

Hillsdale Local School District

Strategic Plan



Motto

Building Character - Expecting Excellence

Vision

The Hillsdale Local Schools, in partnership with the community, will build character and expect excellence by providing a safe and challenging environment that prepares students to be successful in life.

Mission

At Hillsdale Local Schools we will build character and expect excellence in our students by offering diverse opportunities in academics, fine arts, career and technical education, extra-curricular activities, leadership and service. The opportunities must inspire and empower students to value learning as an ongoing process and to gain the knowledge and skills they need for continued education and employment in a changing global society.

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

March 10, 2014, marked the beginning of the Hillsdale Local Schools Strategic Planning Committee. That evening we had 40 individuals present. For the next several months, we worked on developing a vision, mission, and motto that has set the tone for our planning. The Vision, Mission and Motto were adopted by the Hillsdale Board of Education on October 13, 2015. It has been over two years since that initial meeting, and many of the same individuals are devoting their time to improve the future of our school system. It excites me to hear the discussions and see the progress that has developed through this process.

The committee will meet quarterly to review our progress and work towards annual updates for our continuous plan. This ongoing working document will lay the foundation for the future of the Hillsdale Local Schools. This document will include 5-year plans in the area of Student Success and Instruction, Student Services and Activities, Facilities and Operations, Communications, and Financial Stability. Stakeholder input is vital, and I encourage all to join the Strategic Planning team to secure a better tomorrow for all Falcons.

Our quarterly meetings will occur in February, May, August, and November on the Monday prior to the Board of Education meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the High School Media center. We would love for you to join us! Thank you to all that have been involved with the committee, and thank you, community, for your continued support.

Falcons Forever!

Steve Dickerson, Superintendent

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Financial Environment

The Hillsdale Local School District along with many other school districts in Ohio face constant challenges to maintain fiscal stability. Our primary source of revenues comes from levies on real estate and income tax on earned income. The overall economic health of the district will drive these numbers due to economic uncertainty; we are projecting these revenues to remain flat.

The secondary source of revenue comes from the State Foundation payments. The State Foundation payments are part of the State's FY'16 – FY' 17 Biennium Budget. The state's current "State Share Index" is based on a combination of valuation, income and wealth of the district multiplied by the Average Daily Membership (ADM) of the district. Declining enrollment will cause the district to lose foundation dollars. The district has recently seen an increase in the amount it has to pay for outgoing-open enrollment, students that live in the district but attend other schools, which causes a reduction in our foundation payment. The fact that how the state determines how to fund k-12 education every two years, leaves the district in a constant state of uncertainty.

On the expenditure side of the balance sheet the district's largest expense is its personnel costs. Typically districts try to maintain salaries and benefits as a percentage of revenue between 65% and 80%. Over the next four fiscal years the district's projections in these areas is between 65% and 73%. Mandated changes due to federal legislation and the Affordable Care Act (ACA), have caused an increase in the expenses and costs to the district's medical plan. The district participates in the Jefferson Health Plan, a large consortium of approximately 100 schools/entities to help control our expenses.

Maintaining the district's assets: buildings, buses, technology, etc., as well as, the continuing increase in the cost of supplies, materials and curriculum are always a challenge. The district continues to look for low cost providers to save money in these areas.

Demographics/Regulatory Environment

The Hillsdale Local School District consists of 96 square miles primarily located in Ashland County and a very small area in Wayne County. Over the past five years, our district has faced some huge challenges: a need to pass levies, the cutting of programs, declining enrollment, stagnant state funding, a new evaluation processes, new testing requirements and methods, and facility concerns. Since 2013 this district has passed a 1.25% earned income tax levy, a combined renewal of three operating levies, and a 1.4-mil permanent improvement levy. Passing these levies has allowed us to move forward in providing opportunities for our students. We have expanded our curriculum to include additional CTE pathways in Agriculture and Family Consumer Science, STEM opportunities, and a full online curriculum.

We continue to face challenges with declining enrollment. The program cuts of 2013 played a part in this, but there are other challenges such as open enrollment, homeschooling and community schools. Five years ago this district was averaging a plus 15 with open enrollment. Our number of students coming into our district has remained consistent, around 55 students per a year, but our numbers going out have gradually climbed from the plus 15 to a minus 33. The homeschooling numbers have climbed from the mid-forties 5 years ago to currently 70 students. This district has on the average around 30 students annually attending community schools. Over the last three years we have graduated 207 students and registered 150 new kindergartners. Open enrollment, homeschooling, community schools and a nearly minus twenty on graduates to new kindergartner ratio has all contributed to the drop from 1,100 students in 2010 to 860 students today.

Despite the challenges this district has and is facing, the Hillsdale Local School District continues to offer a quality education. Over the past decade, this district has been rated effective or excellent on the state report card. Recent changes to the report card and the move to online testing have brought interesting challenges to school districts in Ohio. Hillsdale is no exception. We are committed to reaching the high level of success on the state indicators to which we are accustomed. There are indicators that show we are doing a good job in educating our students. We continue to have great success with our students passing the third grade reading guarantee. Our graduation rate continues to be excellent. Our ACT scores continue to increase. Over 60% of our students attend college with the last data showing that nearly all are still attending 3 years later.

The Strategic Planning Committee has used the above information and has identified **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities** and **Threats (SWOT)** to assist in developing our 5-year plan.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS

The strategic planning process includes a continuous evaluation of the District’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). The following summarizes this SWOT analysis and is used in the development of the District’s Strategies and Initiatives.

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personnel 2. Small District, Large Opportunities 3. Student Achievement & Behavior 4. Curriculum 5. Low Administrative Costs 6. Strong Investment of Dollars into the Classroom 7. Technology Improvement 8. Strong Support Staff who live here 9. Safe Environment 10. People Choose to Live Here 11. Parental Support 12. Small Community Supports School 13. Student Activities 14. Traditions 15. Booster Groups 16. Volunteers 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilities 2. Handicap Access 3. Special Education (send too many students out) 4. Slow to Change 5. Utilization of Personnel 6. Utilization of Technology 7. Coordination Between Buildings 8. Coordination Across District 9. Communication 10. Public Relations 11. Instructional Equipment and Materials 12. Technology
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. College Credit Plus 2. Virtual Learning Academy (VLA) 3. STEM Funding 4. Grants 5. Business & Industry Partnerships 6. Career Connections and Career Days 7. TCCSA Professional Development Contract 8. Willing Community Benefactors 9. Donors Choose 10. Hillsdale Education Endowment 11. College Partnerships 12. Social Media 13. Grant Writing 	<p>THREATS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Homeschooling 2. Charter Schools 3. Other Public Schools 4. Funding 5. Unfunded Mandates 6. Social Media 7. Parenting (Broken Families) 8. State & Federal Dislike of Public Education 9. Overhead Expenses 10. Technology Replacing Public Education 11. Drugs & Alcohol (Students & Adults) 12. Pace of Change 13. Mental Health

STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES (RESPONDING TO SWOT)

Over the next five years, we will move forward with the following strategies and initiatives (based on availability of funding). Our overall goal is to become a district of choice for residents and others. We will focus on:

- Student Success and Instruction
- Facilities and Operations
- Communications
- Financial Stability

These Strategies and Initiatives will undergo quarterly reviews to evaluate progress. The quarterly reports will reflect the status of each strategy/initiative identified for the current school year by the Strategic Planning Committee. Annually, utilizing the quarterly reports and committee discussion we will evaluate the previous year and attend our strategies/initiatives for the 5th year out.

Strategy/Initiative #1 - Student Success and Instruction

What This Means: We will continually strive to ensure outstanding student academic performance. This will include a focus on quality instruction, innovative teaching practices and professional development.

Why We Will Do This: Our philosophy is to provide varied opportunities for children at all grade levels in the core areas (language, mathematics, science, and social studies) as well as in the arts, technology, and vocational areas.

What We Will Do: (Strategic Planning Curriculum Committee Goals)

- **2019-2020 School Year**
- Begin NWEA Measures of Academic Progress testing at grades 1-8 for reading and math.
- Develop a formal RTI process for the district. Goal is to have an integrated process for handling students with academic difficulties at grades K-12. Work on developing a new way of thinking that supports initiatives like RTI.
- Develop a PBIS program districtwide.

- Staff development for teachers in differentiating for gifted (regular classroom teachers need 30 hours of PD) and special education (new special education forms training for special education teachers only) (Academic Council)
- Develop a special education policies and procedures manual/checklist for Hillsdale Local Schools which includes: identification, referral, testing, and so on (Special Education Coordinator will address this issue)
- Make curriculum director/testing coordinator full-time.
- Data map training for K-12 teachers
- Increase Special Education Director to full time
- Consider annual student instruction on responsible use of technology and social media presence; consider creating digital lesson(s) for this that students complete and parents sign off on; vary instruction by grade levels
- *Add an elementary builders club*

2020-2021 School Year

- Consider building upon our current broadcast class by adding radio or/and television production at the high school
- *Explore additional elective opportunities for middle school students*
- Consider adding STEM instruction at the elementary school.
- *Consider adding a full-time instructional coach (literacy and math) at the middle school*
- Explore alternative funding methods for adding a Technology Integration Specialist, a Technology Teacher, and a STEM Teacher
- Evaluate library media instruction; consider methods to increase classroom integration of library/media and technology standards
- Provide reading instruction at the high school to incoming ninth graders who have reading difficulties.

2021-2022 School Year

- Consider creating an innovation center for art, engineering, and STEM
- Consider creating an art gallery at the middle school and high school; as well as displaying student art in the community
- Consider adding an instructional literacy coach at the high school
- *Consider increasing Agriculture instruction at the middle school to include the full AFNR curriculum between grades 7 and 8.*
- *Consider increasing foreign language instruction at the middle school and high school*

- *Provide Family and Consumer Science instruction in cooking and sewing at the middle school for every student in grades 7-8.*
- **2022-2023 School Year**
- Potentially in a new school facility
- Consider expanding the innovation center
- Consider a public library/school library partnership
- Consider flexible scheduling for some teachers
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- **2023-2024 School Year**
- To be discussed as part of our ongoing new facilities discussion

Strategy/Initiative #2 – Facilities and Operations

What This Means: We will strive to insure adequate and efficient facilities and operations to fulfill our mission.

Why We Will Do This: Our mission will be to provide and maintain our facilities to give our students and staff buildings and equipment that will promote a positive atmosphere for learning.

What We Will Do:

2019-2020 School year

- Evaluate needs of the Greenhouse; Reverse Osmosis and pretreatment system (other needs)
- Evaluate Rover pipeline revenue to guide future decisions in this area
- Evaluate the bus fleet 10-year plan to determine current/future needs
- Seal asphalt at HMS
- Design New Facility

2020-2021 School Year

- Evaluate the bus fleet 10-year plan to determine current/future needs

- Start Construction of new Facilities
- Seal asphalt at HES if not selling school with new construction
- Evaluate Rover pipeline revenue to guide future decisions in this area

2021-2022 School Year

- Evaluate Rover pipeline revenue to guide future decisions in this area
- Finish Construction of new facility

2022-2023 School Year

- Open doors of new facility

*** This group waiting on result of renewal levies and ROVER tax statement to continue planning

Strategy/Initiative #3– Communications

What This Means: Ensure a sense of community pride and involvement in the district through active communication and engagement with all community stakeholders.

Why We Will Do This: To ensure a responsiveness to the community by seeking feedback and input that will enhance community support and understanding of district operations.

What We Will Do:

2019-2020 School Year

- Levy support promotional materials.
- Electronic Newsletter to interested community and alumni
- Utilize grant writer hired through Tri County ESC
- Town Hall meetings for both operating and permanent improvement levies.
- Community meetings on facility designs
- Host/develop a county superintendents meeting to gather and discuss with chamber, TCCSA, and university how to utilize available resources.
- Review others schools’ Communications Plans.
- Add video to the website, including fiscal awareness of our financial situation.
- Evaluate the website and its effectiveness.
- Create a greater social media presence.

- Income Tax evaluation

2020-2021 School Year

- Communicate fiscal awareness of financial situation in relation to Rover Pipeline projections.
- Income Tax evaluation
- Draft district Communications Plan

2021-2022 School Year

- Communicate fiscal awareness of financial situation in relation to Rover Pipeline projections.
- Communicate status of building project.
- Income tax evaluation

2022-2023 School Year

- Open house of new facilities.
- Income tax support promotion.

2023-2024 School Year

- Communicate fiscal awareness of financial situation in relation to Rover Pipeline projections.

Strategy/Initiative #4 – Financial Stability

What This Means: Ensuring taxpayer dollars are used prudently.

Why We Will Do This: To ensure sufficient financial resources are available to provide the education required to fulfill the District’s vision and mission.

What We Will Do:

2019-2020 School Year

- Operating levy renewal placed before voters.
- Permanent Improvement levy renewal placed before voters

- Evaluate 5yr Forecast with/without Rover Pipeline Projections.
- Evaluate reduction of School Income Tax levy
- Resurface track

2020-2021 School Year

- Operating levy renewal placed before voters (if does not pass in 2019-2020)
- Permanent Improvement levy renewal placed before voters (if does not pass in 2019-2020)
- Evaluate 5yr Forecast with/without Rover Pipeline Projections.
- Early renewal of school income tax levy with possible reduction placed before voters.

2021-2022 School Year

- Evaluate Rover Pipeline Revenue and bond Repayment Schedule
- Passage of early renewal of school income tax levy with reduction.

2022-2023 School Year

- Evaluate Rover Pipeline Revenue and bond Repayment Schedule
- Evaluate Income Tax Levy
- Passage of early renewal of school income tax levy with reduction.

2023-2024 School Year

- Evaluate Rover Pipeline Revenue and bond Repayment Schedule
- Place Income Tax Levy on Ballot
- Evaluate Operating Levy Renewal
- Evaluate Permanent Improvement Levy Renewal

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

As a strategic planning committee we will look to our Motto, Mission and Vision as we continue to:

- Evaluate our stakeholders' expectations

- Anticipate the changing requirements for our students
- Capitalize on our strengths and make improvements on our weaknesses
- Plan and achieve our long-term goals

Members

Thank you to all that have participated in developing the Hillsdale Local School District 5 Year Strategic Plan. Over 40 individuals have been involved in this process since the initial meeting on March 10, 2014. There is an open invitation for all stakeholders to get involved in the continued work in reviewing and updating the Hillsdale Local School District's Strategic Plan. The committee will meet in the months of February, May, September and November. These meetings will be in the high school library, from 6:30-8:00 p.m.