

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
- Student Services and Activities
- 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:

2018-2019 School Year

- Develop a formal RTI process for the district.
- 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)

- Add a curriculum director/testing coordinator. Discussed whether this position should or should not include testing coordinator. Discussed a part-time curriculum director if testing coordinator not included.
- Improve gifted services (Professional Development)
- *Expand STEM services at the middle school: robotics*
- *New Grade 8 Electives: Colonial Crafts, School Finance, Poetry, Aeronautics, Popular Culture*
- *Expand Middle School Drama program at lunch time*
- *Begin Middle School Million Words Club Initiative*
- Provide reading instruction at the high school to incoming ninth graders who have reading difficulties. (Horizons—Intervention Specialists have been trained on this.)
- Evaluate extending Easy Tech (K-5)
- Consider adding a third grade teacher (total of 3 third grade teachers)
- *Offer Spanish IV at the high school (course was offered but no student registrations)*
- Consider adding Video Editing class at the high school
- Consider changing the grade 7 & 8 choir
- Consider adding another special at the middle school
- Add a half-time Special Education Coordinator (retitled to Student Services Coordinator)
- Add a full-time Student Services Coordinator responsible for RTI, 504 plans, special education, at risk students. Discussed whether or not this position should also be a testing coordinator. Discussed that this position should have responsibility with regard to state testing for all students with special needs. *Special Education and Curriculum Coordinators have been assigned these responsibilities.*
- *Start developing an integrated process for handling students with academic difficulties at grades K-12*
- Data map training for K-12 teachers

2019-2020 School Year

- Consider adding STEM instruction at the elementary school. Perhaps after school
- *Expand STEM services at the middle school: robotics*
- *Expand an integrated process for handling students with academic difficulties at grades K-12*
- *Increase Special Education Director to full time*

- Consider adding Technology Teacher/Integration Specialist (half time elementary K-6 computer instruction and half-time classroom integration specialist)
- Evaluate library media instruction
- Evaluate computer instruction
- Provide Family and Consumer Science instruction in cooking and sewing at the middle school for every student.
- Consider radio or television production at the high school
- Consider increasing part-time literacy coach to full time at the middle school
- Consider purchasing plagiarism checker software for the district
- Consider expanding the engineering program at the high school
- Consider annual student instruction on responsible use of technology and social media presence

2020-2021 School Year

- 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*

2021-2022 School Year

- Consider adding career pathways at the high school for engineering and/or a medical field
- 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

2022-2023 School Year

- Consider expanding the innovation center
- Consider a public library/school library partnership
- Consider flexible scheduling for some teachers

The committee discussed that additional coordination between curriculum and facilities will be necessary as we plan for a new building.

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:

2018-2019 School Year

- Evaluate the bus fleet 10-year plan to determine current/future needs
- Evaluate the technology plan to determine needs and purchase/replace where appropriate
- Replace/Patch the asphalt at HHS
- Evaluate the dust collecting system at the high school.
- Evaluate needs of the Greenhouse; Reverse Osmosis and pretreatment system (other needs)
- Evaluate Rover pipeline revenue to guide future decisions in this area

2019-2020 School year

- Evaluate the bus fleet 10-year plan to determine current/future needs
- Seal asphalt at HMS

2020-2021 School Year

- Evaluate the bus fleet 10-year plan to determine current/future needs
- Seal asphalt at HES if not selling school with new construction

Strategy/Initiative #4 – 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:

2018-2019 School Year

- Host/develop a county superintendents meeting to gather and discuss with chamber and university how to utilize available resources.
- Determine who receives the least amount of communication but has the most invested financially.
- Electronic Newsletter to interested community and alumni
- Evaluate feasibility of a communications specialist (1 day a week, etc.)
- Town Hall meetings for both operating and permanent improvement levies.
- Community meetings on facility designs

2019-2020 School Year

- Levy support promotional materials.

2020-2021 School Year

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

2021-2022 School Year

- Communicate status of building project.

2022-2023 School Year

- Open house of new facilities.

Income tax support promotion.

Strategy/Initiative #5 – 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:

2018-2019 School Year

- Operating levy renewal evaluated.
- Permanent Improvement levy evaluated.
- Evaluate Rover Pipeline Revenue Projections and establish budget and revenue reserve

account.

2019-2020 School Year

- Operating levy placed before voters.
- Permanent Improvement levy placed before voters
- Evaluate 5yr Forecast with/without Rover Pipeline Projections.

2020-2021 School Year

- Operating levy placed before voters.
- Permanent Improvement levy placed before voters
- Evaluate 5yr Forecast with/without Rover Pipeline Projections.

2021-2022 School Year

- Evaluate Rover Pipeline Revenue and bond Repayment Schedule

2022-2023 School Year

- Evaluate Income Tax Levy

2023-2024 School Year

- Place Income Tax Levy on Ballot

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, August and November. These meetings will be in the high school library, from 6:30-8:00 p.m.