

HAWTHORN SCHOOL DISTRICT 73



STRATEGIC PLAN

January 2011



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I. INTRODUCTION

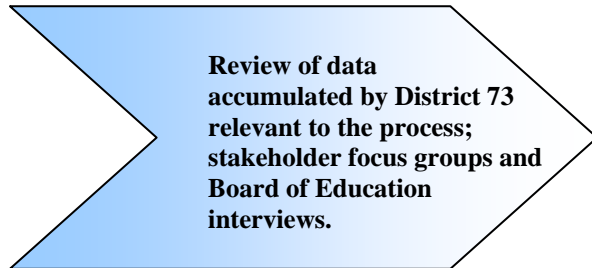
A. Background

Hawthorn District 73 has engaged ECRA Group to assist in developing a Strategic Plan to help formalize and document the future direction of the school district. The Strategic Plan is intended to provide a framework for future decision-making that builds upon all of the work District 73 has done in the past two years. The process has utilized a broad spectrum of existing data to result in a Strategic Plan that reflects a shared consensus of stakeholders and will serve as a foundation for future decisions. The entire Strategic Planning process is a three-phase process as illustrated on the following page.

ECRA Group is an established leader in the areas of educational assessment, research and strategic planning. Based in Rosemont, Illinois, ECRA Group has over 30 years experience in helping educational organizations across the nation better understand and document their performance, and chart a course for the future. ECRA Group comprises leading researchers and practitioners across a wide range of disciplines. Most of ECRA's experts hold Ph.D.s in their fields of specialization, are published, and have university faculty appointments at prestigious universities.

B. The Strategic Planning Process

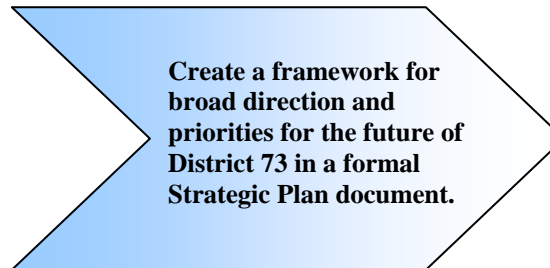
Review of Archival Data and Additional Research



- Review all relevant archival data from the school district, including student achievement data, past surveys, enrollment data, etc.
- Review Future Search document
- Conduct one-on-one telephone interviews with each Board of Education member
- Conduct focus group(s) with other key stakeholder populations (administrators, Hawthorn Planning Council, union representatives, PTO)

COMPLETE

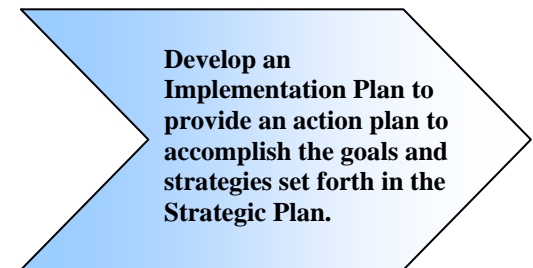
Development of Strategic Plan



- Document mission and vision for District 73, guiding principles for future decision-making, and the future direction desired by its stakeholders.
- Develop the Strategic Plan document to serve as a broad outline to guide direction for the school district. The Strategic Plan will contain:
 - Mission & Vision
 - Guiding Principles
 - Goals
 - Strategic Challenges
 - Strategies

CURRENT PHASE

Development of Implementation Plan



- Upon Board of Education approval of the Strategic Plan, the administration will work to develop an implementation plan to accomplish the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan. The implementation plan will consist of the following:
 - Tactical action plan to accomplish goals
 - Goal metrics (to measure progress toward goals)
 - Strategy indicators (to determine if tactics are being executed)

SPRING 2011

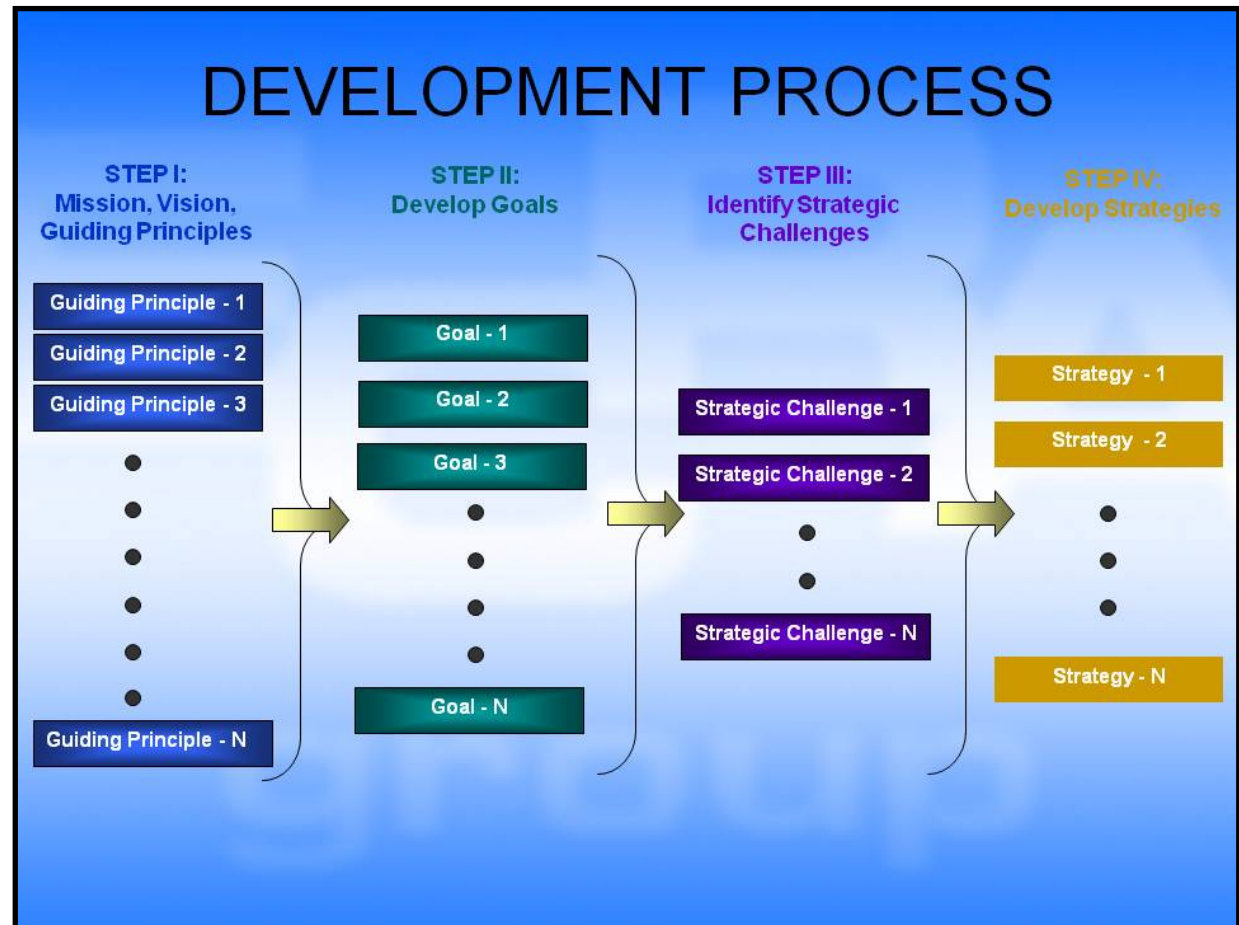
C. Structure of This Report

Contained in this document are an overview of the research, data sources, and data synthesis that went in to the development of the Strategic Plan.

COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The chart at right illustrates the components of the Strategic Planning Development Process.

- First, the mission was reviewed and a vision for the future and guiding principles for decision-making emerged from the data synthesis.
- Next, goals were extracted from the data synthesis with consideration for the vision and guiding principles.
- Third, strategic challenges were identified as possible obstacles to accomplishing the goals given the current state of reality.
- Finally, a set of strategies were developed to accomplish the goals in light of the challenges.



The report also contains next steps for the Board of Education and administration to follow, as well as a clear definition of the Board’s role and the administration’s role in the remainder of the strategic planning process.

II. RESEARCH

A. Data Sources

The following tables show the data sources ECRA used to develop the components of the District 73 Strategic Plan.

Archival Data

Name of Report	Provided By	School Year(s) Completed
Hawthorn District 73 Enrollment Projection	Information Management Systems via District 73	2008-2009
Hawthorn District 73 Buildings: Capacity, Class Size, Demographics and Enrollment	District 73	2009-2010
Hawthorn District 73 Parent/Community Survey	ECRA Group	2008-2009
Realizing our Preferred Future	District 73 Future Search Conference	2009-2010
21 st Century Learning Evaluation	ECRA Group	2007-2009
Achievement Status and Growth Analyses	ECRA Group	2009-2010

Focus Groups and Interviews

Group	Date Completed
District 73 Administrative Team	September 15, 2010
Hawthorn Planning Council	September 15, 2010
Hawthorn PTO	September 15, 2010
HEA (Union Reps)	September 15, 2010
Individual Interviews with Each Board of Education Member	September 2010

B. Data Synthesis

ECRA analyzed and synthesized the data and triangulated findings to identify themes and trends. The vision statement, guiding principles, goals, strategic challenges and strategies contained in this report were developed based on these themes and trends.

District 73 is an outstanding school district that prides itself on being forward-thinking and innovative in its programming. The district strives to promote 21st Century Learning and to be a full-service community school district, involving all district stakeholder groups in community learning beyond the classroom experience. The district's vision is to provide a world class education, concentrating on the whole child, to all students regardless of background or ability. Parents and community members are proud of the community's schools, and regard its greatest strength to be the highly qualified and nurturing teaching staff.

At the same time, the school district has become a complex entity in its efforts to balance an innovative world-class curriculum, school choice, academic achievement and financial strength. Diverse programming and school choice coupled with diverse and changing demographics and enrollments are resulting in inefficiencies, communication challenges and inequities in student outcomes.

According to the most recent student achievement data available, District 73 students achieve at high levels. However, there are achievement status and growth inequities among schools and student populations. Through a new vision for the future of Hawthorn District 73, guiding principles for decision-making, and the goals and strategies contained in this Strategic Plan, ECRA has provided a framework for the Board of Education to use as it moves forward in addressing some of these strategic challenges.

III. MISSION, VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

District 73 has maintained the long-term mission statement “Learning for All – Whatever it Takes” in its practices for many years. The schools leaders have recently expanded that mission statement to “Learning for All, Working Together – to do Whatever it Takes.” Based on research conducted as part of the strategic planning process, ECRA encourages the district to reaffirm this mission. However, ECRA also suggests adopting a vision statement to reflect the forward-thinking learning organization Hawthorn District 73 strives to be.

PROPOSED VISION STATEMENT:

Hawthorn School District 73 will provide a world class, whole-child education and equitable opportunities for all students in an environment that respects diversity and fosters collaborative partnerships among stakeholders while maintaining financial strength.

In addition, ECRA has extracted from its review and analysis of data the following guiding principles to which district stakeholders have expressed a desire to always adhere to when making decisions:

- **Whole-Child Education:** Education should focus on the whole child.
- **Financial Strength:** Financial strength must be a top priority.
- **Equity:** Student opportunities must be equitable.
- **Shared Decision-Making:** Decision-making should be shared and inclusive of internal and external stakeholders
- **Innovation:** The district will be innovative and forward thinking.
- **High Expectations:** High expectations will be fostered for students and staff.
- **Parent Involvement:** Parent involvement will be encouraged.
- **Community Partnership:** The district will work toward a full-service community school district.
- **Global Perspective:** The district will maintain a global perspective when preparing students for future success.

IV. GOALS

The goals contained in this section have been categorized into one of six goal areas which emerged through the research phase of this process.

A. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The goal area of student achievement centers on ensuring the growth of all students.

GOALS

- 1) Increase achievement status of all students at all ability levels and promote mastery for all students.
- 2) Accelerate student growth by setting rigorous and realistic targets for every student.
- 3) Assess student performance on outcomes aligned to 21st Century Learning and the Hawthorn world-class curriculum.

B. WORLD CLASS CURRICULUM

The goal area of world class curriculum involves developing a solid core curriculum for the whole child that incorporates academics, social awareness and health and wellness. The curriculum should foster critical thinking, creativity and synergy, preparing students to meet the challenges of a global community.

GOALS

- 4) Foster creativity and innovation in all aspects of learning, inclusive of the arts and embracing diverse delivery methods.
- 5) Address 21st Century Learning through globalization, adaptations, and communications.
- 6) Expand the World Language Program

C. CULTURE

The goal area of culture involves collaboration, communication, school climate, diversity and community partnerships. The area of culture involves the idea of full service community schools and making the schools an integrative and more cohesive part of the broader community, which means providing services and learning opportunities beyond the traditional classroom.

GOALS

- 7) Maintain a collaborative internal environment and proactive, open and effective internal communication throughout all levels of the district.
- 8) Establish community partnerships between the district and local government, business, educational and civic organizations to provide services and learning opportunities beyond the classroom, including full-service community school programs and learning centers.
- 9) Respect diversity by nurturing the individual needs of all students, teachers, and community in a welcoming environment.
- 10) Provide a safe, orderly and engaging learning environment for all students.

D. EQUITY

The goal area of equity involves ensuring that all students have equitable access to the instructional program.

GOALS

- 11) Ensure equitable access for all students to the instructional program.
- 12) Maintain reasonable class sizes that are similar from one building to the next.

E. HUMAN RESOURCES

The goal area of human resources involves attracting and retaining the highest quality teachers and administrators to ensure delivery of the curriculum and instructional program in the most effective manner.

GOALS

- 13) Attract and retain quality teachers and administrators.
- 14) Hold teachers and administrators accountable for student achievement.

F. FINANCE

The goal area of finance deals with the importance the district places on fiscal responsibility and maintaining financial strength in all decisions.

GOALS

- 15) Maintain adequate fund balances.
- 16) Ensure significant long-term debt capacity.
- 17) Maintain positive revenue to expenditure ratios.

V. STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

As the district moves toward accomplishing the vision of providing a world class, whole-child education and equitable opportunities for all students in an environment that respects diversity and fosters collaborative partnerships among stakeholders while maintaining financial strength, and its goals outlined in the strategic plan, the district will face the following challenges:

- Balancing finances and effectively utilizing facilities while providing progressive and innovative curricular and instructional programs for all students.
- Addressing the imbalances in demographics and enrollments due to the current boundaries and attendance areas while maintaining diverse programming and unique philosophies.
- Enhancing an already robust assessment system to not only monitor and communicate about the academic achievement of students but also the effectiveness of Hawthorn's 21st Century approach and other innovative programming.

VI. STRATEGIES

The following strategies are designed to accomplish Hawthorn's goals, given the strategic challenges. They are:

- Provide a high quality, well-rounded educational experience and opportunities to all students. Such opportunities and experiences should be rigorous, culturally relevant, healthful and engaging.
- Refine and document a curriculum consistent with our vision to provide a world-class education to all students. A world-class education is defined as one that is innovative, fostering creativity, using 21st Century learning methodologies and focusing on a global perspective reflective of diverse cultures.
- Align all resources and structures to accomplish priorities within a balanced budget. Alignment should include and may not be limited to: curriculum and instructional programs, assessment, staff development, personnel, information systems, technology, and facilities utilization.
- Build strong relationships with students, families, and the community to increase trust and shared responsibility. Additionally, engage community members and organizations in collaborative partnerships to enhance learning and increase community benefit. Through strong relationships and partnerships, the district will gain both benefit from community involvement and provide valuable services and additional benefits to the community as a whole.

VII. NEXT STEPS

The organizational model at right illustrates how effective organizations are governed. It identifies the engagement processes designed to address the development of various components of the strategic plan. To this point, the Board of Education and administration have worked together in a primarily generative process aimed at identifying the strategic challenges and strategies to accomplish a set of district goals.

Moving forward, the Strategic Implementation Plan will be developed. The Implementation Plan should result from a generative process aimed at understanding the interrelationships among the goals, strategies and strategic challenges. The focus should be on developing tactics and action plans that are aligned to the strategies.

As the model suggests, it is now the role of administration to develop the tactical plan to accomplish the strategies and how the plan will be executed.

The next steps are specifically as follows:

- The Strategic Plan draft will be reviewed by the Board of Education and posted on the District 73 web site to provide opportunities for public comment.
- District 73 leaders may request revisions to the draft, and ECRA will also consider public input which will come directly to ECRA in the form of online comments.
- ECRA will revise the plan accordingly and present a final draft to the district for Board of Education approval.
- Upon Board of Education approval of the plan, the administration will work to develop an implementation plan to accomplish the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan. The implementation plan will consist of tactics and action plans to accomplish the goals, timeline and responsibilities, goal metrics to measure progress, and strategy indicators to determine if tactics are being executed.

