



East Ramapo Central School District:

2020-2025 (Long-Term) Strategic Academic and Fiscal Plan

October 27, 2021

revised November 15, 2022

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I. Executive Summary and Organization of the Plan Executive Summary

In 2016, a new provision of Education Law required the East Ramapo Central School District (ERCSD or “the District”) to develop and implement a long-term strategic academic and fiscal improvement plan (“the Plan”). In response to that requirement, the District developed a five-year plan that was based on “Four Pillars”:

Pillar 1: High Expectations for Teaching & Learning

Pillar 2: Culture of Safety and Strong Relationships with Families & Community

Pillar 3: Results-Focused Professional Learning & Collaboration

Pillar 4: Data-Informed Efficient and Effective Systems

For each of these pillars, the District developed a set of goals, measures of student progress, professional practices, and educational strategies. For the past several years, the Four Pillars have been the foundation for the District’s instructional program.

Subsequent amendments to State education law have required that the Plan be updated annually by the District and the Monitors assigned to the District by the State Education Commissioner (“the Monitors”) to provide oversight of the District’s academic and fiscal operations. The annual updates are to be approved by the Board of Education and submitted to the Commissioner of Education after a process of public engagement.

The 2020-21 annual update to the Plan maintains the Four Pillars as the organizing structure for the District’s improvement efforts but now includes significantly revised goals and measurable objectives as well as a new set of timebound improvement activities that provide detailed information on how the District will accomplish the educational strategies that undergird the Four Pillars. The academic component of the Plan now contains sections pertaining to Teaching and Learning, Special Education, English Language Learners, Accountability, Family and Community Engagement, School Climate and Social and Emotional Learning, Human Capital, and Organizational Structure. Collectively, the Plan contains 91 improvement strategies that the District will implement to achieve the goals and measurable objectives contained in the Plan. The academic plan is intended to be a complement to the District Comprehensive Education Improvement Plan (DCIP).

Because governance and leadership have been identified as significant issues in the District, there is a separate section of the Plan that provides a detailed critique of governance and leadership and provides 15 strategies for improvement.

The Plan now also contains a series of assurances which the District commits to implement, many of which address the role of the Board of Education, the need for stakeholder engagement, and commitments to ensuring good stewardship of the District’s financial resources.

Unlike previous annual updates, the 2021-22 school year update also provides goals,

measurable objectives, and an extensive list of improvement strategies related to the District's finances and operations, including Budget Development, Cash Flow Management, Reimbursement Claiming Processes, Expenditure (Internal Controls), Long-Term Planning, Organization Structure and Internal Operations Efficiencies, Transportation, Facilities, and Contracting Process.

The Plan is not an aspirational document. The District must report quarterly to the Monitors on the District's implementation of the Plan. Should the Monitors determine that the District is violating the Plan, they may report such violations to the Commissioner who may compel the District to come into compliance with the Plan.

Alternatively, should the District act inconsistently with the Plan, the Monitors have been given the authority under State education law to either override Board resolutions or motions, or introduce their own resolution to ensure that the Plan is implemented with fidelity.

This Plan is also a living document. It will be updated annually through a process of extensive public engagement. For the goals of this Plan to be realized, it is critical that all stakeholders understand their roles in transforming the Plan from rhetoric to reality. Only through a shared sense of purpose among all stakeholders can the District achieve its mission of educating the whole child by providing a healthy, safe, supportive, engaging, and challenging learning environment.

Organization of the Plan

This Plan is made up of several sections:

- Section I contains an executive summary and overview of the organization of the Plan.
- Section II is a list of assurances which the East Ramapo Central School District (ERSCD or 'the District') has committed to implement fully, with the understanding that failure to carry out any of the assurances may result in the Monitors assigned to the District by New York State Commissioner of Education ("the Commissioner") overriding a Board of Education ("the Board") resolution or motion, introducing a resolution for adoption, and/or reporting a violation of the Long-Term Strategic Academic and Fiscal Plan ("the Plan") to the Commissioner.
- Section III is an introduction.
- Section IV contains the District's Mission, Vision, and Values Statements.
- Section V describes the process and public consultations that were used to develop the Plan
- Section VI articulates the theory of action that undergirds the District's improvement efforts.
- Section VII contains general findings about the current status of the District's academic program.

- Section VIII addresses issues specific to the governance and leadership of the District.
- Section IX provides academic long-term goals, the benchmarks to be achieved, timelines for achieving the goals, measurable objectives that will show progress towards achieving long-term goals, strategies to be implemented during the current school year, and the measurable objectives towards determining satisfactory completion of each strategy for each of the following subsections:
 - A. Teaching and Learning
 - B. Special Education
 - C. English Language Learners
 - D. Accountability
 - E. Family and Community Engagement
 - F. School Climate and Social and Emotional Learning
 - G. Human Capital
 - H. Organizational Structure
- Section X provides fiscal long-term goals, the benchmarks to be achieved, timelines for achieving the goals, measurable objectives that will show progress towards achieving long-term goals, strategies to be implemented during the current school year, and the measurable objectives towards determining satisfactory completion of each strategy for each of the following subsections:
 - A. Budget Development
 - B. Cash Flow Management
 - C. Reimbursement Claiming Processes
 - D. Expenditure (Internal Controls)
 - E. Long-Term Planning
 - F. Organization Structure and Internal Operations Efficiencies
 - G. Transportation
 - H. Facilities
 - I. Contracting Process
- Section XI is a conclusion that outlines the next steps in a process of constructive change.
- The following appendices are included at the end of the Plan:
 - Appendix A: Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards
 - Appendix B: Assessment of Public Comments on 2021-2022 Update to the East Ramapo Long-Term Strategic Academic and Fiscal Improvement Plan-October 2022 version
 - Appendix C: Assessment of Public Comments on 2021-2022 Update to the East Ramapo Long-Term Strategic Academic and Fiscal Improvement Plan-October 2022 version

II. Assurances

This section includes a set of assurances with which the East Ramapo Central School District (ERSCD or the District) commits to comply in terms of implementation of the Plan. This section makes explicit the District's understanding that failure to fully comply with any of these assurances may be cause for the Monitors, pursuant to Chapter 173 of the Laws of 2021, to override adopted or proposed resolutions or motions of the Board of Education (the Board), submit a resolution for adoption by the Board, and/or notify the Commissioner that a violation of an element of the Plan has occurred. The assurance statements are as follows:

1. The Board shall operate in accordance with the "Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards" (See Appendix A).
2. The District shall implement the Plan in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.
3. The District shall implement the Plan in accordance with all applicable District plans that have been approved by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) for the 2021-22 school year, including but not limited to approvals associated with Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER); Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) funds; Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) funds; American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds; and the District's Consolidated Application for Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) funded programs.
4. The Board shall ensure that all motions are introduced and acted upon in a manner consistent with established District policies and that adopted resolutions are consistent with the goals, measurable objectives, and improvement strategies contained in the Plan.
5. The Board shall ensure that all District programs are administered in a manner that is consistent with the goals, measurable objectives, and improvement strategies contained in this Plan, applying sound fiduciary practices.
6. All District funds shall be administered consistently and aligned with the goals, measurable objectives, and improvement strategies contained in the Plan.
7. The Board and District leadership and staff shall not take any actions that are inconsistent with the goals, measurable objectives, and improvement strategies contained in the Plan.
8. The District shall take appropriate corrective action to address any instances in which District personnel act inconsistently with the goals, measurable objectives, and improvement strategies contained in the Plan, or fail to act according to the highest ethical requirements of their profession. Such actions will be documented and made available for review consistent with laws and regulations pertaining to the privacy of records.

9. The District shall adhere to the timelines contained in the Plan.
10. The District shall meet all requirements in law and in the Plan in regard to public consultation and engagement, including timely conduct of public hearings, provision of translation services, and translation of documents.
11. The District shall ensure that all District funds are used solely for the benefit of District resident students, both public and nonpublic, and in support of the District's vision, mission, and goals.
12. The Board shall conduct all business in adherence to the District's shared values statement, Board policies, and existing law and regulation.
13. The District shall provide all information and reports in such form and format and in accordance with such timelines as stipulated in law or as requested by the Monitors and the Commissioner.
14. The District shall maintain such records as are required to determine the degree to which the District is meeting its goals, benchmarks, and progress targets and is implementing the strategies contained in the Plan and provide such records upon request to the Monitors and/or Commissioner.

III. Introduction

On June 29, 2021, former Governor Cuomo signed into law Chapter 173 of the Laws of 2021, which made significant changes to the original Monitor legislation (Chapter 89 of the Laws of 2016). Notably, the legislation expanded the powers and duties of the Monitors appointed by the Commissioner to the District as well as the responsibilities of the District in regard to cooperating with the Monitors and development of the Plan and the District's annual budget.

The law requires that the Board and the Monitors develop and annually update by October 1 the Plan. The Plan must include a set of goals with benchmarks and measurable objectives and identify strategies to address areas where improvement is needed by the District, including but not limited to:

- Financial stability
- Academic opportunities and outcomes
- Education of students with disabilities
- Education of English Language learners
- The educational, social, and emotional welfare of public-school students
- Compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations; and
- A comprehensive expenditure plan for any special legislative appropriations to the District (See Appendix B).

The Plan developed by the Board and the Monitors must be subject to a public hearing and submitted to the Commissioner for approval.

A new provision of Chapter 173 of the laws of 2021 is the requirement that a Community Advisory Board (“the Advisory Board”) be established. Each member of the Advisory Board serves for one year and receives no compensation. The Superintendent and the Board of Education shall jointly approve the Community Advisory Board. The Community Advisory Board, to the greatest extent possible, shall include at least one member who is:

- A resident of the District who is a parent of a student with special needs whose education is provided by the District;
- A member of each of the three most commonly spoken non-English languages;
- A member of a civic league or organization not organized for profit and operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare;
- A parent of a public school student; and
- A parent of a nonpublic school student.

Twenty-three people applied to become members of the Advisory Board. Two of these people did not meet the criteria specified in the law for serving on the Advisory Board.

At the September 13, 2021 Board meeting it was recommended by consensus that a Board subcommittee be established and charged with vetting the candidates and bringing recommendations to the full Board. The committee met on September 23, 2021 and selected the candidates for the Community Advisory Board. Ten members were appointed at the October 5, 2021 Board meeting.

Beginning with the 2022-23 school year, the Community Advisory Board will be consulted extensively in the development of the annual update.

IV. District Mission, Vision, and Shared Value Statements

A. Mission

Our mission acts as the “why” or who we are by explaining our fundamental purpose as an organization.

As a unified community, the East Ramapo Central School District is committed to educating the whole child by providing a healthy, safe, supportive, engaging, and challenging learning environment.

B. Vision

Our vision captures the “what” or who we hope to become for our desired future.

We will become proficient in all that we do.

C. Share Value Statements

Our shared values speak to the way we act consistent with our mission along the path toward achieving our vision.

In everything we do, we motivate, facilitate, and reinforce:

1. Trust and open communication
2. Confidence
3. Collaborative relationships
4. Mutual respect and ethical behavior
5. Diversity and inclusiveness
6. Excellence

V. Plan Development Process

This section provides an overview of the process that the Monitors and Board used to inform the development of the Plan. The section summarizes the “when, where, and how” that resulted in the final Plan.

Using the 2020-2025 Strategic Academic and Fiscal Plan as a starting point, the Monitors interviewed core District staff to understand the current reality in the District, identify challenges to achieving desired outcomes, and develop strategies that drive meaningful change. Information was analyzed and a draft Plan was formulated and submitted to NYSED for feedback. Feedback from NYSED was reviewed and incorporated into a revised draft of the Plan. The Plan was then submitted to District staff for additional input. When consensus was reached between the Monitors and District staff, the document was shared with the community, which was given an opportunity to respond to the draft Plan at a public hearing, and a Monitor’s listening session, as well as through an online feedback mechanism. Comments from the public feedback were reviewed and revisions were made to the document as appropriate before the Plan was adopted by the Board and final submission was made to the Commissioner. A summary of the public comments and responses to them can be found in Appendix B and C.

A. District

The core District staff engaging in this work were Executive Cabinet team members representing the Office of Teaching & Learning and the Office of Operations. The Executive Cabinet team members leveraged their knowledge of their respective discipline to review and provide input on the draft Plan. Of importance was the team’s use of carefully sourced data to ensure the Plan contains a set of viable and coherent strategies to achieve the Measurable Objectives contained in the Plan.

Provided below are the guiding principles used to frame District staff discussions, identify relevant data, and guide decision making that resulted in the strategies contained in the Plan:

- Prioritize students and student learning;
- Remain aligned to the East Ramapo Central School District Strategic Academic Plan mission, vision, listed priorities, core beliefs, and our

- critical role in the community;
- Maintain equitable access to quality public education for all students;
- Prioritize equity, diversity, and inclusion in discussions and when building consensus;
- Protect East Ramapo’s strengths and long-term viability to establish fiscal solvency;
- Comply with federal and state mandates; and
- Fulfill contractual obligations.

B. Public Hearing

A Public Hearing was conducted on October 5, 2021, once NYSED feedback had been considered and incorporated into the draft Plan. In accordance with the Open Meetings Law, all members of the community were invited to provide public comment on the Plan. Prior to the meeting, the District Clerk provided the public notice of the date, time, and location of the meeting. During the Public Hearing, the purpose, process, and key areas of the Plan were highlighted and explained.

For the annual plan updates, a Public Hearing was held on October 3, 2022

C. Monitor’s Listening Session

To provide an additional opportunity for public engagement, the Monitors conducted a public listening session on October 18, 2021. There were 21 community members in attendance at the session. There were many comments not about the Plan. The comments that were pertinent to the Plan suggested more meetings with the monitors where questions could be asked and answered, a request for more social workers, the need for afterschool programs, dual language programs, and the use of a learning tool called Clever. A comment was made about more speed bumps at the public schools and better signage for the legal limits for the speed bumps.

For the annual plan updates, Monitor’s Community Chats were held on September 21st and 28th.

D. Feedback forms, Letters, and Emails

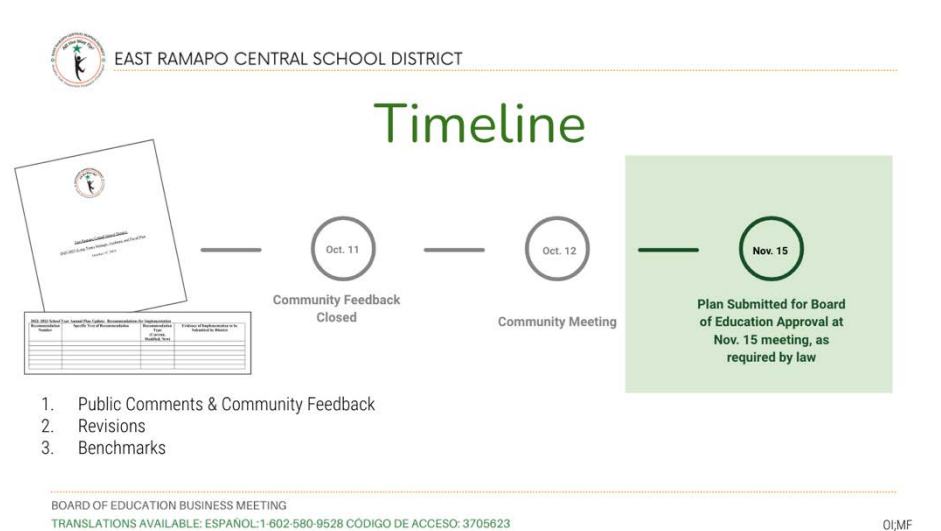
Stakeholders were encouraged to provide feedback on the draft plan by completing an online feedback form or submitting comments by email or letter. A feedback form was shared with the public to collect demographic information and public comment online. From the public comments, major themes were identified for the Monitor’s review. The public comment period was initially set to close on October 12, 2021 but was extended to

October 19th. Approximately 400 responses were received using the electronic tool and letters to the district clerk. The main areas of comment were no changes to the door-to-door busing, more special education services for children, more social workers, and special support for ELL students.

Persons who commented on the use of the \$1 million special legislation grant advocated for the funds to be used on transportation, 1st grade aides, teachers for the high school, and more bilingual services. Appendix B summarizes the responses that were received and any modifications that were made to the draft plan because of the comments.

For the annual plan updates, the public comment closed on October 11, 2022 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.
Timeline



VI. Theory of Action

A. Method to Achieve Our Vision

A theory of action is a set of underlying assumptions about how we will move our District from its current state to its desired future, our Vision.

Our theory of action is grounded in the efficacious belief that achievement, that is, student learning and growth, is reached by effective effort and confidence:

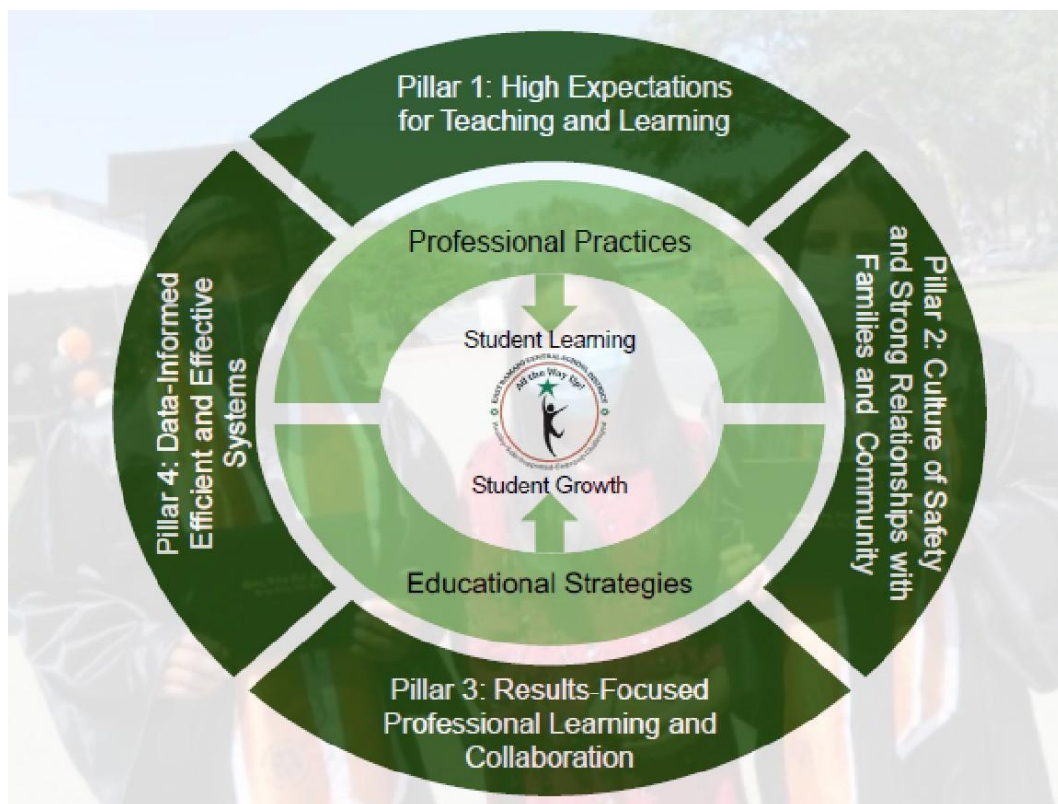
IF educators individually and collectively exercise key professional practices and educational strategies framed by our four pillars and geared towards building student

competencies and confidence for success,

THEN students will

- (1) demonstrate success in the early years,
- (2) exhibit healthy, safe, supported, engaged, and challenged behaviors;
- (3) be motivated confident, and empowered critical thinkers;
- (4) show mastery of academic subjects and the arts;
- (5) graduate from high school and show readiness for college and careers,

AND we will realize our Vision of being proficient in all that we do.



B. Goals and Measures of Student Progress

Our goals refer to agreed upon expectations for student learning and student growth developed by the East Ramapo community in 2016. A fundamental aim of our school system is to equip each student with the competence and confidence for success at the next level. The **Goals and Measures of Student Progress** constitute our promise to our students, our parents and caregivers, and our community. They represent our commitment to each student's learning, growth and success ... from preschool through high school.

Goals	Measures of Student Progress	★ Priority measures
<p>1 Success in the Early Years</p> <p>Every student will demonstrate social, emotional and academic readiness to meet or exceed grade level standards by the end of second grade.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased percentage of students in pre-K through Grade 2 meeting criteria for social-emotional, physical and cognitive development. ★ Increased percentage of students in grades pre-K through Grade 2 achieving proficiency in early literacy and numeracy. ★ Increased number of appropriate student referrals to special education. ★ Increased percentage of English Language Learners demonstrating growth in the acquisition of English Language skills. 	
<p>2 Healthy, Safe, Supported, Engaged and Challenged</p> <p>Every student will be challenged, in a safe learning environment, to be a productive and engaged citizen capable of meeting high expectations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased percentage of students participating in workshops about academic expectations and goal setting. ★ Increased percentage of students who feel safe and valued in their school as measured by a valid and reliable perception survey. • Increased percentage of students who demonstrate knowledge of healthy food choices, exercise, personal care, and routines that support hygiene. • Increased percentage of students participating in student-led conferences. 	
<p>3 Motivated, Confident, Empowered Critical Thinkers</p> <p>Every student will demonstrate ownership of his/her education and be fully engaged in becoming critical, creative-thinking goal-setters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased percentage of students who have successful adult mentor partnerships • Increased percentage of students who demonstrate growth in resilience, confidence, engagement and voice in solving real-world problems. ★ Increased percentage of students cognitively engaged during classroom instruction. 	
<p>4 Mastery of Academic Subjects and the Arts</p> <p>Every student will meet and/or exceed standards in all subjects including the arts at the end of key transition grades.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Increased percentage of students demonstrating growth in performance in all academic subject areas and the arts. • Increased percentage of under-performing students at every grade level making at least 1.5 years' growth in the core subject in one year. ★ Increased percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency in the core academic subjects and the arts. • Increased participation and success rates of middle school students and high school students in upper level/AP/Honors courses • Increased percentage of English Learner students who attain mastery of English Language skills within 3 years. 	
<p>5 High School Graduation and Readiness for College and Careers</p> <p>Every student will graduate from high school prepared for college, career, and post-secondary experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Increased percentage of students who demonstrate successful transitions from pre-school to Kindergarten, Kindergarten to Elementary, Elementary to Middle, Middle to High School, and High School to college/post-secondary experiences. ★ Increased percentage of 10th graders who are on track for on-time high school graduation. ★ Increased 4-year high school graduation rates. • Decreased 4-year high school dropout rates. • Increased percentage of high school students enrolled in college, career training, the work place, or the military within 6 months of graduation. 	

C. Professional Practices

Continuous improvement of student learning rests on continuous improvement of teaching practices (T), leadership practices (L), and organizational practices (O). Those professional practices, framed by the Four Pillars of our theory of action, define what we must implement, monitor, and support every day...in every classroom, in every school, and system-wide.

	Pillar 1: High Expectations for Teaching & Learning	Pillar 2: Culture of Safety and Strong Relationships with Families & Community	Pillar 3: Results-focused, Collaborative Professional Learning	Pillar 4: Data-driven, Effective and Efficient Systems
Teaching Practices	<p>T1: Teachers use a variety of research-validated instructional strategies (e.g. role play, independent work, research projects, cooperative learning) as multiple options for completing assignments.</p> <p>T2: Teachers raise expectations and level of rigor for all students, regardless of current level of achievement, to ensure students' continuous growth and development.</p>	<p>T3: Teachers challenge, encourage and honor all students, and promote a high achieving, caring and supportive environment.</p> <p>T4: Teachers provide families a variety of engagement options which are responsive to parent's schedules and interest.</p>	<p>T5: Teachers use collaborative planning time to share and reflect on curriculum, scope and sequence, student needs, and instructional practice.</p> <p>T6: Teachers develop professional growth plans based on collaborative analysis of student work and reflection about professional practices.</p>	<p>T7: Teachers analyze and use formative and benchmark assessment data to monitor student learning and adapt instruction to meet students' learning needs.</p> <p>T8: Teachers meet regularly to review formative assessment and make instructional adjustments to address areas of concern and/or accelerate student learning.</p>
Leadership Practices	<p>L1: Principal/Leadership Team communicates high expectations for student performance and lets students know that everyone is invested in each student's success.</p> <p>L2: Principal/Leadership Team facilitates school-wide collaboration and consensus on work that meets rigorous standards within and across grade levels and subjects.</p>	<p>L3: Principal/Leadership Team builds the capacity of the school to connect every student to at least one caring adult within the school and / or community.</p> <p>L4: Principal/Leadership Team builds systems to link educators, students, parents and caregivers, and community to create safe, caring, high-performing schools.</p>	<p>L5: Principal/Leadership Team develops and implements a differentiated professional development plan and annual calendar, aligned to the school's improvement plan and the professional learning needs of each teacher or staff.</p> <p>L6: Principal/Leadership Team continuously assesses the impact of professional development programs on student learning and the professional practices of each teacher or staff member.</p>	<p>L7: Principal provides frequent feedback about student learning and professional practices to monitor implementation of school-wide and grade level / department continuous improvement plans.</p> <p>L8: Principal/Leadership Team meet with teams of teachers to review how data is being used to drive continuous improvement of classroom instruction, identifying students that need academic, behavioral interventions or acceleration.</p>
Organizational Practices	<p>O1: District/School Leadership implements a standards-based curriculum and formative assessments aligned to state standards, with vertical, horizontal and cross-content alignment across the core instructional program.</p> <p>O2: District/School leadership allots time for professional development, collegial collaboration, and preparation of standards-aligned curriculum, instruction and assessment practices.</p>	<p>O3: School/ District and community develop a shared vision and plan for promoting, enhancing, and sustaining a high achieving, positive school culture.</p> <p>O4: School staff sponsor workshops or distribute information to assist parents in understanding how students can improve skills, get help when needed, meet class expectations, and achieve high academic growth.</p>	<p>O5: School/District implements a systemic evaluation and continuous improvement protocol to assess the delivery and effectiveness of professional development offerings.</p> <p>O6: District/School Leadership develops a cadre of school and district leaders who have attained mastery of core leadership practices and will facilitate the learning of other teachers, leaders, and staff.</p>	<p>O7: District leadership ensures that all schools have access to high quality benchmark assessments and professional development to implement data decision support systems that help to inform student learning and improve instruction.</p> <p>O8: District leadership ensures that categorical and district budget items are clearly linked to the District's vision focus, and staff development.</p>

D. Educational Strategies

The Four Pillars are the building blocks for purposeful action at every level. They define the capabilities that are required and must be developed to achieve the Goals and Measures of Student Progress; they provide a “frame” for the work and contributions of teachers, leaders, staff, families, and community partners. The Educational Strategies represent the high-leverage programs and initiatives which, when implemented with fidelity, will facilitate continuous improvement of professional practices and the creation of thriving schools where every student can

meet high academic and behavioral standards.

Some of the strategies proposed for the 2020-2025 Strategic Academic and Fiscal Plan are extensions of those outlined in the 2016-2020 Plan. Other strategies are new, reflecting recent or anticipated conditions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Educational Strategy statements show in parentheses alignment to the District Professional Practices and alignment to strategic plan goals.

Pillar 1: High Expectations for Teaching & Learning

Educational Strategy 1.1: Strengthen the alignment of curriculum, assessment, instruction, instructional materials, responsive intervention, and technology across content areas, grade levels, and grade spans (T1, L1, O1). *Strategic Plan Goal Alignment: 1, 4*

Educational Strategy 1.2: Strengthen student engagement and ownership of learning and implement an early-warning process and continuous monitoring of the progress of middle and high school students towards on-time high school graduation (T2, L1, L2). *Strategic Plan Goal Alignment: 2, 3, 5*

Educational Strategy 1.3: Ensure that all students have access to technology-based devices to facilitate hybrid/virtual learning (O2). *Strategic Plan Goal Alignment: 3*

Pillar 2: Culture of Safety and Strong Relationships with Families & Community

Educational Strategy 2.1: Enhance parental engagement in student success through training, collaboration, and communication (T3, L3, O3). *Strategic Plan Goal Alignment: 2, 3*

Educational Strategy 2.2: Educate parents about how to access school and community resources that support family health and wellness, and behavioral and life success for students (T4, L4, O4). *Strategic Plan Goal Alignment: 2, 3*

Educational Strategy 2.3: Ensure that staff meet with students and families at least twice each year to engage in two-way dialog about the student's academic and social emotional progress, using district-wide developmentally appropriate protocols to ensure consistency and coherence (T4, L4, O4). *Strategic Plan Goal Alignment: 2, 3*

Pillar 3: Results-Focused Professional Learning & Collaboration

Educational Strategy 3.1: Provide ongoing professional development and instructional coaching focused on effective implementation of the Foundational 5 teaching practices by every teacher, in every classroom, every day (T5, L5, O6) *Strategic Plan Goal Alignment: 1, 4, 5*

Educational Strategy 3.2: Provide continuous professional learning, coaching, and support to principals and school instructional leadership teams to accelerate their proficiency relative to the five *Leverage Leadership Competencies* (T6, L5, O6). *Strategic Plan Goal Alignment: 1, 4, 5*

Educational Strategy 3.3: Implement high-functioning structures and processes to strengthen growth mindset; data-informed, rigorous planning; hybrid/virtual learning platforms; collegial collaboration; and culture of continuous improvement (T3, L6, O5). *Strategic Plan Goal Alignment: 1, 4, 5*

Pillar 4: Data-Informed Efficient and Effective Systems

Educational Strategy 4.1: Implement a balanced assessment system to provide timely and authentic feedback about student growth, instructional practices, interventions, and communication with parents (T7, L7, O7). *Strategic Plan Goal Alignment: 4, 5*

Educational Strategy 4.2: Organize central roles, resources, and processes to better support schools (T8, L8, O8). *Strategic Plan Goal Alignment: 2, 4, 5*

Educational Strategy 4.3: Organize school and district-based ceremonies to celebrate the accomplishments of staff, students, and district stakeholders (T8, L8, O7). *Strategic Plan Goal Alignment: 2, 4, 5*

E. Strategy Implementation Timeline

The five-year Plan that was finalized in May 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, took into consideration how future instruction would be impacted by the pandemic. As such, emphasis was placed on ensuring that all students had access to technology-based devices to facilitate hybrid/virtual learning (Pillar 1). Additionally, the need to support the health and wellness of families, while assisting parents in navigating school and community resources (Pillar 2) emerged as essential components in support of the social emotional well-being of our students.

Educational Strategies broadly define the steps to attain the identified goal(s). Each Educational Strategy statement includes the who (professional practice code), the what (priority measure and educational strategy), and the when (implementation year). The annual District Comprehensive Plan (DCIP) provides associated implementation activities for the Educational Strategy (See Appendix D. The method (what the strategy entails), the indicator for gauging success, and resources to support each strategy implementation activity are provided in the DCIP as well.

VII. General Findings

A. Academic

1. The 2020-2025 Plan was approved by the Commissioner in May 2021. The District's academic program remains based on the four pillars that are embedded in all areas of teaching and learning in the District.
2. The 2020-21 school year started with a phase-in of a hybrid model. Due to high Covid-19 rates, in October 2020 schools began to be closed in accordance with the former Governor's executive order.
3. When schools went fully remote in March 2020, the majority of students did not have access to one-to-one devices. This had a major negative impact on instruction during the prior school year and impacted implementation of the hybrid model.
4. Interim Superintendent Dr. Ray Giamartino immediately upon his appointment discovered that many students lacked devices and quickly ordered Chromebooks for every student and staff member. He was able to secure a 5-year grant to provide access to hotspots for all of the families in the District. By the end of September, all devices and hot spots were given to students and staff.
5. As the District implemented the hybrid model, Dr. Giamartino shared with the Board and the community that the District had a chronic absenteeism problem. In addition, teachers were taking attendance daily, but the software was not recording attendance correctly. Dr. Giamartino identified a glitch in the software program and worked with the Rockland Board of Cooperative Educational Services to correct the program to ensure that attendance was recorded accurately. An attendance task force was formed, and from their investigation, they developed more effective strategies to improve attendance. Some of the strategies were calling parents to see why their children were not in school, addressing needs of students and families, and making home visits. Some examples were providing clothing, school supplies and personal items for families. Monthly reports regarding student attendance were made to the Board and shared with the community. The District continues to monitor monthly the effectiveness of these attendance improvement efforts.
6. During the time that the hybrid model was being implemented, a large number of students at all grade levels received instruction entirely remotely. In addition, 50 - 75 % of teachers who had received reasonable accommodations pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provided instruction remotely. Dr. Giamartino made the decision to open schools full-time in spring 2021. Returning to 5 days a week in-person instruction not only allowed school staff to address lost learning opportunities but also provided social and emotional support to students while facilitating the return to employment of caregivers.

7. Interim assessments were administered both in-person and remotely three times during the 2020-21 school years for Grades k-8 with 90% participation rate. Students who were remote took the assessments at home.
8. Extended year programs introduced in summer 2021 were very successful based numbers in attendance and feedback from students and parents in addressing the COVID-19 gaps in instruction. The programs were all curricula driven based on learning targets. All students received an hour of literacy instruction and math instruction integrated into a theme based program: All Sports Academy, Robotics, an Integrated Language Arts and Performing Arts Program, and Exploration. Successful secondary level programming yielded positive results: Freshman Academy and Credit Recovery programs were very successful.
9. The Teaching and Learning Office and Personnel Office have vacancies that need to be filled for maximum effectiveness in supporting staff teaching and learning needs at the building and Central Office levels.
10. During the past school year, District challenges continue to overshadow the progress that the District has made. Interim Superintendent Dr. Giamartino conducted “soft audits” of all District offices. These audits uncovered budgetary improprieties, and the Monitors requested an investigation by the Office of the State Comptroller. A \$30 million deficit was found. As a result, the District was the focus of negative media coverage. Dr. Giamartino along with the Executive Cabinet worked aggressively to mitigate the impact by finding millions of dollars in savings. The fiscal section of the plan addresses many of these financial issues.
11. The District has curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems in place and is on the right trajectory to continue to increase student achievement. Nevertheless, in order for the trajectory of improvement in student achievement to continue and accelerate, the community needs to heal, put all divisions aside, and place the needs of all District students at the center of the community’s efforts.
12. In the Monitors’ 2018-19 annual report, the Monitors noted that a diverse group of community members, called East Ramapo United, began to meet monthly with the goal of sharing perspectives and finding common ground. This group’s membership included representatives of the major religious and ethnic groups in the community. After meeting for more than a year, the group disbanded, but efforts have been made to re-engage the original group of community leaders with support from an external facilitator.

Current Academic Update

The Spring Valley High School is closed due to the discovery of potentially hazardous mold and the need for asbestos abatement. As a result, the school went fully remote on October 18, 2021. The special education programs at the school has

been relocated to other buildings so in-person instruction can be provided and the District is reviewing satellite locations to house some grades of students and will seek NYSED approval as needed.

B. Fiscal

The reader will find in the fiscal section discussion of the current year fiscal plan, the development of the 2022-2023 budget, improvements to be enacted during the current year, monitoring and feedback on improvements, and long-term fiscal stability.

1. There is need for continual comparing budgeted versus actual expenditures in all facets of the District's operations. There must be a reconciliation of anticipated payroll expenses to actual payroll expenditures.
2. As the current level of District expenditures is not sustainable without the infusion of further state aid or Federal stimulus monies, the District must make concerted effort to right size programs and eliminate those that are having no positive impact on student achievement. Class sizes need to be evaluated. Current overstaffing needs to be eliminated. This will require intensive investigation into kindergarten thru 12 grade scheduling of students and staffing ratios. A goal of this evaluation should be determining the degree to which, consistent with the collective bargaining agreement, teachers can be reassigned to classroom duties in situations where there are large classes within a school on a grade or in a subject.
3. There must be a complete understanding of projected expenditures and revenue as the 2022-2023 Budget is being developed. During development of the 2020-21 school year budget, changes in State aid was not fully understood by the District. This led to improper State Aid revenue budgeting, resulting in a \$35 million borrowing to cover the deficit.
4. Projected transportation expenditures must be carefully analyzed to ensure proper budgetary allocations are incorporated into the 2022-2023 Budget. Due to a lack of proper transportation projections, the 2020-2021 transportation expenditures exceeded the transportation budget by \$8 million.
5. It is imperative that the proper level of staffing is maintained within the Business Office, and the Transportation Office. Due to reductions in staff over the past several years, there were limited fiscal check and balances in place. Business Office staff require continual guidance combined with knowledgeable leadership

VIII. Governance and Leadership Goals and Measurable Objectives

The Board members as individuals all care about the children in the District, which is the essence of school board work. However, collectively within and among the Board members,

there is a lack of understanding of their roles as a full Board. There is an urgent need for training of Board members to maximize all Board governance operations.

A major misunderstanding exists in regard to what are the Board members' major roles and responsibilities. While all Board members have completed the required Board training, more training is needed.

Some examples from the Monitor's observations are the following:

1. The Board members lack a full understanding of the distinction between their role in establishing policy and providing oversight and direction to District staff and the superintendent's role as chief executive who is hired by the Board to implement their policies and manage the operations of the District. The Board must seek to maximize its focus on policymaking and minimize micromanagement and interference in District operations. The Board's policymaking tends to be reactive rather than proactive and focuses on policymaking tied to new Federal and state requirements. This reactive approach means that many Board policies are out-of-date and not aligned with the current circumstances or needs of the District. A total review of all Board policies, in accordance with a schedule established by the Board, should begin immediately with the assistance of an external organization that specializes in Board policy revision.
2. The Board's most important task is hiring a superintendent, and the Board performed admirably in establishing and implementing the process by which Dr. Ray Giamartino was hired in September 2020 to be the Interim Superintendent and Dr. Clarence Ellis was hired in April 2021 to be the permanent superintendent. The Board should be commended on using a national search firm secured through a Request for Proposals to select and screen outstanding candidates.
3. An area of major concern is the Board's failure for the last several years to conduct an evaluation of the superintendent. Commissioner's Regulations 100.2(o)(1)(vi) requires that the "governing body of each school district shall annually review the performance of the superintendent of schools according to procedures developed by such body in consultation with the superintendent. Such procedures shall be filed in the district office and available for review by any individual no later than September 10th of each year." It is critical to the success of the new superintendent to engage in the mandated evaluation process annually because it provides clear standards on which a superintendent's performance may be reviewed and evaluated.
4. The Board has never participated in a Board self-evaluation process, which is designed to improve the ability of individual Board members to function as a cohesive group. While State Education law does not require this process, it is extremely important that the Board self-evaluate its performance annually, because it provides clear goals for the Board and a process for evaluating its own progress toward meeting those goals.
5. The Monitors in their 2018-19 school year annual report recommended that the Board participate in Diversity, Inclusion and Sensitivity Training and have ongoing Board retreats. A Board retreat was held on March 13, 2019, and was very successful; Board members got a chance to understand their roles and responsibilities and get to know each other as people and as Board members. However, Board membership has

changed since 2019 and the members need to have more training at several retreats throughout the year. As research has shown a strong correlation between Board effectiveness and student achievement, it is critical that Board members receive the training they need to effectively carry out their responsibilities.

6. There is a need for the Board to work with the Superintendent to begin to implement the Regents Framework on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The District is in the beginning stages of implementation.
7. Board members have not always provided the District clerk with timely confirmation of their intent to attend Board meetings.
8. Dr. Ellis is a seasoned superintendent with years of experience in the New York City public school system. The NYSED has committed to providing Dr. Ellis with technical assistance to help him transition to his new role, particularly regarding areas for which the superintendent of the ERCSD is responsible for which a New York City Community District superintendent is not.
9. The Board President and Vice President, the superintendent, and the Monitors need to establish an agenda review process at which the agenda is developed and discussed prior to the Board receiving the full agenda.
10. The Board and District staff need to develop a communication system, so the Board knows what is going on in the District and in the community.

Goal: The Board shall operate at all times in accordance with the eight characteristics of effective school boards identified by the National School Board Association.

Measurable Objectives:

1. Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, the Board shall cancel no regular scheduled meetings because of a lack of a quorum. The Board shall seek to achieve at least 70 percent attendance by each board member as an individual and for the board as a whole.
2. By August 31, 2022, and by August 31 each year thereafter, the Board shall complete timely an evaluation of the superintendent that fully complies with the requirements of Commissioner's Regulations.
3. By September 1, 2022, and each September 1 thereafter, the Board shall complete the school board self-evaluation process for the prior school year.
4. By December 31, 2022, and by December 31 each year thereafter, the Board shall participate in a minimum of 2-3 Board retreats.
5. By December 31, 2022, the full Board shall complete a review of all current District policies and shall have revised them as appropriate.

Trend Data and Annual Targets:

- The last Board retreat was on March 13, 2019.
- The Board is currently in the 1st year of a two-year process of working with Erie BOCES on review of the District policy manual. The previous review of the entire manual was done in 2007.
- The Board last completed a timely evaluation of the Superintendent in accordance with Commissioner’s Regulations in 2017. In the 2020-21 school year, the Board began but never completed the process of evaluating the Superintendent.
- In the 2020-21 school year, one regularly scheduled Board meeting was cancelled due to lack of a quorum. The District clerk sends numerous emails before each meeting to establish whether a sufficient number of Board members plan to attend in order to achieve a quorum. However, some Board members do not respond timely to these requests, making it difficult to determine well in advance of meetings whether a quorum will be present for a meeting.
- The Board has never engaged in a formal self-evaluation process.

IX. Governance and Leadership Improvement Strategies

Number	Specific Text of Recommendation	Type (Current, Modified, New)	Evidence of Implementation to be Submitted by District
GL.1	By the end of June 2023, the Board shall review and revise as appropriate each current Board policy. Such process shall include providing the public with a meaningful opportunity to participate in the policy review process.	Modified	Dates and agenda and/or documents from monthly policy committee mtgs, held in public, in the same room as BOE meetings.
GL. 2	By January 31, 2023 the BOE shall review and discuss the financial impacts of universal transportation versus transportation at the New York State mandated levels on the development of the 2023-2024 school year budget.	New	BOE meeting minutes, District reports on costs.
GL.3	By February 28, 2023 the BOE shall discuss, and adopt and the district leadership shall implement a strategy to educate district voters of the district’s ability to provide a public	New	BOE meeting discussions and minutes

	education as required by law should the proposed 2023–2024 school year budget not be approved.		
GL.4	The district shall provide multiple opportunities for student engagement and feedback on the LTSAF Plan. Such opportunities shall begin with the spring budget development process, continue through the opening of schools in September, and conclude 10 days after the LTSAFP fall public hearing date. Those opportunities will include, but not be limited to, townhalls, superintendent and monitor chats as well as meetings with different community groups.	New	Dates of meetings, agenda and documents /feedback from events
GL.5	By December 22, 2022, the BOE shall establish dates, formats and topics for annual retreat(s). Facilitators can be NYSSBA or Rockland School Boards Association or other BOE consultants	Modified	BOE agenda, discussion
GL.6	By November 30, 2022 the Board shall adopt a policy regarding attendance at Board meetings and the consequences for unexcused absences from Board meetings.	Modified	BOE agenda and minutes
GL.7	Beginning November 15, Board members shall respond within 48 hours to meeting notices/ requests from the District Clerk to notify the District Clerk of their anticipated absence and the reason for the absence.	Modified	clerk documents
GL.8	By June 30, 2023, all BOE members shall have received training in DEI as shall be required by the monitors Recurring activity annually	Modified	Dates/time agenda, facilitator, and attendance list
GL.9	By November 30, 2022, the Board shall reach agreement with the superintendent regarding procedures to be used in the annual evaluation of the superintendent. By January 2023 the	Modified	Official Evaluation completed

	BOE shall complete the annual evaluation of the Superintendent for the 21-22 School year Recurring activity annually		
GL.10	By November 30, annually, the Board shall enter into an agreement with a consultant and/or an organization such as the Rockland County School Boards Association or NYSSBA to assist the Board in implementing the Board self-assessment process and to facilitate retreats. Recurring activity annually	Modified	BOE agenda, Agreement with NYSSBA or RCSBAs
GL.11	By January 31, 2023 the Board shall adopt the process by which it will conduct a self-evaluation, which shall include providing the public with an opportunity to provide feedback on the performance of the Board. Recurring activity annually	Modified	BOE agenda, documents outlining the process
GL.12	By July 31, 2023 the Board shall complete the annual evaluation of the Superintendent Recurring activity annually	Modified	HR records
GL.13	By August 31, 2023 the Board shall approve the procedures for the evaluation of the Superintendent for the 23-24 school year. Recurring activity annually	Modified	BOE agenda
GL.14	By August 31, 2023 the District shall post the procedures for the evaluation of the Superintendent to the District's website. Recurring activity annually	Modified	publish on ER website, BOE section
GL.15	Within 60 days of completion of the self-	Modified	BOE Agenda

	assessment process, the Board shall adopt a resolution identifying those actions that the Board will take during the next calendar year to improve the Board’s effectiveness and efficacy based on the results of the self-evaluation. These actions will encompass goals that both improve the function of the Board as a governing body and improve outcomes for the students in the District.		and minutes
GL.16	In accordance with a timeline established by the Monitors thereafter, Board members shall receive training on the roles and responsibilities of Board members in the contracting process.	Current	Meeting date, agenda and attendance

X. Academic Goals and Measurable Objectives

For the areas of Teaching and Learning, Special Education, English Language Learners, Accountability, Family and Community Engagement, School Climate and Social Emotional Learning, Human Capital, and Organizational Structure, goals with measurable objectives, trends and annual targets are provided.

A. Teaching and Learning, Special Education, English Language Learners, Accountability, Family and Community Engagement, and School Climate and Social Emotional Learning

The numbered goals refer to the five District priority goals for student learning and student growth. In developing the measurable objectives for each areas, the following were prioritized for student progress:

- Increase English Language Arts Proficiency Rates
- Increase Mathematics Proficiency Rates
- Increase Students with Disabilities and English Language Learner Proficiency
- Increase Graduation Rate
- Reduce Chronic Absenteeism Rates
- Reduce Suspension Rates
- Increase Percentage of Students in the Least Restrictive Environment

- Increase Student Engagement in the Arts

Goal 1: Success in the Early Years

Measurable Objective 1.1: By June 2025, increase percentage of K-2 students at/above early literacy proficiency

Trend Data and Annual Targets:

Measure	Population	Growth Target	Spring 2022	Target 6/23	Target 6/24	Target 6/25
Reading: Proficiency	K	+2pp	53%	55%	57%	59%
Reading: Proficiency	1st	+2pp	37%	39%	41%	43%
Reading: Proficiency	2nd	+2pp	31%	33%	35%	37%

Source: Renaissance Star Early Literacy (K) and Reading (1st and 2nd)

Measurable Objective 1.2: By June 2025, increase the percentage of students in the least restrictive environment as demonstrated by the percentage of students with disabilities in the general education program less than 40% of the day.

Trend Data and Annual Targets:

Measure	Population	Growth Target	Spring 2022	Target 6/23	Target 6/24	Target 6/25
State Indicator 15B	SWDs K-12	-1pp	23%	22%	21%	20%

Source: State Indicator School-age Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Measurable Objective 1.3: By June 2025, increase the percentage of English Language Learners demonstrating growth in acquisition of English Language skills at the Transitioning, the Expanding and the Commanding levels.

Trend Data and Annual Targets:

Measure	Population	Growth Target	Spring 2022	Target 6/23	Target 6/24	Target 6/25
NYSESLAT	Transitioning	+2pp	19%	21%	23%	25%
NYSESLAT	Expanding	+2pp	23%	25%	27%	29%
NYSESLAT	Commanding	+2pp	11%	13%	15%	17%

Source: SIRS-113 English Language Proficiency Accountability Detail Report

Goal 2: Healthy, Safe, Supported, Engaged, and Challenged

Measurable Objective 2.1: By June 2025, increase the favorable perception of school safety for students and families

Trend Data and Annual Targets:

Measure	Target Group	District Growth Target	Spring 2022	Target 6/23	Target 6/24	Target 6/25
Student Survey School Safety	All Student Respondents	+3pp	50%	55%	60%	65%
Family Survey School Safety	All Family Respondents	+3pp	62%	67%	72%	77%
Suspensions	All Students	<2%	3.2%	<2%	<2%	<2%

Source: Panorama Student and Family Survey; SIR-111 School Year Suspension Accountability Report

Measurable Objective 2.2: By June 2025, increase family and school relationships.

Trend Data and Annual Targets:

Measure	Target Group	District Growth Target	Spring 2022	Target 6/23	Target 6/24	Target 6/25
Family Survey Barriers to Engagement*	All Family Respondents	+2pp	78%	80%	82%	84%
FRC	All Children and Adult Participants	>5,000	7,957	>5,000	>5,000	>5,000
Family University	Unique Viewers Per Session	200 avg	264	200	200	200

Source: Panorama Family Survey; Rockland County 21C FRC Annual Report; Zoom Analytics

Goal 3: Motivated, Confident, Empowered Critical Thinkers

Measurable Objective 3.1: By June 2025, increase student attendance

Trend Data and Annual Targets:

Measure	Target Group	District Growth Target	Spring 2022	Target 6/23	Target 6/24	Target 6/25
Average Daily Attendance	All Schools	+2pp	88.2%	90%	92%	94%
Chronic Absence	Grades 1-8 & Ungraded Age Equivalent Students	-1pp	40.3%	39%	38%	37%
Chronic Absence	Grades 9-12 & Ungraded Age Equivalent Students	-1pp	51.2%	50%	49%	48%

Source: eSchoolData; SIRS-107 Chronic Absenteeism Accountability Report

Goal 4: Mastery of Academic Subjects and the Arts

Measurable Objective 4.1: By June 2025, increase the percentage of ELA and Math proficiency

Trend Data and Annual Targets:

Measure	Target Group	District Growth Target	Spring 2019	Spring 2022	Target 6/23	Target 6/24	Target 6/25
% scoring level 3 / 4 ELA Exam	All Students	+2pp	28%	23%	24%	25%	26%
	ELL	+1pp	5%	5%	6%	7%	8%
	SWD	+1pp	7%	8%	9%	10%	11%
% scoring level 3 / 4 Math Exam	All Students	+2pp	24%	13%	14%	15%	16%
	ELL	+1pp	6%	4%	5%	6%	7%
	SWD	+1pp	5%	5%	6%	7%	8%
% scoring level 3/4/5 ELA Regents	All Students	+2pp	73.4%	54.8%	56%	57%	58%
	ELL	+1pp	32%	14.2%	15%	16%	17%

East Ramapo Central School District:
2020-2025 (Long-Term) Strategic Academic and Fiscal Improvement Plan

	SWD	+1pp	51.4%	30.6%	32%	33%	34%
% scoring level 3/4/5 Math Algebra 1 Regents	All Students	+2pp	45.9%	25.1%	26%	27%	28%
	ELL	+1pp	27.4%	6.8%	8%	9%	10%
	SWD	+1pp	29.2%	11.5%	13%	14%	15%

Source: Data.NYSED.gov downloads; SIRS-309 and SIRS-653 Annual Regents Examination Report

Goal 5: High School Graduation and Readiness for College and Careers

Measurable Objective 5.1: By August 2025, increase in student graduation rate.

Trend Data and Annual Targets:

Measure	Population	Growth Target	Spring 2022	Target 6/23	Target 6/24	Target 6/25
4-Year Aug Grad (%)	All	+2pp	78.3%	80%	82%	84%
	ELL	+2pp	51.6%	53%	55%	57%
	SPED	+2pp	72.4%	74%	76%	78%
5-Year Aug Grad (%)	All	+2pp	71.1%	73%	75%	77%
	ELL	+2pp	36.2%	38%	40%	42%
	SPED	+2pp	75.2%	77%	79%	81%

Source: SIRS-105 High School Achievement & Graduation Rate Accountability Report

B. Human Capital

Goal: Teacher Recruitment and Hiring

Measurable Objective: Beginning December 2022, Personnel will develop/identify and implement a practice that will measure the number of days from teacher vacancy to hiring.

Measurable Objective: Beginning December 2022, Personnel will implement practices to increase the number of high-quality staff hired.

Trend Data and Annual Targets:

Measure	Target Group	District Growth Target	Spring 2022	Target 6/23	Target 6/24	Target 6/25
Certified Staff	All Schools	+1pp	94%	95%	96%	97%

Source: SIRS-328 Staff Out of Certification Verification Report

C. Organizational Structure

Goal: District Organizational Chart

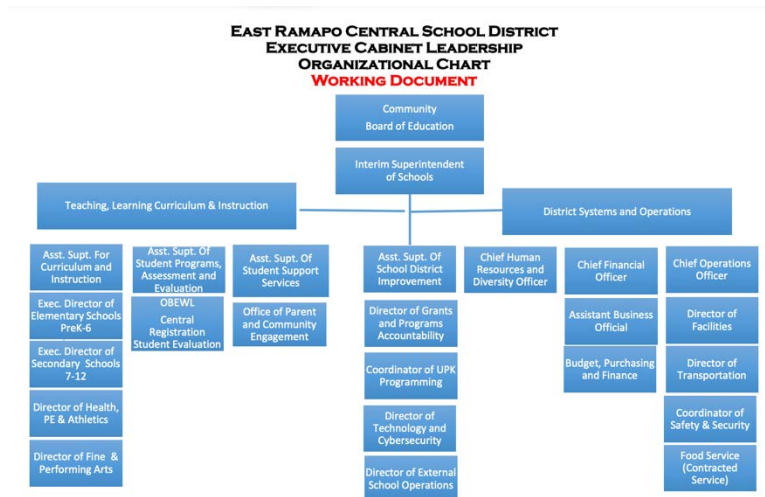
Measurable Objective: The District organizational chart must be revisited during 2022-2023 school year and annually by the current superintendent to align with this updated Plan, so District offices are more clearly linked with targets in the Plan.

Trend Data and Annual Targets:

During the 2020-21 school year the previous superintendent revised the District organizational chart after conducting “soft audits” in all areas of operations. The information from those audits was the basis of the reorganization to capitalize on and revise operations in the District office.

In addition, the reorganization was designed to repurpose District Office positions, reorganize for maximum effectiveness, and result in a Board approved organizational chart (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2.
East Ramapo Central School District Executive Cabinet Leadership Organizational Chart



XI. Academic Improvement Strategies

Number	Specific Text of Recommendation		Type (Current, Modified, New)	Evidence of Implementatio n to be Submitted by District
	Strategy Implement ation Activity	Improvement Strategy (Action Steps)		
A.1	1.2.1	<p>Beginning July 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction shall develop a comprehensive guidance program for K-12 (ARPA: Professional Salaries, Supplies and Materials).</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	Modified	<p>Quarterly updates on the Plan updating process provided to the Office of C and I. Final revised Plan presented to BOE for approval by May 31, 2023.</p> <p>https://nyssca.org/comprehensive-model</p>
A.2	1.2.3	<p>Beginning in September 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will lead the monitoring of student progress towards on-time graduation by review of high school level Final Five status reports (transcript audits) quarterly.</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	New	High school quarterly reports on the Final Five status
A.3	1.2.3	<p>Beginning in October 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will monitor the implementation and progress of partner academic, vocational and social-emotional programs to measure intended against actualized student outcomes.</p>	Modified	By the end of the first semester, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction shall provide a progress report - inclusive of feedback from principals - on the implementation of

		<p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>		<p>these programs. A final report will be prepared by the end of June for presentation to the BOE .</p>
A.4	3.2.1	<p>Beginning October 2022, the superintendent shall conduct the APPR instructional visits to each school building using Multidimensional Principal Performance Rubric (MPPR) guidance documents to provide assessment and feedback.</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	Current	<p>Official writeups , dates. as those visits will be inclusive of the 2 required visits to fulfill the observation requirements outlined by Education Law 3012 d.</p>
A.5	1.1.1	<p>Beginning October 2022, the Office of Student Programs, Assessment and Evaluation shall, through a process approved by the monitors, align instructional resources to the yearlong work of curriculum development and refinement.</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	Modified	<p>dates and attendance or agenda</p>
A.6	3.1.1	<p>By June 30, 2023, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction shall provide professional learning experiences in advanced literacy strategies for linguistically diverse learners to selected district and school leaders and monolingual teachers in accordance with a plan approved by the monitors. (ARPA: Professional Salaries, Supplies and Materials)</p>	Modified	<p>Calendar of dates, meetings and participants/attendance</p>

		Non-recurring activity		
A.7	3.1.1	<p>Beginning September 2022, the Office of Student Programs, Assessment and Evaluation will partner with the Office of Curriculum and Instruction to provide professional learning experiences in advanced literacy strategies for linguistically diverse learners (ARPA: Professional Salaries, Supplies and Materials)</p> <p>Non-recurring activity</p>	Modified	dates and attendance
A.8	3.1.1	<p>By December 31, 2022, the Office of Special Programs, Evaluations, and Assessment will finalize the review of English language learner programming, develop recommendations for improvement, create a timeline for implementing the recommendations, and by January 31, 2023, begin implementing the recommendation in accordance with the timeline.</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	Modified	Calendar of dates, meetings and participants/attendance
A.9		<p>By December 31, 2022 the Office of Special Programs, Evaluations, and Assessment will finalize the review of English language learner programming, develop recommendations for improvement, created a timeline for implementing the recommendations, and by January 31, 2023 begin implementing the recommendation in accordance with the timeline.</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be</p>	Modified	dates, attendance and agendas

		completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)		
A.10	3.1.1	<p>By June 2023, the Office of Special Programs, Evaluations, and Assessment shall ensure the appropriate number of teachers and building and District leaders shall have received professional development (PD), in accordance with a plan approved by the monitors, on targeted strategies to improve the academic outcomes for English Language Learners through on-going data analysis and site visits, and evaluation response with a completion rate of at/above 80% with 75% rating the PD as effective.</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	New	dates, attendance and agendas, training materials, and summary of evaluation results
A.11	2.1.1	<p>By June 2023, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will have facilitated at least six (6) Family University learning sessions, providing interpreters in both Spanish and Haitian Creole (ARPA: Professional Salaries, Purchased Services)</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	Current	dates and attendance
A.12	2.2.1	Beginning September 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will monitor the completion of school-building monthly family and community engagement (FACE) events.	New	dates and times of event

		Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)		
A.13	2.2.1	By August 2022, the Personnel Office will build into the instructional calendar at least two opportunities for formal parent-teacher conferences to allow for two-way dialog about a student’s academic and social-emotional progress. Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)	Current	document
A.14	2.2.1	By August 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will ensure that schools are using technology to schedule and track conferences, such as SignUp, whether in-person or virtually (ARPA: Purchased Services, Supplies and Materials) Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)	Current	documents from systems
A.15	2.2.1	By June 2023, Superintendent will hold four Town Halls entitled, “Conversation with Clarence” and monthly Superintendent Circles for Students and Community as an open forum to respond to questions and outline the District’s progress pertaining to identified goals, providing interpreters in both Spanish and Haitian Creole (ARPA: Purchased Services) Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)	Current	dates, agendas, materials and attendance

A.16	4.2.1	<p>By December 31, 2022, the Personnel Office will have developed a plan, approved by the monitors to address issues of recruiting, hiring and retention of effective teachers and leaders.</p> <p>Non-recurring activity</p>	Modified	documents as specified by the monitors
A.17	4.2.1	<p>By October 2022, the Superintendent will ensure the district organizational chart accurately the instructional and operational roles and responsibilities of leadership.</p> <p>Non-recurring activity</p>	Modified	document
A.18	4.2.3	<p>Beginning September 2022, the Office of Student Support Services will organize and facilitate a plan approved by the monitors to provide coaching and building specific professional development sessions for all school leaders focused on developing their capacity to cultivate social emotional resilience, restorative practices and sustainable organizational leadership, as well as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion practices that curate communal well-being for all (Title, ARPA)</p> <p>Non-recurring activity</p>	New	dates, agendas, materials and attendance
A.19	1.2.4	<p>Beginning October 2022, the Office of Student Support Services will develop and facilitate according to a plan approved by the monitors, monthly professional development sessions for building level teams established to focus on the social emotional learning needs and climate of their respective buildings,</p>	Modified	dates, agendas, materials and attendance

		<p>with an emphasis on the implementation of restorative practices, through partners specializing in restorative practices (SEE3). (ARP, Title). Respondents with a completion rate of at/above 80% with at least 75% rating the PD as effective.</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>		
A.20	3.3.1	<p>Beginning September 2022, the Office of Student Support Services, in partnership with the University of Rochester, shall establish in accordance with the guidance from their Above the Influence program, peer leaders and adult advisors in each middle school trained to support research-based intervention strategies that limit vaping and other substance abuse.</p> <p>Recurring - Strategies</p>	New	dates and attendance or agenda feedback from the University of Rochester
A.21	4.2.3	<p>By December 2022, as per the approved NYSED technology plan, the Department of Management Information Systems (Technology) shall work with the security systems contractor to install security cameras, lockdown systems and card access in all schools. (Smart Schools Bond Act)</p> <p>Non-recurring activity</p>	New	document
A.22	1.1.1	<p>Beginning October 2022, the Office of Special Student Services shall through a process approved by the monitors align instructional resources (materials, supplies, accommodations,</p>	Modified	dates, meeting, financial reports and attendance

		<p>modifications, professional development) to the curriculum</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>		
A.23	3.1.1	<p>Beginning September 2022, the Office of Student Support Services, in partnership with the Lower Hudson Regional Partnership Center, will provide monthly training and coaching for self-contained and ICT teachers on the targeted use of data to support instruction.</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	Current	<p>dates, agenda, materials, and attendance</p>
A.24	1.2.1	<p>Beginning October 2022, the Office of Student Support Services will organize and facilitate the implementation of increased access to career-readiness courses for all secondary level students through expanded Career Technical Education (CTE) programming designed to enhance the professional capacity of staff in support of academic enrichment, college, career and citizenship readiness, with the goal of increased student academic proficiency and graduation rates. (ARP, Title)</p> <p>Non-recurring activity</p>	Current	<p>meeting dates, attendance, agenda and materials - Plan developed to increase career readiness and CTE programs</p>
A.25	3.2.1	<p>Beginning October 2022, the Office Curriculum and Instruction will monitor the completion of each building's learning walk feedback tool.</p>	Modified	<p>utilization data from use of the Learning Walk Tool</p>

		Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)		
A.26	1.1.1	Beginning July 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction shall facilitate the multi-year work of curriculum development and refinement within the Atlas curriculum mapping platform. (ARPA: Professional Salaries; Title: Supplies & Materials) Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)	Current	dates and attendance or agenda and Atlas data
A.27	1.1.2	Beginning September 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will monitor critical data points that demonstrate the impact of each schools' RTI2/MTSS processes and protocols. Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)	New	student progress data
A.28	1.1.2	By November 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction shall have implemented a plan, approved by the monitors to invest in licenses and professional development to utilize during K–8 individualized tutoring sessions by subscribing to a literacy academic support network such as Book Nook (ARPA: Professional Services, Purchased Services) Non-recurring activity	New	documents, licenses, purchase orders

A.29	1.1.2	<p>By September 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will distribute library (digital and print) books to support social emotional learning and student independent reading of diverse/culturally representative high interest texts, as well as professional text for teacher/leader professional practices (Title: Supplies and Materials).</p> <p>Non-recurring activity</p>	New	document
A.30	1.1.2	<p>By October 2022, the Office of Student Support Services will develop a process, approved by the monitors, that establishes quarterly districtwide MTSS team meetings that provide guidance on the role of interventionists and all instructors in RTI2 decision making, student assessment and program implementation, along with the use of resources to meet the diverse needs of all learners throughout the District.</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	New	dates and attendance or agenda
A.31	1.1.2	<p>Beginning August 2022, the Office of Student Support Services will coordinate professional development on Orton-Gillingham reading intervention strategies for all remaining teachers supporting K-3 students and K-8 students with disabilities to strengthen pedagogical understanding and implementation of the five components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and</p>	New	dates and attendance or agenda

		comprehension). (IDEA, ARP, Title) Non-recurring activity		
A.32	1.1.3	Beginning September 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, shall engage leaders in professional learning experiences (ie, coaching), attended at quarterly intervals during the year by the Academic Monitor, that include data-driven leadership and culturally relevant and responsive leadership practices (ARPA: Purchased Services). Non-recurring activity	New	dates and attendance or agenda
A.33	1.1.4	By December 31, 2022 the Office of Curriculum and Instruction shall purchase content area curriculum resources instructional materials and equipment through a process approved by the monitors. (ARPA: Purchased Services, Supplies and Materials; Title: Purchased Services, Supplies and Materials) Non-recurring activity	New	document
A.34	1.1.5	Beginning August 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will continue to monitor and communicate expectations to building leadership and teachers the use of Schoology as the K-12 district-wide learning management system by teachers for communication and blended learning (ARPA: Purchased Services, Supplies and Materials; Title: Purchased Services, Supplies and Materials)	New	document

		Non-recurring activity		
A.35	1.2.1	Beginning July 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will continue to offer K-12 Expanded School Year (EXP) summer, after school, and Saturday programming that provides individualized and differentiated small-group supplemental instruction to address the needs of impacted students, including low-income students, students with disabilities, English language learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness and children and youth in foster care by hiring administrators, site supervisors, teachers, paraprofessionals, monitors, clerical staff, nurses, social workers, security, and administrators (ARPA: Professional Salaries) Non-recurring activity	Modified	dates and attendance or document
A.36	1.2.1	Beginning July 2022, the Transportation Department will provide busing for all Expanded School Year programs (ARPA: Purchased Services) Non-recurring activity	Modified	Transportation documentation summer 2022
A.37	1.2.1	Beginning July 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will partner with providers and teacher leaders to support curriculum and professional development for Expanded School Year programs in order to support individualized and small group instruction (ARPA: Purchased Services, Supplies and Materials).	New	documents, BOE agenda

		Non-recurring activity		
A.38	1.2.1	<p>By July 31, 2023, the Office of Student Support Services will expand K-8 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programming in partnership with agencies such as 21st Century ED to create district partnerships with community agencies (OSSS) (ARPA: Purchased Services, Supplies and Materials)</p> <p>Non-recurring activity</p>	Current	dates and attendance or agenda or document
A.39	1.2.1	<p>By July 31, 2023, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will expand K-8 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programming in partnership with agencies such as 21st Century ED to map curriculum (C&I) (ARPA: Purchased Services, Supplies and Materials)</p> <p>Non-recurring activity</p>	Current	dates and attendance or agenda or document
A.40	1.2.1	<p>By July 31, 2023, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will map vertical and horizontal articulation of the 7-12 Technology Education curriculum and provide teacher professional development in partnership with agencies such as Project Lead the Way to expand graduation pathways (ARPA: Professional Salaries; Title: Professional Salaries, Supplies and Materials).</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	Modified	dates and attendance or agenda or dates and attendance or agenda or documents and Atlas data
A.41	1.2.1	Beginning August 2022, the Office of	New	dates and

		<p>Curriculum and Instruction will collaborate with BOCES and science teachers to re-evaluate and develop the design of model secondary science lab for inquiry-based investigations (i.e., chemistry, physics, biology, aquatics, astronomy, earth science and Integrated Physics and Chemistry) (ARPA: Purchased Services, Supplies and Materials)</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>		attendance or agenda or document
A.42	1.2.2	<p>Beginning October 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will monitor the implementation and impact of school comprehensive education plans through facilitating Leadership in Action meetings and holding quarterly data conversations (ARPA: Professional Salaries)</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	New	dates and attendance or agenda or student progress data
A.43		<p>Beginning October 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction shall monitor the implementation and impact of school comprehensive education plans through facilitating Leadership in Action meetings and holding quarterly data conversations (ARPA: Professional Salaries)</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	New	dates and attendance or agenda or student progress data

A.44	1.3.1	<p>By October 2022, the Department of Management Information Systems (Technology) will communicate to building-level Distributions Teams charged with managing device distribution the District’s expectations for adherence to common protocols, such as inputting data related distribution, inventory, and monitoring of individual devices for all students and staff</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	Current	document
A.45	2.1.1	<p>Beginning September 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will oversee the middle school and high school use of Family ID to monitor extra-curricular, co-curricular, interscholastic participation (Title: Purchased Services, Supplies and Materials)</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	New	dates and attendance or document/data from Family ID
A.46	3.1.1	<p>Beginning September 2022, the Office Curriculum and Instruction will, in a process approved by the monitors, strengthen its partnership with the East Ramapo Teacher Center (TC) to support end of year goal attainment.</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	Current	dates and attendance or agenda or survey

A.46	3.1.1	<p>Beginning October 2022, the Office Curriculum and Instruction will, in a process approved by the monitors, oversee K-12 building use of Frontline Professional Growth Platform to calendar, organize. and manage professional development activities.</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	Modified	<p>dates and attendance or survey, Frontline data</p>
A.47	4.1.1	<p>Beginning September 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will administer four cycles of the Renaissance Star Early Literacy, Reading and Math, the district-wide universal screener and benchmark assessment for K-12 students. (ARPA: General Funds)</p> <p>Activities that are expected to be completed more than once during a year (e.g., quarterly, monthly, weekly)</p>	New	<p>dates and attendance or document</p>
A.48	4.2.3	<p>By September 2022, as per the approved NYSED technology plan, the Department of Management Information Systems (Technology) will expand the wireless infrastructure in all buildings, outdoor wireless for high schools and increase the internet bandwidth to 5 GB. (CARES, BOCES coser)</p> <p>Non-recurring activity</p>	New	<p>document</p>
A.49	4.2.3	<p>By August 2023, Department of Management Information Systems (Technology) will migrate district's network directory structure & storage</p>	New	<p>document</p>

		from Novell platform to Microsoft cloud platform (MS Azure) for ease of data access, broader global support, product compatibility, enhanced security features & automatic integration with the digital resources. (BOCES coser) Non-recurring activity		
A.50	4.2.4	Beginning September 2022, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will, in a process approved by the monitors, purchase music, art, physical education, health, and interscholastic equipment and materials (ARPA: Supplies and Materials; Title: Supplies and Materials) Non-recurring activity	New	data documents, purchase orders, invoices etc
A.51		Revision to trends and annual targets in current plan	Modified	See Appendix A: Trends and Annual Targets

XII. Fiscal Goals and Measurable Objectives

Overview

At the time that this Long Term Academic and Fiscal Plan was written, the June 30, 2021, end year financial statements had not been finalized. The ERSCD has hired Book Smart Accounting, CPA, to assist with financial year end close out. As school districts operate on a continuous fiscal cycle, July 1 through June 30 annually, the year-end audit is a summary of all financial transactions during the prior year, financial highlights, plus management critiques to improve financial accountability. The year-end audit confirms total revenues and total expenditures and includes the year-end fund balance.

The year-end close out of all financial records will allow the External Auditors, R.S. Abrams, to complete the Financial Statement for the period ending June 30, 2021.

Due to staffing shortages in the Business Office and financial issues uncovered during the course of the 2021-22 school year, the District will be unable to submit the required Financial Statements to the NYSED by the October 15, 2021, deadline. It is anticipated that the Financial Statements will be approved at the December 2021 Board meeting and then submitted to the NYSED. Once finalized, the June 30, 2021, Financial Statements will be

appended to this Plan. The District must track spending with fidelity; otherwise, the District again might overspend and continue the cycle of fiscal stress/crises. It is essential that the Financial Statements are rectified and reconciled on a regular, at minimum monthly, basis. Under normal circumstances (i.e., absent Stimulus funding)

this delay would likely result in increased borrowing costs for the District. Payroll and other expenditure rectifications should obviously be done on a more frequent basis.

All Financial Audit reports (e.g., external, internal, claims, New York State Comptroller, NYSED, Federal), must be posted on the District website to enhance transparency for the community. This will allow ease of access for the community to review noted improvements and the management response as is required.

It must be noted that had the District not secured \$36.1 million in the three cash borrowings listed below, the District would have ended the 2020-21 school year with a significant deficit:

- \$8.8 Million Budget note
- \$12.3 Million Deficiency note
- \$15 Million Revenue Anticipation Note

The projected June 30, 2021, year end fund balance is \$45 million, as a result of the District needing to spend less of the borrowing than had originally been projected.

As noted above, the three borrowings occurred during the 2020-2021 school year. The three cash borrowings are due to be repaid by June 30, 2022. The District projects that it will receive sufficient State Aid during the 2021-22 School Year to pay off all borrowings. The debt service interest payments have been budgeted in the 2021-22 school year budget. The \$22.5 million CARES application (2020-21) received NYSED approval, and the initial 20% payment was received by the District during July 2021.

A. Budget Development

Chapter 173 of the Laws of 2021 requires that the ERSCD develop its proposed budget in accordance with specific steps and timelines. The Board must annually submit its proposed budget for the next school year to the Monitors by March 1. The proposed budget submitted to the Monitors must, to the greatest extent possible, be consistent with the Plan and expand opportunities for students in areas such as extracurricular activities, course offerings, non-mandated support services, non-mandated art and music classes, programs and services for English language learners and students with disabilities, and maintenance of class sizes. The Monitors must review the proposed budget to ensure it is balanced within the context of revenue and expenditure estimates and mandated programs and present their findings to the Board and the Commissioner no later than 45 days prior

to the budget vote. The Commissioner shall require the Board to adjust the budget consistent with the recommendations of the Monitors to the extent that the Commissioner determines such adjustments are necessary to align the proposed budget with the provisions of the Plan. At least seven days prior to the budget vote, the District shall make available on its website the initial proposed budget, the Monitors' finding and recommendations, and the proposed final budget.

The 2021-22 school year budget contains Federal Stimulus Aid, including \$22.5 million in funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES); \$66.7 million in funding from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CCRSA); and nearly \$150 million in American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding. The approved 2021-22 school year budget is reasonable in that the estimated revenues equal estimated expenditures. However, while the total budget is balanced, the District is relying on one-time federal stimulus aid to fund regular teacher salaries, which are recurring costs the District will have after the federal aid is no longer available. The Stimulus Funding are one-shot revenue sources, not long-term sustainable sources of revenue; absent additional recurring revenue, substantial expenditure reductions will be necessary to structurally balance budgets over the next three to four years.

One of the greatest challenges facing the District is to avoid, to the maximum extent possible, using one-time revenues, particularly Federal Stimulus aid, to finance day-to-day operations or recurring costs. To ensure structurally balanced budgets, one-time revenues should be utilized for one-time expenditures, such as capital improvements. Assigned fund balance should be used to lower the succeeding year tax levy and remaining fund balance/reserves should be used to strengthen the financial position of the District.

Significant factors in the development of the 2022-23 school year budget will be the impact of contract settlements with any of the District's nine collective bargaining units as well as the successor contracts to the 48 transportation contracts that expired by the end of the 2020-21 school year.

Goal: Voters adopt annually a budget that is balanced within the context of projected revenues and expenditures, provides sufficient resources for mandated services, and supports improvements in student outcomes.

Measurable Objectives:

1. Each year, each stage in the budget process shall be completed in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 173 of the Laws of 2021. The Monitors shall review and sign off on each step of the Budget process, as outlined in the Budget Development Calendar. All justifications must accompany the expenditure and revenue budget codes. The Monitors must be provided all justifications that aligns with each budget code.
2. Voters shall annually approve a budget that reflects the actual projected growth in district expenses and revenues.
3. The District shall have annual positive year-end fund balances without the need for

extraordinary borrowing.

4. The District shall have no Corrective Action Plans imposed on the District for failure to provide mandated services to students with disabilities or English language learners.

5. The budget shall identify opportunities to redirect funds from ineffective and inefficient programming to support increases in extracurricular activities, course offerings, non-mandated support services, non-mandated art and music classes, programs and services for English language learners and students with disabilities, and maintenance of class sizes.

B. Cash Flow Management

The District's projected operating deficit for the 2020-21 fiscal year and the highly fluid fiscal circumstances caused by the pandemic, which has increased District expenses and revenues in some areas while both increasing and decreasing revenues in others, makes it imperative that the District carefully monitor revenues and expenditures and make adjustments to the budget as needed throughout the year as more information becomes available. These adjustments must be made transparently, so that the public and the Monitors are aware of the changes and why they were made. It remains essential that the District continue to monitor planned expenditures while simultaneously ensuring that the District does not enter into numerous and high-cost consultant contracts that were a primary contributing factor to the overspending and under-budgeting that had a deleterious effect on the 2020-2021 Budget and fiscal state of the District.

Goal: The District manages its cash flow so as to ensure that there is sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly and that expenditures can be met with minimum reliance on the District's fund balances.

Measurable Objectives:

1. By the close of each month, the District's projections of monthly cash flow needs will be accurate, cross-referenced with revenues, and presented at the Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer's (CFO) Monthly Budget Presentation Update to the Board. This presentation shall also identify by key budget codes any significant changes to budget needs.

2. Beginning immediately, the District shall monitor bi-weekly cash flow and at all times maintain sufficient cash on hand to make timely payment of all expenses.

C. Reimbursement Claiming Process

The Office of Federal Funds is understaffed. The District needs to fill open positions and hire additional administrative personnel. The District has had a pattern of missing

deadlines to apply for Federal funds, which has resulted in the District either having payments delayed or not received at all. The District has also had a pattern of missing deadlines for submitting required reports, again risking delays in payments or forfeiture of funds. The CFO, and as practicable, the Superintendent shall monitor and supervise the Executive Director of Federal Funds (or person in similar title with such responsibilities) and process check Title I, Medicaid, and other related Federal grants to ensure alignment to the scope and purpose of the grants and adherence to submission and reporting timelines.

A Federal Funds consultant has been contracted to assist with the application process to ensure timely submission of all Federal fund grants, but this should be considered a temporary solution. Full-time permanent staff who are experts in grants management must be hired, as soon as possible, so that the past patterns are not carried forward.

The District must also ensure that all available revenue sources are utilized to offset expenditures. This will require training new staff in how to submit invoices for services provided, using such mechanisms as STAC billing and Medicaid.

Goal: The District makes timely claims for all available funds for which it is eligible

Measurable Objectives:

1. Beginning September 30, 2021, the District will submit timely claims for 100% of services for which it is eligible to receive reimbursement from NYSED or (other) school districts.
2. Beginning with claims for aid for the 2022-23 school year, the District receives no notifications from NYSED that an application or report has been submitted late or that the District will not be paid the full award amount for which it is eligible.

D. Expenditure (Internal Controls)

In the Monitors' 2020-21 annual report, the Monitors noted that the District had not adequately addressed the inappropriate use of confirming purchase orders, which has led to a lack of proper purchasing procedures that could result in increased District costs. Confirming purchase orders mean that purchase orders were written after a purchase, not before, as should be standard operating procedure. Confirming purchase orders are appropriate only for use in emergency circumstances that typically happen a few times in a year (e.g., emergency maintenance repairs for buildings and grounds). All other purchases must follow standard operating procedures.

During the 2020-21 school year, confirming purchase orders are noted in each month's claims report, which were presented to the Board at its monthly meetings.

Goal: All District purchases shall be made in accordance with District policy and

proper purchasing procedures.

Measurable Objectives:

1. Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, there will be no audit findings pertaining to confirming purchase orders.
2. By January 1, 2022, and each January 1 thereafter, the Monitors will have approved the District's plan for training staff in proper purchasing practices.
3. Beginning June 30, Monitors will receive evidence that all relevant staff members have been trained annually. The CFO shall provide evidence of and artifacts related to the type of professional development provided, such as session sign-in sheets that include titles of the professional development provided, and materials used in the training.

E. Long Term Planning

For too long, the ERSCD has been "playing from behind." The failure to accurately project current and future expenditures and revenues has led to disruptions in services and higher District expenses. The District must improve its ability to forecast future trends in enrollment, staffing, expenditures, revenues, facility utilization, and borrowing needs by annually creating five-year financial plans that include fund balance analysis.

Goal: All Board decisions are informed by an up-to-date long-term plan that has been developed in accordance with the Office of State Comptroller's multi-year financial planning tool.

Measurable Objectives:

The Board shall annually hold a public meeting to present and receive comment on the District's five-year financial plan, which shall be updated and published following the public hearing.

F. Organizational Structure and Internal Operations Efficiencies

This past school year has shown the need to ensure Business Office staff are cross-trained on the many facets of Business Office operations and that the Office be adequately staffed. This past school year has also shown the need for the District to upgrade its financial software and integrate it with the software used by the Human Resources Office.

One area where the District would benefit from operational efficiencies is in the annual budget development process. All department and school leaders need to understand their role in the budget development process and the timelines by which they must provide input into the process. Department leaders should be held accountable for the budgets developed for their offices and be prepared to explain any significant increase or decrease in expense and revenue codes for their offices. The Business Office must maintain documentation that explains any significant changes in revenues or expenditures. Should the Business Office

fail to do so, it must be held accountable for the failure. The District must increase its use of its website to provide information to the school community in order to increase transparency and accountability to the school community.

The District also needs to continue practices that have been put in place that ensure that there are no redundancies in spending, inclusive of needed supplies and materials, and that increase the alignment of personnel use with student specific programmatic needs.

Goal: The District regularly identifies and implements improvements to management practices, minimizes or reduces operating expenses, and enters into shared service agreements that reduce operating expenses.

Measurable Objectives:

1. Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, the District shall receive no auditor comments.
2. By January 1, annual reviews shall show that all staffing budget codes are aligned with actual staff.
3. By July 1, 2021, the CFO will ensure New York State Office of State Comptroller and Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Accounting Practices and related codes are up-to-date and used in daily practice. (See <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/required-reporting/pdf/school-district-account-codes-added-for-gasb-84.pdf>.)

G. Transportation

ERSCD is responsible for busing over 40,000 resident nonpublic school students to their schools, making transportation the largest contractual service in the budget. As the number of resident students enrolled in nonpublic schools has been increasing annually, in some years by as many as 2,000 additional nonpublic school students, additional bus service is required, placing further stress on the District's budget.

Public comments on the draft plan makes clear that there is significant support for continuation of the current District transportation policies, and a goal for all school districts is to implement transportation policies that facilitate the ability of students to attend school and arrive on time. Nonetheless, decisions made decades ago to provide all students with universal "door to door" transportation need to be re-examined to determine the implications for the ability of the District to create balanced budgets in future years. It is essential that the transportation student data system is continually updated and revised daily to align with the District student data system. As enrollment changes daily, it is imperative that both systems are aligned.

Transportation Update:

To address opening of school transportation issues, the Board in October 2021 approved two bus contracts. Community Bus added 15 large buses, and Student Bus added 3 large

buses. The District has been working with both bus companies to ensure services begin November 1, 2021

The additional 18 buses plus the move to remote instruction at Spring Valley High School will greatly improve transportation efficiency. The remaining transportation issues are being closely monitored (i.e., transmission of e-school student data into VersaTrans transportation software). School Bus Logistics is providing daily updates on the software integration and the impact on transportation services.

The District's recently hired transportation consultant has in his initial week of work saved 6 bus routes. The District is developing contingency plans for transportation services should an alternative site be secured in which to provide in-person instruction to Spring Valley High School students or, as a last resort, when Spring Valley HS students return to in-person instruction in January 2022.

The District is currently in the process of interviewing candidates for Transportation Director. A primary focus for the new director will be to develop long-term strategies for addressing the bus driver shortage.

Goal: The ERCSD shall create a transportation system that is efficient and cost effective and provides all resident students, at minimum, with such services that are mandated by State law.

Measurable Objectives:

1. By Spring 2022, the District shall have entered into new transportation contracts for the 2022-23 school year and five future years that reduce the per pupil cost of transportation compared to the 2021-22 school year, after adjustments for changes in the Consumer Price Index.
2. Beginning immediately, all contracts for pupil transportation, regardless of the school to which the students will be transported, shall be let in compliance with the General Municipal Law and Part 156 of the Commissioner's Regulations, so that they will be eligible for state transportation aid and not be an unaided cost upon the District.
3. By July 1, annually, the Board shall adopt a revised transportation policy that reflects the ability of the District to maintain structurally balanced budgets based on projected revenues and expenditures as informed by the District's five-year transportation cost study.

H. Facilities

The ERSCD has underinvested in its educational facilities, both in terms of ensuring appropriate leadership and supervision of the Office of School Facilities and providing clean, well-maintained, up-to-date facilities for students.

The Facilities office has been without a Director since July 1, 2020, and the District must

prioritize filling this position with a qualified professional and ensuring that the office is fully staffed. Upon the hiring of the Director of Facilities, the successful candidate must assess the current conditions of the buildings and grounds. After the review is completed, the Director must establish measurable objectives to determine progress towards the District goal.

Currently there are issues with the cleanliness and maintenance of school buildings as evidenced by building tours and observations conducted by the Monitors. The Director must provide training for all head/chief custodians that makes clear to them their areas of responsibility.

There is a need to improve supervision of the custodial, maintenance, and grounds staff, as evidenced by lack of cohesive direction given to maintenance and custodial staff. There needs to be enhanced direction provided to building administrators who are responsible for on-site supervision of operational staff.

A replacement schedule should be established for all District equipment to ensure District personnel have usable equipment.

In order to identify health, safety, and security needs as well as needed building enhancements, the District should establish a committee to guide the development of a Capital Improvement Plan. Once the plan has been created, there will be a need to secure voter approval for such long-term debt, or otherwise secure sufficient funding, is required to implement the Plan. As the District places greater emphasis on providing extended learning experiences to students, there is a need to ensure both that adequate space is made available for expanded summer school as well as that external groups that use school facilities are charged fees that reflect the true cost to the District of making these facilities available to external groups.

Facilities Update:

To address the issues at Spring Valley High School, the District has secured the services of Jacobs Construction Manager to support the District with its capital project efforts. The contractor and District staff are working together to create the plan and timeline for remediation work and to secure such approvals from the New York State Education Department as will be necessary to undertake and complete the work.

The Jacobs team has already assisted the District by instructing the Spring Valley High School custodial crew on methods to prepare for the mold and asbestos remediation.

At the November 19, 2021, Board meeting, the superintendent will make a recommendation for appointment of a Director of Facilities, a position that needs to be filled urgently to address the critical facility issues in the District.

The District is continuing to search for potential alternative sites at which to provide in-

person instruction to Spring Valley High School students. As of the end of October, a number of sites that on initial review had been thought to have potential have had to be removed from consideration after more detailed feasibility analysis was conducted.

Goal: All students will attend clean, well maintained, and up-to-date schools that appropriately support student learning.

Measurable Objectives:

1. By June 30, 2022, the Office of School Facilities will be fully staffed in accordance with national standards and square footage assignment methodologies (i.e., all budgeted lines will be filled).
2. By June 20, 2022, 100% of school facilities shall receive a quarterly review and will receive ratings of B+ or higher on their facility inspections.
3. By June 30, 2022, the non-code conforming kitchen vent hoods, which were the subject of not only conditional approval of the District's budget for the 2021-2022 school year by then-Interim Commissioner Tahoe, but also an ongoing Corrective Action Plan from NYSED's Office of Facilities Planning, shall be completely addressed during the 2021-22 school year.
4. By January 1, 2022, the District shall fully implement Phase I of its Capital Improvement Plan as defined in the ARPA plan.

I. Contracting Process

The District has long struggled with the process of contracting (e.g., summer school cleaning), which have not always been properly vetted by the Board; entered into timely; or implemented in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations and/or best practices. This has resulted in instances where the District has overpaid for services while not being able to provide students all the services that they need.

Goal: The Board timely and properly authorizes all contracts, and the District ensures that all contracts are entered into and implemented in accordance with Uniform Grants Guidance and the General Municipal Law; monitors for accuracy of payments; and plans appropriately for any negotiations or renewals.

Measurable Objectives:

1. Beginning with contracts let for the 2022-23 school year, the District conducts all procurements for pupil transportation services in a manner consistent with the General Municipal Law and the Part 156 of Commissioner's regulations so that all available transportation aid may be received. Aid claims will reflect only allowable expenses, but all contracts for home to school busing, having been properly bid, will be eligible for aid. In addition, federal program contracts will be let in a manner consistent with the Uniform Grants Guidance, and all other appropriate statute and regulations.

XIII. Fiscal Improvement Strategies

Recommendation Number	Specific Text of Recommendation	Recommendation Type (Current, Modified, New)	Evidence of Implementation to be Submitted by District
F.1	<p>The Superintendent shall create and implement a 3-part Financial Efficiencies and Expenditure Reduction Plan (FEERP) to ensure that the June 30, 2023, Fund Balance is positive.</p> <p>The superintendent shall meet every Monday with Bond Counsel and Fiscal Advisors to presents the district’s most current plan for making cost reductions.</p>	New	The Superintendent will provide line by line 2023-2024 budget reductions. The Superintendent Proposed 2023-2024 will be balanced. There will be sufficient revenue equal to the expenditures.
F.2	<p>By September 2022, the Board shall adopt the 2023-24 Budget Development Calendar that details the due dates for submission of budget documentation such that each phase of the budget process shall be completed timely.</p> <p><i>Recurring annually</i></p>	Current	Link to the Calendar can be found here .
F.3	<p>By June 30, 2023, the District staff shall submit to the Board an analysis of the salary schedules, debt payment schedule, and transportation expenditures necessary to inform the development of the proposed budget for the succeeding school year.</p> <p><i>Recurring annually</i></p>	Current	The Superintendent and Executive Cabinet will perform a line-by-line review of the budget. Superintendent will provide a bimonthly analysis to the Board of Education of the modifications to the 2022-2023

			budget
F.4	<p>By June 30, 2023, the District staff shall provide the Superintendent and the Board monthly with an estimate of the projected June 30 fund balance.</p> <p><i>Recurring annually</i></p>	Current	Projected June 30, 2023 fund balance analysis will be provided on a monthly basis
F.5	<p>Beginning Fall 2022 (with the development of the 2023–2024 proposed budget), the District shall adopt the following policies and practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The proposed budget shall be based on a strategic examination of current resource use in order to determine the contribution that each investment makes to educational outcomes. o The proposed budget shall be based on a review of expenditure trends and projected expenses, as well as local and state revenue projections. o Assumptions used to develop the proposed budget shall be stated explicitly in the budget document, including projected increases or decreases in enrollment and trends in expenditure growth. o Notes shall be added to the 2023–2024 budget to explain any unusual line-item budget expenditures or revenues. The explanation notes must be completed to align with the proposed 2023–2024 budget. The explanation notes which are to be appended to the 2023–2024 Budget will give the reader further insight to budgetary changes. o District staff shall be provided written guidance and procedures regarding budgetary objectives and budgetary procedures. o The budget development process shall be informed by the guidance on budget development that the NYSED provides to the Monitors. o Within the context of expected revenues, the proposed budget shall allocate the resources needed to implement the academic components of the Plan and be adequate to 	Current	Proposed budget and guidance materials.

	<p>ensure that all students are able to meet State standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Within the context of expected revenues, the budget shall allocate funds to support increases in extracurricular activities, course offerings, non-mandated support services, non-mandated art and music classes, programs and services for English language learners and students with disabilities, and maintenance of class sizes.o The proposed budget shall be aligned with the Plan.o The proposed budget shall take into account external factors that affect the projected tax base and enrollment numbers. <p>. Annually by October 1, the Board shall adopt a Budget Development Calendar that details the due dates for submission of budget documentation such that each phase of the budget process shall be completed timely. 2. Annually by January 1, the Board shall review, and update as appropriate, its budget policies to ensure that they are compliant with applicable laws and regulations. 3. Annually by January 1, District staff shall submit to the Board an analysis of the salary schedules, debt payment schedule, and transportation expenditures necessary to inform development of the proposed budget for the succeeding school year. 4. Annually beginning each November, District staff shall provide the superintendent and the Board monthly with an estimate of the projected June 30 fund balance. 5. Beginning with the development of the 2023-24 proposed budget, the District shall adopt the following policies and practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o The proposed budget shall be based on a strategic examination of current resource use in order to determine the contribution that each investment makes to educational outcomes. <p>1. Beginning September 1, 2022, District staff shall conduct monthly analysis of expected revenues and expenditures to ensure that they remain reasonable. This shall be made available to the Board and public.</p>		
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<p>F.6</p>	<p>Beginning July 1, 2022, school leadership and Department leads shall institute the practice of cross-referencing line-item expenditures, per department, per budget code to ensure monies to be obligated are aligned with the District’s long-term strategic academic goals.</p> <p>Reimbursement Claiming Process The Office of Federal Funds is understaffed. The District needs to fill open positions and hire additional administrative personnel. The District has had a pattern of missing deadlines to apply for Federal funds, which has resulted in the District either having payments delayed or not received at all. The District has also had a pattern of missing deadlines for submitting required reports, again risking delays in payments or forfeiture of funds. The CFO, and as practicable, the Superintendent shall monitor and supervise the Executive Director of Federal Funds (or person in similar title with such responsibilities) and process check Title I, Medicaid, and other related Federal grants to ensure alignment to the scope and purpose of the grants and adherence to submission and reporting timelines.</p> <p>The District must also ensure that all available revenue sources are utilized to offset expenditures. This will require training new staff in how to submit invoices for services provided, using such mechanisms as STAC billing and Medicaid.</p> <p>Improvement Strategies: 1. By November 30,2022, the District shall complete a study to determine what should be the proper level of personnel and/or contracting needed by the Office of Federal Funds to achieve the Measurable Objectives for which it is responsible. The study should include comparisons to other similar New York State school districts and take into account the need for staffing levels to be sustainable over time. 2. By no later than January 1, 2023, the District shall maintain a fully staffed Office of Federal Funds and have in effect such contracts as have been determined to be needed in accordance with the study of Office needs. 3. By December 2021, Office of Federal Funds staff will receive training so that they are able to conduct any federally supported procurement process in a manner</p>	<p>Current</p>	<p>Budget booklet provided to all building administrators</p>
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	<p>consistent with the Uniform Grants Guidance and the General Municipal Law. 4. Beginning immediately, the District shall implement a process by which new Business Office staff are trained in how to submit invoices for services, STAC billing, and the billing of other school districts that have students enrolled in the District and have received health and welfare services. Beginning October 1, 2021, provision of such training shall be tracked and documented.</p> <p>2. Expenditure (Internal Controls) In the Monitors' 2020-21 annual report, the Monitors noted that the District had not adequately addressed the inappropriate use of confirming purchase orders, which has led to a lack of proper purchasing procedures that could result in increased District costs. Confirming purchase orders mean that purchase orders were written after a purchase, not before, as should be standard operating procedure. Confirming purchase orders are appropriate only for use in emergency circumstances that typically happen a few times in a year (e.g., emergency maintenance repairs for buildings and grounds). All other purchases must follow standard operating procedures. During the 2020-21 school year, confirming purchase orders are noted in each month's claims report, which were presented to the Board at its monthly meetings. Goal: All District purchases shall be made in accordance with District policy and proper purchasing procedures. Measurable Objectives: 1. Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, there will be no audit findings pertaining to confirming purchase orders.</p>		
F.7	<p>Beginning July 1, 2022, District shall implement a process by which new Business Office staff are trained in how to submit invoices for services, STAC billing, and the billing of other school districts that have students enrolled in the District and have received health and welfare services.</p> <p>Throughout the 22.23 school year, the provision of such training shall be tracked and documented.</p>	Current	<u>OFP Audit Efficiency Action Plan.pdf</u>

	<p>Improvement Strategies: 1. By October 1, 2022, and each year thereafter, the Purchasing Office shall develop and disseminate an annual calendar of services to bid, which shall include date of bid; date of Board approval, and effective date of service. 2. By July 1, 2022, The CFO will ensure that all bid processes and specifications align with operational standards of practice and Government Accounting Standards. 3. By November 1, 2022, the District shall send memos to all departments and buildings leaders that reiterate the District’s purchasing guidelines and specify policies relating to the proper and improper use of confirming purchasing orders. These memos shall be provided to all new department staff and building leaders and updated and redistributed annually prior to the start of the new school year. 4. By November 1, 2022, the District shall send memos to all current vendors informing them that if a purchase is made without proof of a purchase order, then the District shall not be obligated to make payment to the vendor. This memo shall be sent to all new prospective vendors and redistributed prior to the start of each school year to all current vendors. 5. By December 1, 2022, and by December 1 each year thereafter, the District shall submit to the Fiscal Monitor a plan for how relevant staff will be trained in appropriate purchasing practices. The plan shall be implemented upon approval by the Monitor, and the District shall provide such documentation as is requested by the Monitors to demonstrate implementation of the plan. 6. By January 1, 2023, the District shall re-adopt a policy by which staff who repeatedly violate</p> <p>District purchasing policies may be held accountable through the district’s discipline policy, and, where appropriate, reimburse the district for the purchases using their own funds. 7. Beginning with the 2022-23 school year, the district shall annually review each shared service agreement to determine whether cost savings may be effectuated by having the district provide the service directly.</p>		
F.8	By June 30, 2023, the Assistant Superintendent for Business/Supervisor of Fiscal Services will ensure that all bid	Current	Assistant Superintendent for Personnel will

	<p>processes and specifications align with operational standards of practice and Government Accounting Standards.</p> <p>The district needs to hire or appoint an Assistant Superintendent for Business.</p>		<p>provide the posting of Assistant Superintendent for Business position</p>
<p>F.9</p>	<p>Following the conclusion of the 6/30/2022 External Auditors Year-End Financial Statement, the District shall review historical trend data and revise the five-year fiscal plan. Following the conclusion of the 6/30/2022 External Auditors Year-End Financial Statement, the District shall review historical trend data and revise the five-year fiscal plan. Organizational Structure and Internal Operations Efficiencies This past school year has shown the need to ensure Business Office staff are cross trained on the many facets of Business Office operations and that the Office be adequately staffed. This past school year has also shown the need for the district to upgrade its financial software and integrate it with the software used by the Human Resources Office. One area where the district would benefit from operational efficiencies is in the annual budget development process. All department and school leaders need to understand their role in the budget development process and the timelines by which they must provide input into the process. Department leaders should be held accountable for the budgets developed for their offices and be prepared to explain any significant increase or decrease in expense and revenue codes for their offices. The Business Office must maintain documentation that explains any significant changes in revenues or expenditures. Should the Business Office fail to do so, it must be held accountable for the failure. The district must increase its use of its website to provide information to the school community in order to increase transparency and accountability to the school community. The district also needs to continue practices that have been put in place that ensure that there are no redundancies in spending, inclusive of needed supplies and materials, and that increase the alignment of personnel use with student specific programmatic needs.</p>	<p>Current</p>	<p><u>5 Year Financial Plan.pdf</u></p>

F.10	<p>Following the conclusion of the 6/30/2022 External Auditors Year-End Financial Statement, the District shall ensure that all auditor suggestions, concerns, and areas for Improvement Strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The District shall ensure that all auditor suggestions, concerns, and areas for improvement, are resolved. All noted deficiencies are addressed and cured. 2. By June 30, 2022, the District shall complete an upgrade of the current financial software package. The new financial software package shall be integrated with the systems used by the Human Resources department. The Monitors must be allowed read only access to the new financial and personnel software. 3. By June 30, 2022, the District shall complete training of staff from the Business Office, Human Resource Office, Payroll Office, Benefits Office, Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, Information Technology staff, all department heads, and all school leaders in the appropriate use of the new financial system. This will allow them to know how to review their budget codes in real time. 4. By September 1, 2022, the District shall create a budget development form that shall be used by Department leaders to input their expenditure requests. 5. By September 1 annually, the Business Office shall provide each office and school leader with explicit instructions regarding their role in the budget development process and the timelines for deliverables. 6. Beginning September 1, 2022, the District shall implement updated procedures to alert residents of important updates and ensure residents have information with the greatest amount of notice. 7. By March 1, 2023, the District, after engagement with key stakeholders, shall launch a redesigned website designed to provide stakeholders with easier, more transparent access to critical District financial and academic information. The revised website shall be designed to ensure that documents are translated in appropriate languages. <p>are resolved.</p>	Current	Year-end financial report to be provided when concluded; that is when suggestions, concerns, and areas for improvement are resolved.
F.11	By June 30, 2023, the Board shall appoint an appropriately certified Director of Facilities.	Current	Assistant Superintendent for Personnel will

			provide the posting of Director of Facilities position
F.12	By June 30, 2023, the Director of Facilities shall establish standards, procedures, and a schedule for the regular cleaning and routine maintenance of each District facility, which shall be approved by the Board and the Monitors.	Current	Determined with the Director of Facilities
F.13	Beginning July 1, 2023, the District shall conduct for each District facility quarterly inspections and assign grades to each facility based on its adherence to standards for cleanliness and routine maintenance. A copy of the grades assigned and the rationale for the grades shall be provided to the Board within 30 days of the conclusion of each quarter. Any corrective actions needed shall occur in accordance with the schedule stipulated in the report.	Current	A copy of the grades assigned and the rationale for the grades shall be provided to the Board within 30 days of the conclusion of each quarter. E RAMAPO Facilities Status Scorecard.pdf
F.14	Beginning July 1, 2022, the District shall establish and implement a policy for the issuance of uniforms to all custodial and maintenance staff, which shall include the use, care, cleaning, and replacement of such uniforms.	Current	Determined with the Director of Facilities
F.15	Transportation Measurable Objectives: 1. By Spring 2022, the district shall have entered into new transportation contracts for the 2022-23 school year and five future years that reduce the per pupil cost of East Ramapo Central School District: 2020-2025 (Long-Term) Strategic Academic and Fiscal Improvement Plan Initial Submission 60 transportation compared to the 2021-22 school year, after adjustments for changes in the		

	<p>Consumer Price Index. 2. Beginning immediately, all contracts for pupil transportation, regardless of the school to which the students will be transported, shall be let in compliance with the General Municipal Law and Part 156 of the Commissioner's Regulations, so that they will be eligible for state transportation aid and not be an unaided cost upon the district. 3. By July 1, annually, the Board shall adopt a revised transportation policy that reflects the ability of the district to maintain structurally balanced budgets based on projected revenues and expenditures as informed by the district's five-year transportation cost study. Improvement Strategies: 1. Beginning January 1, annually, the Transportation Department staff shall receive training from a NYSED-approved source in the procurement and safety rules that apply to transportation contracts. 2. By Fall 2021, the district shall complete a routing efficiency study of current bus routes to ensure maximum cost-effective transportation efficiency. Recognizing that all buses are equipped with GPS and/or the district's routing software, Versatrans, which can track and evaluate efficiencies, the district shall include in the routing study assessments of morning and afternoon ridership at each school, seat utilization, and efficacy of pick-up and drop-off times. 3. By Spring 2022, the district shall issue a solicitation of bids for 2022-23 school year transportation contracts that are informed by the results of the routing efficiency study. 4. By February 1, annually, District staff shall submit to the Board a five-year projection of the costs of providing various levels of transportation services: a. Transportation as required by State law. b. Universal (i.e., door to door) transportation for all students. c. Elementary and middle school transportation as required by State law and high school transportation door to door. d. High school transportation as required by State law and elementary and middle school transportation door to door. e. other levels as specified by the Board or</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Current</p>	
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F.16	<p>Monitors. f. The study shall at minimum review five years of trend data and take into account projections for enrollments in public and nonpublic schools during the next five years; public school registrant trends, by school and grade level; nonpublic school ridership trends; and expected expenditure costs for each option above.</p> <p>5. By January 1, annually, the Board shall adopt a revised transportation policy that reflects the ability of the district to maintain structurally balanced budgets based on projected revenues and expenditures as informed by the district's five-year transportation cost study, which shall be incorporated into the five-year financial study.</p> <p>Facilities</p> <p>Beginning July 1, 2022, the Board shall appoint members to a committee to develop recommendations for incorporation into the Five-Year Capital Plan. The committee shall issue its report by June 2023, which shall include recommendations regarding whether current District footprint is adequate to meet the needs of current and future students.</p> <p>The ERSCD has underinvested in its educational facilities, both in terms of ensuring appropriate leadership and supervision of the Office of School Facilities and providing clean, well-maintained, up-to-date facilities for students. The Facilities office has been without a Director since September 1, 2022, and the district must prioritize filling this position with a qualified</p>		<p>The committee shall issue its report by June 2023, which shall include recommendations regarding whether the current District footprint is adequate to meet the needs of current and future students.</p>
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	<p>professional and ensuring that the office is fully staffed. Upon the hiring of the Director of Facilities, the successful candidate must assess the current conditions of the buildings and grounds. After the review is completed, the Director must establish measurable objectives to determine progress towards the district goal. Currently there are issues with the cleanliness and maintenance of school buildings as evidenced by building tours and observations conducted by the Monitors. The Director must provide training for all head/chief custodians that makes clear to them their areas of responsibility. There is a need to improve supervision of the custodial, maintenance, and grounds staff, as evidenced by lack of cohesive direction given to maintenance and custodial staff. There needs to be enhanced direction provided to building administrators who are responsible for on-site supervision of operational staff. A replacement schedule should be established for all District equipment to ensure District personnel have usable equipment. In order to identify health, safety, and security needs as well as needed building enhancements, the district should establish a committee to guide the development of a Capital Improvement Plan. Once the plan has been created, there will be a need to secure voter approval for such long-term debt, or otherwise secure sufficient funding, is required to implement the Plan. As the District places greater emphasis on providing extended learning experiences to students, there is a need to ensure both that adequate space is made available for expanded summer school as well as that external groups that use school facilities are charged fees that reflect the true cost to the district of making these facilities available to external groups.</p> <p>Measurable Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. By June 30, 2022, the Office of School Facilities will be fully staffed		
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	<p>in accordance with national standards and square footage assignment methodologies (i.e., all budgeted lines will be filled). 2. By June 20, 2022, 100% of school facilities shall receive a quarterly review and will receive ratings of B+ or higher on their facility inspections. 3. By June 30, 2022, the non-code conforming kitchen vent hoods, which were the subject of not only conditional approval of the district’s budget for the 2021-20221 school year by then-Interim Commissioner Tahoe, but also an ongoing Corrective Action Plan from NYSED’s Office of Facilities Planning, shall be completely addressed during the 2022-23 school year. 4. By January 1, 2022, the District shall fully implement Phase I of its Capital Improvement Plan as defined in the ARPA plan. Improvement</p> <p>2. Strategies: All subsequent vacancies shall be filled within 60 days. East Ramapo Central School District: 2020-2025 (Long-Term) Strategic Academic and Fiscal Improvement Plan Initial Submission 63 3. By December 31, 2021, the Director of Facilities shall submit a plan to the superintendent for the supervision of the custodial, maintenance, and grounds staff. Within 30 days of submission, the superintendent shall approve the plan or modify it and return it to the Director of Facilities, who shall begin implementation of the plan immediately upon receiving it from the superintendent. 4. By October 31, 2021, the Director of Facilities shall establish standards, procedures, and a schedule for the regular cleaning and routine maintenance of each District facility, which shall be approved by the Board and the Monitors. . By December 31, 2022, the District shall develop or adopt a rubric to be used to conduct quarterly inspections and</p>		
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	<p>assign grades to each facility. 6. Beginning June 30, 2023, the District shall conduct for each District facility quarterly inspections and assign grades to each facility based on its adherence to standards for cleanliness and routine maintenance. A copy of the grades assigned and the rationale for the grades shall be provided to the Board within 30 days of the conclusion of each quarter. Any corrective actions needed shall occur in accordance with the scheduled stipulated in the report. By June 30, 2023, the District shall establish and implement a policy for the issuance of uniforms to all custodial and maintenance staff, which shall include the use, care, cleaning, and replacement of such uniforms. 8. By November 1, 2022, the Board shall appoint members to a committee to develop recommendations for incorporation into the Five-Year Capital Plan. The committee shall issue its report by March 2023, which shall include recommendations regarding whether current District footprint is adequate to meet the needs of current and future students. . 9. By April 1, 2023, a Five-Year Capital Plan shall be submitted to the Board for approval. The Five-Year Capital Plan shall be placed on the ballot for voter approval if alternative sources of funding are not secured. 10. By January 1, 2023, the Board shall adopt a revised policy on the use of school facilities by external groups that ensures that groups are charged fees that reflect the true cost to the District of providing utilities, consumables, labor, security, insurance, and other expense related to the activity.</p>		
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XIV. Conclusion

Like almost all school districts throughout the nation, the ERSCD faces very significant challenges as students return to full in-person learning from remote instruction. The district is fortunate to have many dedicated staff and partners who have worked for years to put the district on a path of progress towards improved educational outcomes. There is a foundation upon which good work can be done

The challenges that district face nationally are exacerbated in ERCSD by a school board that struggles to maintain a laser focus on educational policy; the onboarding of a

new superintendent; the realization that many of the district's core support structures, such as transportation and facilities are in need of fundamental overall; a historical pattern of the District underscoring services to public school students; and a community of stakeholders

who often have very different understandings of what the role of the District should be. At the same time, the District has been given an unprecedented infusion of financial aid, primarily from Federal stimulus funds, that offers the District an opportunity that must be fully realized to provide students with the educational program that they need and deserve.

ERCSD is currently under fiscal stress. Once Federal Stimulus money is no longer available, the District will face unsustainable budget deficits unless efforts are made to increase revenues (e.g., secure competitive grants, increase user fees for school facilities, increase the tax levy) and/or decrease expenditures (e.g., reduce the cost of contractual services; change transportation policies) The District must seek the community support necessary to create balanced budgets that provide sufficient levels of resources to be able to support implementation of the academic component of this Plan.

Of all of the improvement strategies identified in this Plan, the following are those that the District will prioritize for the 2022-23 school year:

1. The District must constantly monitor to ensure that all funds are administered consistent with the goals, measurable objective and improvement strategies contained in the Plan.
2. The District must identify the steps it needs to take to raise its credit rating, as this will lead to lower borrowing costs. These steps may take years to implement but given that the District needs to embark on a District Facilities Enhancement program, lowering projected borrowing costs will make the Facilities Enhancement Program more affordable. An ancillary benefit to making improvements in the District's buildings and grounds is that it will lead to lower insurance rates. Currently, New York Schools Insurance Reciprocal, (NYSIR) will not insure East Ramapo School District due to the deteriorated conditions of the existing buildings.
3. The District must increase outreach to all stakeholders, both in the public and nonpublic school communities. The newly formed Community Advisory Board may be helpful in facilitating that outreach. The whole community needs to fully understand the importance of supporting public education, which requires adequate funding of programs. Continued failure to secure voter approval for the annual District Budget will exacerbate the challenges faced by the District.

It is said that there is a time and a season for everything. It is likely that members of the community can agree that we want our children to be prepared as adults to live a good life, to live lives of good, and to be able to obtain the goods of life necessary to support themselves and their families. Now is the time for all who are involved in and concerned about the education of the students who reside in the District to come together and chart a common path forward so that every child in the District will be able to graduate from high school ready to pursue post-secondary education or a career.

Appendix A: Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards

Center for Public Education



AN **nsba** PUBLICATION

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Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards

More than 90,000 men and women are members of local school boards in the United States, all serving as important trustees of the nation's public education systems. According to the National School Boards Association, these public officials serve on 13,809 elected or appointed boards in the U.S.

Most of the public knows that school boards do things like set the budgets, establish school boundaries and set school policies. But does school boards' work affect student achievement? The higher media visibility of teachers and principals in the push for better learning, while important, has led some to question whether school boards matter.

From a research perspective, it's a complex question. Isolating what makes an effective board—that is, one that impacts student achievement—involves evaluating virtually all functions of a board, from internal governance and policy formulation to communication with teachers, building administrators, and the public.

But the answer is: Yes, they do. In this research brief, NSBA's Center for Public Education looks at indicators of school board effectiveness. From this research, it is clear that school boards in high-achieving districts exhibit habits and characteristics that are markedly different from boards in low-achieving districts. In the most dramatic examples from this research, scholars compared districts with similar levels of poverty and disadvantage to determine factors that separate high-performing districts from those with low performance. In many cases, these differences included the approaches taken by local school boards.

So what do these boards do? Here are some examples:

- J. Boards in high-achieving districts are more likely to engage in goal setting and monitoring their

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progress.

K. They are increasingly data savvy—identifying student needs and justifying decisions based on data.

L. Board members possess detailed knowledge of their district, including initiatives to jump-start success.

M. Board members have crafted a working relationship with superintendents, teachers, and administrators based on mutual respect, collegiality and a joint commitment to student success.

For the full list of eight characteristics of effective school boards, keep reading.

Background on the studies

Despite the pivotal role of school boards in the nation's educational framework, comparatively few studies focused on the practices and effectiveness of elected or appointed boards. As Sam Stringfield and Deborah Land noted in their 2002 study, *Educating At-Risk Students*, "quantitative and qualitative studies of board effectiveness are virtually non-existent," (Land and Stringfield, National Society for the Study of Education, 2002). Nonetheless, while there may be no magic bullet to assess boards comprised of individuals with divergent views, there is a consistent body of research examining the characteristics and practices of effective school boards. (For the purpose of this paper, effective boards are those operating in high-achieving districts, particularly those that are making significant strides despite serving large numbers of disadvantaged students.)

Much of the research cited here focuses on school board/district practices and approaches gleaned through interviews, surveys, observations and qualitative measures rather than in-depth quantitative information. Several studies also date back to the early 2000s or earlier; as a result, the data have limitations.

Nonetheless, the research base now includes notable studies comparing the practices of boards in high-achieving districts and contrasting those with practices of boards in lower-achieving districts. Several of these include detailed case studies exploring the evolution of districts from low performing to high achieving—a process that includes discussion of the school board role. In addition, scholars have used quantitative methods to assess the effect of district leadership on student achievement; often, this assessment includes data and trends related to school board operation, thus providing rich details on the evolution and, in some cases, transformation of local boards.

Taken together, these reports provide a sound basis to explore the role played by school boards in student achievement. The pertinent studies for this paper fall into three general areas:

N. Meta-analyses of education research, with a focus on the practices of boards, superintendents, and other school leaders;

O. Case studies of high-achieving districts, with a focus on the evolving role of school boards; and

P. Studies that compare school board practices in districts with similar demographics but substantially different student outcomes as reflected by annual assessments and other factors.

Meta-Analysis: In 2006, J. Timothy Waters and Robert Marzano of Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) examined 27 studies since 1970 that, they concluded, included rigorous quantitative methods to assess the effect of school district leadership on student achievement.

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Their analysis, *School District Leadership That Works: The Effect of Superintendent Leadership on Student Achievement: Meta-analysis of Influence of District Administrators on Student Achievement*, looked at more than two

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dozen studies covering more than 2,800 districts and 3.4 million students. Of the 27 studies examined, 14 had information about the relationship between district leadership and average student academic achievement.

Case Studies: Several studies on district leadership focus at least in part on board activities. The Learning First Alliance study, *Beyond Islands of Excellence*, (Togneri and Anderson, 2003), examined the practices in five school districts with high student test scores despite moderate to high student poverty levels. Districts in the study were Aldine, Tex., Independent School District; Chula Vista, Calif., Elementary School District; Kent County Public Schools in Maryland; Minneapolis, Minn., Public Schools, and Providence, R.I., Public Schools.

Also, a study of 10 districts in five states, *Getting There from Here* (Goodman, Fulbright, and Zimmerman, 1997), sought to identify the effect of quality governance on student achievement. Included in the analysis was an examination of the relationship between school board and superintendent and characteristics of effective board leadership. Researchers selected the districts to reflect diversity in size, geography, student achievement, graduation rates, dropout rates, board/superintendent relations and race/ethnic factors.

Studies with Comparison Districts: One of the richest data sets available is the Lighthouse I study of the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB). Looking at similar districts with either unusually high or unusually low records on student achievement, the project examined the role of boards and how they relate to student achievement. In studying Georgia districts, Lighthouse I contrasted the knowledge, beliefs, and actions of school board members from high- and low performing districts. Since conducting this original study in 1998-2000, IASB has expanded the project into an action research approach, identifying pilot districts in Iowa for further testing of this concept (Lighthouse II) and launching a multi-state project focused on board leadership (Lighthouse III). Multiple Lighthouse research papers were cited in this report,

EIGHT CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD

Effective school boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision

Effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.

Effective school boards are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.

Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.

Effective boards are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.

Effective school boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.

Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their

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including *The Lighthouse Inquiry: School Board/Superintendent Team Behaviors in School Districts with Extreme Differences in Student Achievement* (Iowa Association of School Boards, 2001), *The Lighthouse Re-*

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search: Past, Present and Future: School Board Leadership for Improving Student Achievement (Iowa School Boards Foundation, 2007) and in the Thomas Alsbury-edited *The Future of School Board Governance: Relevancy and Revelation* (2008).

In addition, *Foundations for Success: Case Studies of How Urban School Systems Improve Student Achievement* (MDRC for Council of Great City Schools, 2002) examined what it termed “fast-moving” urban districts and compared them with slower-moving districts of similar size and demographics. In selecting the districts, researchers looked for cities with improvement in reading and math in more than half of their grades through spring 2001. Districts also had to achieve growth rates faster than their respective states and narrow racial achievement gaps. The project ultimately focused on Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the Houston Independent School District, the Sacramento, Calif., United School District, and a subset of New York City schools known as the Chancellor’s District. One key research question was to examine district-level strategies used to improve student achievement and reduce racial achievement disparities. Several of these strategies involved school boards.

Finally, a 1993 report on school leadership in British Columbia, Canada, *The Politics of Excellence: Trustee Leadership and School District Ethos*, concluded that districts with a productive “ethos” produced higher-than-expected student achievement and lower-than-expected costs over time (LaRocque and Coleman, 1993). The role of the board was part of this district “ethos.”

In reviewing these studies, it is reasonable to conclude that school boards in high-achieving school districts look different, and that they often feature characteristics and approaches that differ, from those in lower-achieving districts.

Eight characteristics of effective boards

F. Effective school boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.

In comparing district leadership and student achievement, Waters and Marzano (2006) identified five specific district leadership responsibilities that positively correlated with student achievement:

- (1) Establishing a collaborative process to set goals;
- (2) Establishing “non-negotiable goals” (that is, goals all staff must act upon once set by the board) in at least two areas: student achievement and classroom instruction;
- (3) Having the board align with and support district goals;
- (4) Monitoring goals for achievement and instruction; and
- (5) Using resources to support achievement and instruction goals.

“Publicly adopting broad five-year goals for achievement and instruction and consistently supporting

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these goals, both publicly and privately, are examples of board-level actions that we found to be positively correlated with student achievement,” they said. Typically, they adopted the goals with specific achievement targets and benchmarks. “The board ensures that these goals remain the top priorities in the district and that no

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other initiatives detract attention or resources from accomplishing these goals.” The districts also provided professional development to board members and examined the effectiveness of such training.

In *Beyond Islands of Excellence*, Togneri and Anderson (2003) provided examples of the positive effects of goal setting. In its case studies, the majority of high-achieving districts adopted specific goals and boards adopted policies to consistently support them. At three case study sites—Kent County, Md., Minneapolis, and Providence—boards adopted broad strategic plans that contained both goals and the action steps needed to attain them. To assess progress on a regular basis, Kent County and Minneapolis also added indicators of success to the plan so board members could review gains or address challenges.

Each district also adopted what Togneri and Anderson termed a simply stated vision of student success. For goals on student achievement, board members identified brief, one-line vision statements such as “All our students will achieve on grade level” and used them in public and staff presentations. Significantly, the report said, school boards and superintendents also carefully examined how to stretch limited dollars to focus sufficient funding on the goals.

The Lighthouse I studies (2001, 2007) also offer important details about the importance of identifying goals. In high-achieving districts, board members adopted goals and had detailed knowledge about their relationship to curriculum, instruction, assessment and staff development. As a result, these public officials could identify not only the purposes and processes behind school improvement initiatives but also the board’s role in supporting these efforts. By comparison in low-achieving districts, board members were “only vaguely aware of school improvement initiatives,” researchers noted. “They were sometimes aware of goals, but seldom able to describe actions being taken by staff members to improve learning.”

Notably, these differences extended down to the staff level. In high-achieving districts, staff members could link the school board’s goals to building-level goals for student learning and explain how the goals impacted classrooms. “Staff members identified clear goals for improvement, described how staff development supported the goals, and how they were monitoring progress based on data about student learning.” By comparison in the low-achieving districts, “There was little evidence of a pervasive focus on school renewal at any level when it was not present at the board level.”

G. Effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.

In the Lighthouse I studies (2001, 2007), board members consistently expressed their belief in the learning ability of all children and gave specific examples of ways that learning had improved as a result of district initiatives. Poverty, lack of parental involvement and other factors were described as challenges to be overcome, not as excuses. Board members expected to see improvements in student achievement quickly as a result of initiatives. Comments made by board members in Lighthouse were indicative of the differences. In a high-achieving district, one board member noted, “This is a place for all kids to excel.” Another board member noted, “Sometimes people say the poor students have limits. I say all kids have limits. I believe we have not reached the limits of any of the kids in our system.”

Yet in low-achieving districts, board members frequently referred to external pressures as the main rea-

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sons for lack of student success. Board members often focused on factors that they believed kept students from learning, such as poverty, lack of parental support, societal factors, or lack of motivation. Board members expected it would take years to see any improvements in student achievement. For these board members, the reasons for pursuing change often were simple ones—to meet state mandates (and avoid sanctions) and a desire to not “have the lowest test scores” in the state.

In addition, board members in low-achieving districts offered many negative comments about students and teachers when they were interviewed by Lighthouse researchers. Said one, “You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make them drink. This applies to both students and staff.”

In one low-performing district, teachers made 67 negative comments about students and their parents during Lighthouse interviews. In a similar number of interviews in a high-performing district, there were only four such comments.

H. Effective school boards are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.

According to Goodman, Fulbright, and Zimmerman (1997), another characteristic of quality governance is the ability to focus on student achievement while spending comparatively little time on day-to-day operational issues. In interviews with hundreds of board members and staff across the districts, they found that high-performing boards focus on establishing a vision supported by policies that target student achievement. Yet poor governance is characterized by factors such as micro-management by the board; confusion of the appropriate roles for the board member and superintendent; interpersonal conflict between board chair and superintendent; and board member disregard for the agenda process and the chain of command.

Case studies of individual districts in other studies support many of these findings. In Chula Vista, Calif., the board took its policy role seriously and developed policies that supported instructional reform. As profiled in Togneri and Anderson (2003), the focus began when top administrators recognized a need for a new cadre of exceptional principals and asked the school board for help. In response, the board approved a policy with higher salaries for principals, giving the district more leverage to attract quality candidates to the district. Later, the board granted the central office greater flexibility to provide principal raises and bonuses. Members also supported the superintendent in dismissing principals who did not meet performance standards; this smaller but still significant action reflected the policy and partnership approach adopted earlier by the board.

Other case studies in this report were replete with examples of board commitment to policy and accountability, something often reflected through visions and strategic plans. In Aldine, Tex., board members made sure to adopt strategic plans that placed children’s learning needs front and center. As one Aldine board member explained, “Everything we do is based on what’s best for the children, period. Whether you are dealing with an administrative issue or a student issue, we ask, ‘What’s best for the children?’”

With everyone on board to promote achievement, boards encouraged their staffs to tackle difficult issues and seek innovative solutions. As a result, the districts engaged in a collegial policy-making process that

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emphasized the need to find solutions. An administrator in Kent County, Md., summed up the board's work as follows: "The board recognizes its role as a policy-maker. [Board members] are very professional."

They never humiliate each other. They have no hidden agendas. The goal is what is best for the children.”

Boards held the superintendent and his or her colleagues accountable for progress but did not engage in the daily administration of schools. Explained one board member: “I am not a professional educator.... [The superintendent and her staff] are the professionals, and we say to them, ‘These are the results we want to see; you are in charge of how to do it.’”

Likewise, Snipes, Doolittle, and Herlihy’s case studies (2002) include similar findings. The groups concluded that fast-moving districts had developed a consensus among board members and other leaders on the identification and implementation of improvement strategies. This required a new role for the school board, which focused on decisions “that support improved student achievement rather than on the day-to-day operations of the district.”

In Lighthouse II (2007), researchers identified five pilot school districts and provided technical assistance and support to the boards based on research findings documented in Lighthouse I.

Results from this study also showed that districts made gains when they were able to focus on achievement rather than administrative issues. In the majority of districts, boards spent more than double the amount of time on policy and student achievement than they did prior to Lighthouse II. It was also common for these districts to schedule additional work sessions on student achievement. (More information on Lighthouse II is in the sidebar on the next page).

A DOZEN DANGER SIGNS

While this paper did not specifically focus on characteristics of ineffective school boards, it may be helpful to review some of the descriptions of ineffective boards mentioned in the research:

Only vaguely aware of school improvement initiatives, and seldom able to describe actions being taken to improve student learning

Focused on external pressures as the main reasons for lack of student success, such as poverty, lack of parental support, societal factors, or lack of motivation

Offer negative comments about students and teachers

Micro-manage day-to-day operations

Disregard the agenda process and the chain of command

Left out the information flow; little communication between board and superintendent

Quick to describe a lack of parent interest in education or barriers to community outreach

Looked at data from a “blaming” perspective, describing teachers, students, and families as major causes for low performance

Little understanding or coordination on staff development for teachers

Slow to define a vision

Did not hire a superintendent

I. Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.

The Lighthouse I studies are particularly relevant in conveying this theme. Looking across high- and low-achieving districts in Georgia, school board members in high achieving districts had strong communication between the superintendent, staff, and each other. They received information from many sources including the superintendent, curriculum director, principals, teachers, and sources outside the district. While the superintendent was a primary source of information, he or she was not the only source. In addition, findings and research were shared among all board members.

By comparison, in low-achieving districts, board members expressed concern that not all information was shared or shared equally. As a result, researchers said, “Some felt left out of the information flow.”

In high-achieving districts, school board members could provide specific examples of how they connected and listened to the community, and were able to identify concrete ways they promoted this involvement. Likewise, staff members in these districts described the boards as supportive, noting that these public officials “would respect and listen to them.” In interviews, board members were quick to note how they communicated actions and goals to staff. One strategy was to schedule post-board meetings to provide teachers and administrators with in-depth briefings on policy decisions.

By comparison, school boards in

CONVERTING RESEARCH TO ACTION: LIGHTHOUSE II

Building on the success of Lighthouse I—which identified the different knowledge, beliefs and actions of school boards in high-achieving districts—the Iowa Association of School Boards expanded the initiative to begin embedding these ideas in other jurisdictions.

Under Lighthouse II, from 2002 to 2007, IASB identified five pilot districts in Iowa and offered technical assistance and support to the board, superintendent, and, at some sites, district leadership teams. The goal was to move entire districts from one set of assumptions, beliefs and practices to another: the set possessed by the high-achieving districts in Lighthouse I. After five years of work, the project showed significant gains:

- C. In three of the five districts, the time spent on policy and student achievement during regular board meetings increased from 16 percent to 37 percent.
- D. By the end of the project, boards in all five districts regularly scheduled extra time for boards to focus on student achievement.
- E. Four of the sites showed significant increases—some as high as 90 percent—in the number of staff and board members who could consistently describe the district’s school improvement goals.
- F. At all sites, 83 percent to 100 percent of all staff and board members reported a clear, district-

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wide focus on improving literacy.

- G. All districts, by year 3 of the project, agreed strongly that local school boards can positively affect student achievement.
- H. By year 3, significant gains on a measure of reading comprehension were seen at every grade level in one district. In addition, in the fourth year of the study, four of the five sites showed statistically significant gains in student reading and/or math for at least two grade levels on the statewide norm-referenced measure of achievement.

Starting in 2008, IASB launched the Lighthouse III project, through which the association is working with several states to outline best practices for school boards and state school board associations.

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low-achieving districts were likely to cite communication and outreach barriers. They were quick to describe a lack of parent interest in education; in fact, they were able to list only a few efforts to solicit community involvement. Compared with board members from high-achieving districts, they frequently noted frustration with the lack of community involvement and said there was little they could do about it. As for relationships within the district, staff members from the comparison low-achieving districts contacted for the research often said they didn't know the board members at all.

While such findings perhaps could be limited to high- and low-achieving districts in Georgia, other research highlights similar findings. Similar factors were evident in Waters and Marzano's 2006 meta-analysis of 27 studies. In this study, the authors found that high-achieving districts actively involved board members and community stakeholders in setting goals.

While individual board members did pursue their own issues, the researchers said, there was a reluctance to place these issues at center stage. "When individual board member interests and expectations distract from board-adopted achievement and instructional goals, they are not contributing to district success, but in fact, may be working in opposition to that end." School board members realized, the authors noted, that these issues can be a distraction from core district goals.

J. Effective boards are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.

In the Lighthouse I study, board members in high-achieving districts identified specific student needs through data, and justified decisions based on that data. In addition, board members were not shy about discussing trends on dropout rates, test scores, and student needs, with many seeking such information on a regular or monthly basis.

By comparison, board members in low-achieving districts tended to greet data with a "blaming" perspective, describing teachers, students and families as major causes for low performance. In one district, the super- intendent "controls the reaction of the board to recommendations by limiting the information he gives to them." The Lighthouse I study contrasts this with the policy of a high-performance district, where the super- intendent "believes sharing information will get them to react and encourage engagement." Board members in this district view data as a diagnostic tool, without the emotional response of assessing blame.

Board members in lower-performing districts also provided little evidence of considering data in the decision making process. In these districts, board members frequently discussed their decisions through anecdotes and personal experiences rather than by citing data. In many cases, the study noted, "The board talked very generally about test scores and relied on the interpretation made by the superintendent." As a result, board members believed the superintendent "owned" information, leaving it to the top administrator to interpret the data and recommend solutions.

Togneri and Anderson (2003) also emphasized how effective school boards embraced data. Boards in high-achieving districts were not afraid to confront negative data and, in fact, used it as a basis to improve teaching and learning. In Minneapolis, a renewed emphasis on data has helped drive improvement. Yet back in the mid-1990s, the district showed a wide achievement gap between white and minority students

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and posted a high school graduation rate barely above 40 percent. When the city's Chamber of Commerce

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failed to support the school board's request for a tax increase, the board began a fundamental rethinking based on goals and data. It hired a new superintendent with a strong foundation in instructional improvement. Together, the board and superintendent developed goals and performance indicators to rank and monitor school progress. This process ultimately helped build trust among school and community leaders, eventually leading to district progress and, later, successful new tax proposals beneficial to schools.

Minneapolis was typical of the report's study districts, which "had the courage to acknowledge poor performance and the will to seek solutions." With the board, superintendent and community supporting the new process, the district developed a vision focused on student learning and instructional improvement with system-wide curricula connected to state standards with clear expectations for teachers.

K. Effective school boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.

Successful boards recognize the need to support high priorities even during times of fiscal uncertainty. One leading example is in providing professional development for teachers, administrators and other staff. According to LaRocque and Coleman (1993), effective boards saw a responsibility to maintain high standards even in the midst of budget challenges. "To this end, the successful boards supported extensive professional development programs for administrators and teachers, even during times of [fiscal] restraint," they wrote in *The Politics of Excellence: Trustee Leadership and School District Ethos*.

Lighthouse I researchers (2001, 2007) also identified research-based professional development for staff as one of seven "conditions for improvement" typically evident in high-achieving districts. From the board's perspective, members did not simply provide funding for such professional development – they could cite specific examples of activities and their link to improvement plans. "In high-achieving districts, board members described staff development activities in the district and could describe the link between teacher training and board or district goals for students," the study noted. "Board members described a belief in the importance of staff development activities focused on student needs."

In low-achieving districts, however, board members said teachers made their own decisions on staff development based on perceived needs in the classroom or for certification. "Board members knew there was a budget for staff development but were unsure whether there was a plan for staff development," the study noted. In fact, board members frequently made "disparaging remarks" about staff development, calling it an ineffective strategy.

Lighthouse II, as noted in Alsbury (2008) further reinforced this point. Boards not only took an active interest in professional development but also provided the infrastructure for such programming to succeed. "For most boards, this required significant changes in the allocation of resources (people, time and money) and would not have happened without a clear understanding of the characteristics of quality professional development and a belief in the importance of improving the knowledge and skills of educators in order to improve student outcomes."

Additional evidence is available in the Snipes, Doolittle and Herlihy's 2002 analysis of high- and low-achieving districts. In high-achieving districts, the board and superintendent support uniform

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professional development built on curriculum. In lower-achieving districts, professional development may vary extensively

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from school to school. One example was in Sacramento, Calif., where teachers received at least 18 hours of in-service training per year based on uniform curricula. New teachers also received six full days of instructional training, and teachers had common planning periods to encourage collaboration on lesson plans and strategies to address student needs. In the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C., schools, weeklong seminars for Advanced Placement teachers, leadership retreats for principals and financial support for attaining national board certification were among effective strategies by the district to improve curriculum.

Waters and Marzano (2006) also touts the importance of professional development. While not specifically examining the school board role in this process, this study on leadership notes that “a meaningful commitment of funding must be dedicated to professional development for teachers and principals. This professional development should be focused on building the knowledge, skills and competencies teachers and principals need to accomplish a district’s goals.”

L. Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.

In *Getting There from Here*, Goodman and colleagues (1997) concluded that those with a strong board/superintendent relationship had greater student achievement as measured by dropout rates, the percentage of students going to college, and aptitude test scores. Goodman’s review of characteristics of quality governance included several that were directly related to school boards and their relationships:

- (1) A trusting and collaborative relationship between the board and superintendent;
- (2) Creation by the board of conditions and organizational structures that allowed the superintendent to function as the chief executive officer and instructional leader of the district;
- (3) Evaluation of the superintendent according to mutually agreed upon procedures; and
- (4) Effective communication between the board chair and superintendent and among board members.

Likewise, Snipes, Doolittle, and Herlihy (2002) also emphasizes the importance of these factors. In successful districts, boards defined an initial vision for the district and sought a superintendent who matched this vision. Nowhere was this truer than in Sacramento, Calif., one of the case study sites. In 1996, a mayor’s commission concluded that the city schools, beset with high superintendent turnover and other problems, had “a lack of accountability and deplorable building conditions.” A group of individuals focused on progress won seats on the school board, and they quickly bought out the contract of the old superintendent and hired one sharing their views. The new superintendent and board sought input from thousands of community stakeholders and ultimately adopted an action plan with specific achievement benchmarks based on student assessments such as the SAT-9. The board and superintendent also established seven “vital signs” of success, including high rates of kindergarten readiness; a student attendance rate of at least 95 percent; increased proficiency of English Language Learners; and objectives that at least 90 percent of students attain math and reading proficiency and graduate high school. Within four years, the district saw consistent gains in math and reading plus a drop in the disparity between white and Hispanic student achievement.

In contrast to this “moving” district, comparison districts had no such impetus to work toward success.

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Boards were slow to define a vision and often recruited a superintendent with his or her own ideas and

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platform. The differences between the districts only increased over time, as boards and superintendents in high-achieving districts jointly refined their visions over time, assessed district strengths and weaknesses and had all signs of a stable relationship. By comparison, less successful districts featured boards and superintendents that were not in alignment, as the superintendent “may develop solutions without board involvement.” Such boards also may not hold superintendents accountable for goals.

M. Effective school boards take part in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values, and commitments for their improvement efforts.

Board member development and training is a clear theme within this research base. In high-achieving Lighthouse I study districts (2001), school board members said they regularly participated in activities in which they learned together as a group. They cited frequent work and study sessions with opportunities for inquiry and discussion prior to making a final decision. In low-achieving districts, however, board members said they did not learn together except when the superintendent or other staff members made presentations of data.

Other studies focused on this subject as well, sometimes within the context of the responsibilities of an effective superintendent. In the 2006 Waters and Marzano meta-analysis, for example, one key goal for superintendents is to produce an environment in which the board is aligned with and supportive of district goals. The study suggests that supporting board members’ professional development is one of several ways that superintendents can help realize this goal.

In their study on effective governance, Goodman and colleagues (1997) emphasized in detail the importance of formal training for board members. They recommended orientation workshops for new members soon after their election. Their “sample policy statement” on orientation included a commitment by the board and administrative staff to help all new members learn board functions, policies and procedures. Chief responsibility for orientation should reside with the superintendent and board chair, they noted, but this work should include meetings with top administrative personnel to examine services, policies, and programs. As a guide, the report cited policies in Kentucky requiring a specific number of hours of training for board members based on their experience. This ranged from a high of 12 hours of annual training for board members with zero to three years experience to four hours a year for those with at least eight years of board service. Emphasizing the importance of the board/superintendent relationship, the study also recommended that superintendents participate in orientation and development workshops alongside their board members.

Elsewhere, two of the effective districts in the Togneri and Anderson (2003) study utilized formal training and professional development for school board members. In Kent County, Md., the board adopted the Baldrige in Education process, which created a strong working relationship among the central office, board, principal and teachers. In Minneapolis, the school board engaged in the Carver method, which emphasizes the board’s role in establishing goals, setting indicators, aligning resources to goals, monitoring progress, and communicating with the public.

Finally, LaRocque and Coleman (1993) illustrated the value of both formal and informal learning activities for board members. According to these researchers, effective school districts in Canada offered a

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mixture of learning activities for their board members, or “trustees,” including retreats, special meetings, work

sessions, school visits and even social events. As a result, the trustees had a “willingness to meet regularly with the professionals in the district to discuss what was happening and what should be happening.” This commitment conveyed to staff the importance of district goals and the importance of the staff members’ work in supporting them. In addition, they noted, “The successful boards did not just rely on district staff reports... They obtained information about programs in different ways and from different sources, and sought opportunities to interact directly with administrators and teachers.”

Related finding: Stability of leadership

In the 2002 Snipes et. al study, researchers noted that fast-moving districts had political and organizational stability, as evidenced by low rates of school board and superintendent turnover. Goodman’s research echoed all of these points, concluding two characteristics of high achieving districts were long tenures by superintendents and school board members and regular retreats by senior staff and board members for evaluation and goal setting purposes.

Similarly, Togneri and Anderson (2003) note the long tenure of board members and superintendents in high-achieving districts. “They set their courses and stayed with them for years,” the study said. Among the five successful districts profiled, superintendents in three districts had been at their jobs for at least eight years. In most of those profiled, the majority of board members had been serving in that capacity for 10 or more years. “That continuity allowed superintendents and boards to grow together in their approaches to change and to better understand each other’s work.”

Conclusion

During the past 15 years, a number of research studies have begun to document the value that school boards and their members add to the development of an effective public education system. This fledgling base of research provides a foundation for boards and other policymakers. The research also is timely, since it coincides with a period in U.S. public policy that has focused substantially greater attention on accountability in public education. Much of this research has contrasted boards in low-performing and high-performing districts, thereby providing best practices for new and veteran board members nationwide. While there is a need for additional research—a study on boards in districts with mid-range achievement might be one useful step—it is increasingly clear that board members in high-performing districts have attitudes, knowledge and approaches that separate them from their counterparts in lower-achieving districts.

Based on the studies included in this report, it is clear that school boards in high-achieving districts hold a high, shared vision about the capabilities of both students and staff—they believe that more is possible and are motivated to improve results for students. They are policy and accountability driven, focusing their time and energy on governance-level actions related to student achievement and classroom instruction. They engage in goal-setting processes that can drive action in the district to improve. They align resources—including staff professional development—around those goals. They are data savvy—using data to both diagnose problems and to monitor and drive continuous improvement efforts. They communicate with and engage staff and community and work well together as a team and in collaborative leadership with their superintendents. And, they commit to their own learning, building the knowledge and skills it takes to govern during a period of educational reform.

CENTER FOR PUBLIC

In this era of fiscal constraints and a national environment focused on accountability, boards in high-performing districts can provide an important blueprint for success. In the process, they can offer a road map for boards in lower-achieving school districts nationwide.

This report (2011) was written by Chuck Dervarics and Eileen O'Brien. O'Brien is an independent education researcher and consultant in Alexandria, Virginia. Much of her work has focused on access to quality education for disadvantaged and minority populations. O'Brien has a Master of Public Administration from George Washington University and a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from Loyola University, Chicago. Chuck Dervarics is an education writer and former editor of Report on Preschool Programs, a national independent newsletter on pre-k, Head Start, and child care policy. As a writer and researcher, he has contributed to case studies and research projects of the Southern Education Foundation, the American Council on Education, and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, often focusing on issues facing disadvantaged populations. Dervarics has a Bachelors degree from George Washington University.

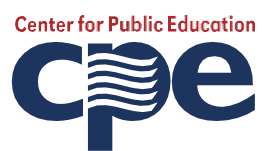
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APPENDIX B: Assessment of Public Comments on 2021-2022 Update to the East Ramapo Long-Term Strategic Academic and Fiscal Improvement Plan-October 2021 version

Comment #	Topic	Summary of Comments	Action
1	Community Engagement	There is a need for more listening sessions to be conducted at different locations throughout the District	A new improvement strategy has been added to the plan: “Annually, the Monitors and District staff will hold one listening session at each school to receive feedback on implementation of the improvement plan.”

2	School Transpiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The District should make no changes to current policies regarding transportation of students. • The Monitors and the State Education Department must take action to require the district to reduce transportation costs as these out-of-control costs jeopardize the district's ability to fulfill the goals of the Academic and Fiscal Improvement Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transportation section of the plan now includes the following statement: "Public comments on the draft plan make clear that there is significant support for continuation of the current District transportation policy, and a goal for all school districts is to implement transportation policies that facilitate the ability of students to attend school and arrive on time." • The plan states that "by January 1, annually, the Board shall adopt a revised transportation policy that reflects the ability of the District to maintain structurally balanced budgets based on projected revenues and expenditures as informed by the District's five-year transportation cost study, which shall be incorporated into the five-year financial study."
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Comment #	Topic	Summary of Comments	Action
3	Monitor's Authority	The Monitors need to be more aggressive in using their authority to compel the district to address a variety of critical comments.	The Monitors will use their authority when it is determined that the Board or District are in violation of law or regulation or acting inconsistently with the updated improvement plan. No change to the plan required at this time.

4	Statement of assurance	The assurance that allows the District to act inconsistently with the plan with the written consent of the Monitors is contrary to the law and should be removed.	This provision has been removed from the assurance statement.
5	Board Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan should establish standards and goals for Board conduct at School Board meetings including adequate public comment period, sufficient explanation of issues raised by members of the public, appropriate standards on use of executive session and any other strategies to improve the experience of Board meetings. • The Plan should establish objectives for the District in order to improve the communication between the District and the public. • The Plan should require and create goals for the district to increase the amount of information available on the website, translation of such 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first assurance in the plan to which the district commits to implement is that “The Board shall operate in accordance with the Eight Characteristics of Effective School Board” Operating in this manner will result in increased communication between the Board and the public. The plan also includes an assurance that “The District shall meet all requirements in law and in the Plan in regard to public consultation and engagement, including timely conduct of public hearings, provision of translation services, and translation of documents.” • A new improvement strategy has been added that states: “Beginning September 1, 2022, the District shall implement updated procedures to alert residents of important updates and ensures residents have information with the greatest amount of notice.” • The improvement strategy that states: “By March 1, 2023, the District, after engagement with key stakeholders, shall launch a redesigned website

Comment #	Topic	Summary of Comments	Action
		<p>documents in appropriate languages, various communication methods to alert residents of important updates and ensuring residents have information with the greatest amount of notice.</p>	<p>designed to provide stakeholders with easier, more transparent access to critical District financial and academic information” now includes the following additional text: “The revised website shall be designed to ensure that documents are translated in appropriate languages.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan contains the following improvement strategy: “By July 31 annually, the Board shall adopt the process by which it will conduct a self- evaluation, which shall include providing the public with an opportunity to provide feedback on the performance of the Board.”
6	Social Workers and other Support Staff	<p>The Plan should establish goals on the number of social workers based on the need of students in the district using other districts with similar demographics as benchmarks.</p> <p>The plan should provide for an adequate ratio of social workers, counselors, and other trained, professional support staff for student well-being and success</p>	<p>The Plan requires that “By October 2021, the District will deploy seven social workers to support building level plans for student and family social-emotional needs.” The monitors will consider establishing goals for the number of social workers and other support staff in their 2022-23 school year update</p>

7	Social Emotional Support	The Plan should evaluate other necessary programming that provides social and emotional support services to students including before and after school programming and in-class support programs to enhance the social/emotional learning environment.	
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Comme nt #	Top ic	Summary of Comments	Action
8	Opportunities to participate in sports and extracurricular activities	<p>The Plan should seek to greatly expand the opportunities for students to participate in sports and extra-curricular activities.</p> <p>The Plan should include concrete goals for improving extracurricular offerings and interim objectives to achieving those goal, including explicit means for soliciting feedback from students about the types of extracurriculars they want.</p>	<p>A new measurable goal has been added to the budget development process that states that: “The budget shall identify opportunities to redirect funds from ineffective and inefficient programming to support increases in extracurricular activities, course offerings, non-mandated support services, non-mandated art and music classes, programs and services for English language learners and students with disabilities, and maintenance of class sizes.</p>

9	Class sizes	The Plan should establish benchmarks for class sizes in the various school buildings throughout the district. The district must hire more teachers and aides to support more individualized attention for students. Currently, the Plan indicates that class sizes may need to be evaluated as a means to save money, suggesting that moving to larger class sizes may be a strategy to sustain solvency in the district.	A new sentence has been added to the second of the general fiscal findings “A goal of this evaluation [of class sizes] should be determine the degree to which, consistent with the collective bargaining agreement, teachers can be reassigned to classroom duties in situations where there are large classes within a school on a grade or in a subject.” The plan contains numerous improvement strategies that commit the district to hiring more support staff.
10	Community Advisory Board	Language regarding consultation with the Community Advisory Board (CAB) should be corrected.	Language has been added to clarify that the CAB will begin to be involved in the development of the 2022- 23 school year annual update and the discussion of the CAB has been moved out of the Plan Development Process section.
11	English language learners	Community members want more services for ESL students.	The plan includes numerous targets for improvement of results for English language learners, including an

Comme nt #	Top ic	Summary of Comments	Action
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		<p>Suggestions were made to Improve services to ELL’s by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding measurable objectives related to raising the engagement level, grades, or graduation rate of ELLs. Consider restoring • Expanding the Community Outreach program by hiring credible community messengers to build relationships with those families and connect them to services. <p>Require the hiring of a bi- or multilingual liaison to open channels of communication, identify and locate kids who may be unenrolled or chronically absent, ensure district information is translated in a timely manner, and to address specific unmet needs of non-English speaking community members.</p>	<p>extremely aggressive target for improving graduation rates for ELLs.</p> <p>The plan has been revised to contain the following improvement strategy:</p> <p>”By July 2022, the District will have completed a review of English language learner programming, developed recommendations for improvement, created a timeline for implementing the recommendations, and by October 2022 begun implementing the recommendation in accordance with the timeline.”</p>
12	Benchmark East Ramapo to other Rockland County School Districts.	Require a systemic examination of program and course offerings, student- to-staff ratios, class sizes, ratio of support staff, and breadth of extracurricular activities in neighboring	The District currently faces challenges unlike those of other Rockland County districts. The District and monitors agree that an aspirational goal for the District is to be able to provide opportunities to learn that equal or exceed those of other school districts in the county and will consider in

Comment #	Topic	Summary of Comments	Action
		<p>districts to set meaningful benchmarks for ERCSD. We recommend this goal (ensuring that all students have access to the courses needed to graduate on time) be developed in comparison to other Rockland County districts, to establish relevant benchmarks and offerings.</p> <p>Additionally, the Plan should require the District to act on other resources for providing additional courses including the Rockland BOCES, local community colleges, and online learning.</p>	<p>future uses Rockland County districts to benchmark the services that the District provides to students.</p>

13	Benchmark East Ramapo to other Rockland County School Districts.	<p>Require a systemic examination of program and course offerings, student- to-staff ratios, class sizes, ratio of support staff, and breadth of extracurricular activities in neighboring districts to set meaningful benchmarks for ERCSD.</p> <p>We recommend this goal (ensuring that all students have access to the courses needed to graduate on time) be developed in comparison to other Rockland County districts, to establish relevant benchmarks and offerings.</p> <p>Additionally, the Plan should require the District to act on other resources for providing additional courses including the Rockland BOCES, local community colleges, and online learning.</p>	<p>The District currently faces challenges unlike those of any other Rockland County districts. The District and monitors agree that an aspirational goal for the District is to be able to provide opportunities to learn that equal or exceed those of other school districts in the county and will consider in future benchmarking its performance against other Rockland County districts.</p>
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14	Instructional Materials	Classroom materials, including textbooks are outdated and in poor condition. We recommend the Plan include goals for updating classroom materials and technology	A new improvement strategy has been added, “ By January 2022 the District shall establish and implement a schedule for the periodic identification of classroom instructional materials for replacement and shall upon purchase of new materials estimate the anticipated date at which such materials shall need to be replaced.”
15	Culturally Responsive Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal of completing a “book study” by November 2021 is inadequate. We recommend the following be added to the Plan: a) the formalized inclusion of student voice, including that of ELLs, in the book study and assessment portion of this goal; b) measurable benchmarks that begin to place culturally relevant materials in students’ hands this academic year. • This plan only gives lip service to the need for culturally relevant pedagogy. A Culturally Relevant Teaching system would expand on this grassroots activism and incorporate it in the 	<p>A number of revisions have been made to strengthen the improvement strategies related to implementation of: “Strategy Implementation Activity 1.1.1 Review and refine the instructional program to ensure that it provides <i>guaranteed and viable curriculum, assessments, and materials</i> reflective of the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Framework.”</p> <p>The plan also contains a recommendation that “Beginning September 2021, the Superintendent will schedule and hold ongoing Superintendent Circles with student leadership and community members.”</p>

		curriculum.	
16	School facilities	Community Members want school building improvements.	The Plan continues an extensive set of measurable goals and improvement strategies designed to ensure the goal that all students will attend clean, well maintained, and

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		<p>ERCSD must seriously consider whether its physical footprint is adequate for the current and future needs of its students.</p> <p>The need for extra classroom space is dire, especially in light of the continuing need for social distancing. This plan should require a report on space available and have a plan to accommodate the growing public school enrollment, the need for more small special classes and to reduce class size in general education classes.</p>	<p>up-to-date schools that appropriately support student learning is met.</p> <p>The improvement strategy that states “By November 1, 2021, the Board shall appoint members to a committee to develop recommendations for incorporation into the Five-Year Capital Plan. The committee shall issue its report by March 2022” has been revised to include the following additional statement, “which shall include recommendations regarding whether current District footprint is adequate to meet the needs of current and future students.”</p>
17	Special Education Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some nonpublic school parents want special education services to continue and be expanded. <p>In contrast, some advocates for the public schools want the plan to include measures to reduce “unnecessary and educationally unsound expenditures” on inappropriate out of district placements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The District is committed to continuing to provide appropriate special education services in accordance with students IEP’s. <p>In the last five years the District has made substantial progress in reducing the number of students in out-of- district placements (283 in 2016 versus 160 in 2021)</p>

18	Contracting Process	The Plan should include an analysis of private contracts awarded by the District and a goal to ensure strict adherence to procedural requirements pursuant to both legal and ethical obligations.	The Plan contains as a Measurable Objective that: “Beginning with contracts let for the 2022-23 school year, the District conducts all procurements for pupil transportation services in a manner consistent with the General Municipal Law and the Part 156 of Commissioner’s regulations so that all available transportation aid may be received. Aid claims will reflect only allowable expenses, but all contracts for home to school busing, having been properly bid, will be eligible
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Comment #	Topic	Summary of Comments	Action
			for aid. In addition, federal program contracts will be let in a manner consistent with the Uniform Grants Guidance, and all other appropriate statute and regulations.”
19	Kindergarten and PreK Services	All other Rockland school districts use Child Care Resources of Rockland to administer their pre-k programs. The East Ramapo school board fired Child Care Resources and replaced them with Arnie Warmbrand. This Plan should include public reports on school readiness. The school district used to have staff	The plan contains annual targets for the percentage of kindergarten students expected to achieve early literacy benchmarks.

		that did home visits to prospective future kindergartners.	
20	Afterschool Programs	Community members want afterschool programs and supports for students to address the learning needs.	Extended school years programs are included in the Plan.

APPENDIX C: Assessment of Public Comments on 2022-2023 Update to the East Ramapo Long-Term Strategic Academic and Fiscal Improvement Plan-October 2022 version

Comment #	Topic	Summary of Comments	Action
	General	<p>The State must not approve a Plan unless it includes: 1) an analysis of how deadlines were missed and the steps to ensure they aren't missed again; 2) an analysis of the gains made by students as a result of the Plan; 3) an analysis of where last year's plan fell short.</p> <p>The update must be revised to include a bona fide assessment of progress and a clear schedule for implementation with clear goals and deadlines. It must account for what didn't happen last year and why.</p>	<p>The District will submit an analysis.</p> <p>The Quarterly Report process flags the items.</p>

	Governance	Many of the improvement activities regarding governance are carried over from last year's plan with new dates. The update should inform the public as to why the board's tasks were not completed and must create accountability for members who disregarded these duties	BOE will address
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Governance

The following improvement strategies should be added to the plan:

1. the Superintendent should be required to answer all correspondence coming from the community.
2. After serving a year in office, the Superintendent should be required to reside in Rockland County.
3. There should be an attendance requirement for all board trustees with a penalty for violating the requirement.
4. Twice a year there should be mandatory Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training for all board members. There should be a penalty for violating the policy.
5. Board members should be required to visit yearly two of the district's public schools. District clerk should keep a record of completion of the requirement.
6. All board members should be required to attend one school event. The district clerk should keep a record of completion of the requirement

The Contractual and Supervisory requirements are the responsibility of the BOE and residency can be a contractual time added to future contracts. The October BOE attendance policy outlines the new attendance policy and consequences. The Plan includes DEI training. Facility inspection and site visits are a requirement

	Community Engagement	<p>There was insufficient public engagement in development of the update.</p> <p>The Monitors, in conjunction with the Shared Decision-Making Committee, should hold meetings on the Plan months in advance of the deadline. There should be at least one month advance notice of the hearing and a revised plan should have been drafted, translated into both Spanish and Haitian Kreyol, and made available for community review no later than the first day of school in September.</p>	<p>The district shall provide multiple opportunities for student engagement and feedback on the LTSAF Plan. Such opportunities shall begin with the spring budget development process, continue through the opening of schools in September, and conclude 10 days after the LTSAFP fall public hearing date. Those opportunities will include, but not be limited to, townhalls, superintendent and monitor chats as well as meetings with different community groups.</p>
	Fiscal Crisis	<p>The Plan update includes only one improvement strategy to address the district's fiscal crisis, which is the creation of the superintendent's committee to create a Financial Efficiencies and Expenditure Reduction Plan (FEERP). However, the plan does not provide guidance on how the FEERP should produce a balanced budget by the end of the current school year.</p>	<p>Two new Items were added to the Governance and Leadership Section of the Plan which require BOE action.</p>

	Revenue	The Plan must include a strategy to secure revenue, including exploring allowing all parents to vote in school board elections, expanding what is permitted in a contingency budget, and spreading the pain of budget defeats more fairly across populations to encourage investment in schools.	By February 28, 2023 the BOE shall discuss, and adopt and the district leadership shall implement a strategy to educate district voters of the district's ability to provide a public education as required by law should the proposed 2023–2024 school year budget not be approved.
	Expenditures	The plan should contain specific recommendations to address unsustainable spending on non-mandated transportation.	By January 31, 2023 the BOE shall review and discuss the financial impacts of universal transportation versus transportation at the New York State mandated levels on the development of the 2023-2024 school year budget.
	Academics	Schools should be required to teach lessons on the various groups that make up the East Ramapo Community (e.g., Jews, Haitian Creole, Latinos, Asians, and African Americans).	District operates programs for English Language Learners in a manner consistent with requirements outlined under the Part 154 of Commissioner's regulations. Scaffolding activities via classroom aides and Microsoft Translate are also incorporated.
	Pre-Kindergarten	All preschool programs should be housed in community agencies located in East Ramapo.	Universal Pre-K Programs operate under the current NYSED regulations regarding UPK Programs.

	English language learners	<p>The plan inadequately addresses the fact that many ELLs must wait for extended periods of time for a schedule and program assignment, receive limited if any English language instruction, and are languishing in other academic classes taught in English only. The plan lacks benchmarks to assess the implementation activities to address the needs of ELLs, particularly in regard to strategies to address the district’s difficulty recruiting bilingual staff and staff with necessary cultural competence. ..</p>	<p>Two items have been added to the Plan - Beginning September 2022, the Office of Student Programs, Assessment and Evaluation will partner with the Office of Curriculum and Instruction to provide professional learning experiences in advanced literacy strategies for linguistically diverse learners and By December 31, 2022 the Office of Special Programs, Evaluations, and Assessment will finalize the review of English language learner programming, develop recommendations for improvement, created a timeline for implementing the recommendations, and by January 31, 2023 begin implementing the recommendation in accordance with the timeline.</p>
	Chronic Absenteeism	<p>The plan lacks a systematic approach to determining the root causes of the attendance crisis.</p>	<p>Each school shall review chronic absenteeism rate report per building as per the NYS comprehensive attendance guidance and have as topic during building leadership meetings along with follow up strategies taken at the building level to address. Chronic absenteeism is a required topic at the Monthly principal’s meeting.</p>

Dropouts

The district must address the dropout crisis with a thorough review of the high schools and a plan to redesign and reinvigorate them.

A transcript review process and the comprehensive guidance Plan development will focus on this.