MCPS
MARION COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
"Helping Every Student Succeed"

Achieve 2026
Marion County Public Schools
Strategic Plan
2021 - 2026

School Board Members

District 1   Mrs. Allison Campbell
District 2   Mr. Don Browning
District 3   Mr. Eric Cummings
District 4   Mrs. Nancy Thrower
District 5   Mrs. Kelly King

Superintendent

Diane V. Gullett, Ed.D.

Board Approved November 9, 2021

Contents

Introduction

The Marion County Public Schools' Strategic Plan articulates a set of priorities and strategies that are keenly focused on students as the center of our actions and beliefs. This pathway ensures we are purposeful in serving the needs of our young people and preparing them for a future of opportunities and success.

Through a dedicated team and strong partnerships with the community, we can transform our school system to elevate outcomes our students deserve. We are focusing intensely on student achievement beginning with the early grades and creating pathways to optimize postsecondary success. Creating a safe and positive learning and working environment fosters a culture of collaboration centered around excellence. Through operational efficiency and sound fiscal management, we are optimizing our resources and providing transparency to our community.

We are committed to accelerating, innovating, and elevating as we move onward and upward to performing in the top third of districts in the state of Florida.

Vision and Mission

Vision:

Helping every student succeed

Mission:

Together with families and the community, Marion County Public Schools creates diverse and enriching pathways for all students to achieve intellectual and personal excellence.

We believe

High expectations

Trusting relationships

Transparent communication

Responsibility and accountability

Continuous improvement

Acceleration and innovation

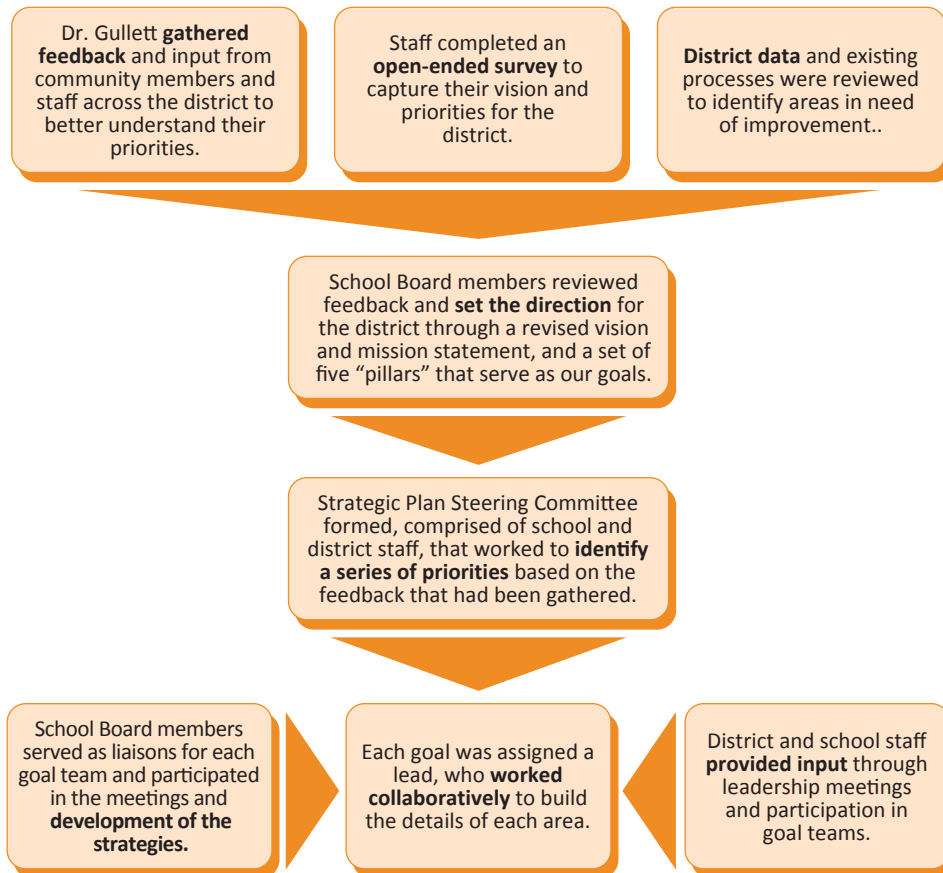**are the foundation for our success**

About Marion County Public Schools

Marion County Public Schools (MCPS) is located in Ocala, Florida, along Interstate 75 with beaches both east and west within an hour's drive. In a community with 375,000 residents, the district serves nearly 43,000 students and is the area's largest employer with almost 7,000 team members. The district is responsible for 49 traditional schools, three charter schools, one special needs school, one adult education school, and one virtual school -- all within 7,000,000 square feet of real estate in an area geographically larger than the state of Rhode Island. MCPS operates on a near $746 million budget, and over 87% of students graduate on time while 63% of students are eligible for free/reduced meals. The workforce is divided into 43% instructional, 54% support, and three percent administrative.

The Strategic Planning Process

The development of this plan was a collaborative effort through which we engaged voices throughout the Marion County Public Schools' community.

Dr. Gullett **gathered feedback** and input from community members and staff across the district to better understand their priorities.

Staff completed an **open-ended survey** to capture their vision and priorities for the district.

District data and existing processes were reviewed to identify areas in need of improvement..

School Board members reviewed feedback and **set the direction** for the district through a revised vision and mission statement, and a set of five "pillars" that serve as our goals.

Strategic Plan Steering Committee formed, comprised of school and district staff, that worked to **identify a series of priorities** based on the feedback that had been gathered.

School Board members served as liaisons for each goal team and participated in the meetings and **development of the strategies.**

Each goal was assigned a lead, who **worked collaboratively** to build the details of each area.

District and school staff **provided input** through leadership meetings and participation in goal teams.

This document outlines the goals and strategies that will serve as the "north star" for the district in the coming years. We will continue to revisit this document regularly to ensure we are tracking our progress to achieve the goals we set.

We will provide comprehensive strategic plan updates to the School Board of Marion County twice a year (August and February), focused on both quantitative metrics as well as implementation progress.

Our Strategic Plan (at a glance)

Goal 1 – Student Success

Increase student achievement, opportunities, access, and equity.

Goal 2 – Safe and Positive Learning and Working Environment

Provide a safe and supportive learning and working environment for all students and staff.

Goal 3 – Talent Management

Ensure all students have access to highly effective and diverse teachers, administrators, and support staff.

Goal 4 – Fiscal and Operational Efficiency

Ensure operational effectiveness and efficiency of resources are aligned with strategic priorities.
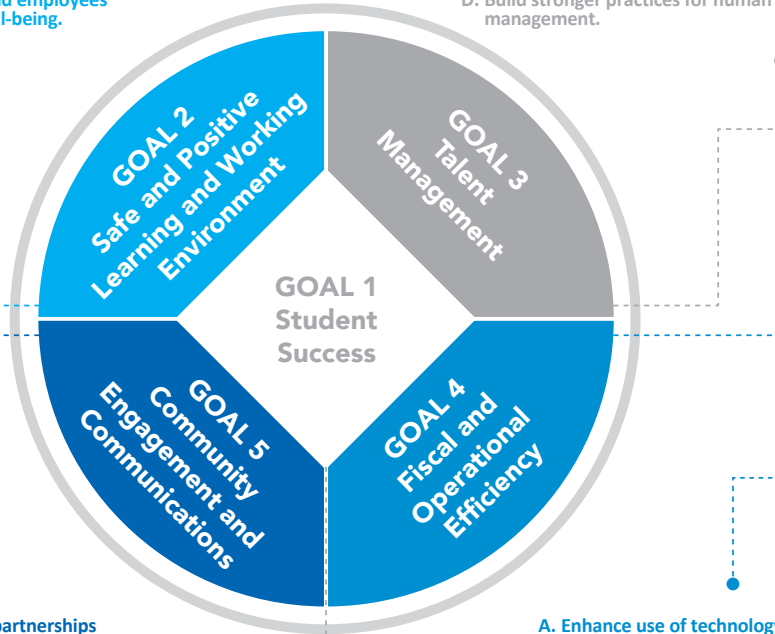
Goal 5 – Community Engagement and Communications

Increase dialogue, partnerships, and collaboration to meet stakeholder needs and productively engage them in our successes.

Goals and Strategies

A. Build capacity of schools and leaders to implement strategies to provide safe, positive, and supportive learning conditions.

B. Engage families and the community as partners to support student achievement, attendance and social-emotional well-being.

C. Ensure school safety is a top priority at all schools.

D. Support students' and employees' social-emotional well-being.

A. Strengthen recruitment of highly-qualified teachers, administrators, and staff.

B. Implement innovative professional development strategies to reinforce a focus on retaining a positive and effective workforce.

C. Reduce school staff absences and impact on schools and students.

D. Build stronger practices for human capital management.

GOAL 2
Safe and Positive Learning and Working Environment

GOAL 3
Talent Management

GOAL 1
Student Success

GOAL 5
Community Engagement and Communications

GOAL 4
Fiscal and Operational Efficiency

A. Expand community partnerships to increase student learning opportunities.

B. Strengthen two-way district communication and engagement with families and the community.

C. Strengthen internal communication and recognition of employee contributions.

A. Strengthen core instruction (Tier 1) with an emphasis on literacy.

B. Develop systems to support data-driven instruction.

C. Engage ALL students in rigorous, grade-level content through differentiated instruction.

D. Expand access to high-quality early childhood opportunities to strengthen kindergarten readiness.

E. Support students' readiness and success in postsecondary opportunities (employment, enlistment, enrollment, entrepreneurship).

A. Enhance use of technology for improved efficiency and effective instruction across the district.

B. Provide reliable and safe bus transportation.

C. Ensure facilities are healthy and safe physical environments for working and learning.

D. Expand wellness and nutritional education to improve academic performance and behavior by supporting students in making healthy food choices.

E. Increase efficiency in the procurement of goods and services.

F. Provide financial stability, sound fiscal management, and operational efficiency.

Goal 1 – Student Success

Increase student achievement, opportunities, access, and equity.

Outcome Metrics

- Increase the percent of students making at least one year of growth (learning gains) in English Language Arts (ELA) districtwide from 50% in 2021 to 63% by 2026.

- Increase the percent of students making at least one year of growth (learning gains) in math districtwide from 43% in 2021 to 56% by 2026.

- Increase the percent of students making at least one year growth (proficiency) in science districtwide from 44% in 2021 to 57% by 2026.

- Increase the percent of students that have the opportunity for advanced coursework, including college courses and industry certifications, from 82% in 2021 to 95% by 2026.

Priority Strategies

A. Strengthen core instruction (Tier 1) with an emphasis on literacy.

B. Build systems to support data-driven instruction.

C. Engage all students in rigorous, grade-level content through differentiated instruction.

D. Expand access to high-quality early childhood opportunities to strengthen kindergarten readiness.

E. Support students' readiness and success in postsecondary opportunities (employment, enlistment, enrollment, entrepreneurship).

Goal 2 – Safe and Positive Learning and Working Environment

Provide a physically and emotionally safe and supportive learning and working environment for all students and staff.

Outcome Metrics

- Reduce chronic absenteeism rates from 37% in 2021 to 10% by 2026.

- Reduce alternative placements from 397 in 2021 to no more than 200 by 2026.

- Reduce the number of expulsions from 16% in 2021 to 9% by 2026.

- Increase percentage of students and staff feeling safe (physically and psychologically) at school through climate survey data to be determined once survey is developed.

- Increase the percentage of schools that are secured with fences, cameras, and door buzzers installed from 52% in 2021 to 100% by 2026.

Priority Strategies

A. Build capacity of schools and leaders to implement strategies to provide safe, positive, and supportive learning conditions.

B. Engage families and the community as partners to support student achievement, attendance, and social-emotional well-being.

C. Ensure that school safety is a top priority at all schools.

D. Support students' and employees' social-emotional well-being.
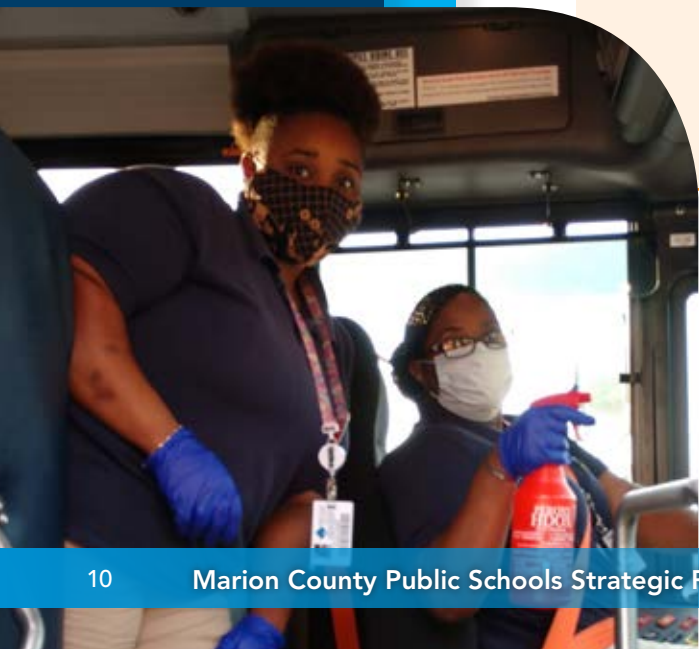
Goal 3 – Talent Management

Ensure all students have access to highly effective and diverse teachers, administrators, and support staff.

Outcome Metrics

- Increase the percentage of in-field certified teachers in classrooms from 92% in 2021 to 97% by 2026.

- Improve retention rate of instructional personnel from 88% in 2021 to 94% by 2026.

- Reduce the number of Exceptional Student Education (ESE) self-contained instructional positions that remain vacant at the 10-day count from 23% in 2021 to 10% or less by 2026.

- Decrease the diversity gap of administrators and certified staff with the student population of the district from 26% in 2021 to 14% by 2026.

Priority Strategies

A. Strengthen recruitment of highly-qualified teachers, administrators, and staff.

B. Implement innovative professional development strategies to reinforce a focus on retaining a positive and effective workforce.

C. Reduce school staff absences and the impact on schools and students.

D. Build stronger practices for human capital management.
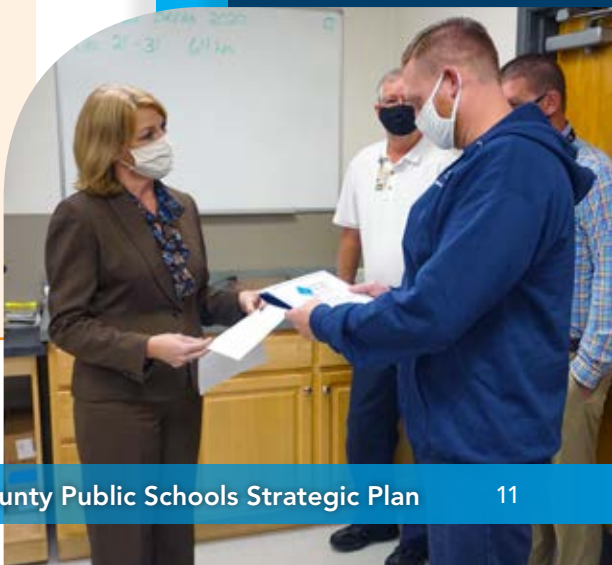
Goal 4 – Fiscal and Operational Efficiency

Ensure operational effectiveness and efficiency of resources are aligned with strategic priorities.

Outcome Metrics

- Technology - Improve student access to devices and bandwidth (achieving 1:1 with Chromebooks) from 90% in 2021 to 100% by 2026.

- Transportation - Improve average daily bus driver attendance from 85% in 2021 to 100% by 2026.

- Facilities and Technical Services - Reduce time to complete work orders (baseline to be determined by 2022).

- Food and Nutrition Services - Increase school lunch participation from 51% in 2021 to 80% by 2026.

- Risk Management - Compare the projected annual savings to the board for the self-funded health plan versus the fully-insured plan in each calendar year starting with 2021 with a projected savings of $3,906,353.00. Future years' savings will be determined via actuarial analysis.

- Provide continuity of operations, in the event of unforeseen emergencies, by increasing the unassigned ending fund balance from 6% in 2022 to 10-12% by 2026 of the General Fund Revenue.

Priority Strategies

A. Enhance use of technology for improved efficiency and effective instruction across the district.

B. Provide reliable and safe bus transportation.

C. Ensure facilities are healthy and safe physical environments for working and learning.

D. Expand wellness and nutritional education to improve academic performance and behavior by supporting students in making healthy food choices.

E. Increase efficiency in the procurement of goods and services.

F. Provide financial stability, sound fiscal management, and operational efficiency.

Goal 5 – Community Engagement and Communications

Increase dialogue, partnerships, and collaboration to meet stakeholder needs and productively engage them in our successes.

Outcome Metrics

- Establish a measure of community satisfaction with district communication.

- Increase the percent of families indicating satisfaction with communication from 78% in 2021 to 90% by 2026.

- Establish a districtwide staff survey that captures satisfaction rates across all five goal areas.

Priority Strategies

A. Expand community partnerships to increase student learning opportunities.

B. Strengthen two-way district communication and engagement with families and the community.

C. Strengthen internal communication and recognition of employee contributions.

Appendix – Strategy Profiles

GOAL 1

Strategy	1A. Strengthen core instruction (Tier 1) with an emphasis on literacy.
Description	Strengthening core instruction along with building a strong literacy foundation is our focus. MCPS is committed to increasing proficiency in reading, math, and science. In order to have the necessary skills needed to accelerate student academic performance and close the achievement gap, we will increase proficiency by providing rigorous core instruction and building a strong literacy foundation that impacts all subjects and content. It is also necessary to invest time and resources in our staff to equip them with the tools required to meet our goal.
Key Activities	1. Develop a comprehensive K-12 literacy plan to address and meet the needs of all learners. 2. Develop and provide professional learning opportunities for all staff on rigorous Tier 1 instruction across content areas. 3. Implement and provide professional learning opportunities for educators to strengthen their delivery of Tier 1 instruction and specific instructional strategies that will address the transition to Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) standards to remove learning barriers and maximize instruction for all learners. 4. Increase the quality of writing, science, mathematics, reading, and social studies instruction to prepare students at all levels for rigorous coursework and various program opportunities by means of proven strategies that lead to increased student learning. 5. Enhance instructional leadership practices through innovative practices and research-based strategies to strengthen instructional capacity with school and district personnel. 6. Design an instructional framework tool to access curriculum maps and other additional resources to support professional learning and student achievement.

Strategy	1B. Develop systems to support data-driven instruction.
Description	In order to meet the academic needs of our students, we have to meet them where they are. Data-driven instruction is a cycle of monitoring the impact of instruction in the classroom to help decide what comes next in the learning progression for each student and the class as a whole. It helps teachers be more flexible and responsive in their teaching and to identify opportunities for enrichment and remediation. Along with a solid foundation of Tier 1 instruction, data-driven instruction will allow us to close academic gaps and guide more students to a path of acceleration.
Key Activities	1. Review and strengthen Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) strategies and evidence-based interventions. 2. Develop a data dashboard with early-warning indicators. 3. Review formative assessments to determine appropriate alignment to the new B.E.S.T. standards. 4. Enhance teacher capacity to utilize formative assessment data to inform instruction. 5. Strengthen the work of Professional Learning Communities.

Strategy	1C. Engage all students in rigorous, grade-level content through differentiated instruction.
Description	MCPS will increase achievement proficiency scores and access opportunities for all students. Overall and individual subgroup scores are reviewed to ensure all students meet or exceed proficiency levels. On average, there is a 20% achievement gap in ELA, mathematics, and science between our English Language Learners (ELL) and ESE students compared to their counterparts. In order for students with various learning styles and abilities to make gains toward grade-level proficiency, we will remove barriers. A strategic focus on ELA, mathematics, and advanced coursework assists students in acquiring the strategies needed to be successful in all content areas. We must provide students with content that is accessible to them, strategies that enable them to learn, and exposure to critical thinking skills and problem-solving experiences that will prepare them for K-12 and postsecondary success. In addition, we will provide professional learning opportunities for teachers and strategies for success.
Key Activities	1. Remove learning barriers by offering professional learning opportunities for teachers to apply Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. 2. Enhance capacity of educators to teach all students through professional learning opportunities to support English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and ESE students. Provide opportunities for ELLs to develop an understanding of academic content, critical thinking, and use of English simultaneously. Provide a consistent consortium to address the gap and continue to accelerate their academic performance to close the achievement gap. 3. Increase the inclusion of self-contained ESE students in general education classrooms to gain access to rigorous instruction. 4. Strengthen gifted education through implementation of 2nd grade universal gifted screening and examination, and training of research-based delivery model(s). 5. Provide access and opportunities to engage in coding, chess clubs, and other enrichment learning opportunities for students. 6. Extend learning opportunities for specific subgroups beyond the traditional school year to include summer learning opportunities for ESE and ELL students.

Strategy	1D. Expand access to high-quality early childhood opportunities to strengthen kindergarten readiness.
Description	MCPS will address the readiness disparity between students by increasing early childhood opportunity programs to accelerate academic readiness for kindergarten. We will implement early childhood opportunities to improve students' readiness levels when entering kindergarten. MCPS will evaluate and analyze the lack of foundational skills prior to kindergarten by providing high-quality pre-kindergarten programs and improve the quality of instruction.
Key Activities	1. Educate parents in the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards and engage them in the importance of early learning. 2. Expand pre-kindergarten educational opportunities across the district. 3. Improve quality of pre-kindergarten curriculum and instruction (aligned with kindergarten readiness) with an emphasis on Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP), including social-emotional learning to prepare students for kindergarten.

Strategy	1E. Support students' readiness and success in postsecondary opportunities (employment, enlistment, enrollment, entrepreneurship).
Description	In order to meet the needs of the workforce in the surrounding community, MCPS must ensure all pathways align with community needs. Accomplishing this involves the interaction with all stakeholders, including local businesses, in order to design pathways that are aligned K-12. This will include putting support structures in place to guide students through their educational journey.
Key Activities	1. Expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways that align with community needs. 2. Develop and maintain industry partnerships and establish innovative ways to ensure students pursuing CTE pathways are provided access to opportunities and internships that will prepare them to succeed in the most promising occupations. 3. Develop personalized goals/plans with students supported by the use of student data with coaching from staff. 4. Provide equitable opportunities for advanced coursework and offer multiple pathways for student learning. 5. Promote college and career awareness, exploration, and preparation programs beginning in elementary and middle grades.

GOAL 2

Strategy	2A. Build capacity of schools and leaders to implement strategies to provide safe, positive, and supportive learning conditions.
Description	District and school-based leaders will be offered support in positive behavior methods to promote safe and positive school climates for staff and students. Utilizing evidence-based practices, such as classroom management strategies and restorative approaches, may increase student engagement and academic performance. These strategies will be supported through ongoing professional learning opportunities and coaching at the leadership and classroom levels. We will monitor the effects of professional learning and coaching opportunities through multiple metrics including climate surveys, attendance and discipline data.
Key Activities	1. Support the implementation of positive behavior methods through a differentiated coaching model and continuous professional learning opportunities. Monitoring will occur through climate surveys, walkthroughs, and discipline data. 2. Provide professional learning opportunities to coach staff on effective classroom management practices aligned with a schoolwide discipline framework, as well as develop districtwide opportunities for professional learning and mentoring around effective classroom management strategies. 3. Provide professional learning and coaching opportunities to include proactive and responsive restorative practices in schoolwide discipline procedures, shifting from punishment-based discipline strategies to an instructional approach to effective schoolwide discipline procedures.

Strategy	2B. Engage families and the community as partners to support student achievement, attendance and social-emotional well-being.
Description	Enhance student achievement by developing and implementing innovative ways to partner with parents and the community. These partnerships will be at the school level (parent conferences) and community meetings/events to support the importance of learning and attendance.
Key Activities	1. Offer community events to support achievement, attendance, and social-emotional well-being. 2. Every campus will receive a home school liaison. 3. Schools will provide parent conference opportunities. 4. The district will provide professional learning opportunities to support site-based School Advisory Councils (SAC) to continually assist in preparing and evaluating the results of the School Improvement Plan.

Strategy	2C. Ensure school safety is a top priority at all schools.
Description	Utilize existing funds and resources to complete all school hardening projects, expand training for staff to manage crisis situations, and create educational opportunities to support at-risk students.
Key Activities	1. The Safe Schools Department will collaborate with the Finance Department to properly use available funds to complete all school hardening projects. 2. The Safe Schools Department will collaborate with the Mental Health and Wellness and Professional Leadership and Learning Departments to assist with the proper training of students and staff to prepare for any future crisis events. 3. The Safe Schools Department will collaborate with key stakeholders to develop a safety task force to support at-risk students.

Strategy	2D. Support students' and employees' social-emotional well-being.
Description	Reduce barriers and increase access for students and staff to obtain the support they need for their mental health and well-being.
Key Activities	1. Implement components of the Mental Health Plan framework. 2. Provide information and support to students and school staff through the Self-Care, Healthy Mindset, Inspire Growth, Nutrition, and Exercise (SHINE) initiative.

Strategy	3A. Strengthen recruitment of highly-qualified teachers, administrators, and staff.
Description	In the school setting, a highly effective classroom teacher is the most influential component of student achievement, followed by strong and supportive administrators and staff. The priority of student achievement requires the collaborative work of highly-qualified teachers, administrators, and support staff. Recruiting effective and highly-qualified teachers, administrators, and staff has and continues to be a challenge. This will require school and district leaders to think differently for stronger strategies to recruit team members. Systems are in need of development and/or strengthening as they are effectively implemented, progress monitored, and problem-solved to ensure highly-qualified teachers, administrators, and staff come to, and stay in, Marion County. Staff must be supported and primed for success. To do this, stronger partnerships with higher education, businesses, and community stakeholders, as well as establishing effective pipelines to develop, support, and "grow our own" will be essential to this strategy.
Key Activities	1. Develop strategic partnerships to source new talent with a diverse workforce that is effective and highly-qualified for non-instructional, instructional, and administrative positions throughout the district. 2. Strengthen the internal and external pipelines for current and potential teachers, administrators, and staff to "grow our own" and reduce diversity gaps. 3. Target our recruitment efforts toward positions that are difficult to staff.

Strategy	3B. Implement innovative professional learning opportunities to reinforce a focus on retaining a positive and effective workforce.
Description	Through professional learning opportunities and the use of researched-based best practices, our workforce will be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to support and engage all learners in high-quality instruction.
Key Activities	1. Ensure mentors are provided for novice teachers. 2. Monitor and support the development of differentiated professional learning opportunities for teachers through each phase of their career, including recognition of teachers as leaders. 3. Develop a process to explore implementation of teacher-driven professional learning opportunities (EdCamps, ECET2, etc.). 4. Establish mechanisms to elevate teacher voices in district decisions. 5. Create a comprehensive leadership and learning pipeline for instructional and non-instructional roles with job-embedded opportunities for growth (e.g., residencies and job-shadow experiences). 6. Provide professional learning opportunities for school leaders to provide meaningful feedback for maximization of employee engagement and performance.

Strategy	3C. Reduce school staff absences and the impact on schools and students.
Description	Stability is an integral factor for the academic, emotional, and social growth of students. At the heart of a school's stability are the employees who provide consistency for students on a daily basis. Students must be able to rely on the consistency of their classrooms, schedules, and supporting personnel. Staff absences are detrimental to the instructional continuity students depend on throughout the year. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this issue was exacerbated by required procedures for quarantining and protecting the staff and students. Efforts focused on professional learning opportunities and preparing staff to support the school and students will maximize efficiency and streamline real-time support for students. Incentives for school staff to maintain high attendance rates will acknowledge the dedication of staff and consequently maintain a stable learning environment for student learning.
Key Activities	1. Investigate the challenges and barriers impacting staff attendance. 2. Identify strategies to develop and implement a plan of action to improve staff attendance. 3. Provide best practices for schools to cross-train employees to maximize classroom support in the event of a teacher absence. 4. Explore methods to increase substitute availability, provide training, and increase efficacy.

Strategy	3D. Build stronger practices for human capital management.
Description	Human Resources has a significant impact on the culture of the entire organization and the ability to retain and recruit exceptional employees. The awareness and strategic use of human capital is foundational to MCPS. The ability to assess and utilize each employee's skillset, knowledge, and experience can more precisely enable all employees to achieve optimal performance. In order to effectively and efficiently monitor the current and projected state of available and desirable human capital, we must enact and build systems for human capital management.
Key Activities	1. Conduct a survey of Human Resources to enhance a customer-focused approach and develop an action plan of best practices. 2. Establish effective, transparent, and streamlined hiring and onboarding practices. 3. Develop and implement a research-aligned evaluation system to effectively establish practices that will capitalize on strengths and identify areas of growth for each employee to better serve our students. 4. Develop and implement a human resource scorecard that will assist with the planning and management of strategically aligned human capital management systems.

Strategy	4A. Enhance use of technology for improved efficiency and effective instruction across the district.
Description	Promoting the effective use of technology by addressing the educational technology needs of students will result in improved learning opportunities, interactions, and instruction. Effective technology can be utilized to manage and track ongoing progress along with data points. MCPS must ensure students' technology hardware needs are met to provide connectivity, increase access to tools for learning, and increase attendance.
Key Activities	1. Develop a digital master plan that identifies needs and opportunities to strengthen technology across the district. 2. Explore innovative technologies and resources to expand digital opportunities for student engagement and learning. 3. Provide training and support on how to utilize technology to improve high-quality instruction.

Strategy	4B. Ensure reliable and safe bus transportation.
Description	The purpose of this strategy is to identify and strengthen areas of deficiency to ensure bus transportation is efficient, reliable, and safe. The Transportation Department will recruit, hire, and retain a team of drivers to cover the number of routes needed to transport bus riders to and from school in a timely and safe manner. The Transportation Department will also explore and secure the most innovative product, best technology, and programs to assist with establishing the most efficient bus routes and utilization of the fleet.
Key Activities	1. Explore ways to recruit and retain bus drivers. 2. Upgrade Global Positioning System (GPS) on buses to 4G for continued support of fleet tracking and improved communication. 3. Establish a Lead Bus Driver Program to assist in providing additional support to newly-hired bus drivers and aides. 4. Maximize fleet usage to improve the timely delivery of students to school and home.

Strategy	4C. Ensure facilities are healthy and safe physical environments for working and learning.
Description	Develop a facility database and tracking system to effectively address facility and maintenance needs. The database would consist of infrastructure quantities and types such as, square feet and type of flooring, amount and type of mechanical and electrical equipment, and quantity and type of roofs. This will allow the setting of maintenance milestones and the planning for systems replacements.
Key Activities	1. Develop a facilities master plan that addresses infrastructure with a priority on critical systems. 2. Develop a system for tracking, prioritizing, and responding to maintenance requests. 3. Explore alternative revenue sources to meet facility/maintenance needs that are unfunded in the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan. 4. Secure vendor(s) and contract(s) to provide air quality enhancements in heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) units (process will operate HVAC systems more efficiently reducing routine maintenance needs and killing airborne viruses).

Strategy	4D. Expand wellness and nutritional education to improve academic performance and behavior by supporting students in making healthy food choices.
Description	To increase the knowledge of healthy eating by providing nutritional education and healthy choices through the district food and nutrition program. Healthy students are better learners. Research shows a strong connection between healthy behaviors and academic achievement (e.g. grades, standardized tests, graduation rates, attendance). Data from the 2019 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) illustrate the prevalence of health behaviors among children and adolescents that can have a significant impact on learning and a lifetime of healthier living.
Key Activities	1. Expand nutritional and program marketing through multiple venues to encourage healthier eating. Nutrition education is part of a well-rounded health education curriculum and can be included as part of schoolwide instruction. 2. Increase student involvement in meal programs and address the need to engage students as active participants in their learning and health, through tasting events and monthly award programs. 3. Expand student involvement with the purchase of nutrition software and hardware which provides student access to preselect healthy meals of their choice.

Strategy	4E. Increase efficiency in the procurement of goods and services.
Description	By creating efficiency in the procurement process as a whole, needed items will be procured in a clear and concise manner, at the best price possible, meeting the needs of students and staff.
Key Activities	1. Explore the use of a web-based bid and contract management software to streamline the bid process to increase efficiency and reduce errors. 2. Revise contracting process to reduce time for completion. 3. Establish innovative ways to increase procurement training for district employees in the purchasing process. 4. Expand piggyback contracts where appropriate to optimize savings.

Strategy	4F. Ensure financial stability, sound fiscal management, and operational efficiency.
Description	The strategy will provide assurances that maximum funds are available to support classrooms and minimize operational costs.
Key Activities	1. Develop a robust system of key performance indicators to monitor and assess operational efficiency, including risk assessment. 2. Ensure financial resources are dedicated to the district's highest priority strategies, including the utilization of grants. 3. Plan, develop, and monitor the district budget and provide relevant financial information to decision-makers and the community, including training for district staff and school leaders.

GOAL 5

Strategy	5A. Expand community partnerships to increase student learning opportunities.
Description	When community institutions (e.g., local businesses, civic organizations, nonprofit agencies, faith-based groups, and community colleges), families, and schools collaborate on their goals and how to reach them, all entities benefit. To make this possible, the district will establish (and build upon) strategic partnerships with key external stakeholders by improving external communication and creating leadership and learning opportunities.
Key Activities	1. Create a districtwide liaison to identify and lead innovative partnerships and improve communication with external stakeholders. 2. Establish strategic partnerships within the community to improve early learning, literacy, and student success (e.g., districtwide partnerships). 3. Explore opportunities to utilize expertise and knowledge in our local community (including retired educators and subject-matter experts) to expand engagement to optimize support areas of need. 4. Create leadership and learning opportunities to engage business and community members (including Leadership MCPS and job shadow experiences).

Strategy	5B. Strengthen two-way district communication and engagement with families and the community.
Description	Strong, effective two-way communication takes effort from all stakeholders and is on-going at all times. By providing accurate, timely, and transparent communication through the website and additional communication channels, families and the community should have a greater awareness of the district brand and school identities.
Key Activities	1. Build a comprehensive communication plan promoting the district brand and individual school identities to families and community. 2. Update district website to improve communication and transparency. 3. Provide stellar customer service professional learning opportunities for all employees to more effectively engage with families and the community. 4. Explore the use of mutual civility protocols to ensure respectful partnerships between schools and the community.

Strategy	5C. Strengthen internal communication and recognition of employee contributions.
Description	In order for colleagues to be as effective as possible, we need to keep them informed. Strengthening internal communication and highlighting employee contributions can also lead to higher levels of trust and create a culture of communication in which the common goal will help achieve the best outcomes for everyone involved. This will be accomplished by improving access to information for all employees, and finding new ways to recognize employees for their service.
Key Activities	1. Examine and improve access to information for all employees. 2. Provide stellar customer service professional learning opportunities for all employees to improve communication within and among employees in the district. 3. Explore ways to recognize employees for their impact to students and their success (including milestone employees).

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