

A photograph of two young children lying on their stomachs in a lush green field of tall grass. They are both looking upwards with joyful expressions. The child on the left is wearing a red sweater and has their right arm raised, pointing their index finger towards the sky. The child on the right is wearing a colorful striped sweater. The background is a dense field of green grass with some yellow wildflowers.

STORMY LAKE CONSULTING

SD57 Strategic Plan 2016-2021

February 2016

INTRODUCTION FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Our strategic plan sets the direction and establishes priorities for our School District over the next 5 years. It takes a long-term perspective – learning outcomes in 20 years – and focuses on what we can do in the near future to get there.

This plan aligns all sectors of our organization and all schools in our district on the mission and vision of the organization. This includes plans such as our own Long Range Facility Plan as well as the district accountability and student achievement framework document.

This strategic plan is important. We will use the mission, vision, and values to construct meaning and use it as a measure to consider decisions and direction. With a shared purpose and a common understanding, we can be more effective moving forward.

FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH

School District 57 acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh people in Prince George and McBride, the McLeod Lake Indian Band in the Mackenzie region, as well as the Simpcw First Nation in Valemout.

School District 57 includes the City of Prince George, the District of Mackenzie, the Village of McBride, the Village of Valemout, and the Regional District of Fraser Fort George.

We are a slow-growing Regional District. Population peaked at approximately 101,000 in 1996 and has been declining since. The decline is forecasted to halt by 2016, although average annual growth will be slow – just 0.2% through to 2016. This will be followed by an average of 0.2% annual growth for the Regional District to 2026. Even with the slight population increase, the school population in the 5 - 17 age group will decrease. The increase in total population is largely due to the increase in the 65+ age bracket.

In the past decade, School District No. 57 had a choice to make: ignore the enrolment decline, ignore imposed financial challenges and ignore under-utilized space in schools or face these challenges as an organization to ensure a sustainable future. Addressing these challenges was essential, as inaction would likely deprive students of the educational opportunities that they deserve.

In the past few years we have made very difficult decisions to ensure the sustainability of our school district. We have closed 37% of district schools and made changes to others to keep them viable, including the reconfiguration of three schools, school boundary relocations, secondary school re-alignment, structural right sizing, and the establishment of an educational service centre.

“Be prepared for what you cannot imagine. Be a courageous and adventurous learner. Care deeply – about your learning, about yourself and about your community.”

From community dialogue

This work, albeit challenging, has resulted in a sustainable school district and additional dollars for student learning in the School District. Student achievement has continued to rise slowly and steadily: the Aboriginal six-year completion rate has improved by approximately 2% each year, the Non-Aboriginal six-year completion rate has improved by 1% each year, and required provincial examination results (pass or better) for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students range from 85% to 99%.

We have also identified and implemented conditions for learning, eight elements we see as essential in meeting the needs of our ever increasingly vulnerable student population: assessment for learning, data-driven evidence for learning, cultural competencies, social and emotional learning, poverty and student learning, differentiation and universal design for learning, enhanced learning through technology, and growing as adult learners which includes supervision of instruction and mentorship/training.

The Ministry of Education challenged us to enable “learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy” (BC Education System Mission Statement).

Our strategic plan needs to meet the challenge presented by the Ministry of Education and adapt to the changing world of education. To create the learning environment necessary to bring about success for each student, we need to continue to advance our understanding of brain development, unique learning needs of our students, and the ever-changing needs of our community.

Our workforce is dedicated to quality learning experiences and support for all students. What we need is a strategic plan that prepares the current generation for their future and considers the next generation of learners.

Within this context, focused on our students, our educators and our community, we set out the following strategic plan.

“It’s important that our students develop learning skills that can be used in real life, not just in the classroom.”

From community dialogue

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Our strategic plan consists of a coherent set of goals and objectives founded on a compelling mission, vision and values. It includes the desired capabilities of our graduates and the measures by which we will know that we are successful.

Our mission describes our core purpose and our vision describes what we would like to be in the near future.

Our values provide the philosophical background for our actions and decisions.

The capabilities describe the set of holistic skills and abilities that students should graduate with in order to thrive in the 21st Century.

MISSION & PURPOSE

Our mission and purpose describes why School District No. 57 exists at the most meaningful level. It is aspirational and can never be fully achieved. It is why we do the work that we do.

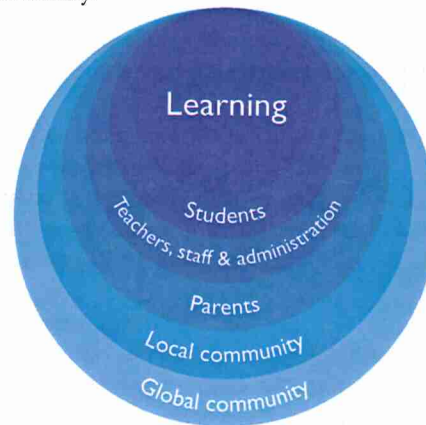
Many education systems state their visions in terms of the students, and indeed students are at the heart of everything we do. But the education system serves the entire community and affects many people beyond students.

For this reason, the mission needs to be based on a more fundamental truth about education in its broadest sense.

In School District 57, our mission is:

Inspiring learning anywhere.

At the core of everything we do is learning. Learning happens both inside and outside the classroom. It happens for the benefit of students and for the benefit of society. Learning is for students, staff, parents and the community.



At its best, learning is motivating and engaging. Learning happens in the school, in the home and in the community. Learning happens everywhere.

Every decision has to be considered within the context of how it affects learning.

Technology has provided a means to allow information to become accessible and ubiquitous. Our learners need to understand how to use technology to enhance learning.

VISION

A vision is a clear, specific, compelling picture of what the school district will look like in 20 years. It helps define what is within or outside of the school district's scope.

Through our consultations, we heard clearly from students, educational staff, parents and the community that the desired outcome of the education system is for students to have options and possibilities for whatever comes next in life. Based on this insight, our vision for the School District No. 57 is:

Preparing students to seize life's opportunities.

This vision becomes achievable when core academic skills are brought to life in real-world contexts and students are motivated and engaged in their own learning. Parent and community involvement is high and contributes to the students' learning. Learning that happens in the community, in the home and in the workplace is linked with learning in the school.

CAPABILITIES OF OUR STUDENTS

Deeply connected to our vision is a set of capabilities that we want our students to develop in order to live well in a changing, complex world. These capabilities were derived from our work with the community and also reflect the direction of the Ministry of Education.

Our school district will work to develop the following primary capabilities in our students:

- Fundamental academic skills, including literacy, numeracy and knowledge of the sciences
- Interpersonal, relationship, teamwork and social skills
- Curiosity, critical thinking and problem solving
- Multiple literacies, including technological, financial and environmental
- Local and global citizenship
- Self-awareness, resilience, motivation and adaptability
- Mental, physical and emotional wellness

Many of these capabilities are not the exclusive responsibility of the school system. That is why we will work closely with our parents and our communities to form partnerships to help assure that our students graduate with these capabilities.

ATTRIBUTES WE VALUE

Our attributes inform our behavior in pursuit of our vision. This includes core values on which we cannot compromise and aspirational values that we espouse.

The values of our School District are based on the educational values and needs expressed by our community.

A set of six values are proposed that will meet our communities' needs:

COMMUNITY NEEDS	VALUE
<p>Adaptability Our students and our community need us to be able to adapt to an education environment that experiences continual change. This will ensure that we successfully meet the needs of our learners, staff, parents and communities.</p>	<p>Confidence → We need to be confident in our skills and knowledge. We have the courage and conviction to achieve our goals. We are willing to make bold decisions for the betterment of our learners and will stand behind our actions.</p>
<p>Community Connectedness We are a geographically diverse school district that is made up of four distinct communities. It is important that everyone, regardless of their geographic location, feels connected to one another in an education community.</p>	<p>Inclusivity → We will provide an education community that is welcoming and inclusive. A community where everyone feels valued and has a sense of belonging.</p>
<p>Uniqueness We must appreciate the diversity, individuality and uniqueness of each learner and understand that learning styles, needs and abilities of learners will vary.</p>	<p>Dynamic Approach → By respecting the uniqueness of our learners, we will strive to meet their needs and provide them with the skills that they need to succeed. We will be dynamic in our approach to the educational needs of our learners.</p>
<p>Relevance We must create an educational experience that connects learners to material that is personally relevant and inspires a true passion for learning.</p>	<p>Experiential Learning → Experiential learning will provide learners with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills through hands-on experiences. We will also value lived experience within academic learning.</p>
<p>Communication Skills We must utilize effective communications to support our community of learners.</p>	<p>Openness → We will actively engage in open communication with our education community. Transparency will enable us to establish trust and support from our communities and will provide clarity in our processes.</p>
<p>Fairness We must be fair, ethical and inclusive in our policies, practices and allocation of resources.</p>	<p>Equitable Access → We will create an environment where everyone has equitable access to learning opportunities and resources. Equitable access is based on fairness more than equality.</p>

GOALS

Goals are high-level descriptions of what we would like to achieve as a whole. They are supported with measurable objectives to track progress and with strategies that set out how each of the goals will be achieved. These goals will guide departments and leaders in creating objectives, policies and procedures that are aligned with the Mission, Vision, and Values. Learning and operating plans will align with our high-level goals, and will translate the goals into concrete, realistic, timely and measurable objectives and strategies.

Our goals describe what we want to have accomplished by 2021. They fall into four categories: Learning, Engagement, Opportunity, and Sustainability.

Learning

An inclusive learning environment that provides high quality instruction and learning experiences.

The School District will focus on continuous improvement in order to create a learning environment that is welcoming, safe, caring and positive.

- **Students** will engage in relevant and personally meaningful experiences to enable them to graduate with options and purpose, and to create a lifelong passion for learning.
- **Staff** will employ innovative learning practices and adapt to varying student learning needs. They will provide authentic and relevant experiences that enable students to connect their learning to the real world.
- **The community** will be utilized, both inside and outside the classroom, to enrich and enhance student learning opportunities.

Engagement

A community of parents, families, community organizations and community leaders who are broadly and meaningfully engaged in students' learning.

The School District will enhance public education through ongoing communication, engagement and partnerships with all stakeholders.

- **Students** will be actively engaged in learning and leadership opportunities throughout their education.
- **Staff** will engage learners in their education to enable them to graduate with purpose and options.
- **The community** will be encouraged to collaborate with the School District to develop and strengthen key partnerships in support of learning.

Opportunity

A learning environment that provides our community of learners with the opportunities needed to achieve their short- and long-term goals.

The School District will foster accessibility, growth and success for every learner by supporting them throughout their learning journey.

- **Students**, regardless of their situation or background, will have equitable opportunity to achieve their learning goals.
- **Staff** will be encouraged to pursue professional development opportunities to enhance their classroom, professional capacity and leadership skills.
- **The community** will be engaged to help connect students to potential career pathways that support their transition to post-secondary education or employment.

Sustainability

A sustainable school system that maintains the human, financial and physical resources necessary to achieve our students' learning needs.

The School District will provide welcoming, safe and sustainable facilities that enhance the learning and teaching environment, and will promote human, financial, and physical sustainability.

- **Students** will develop an understanding of the importance of sustainable practices and environmental stewardship.
- **Staff** will facilitate student participation in sustainability practices by modeling sustainability, smart energy use and sound environmental practices.
- **The community** will be encouraged to assist and support School District sustainability practices and learning initiatives.

ASSESSMENT OF GROWTH

We will measure progress at three key points to gauge our growth towards the vision and mission and adjust our course as necessary: during the school years, at graduation and after graduation.

During school years (self-report on a scale)

- Parent engagement
- Parent satisfaction with engagement
- Student satisfaction with learning
- Student learning progress
- Teacher satisfaction
- Teacher self-efficacy (do I make a difference in students' learning?)

At graduation

- Students reaching graduation (six year completion rates)
- Student satisfaction with education at graduation. (self-report on a scale)
- Student self-efficacy: how confident are you that you are prepared for your next stage of life? (self-report on a scale)

After graduation

- % students to post-secondary
- Youth employment rate within district

CONCLUSION

The 2016-2021 strategic plan sets the priorities and defines the path that our school district will take over the next five years. This strategic plan will serve as a framework that guides planning and decision making throughout our District. Learning will be at the heart of everything that we do, and we will remain focused on the needs of our students.

The goals and objectives identified in this plan require significant commitment and effort. By working together, as educational staff, parents, mentors, community and employers, we can accomplish these goals.

We want to get to a place where, throughout the District, we are **preparing students to seize life's opportunities**, so our core mission is **inspiring learning anywhere**. We will complete our mission by focusing on **Learning, Engagement, Opportunity and Sustainability**. We will provide students with the capabilities and abilities to help them live well in their world, regardless of the path that they choose. We will make sure that, in everything we do as a School District, we are **confident, inclusive, dynamic, experiential, open, and equitable**.

