, and goal setting for learners to present evidence and achieve a desired outcome; pathways allow for fluid learner movement within a course and/or unit of study.
- 29. Personalized Learning:** Utilizing research-based methods for individualizing learning which allows learners to work at their own pace while allowing voice and choice and developing learner agency.
- 30. Personalized Learning Plan (PLP):** A document co-created by individual learners and educators to record their path for learning.
- 31. Personalized Learning Profile:** ‘Paints’ a portrait of a learner against a backdrop of a learner’s interests, motivations, goals and aspirations.
- 32. Portrait of a Learner Attributes:** These are the skills learners must demonstrate in order to be successful in college, career, or military: **Accountability, Communication, Adaptability, Learner’s Mindset, and Leadership.** Learners define and demonstrate proficiency in choice ready skills at transition levels (social levels 2, 5, 8, 12).
- 33. Prerequisite:** Required prior learning as determined by an educator. Can be based on learning levels, standards, or social levels.
- 34. Priority Standards:** Learning standards that have been deemed to be necessary to have success at the next level. These are standards learners are assessed on formally. They are required to demonstrate proficiency.
- 35. Proficiency:** Required content and skills for each priority standard. Perfection is not required to demonstrate proficiency, but learners must avoid major errors in demonstration, based on the standard and scale. On a scale, the score 3.0 is proficient.
- 36. Proficiency-based grading:** Grading which represents each learner’s proficiency related to the priority standards and based on a proficiency scale. Learners are required to achieve proficiency on all priority standards.
- 37. Proficiency Scales:** A tool used to measure a learner’s current proficiency score on a priority standard.
- a. Score 1--Emerging
 - b. Score 2--Foundational
 - c. Score 3--Proficient
 - d. Score 4--Extended
- 38. Progression of Learning:** The advancement through a set of articulated standards from PK-12.
- 39. Project:** A learning opportunity for demonstrating proficiency on one or multiple standards where the learner and educator have broken the process into steps. Learners are provided with ongoing feedback.
- 40. Relevant:** Topics which a learner is interested in and sees connections to their personal life.

- 41. Rubrics:** A document that articulates how a learner can meet expectations for a priority standard by listing criteria and describing levels of achievement.
- 42. Score 4:** Optional learning beyond ‘proficiency’ level that showcases learner ability to extend and deepen their learning. Score 4 is a collaboration between learner and educator. Learners must conference with their content educator.
- 43. Self-Reflection:** An assessment of one’s learning based on individual goals.
- 44. Seminar:** Direct instruction provided by an educator to a group of learners.
- 45. Signature Experience:** A visible or internal element of a learner’s experience in a learning environment. It creates value but it also serves as a powerful and consistent symbol of the culture, values, or interest of a level and/or individual.
- 46. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL):** Learners acquire and apply the necessary skills to understand and manage emotions, set positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, develop and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible choices.
- 47. Social Level:** Formerly known as grade level, this is the amount of years the learner has been in school. Learners are referred to by both their social level (example: Social Level 10) or their graduating year (Class of 2021).
- For example, a learner may be a social level 9, but at a learning level 10 in math and a learning level 8 in ELA.
 - For example, if a learner comes to Northern Cass from a different school, we need to assess what level they are achieving.
 - For example, if a learner is a social level 6, they have attended school for 7 years (Kindergarten is level 0).
- 48. Studio:** A problem-based topic of study that is designed to assess competencies across multiple disciplines.
- 49. Supporting Standards:** Standards which are not a priority but are necessary for connecting content across measurement topics. They do not have to be formally assessed.
- 50. Voice and Choice:** Learners are provided options in how they learn and how they will demonstrate proficiency. Voice is input in the structure of learning, and choice is a variety of options to demonstrate learning.

Personalized Competency-Based Learning Team:

- Dr. Cory Steiner
- Tom Klapp
- Beth Head
- Sam Johnson
- Keira Oscarson
- Megan Engelke
- Megan Margerum
- Carla Wolsky
- Luke Bush
- Crysta Schenck
- Doug Margerum
- Jessica Stoen
- Brit Breiland

