



Gloucester City School District Strategic Plan 2023-2026

District Beliefs

At Gloucester City School District, we believe that . . .

- Everyone will be embraced for their individuality with pride and care.
- Student academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs must be met and supported based on the individual.
- Authentic relationships are the foundation of an excellent education.
- We have the responsibility to eliminate barriers through collective focus and commitment.
- Diversity increases the opportunity for mutual respect, empathy, and personal growth.
- We have the responsibility to model ethical behavior and treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Effective communication is essential for trust and transparency.
- All students deserve a rich and rigorous curriculum.
- It is vital to provide a safe and secure environment – physically, mentally, and emotionally.
- Education is a community effort.
- Education should promote critical thinking and innovation.

AND . . .

- Once a Lion, always a Lion!

Vision Statement

The Gloucester City School District Family empowers our students to be confident, well-rounded, happy individuals who positively impact society.

Mission Statement

Rooted in history, the Gloucester City School District embraces our unique traditions and growing community as we inspire each student to become an independent thinker, lifelong learner, and passionate, responsible member of society who strives to be the best version of themselves.

We accomplish this mission in a fun, safe, and caring environment. We nurture enduring relationships built on trust, eliminate barriers, and seek growth and inclusivity . . . one Lion at a time.

Strategic Goals

Staffing

IF we focus on strengthening our hiring process for all positions, **THEN** we will be able to address staffing issues that hinder the full and seamless implementation of the district mission.

Safety

IF we continue to address safety matters of concern, **THEN** our community will have an increased sense of security and enhanced pride in the fact that the system continues to look out for the welfare of all.

Facilities

IF we continue to maintain our existing facilities and look to effectively utilize other, available, district-owned space in creative ways, **THEN** we will be able to create comfortable school settings that best meet the educational needs of our students.

Instructional Program

IF we expand our instructional program and specific curricular initiatives, **THEN** we can target opportunities to meet student interest and address instructional areas of concern.

Community Outreach

IF we increase the number of ways that we reach out to the community and employ creative ways to get information to all corners of the school community, **THEN** the existing pride in GCSD will grow, people will be able to speak about the district's points of difference that separate us from others, and all will feel an increased sense of belonging.

Diversity/Culture

IF we work to recognize, celebrate, and utilize the tremendous advantage that is presented by a growing and increasingly diverse school community, **THEN** all will be able to feel a part of the school community and the school community can better reflect those who walk our halls.

Strategic Goals with Action Steps

1. Staffing

IF we focus on strengthening our hiring process for all positions, **THEN** we will be able to address staffing issues that hinder the full and seamless implementation of the district mission.

Action Steps

- 1.1. We will enhance our job recruitment efforts to ensure the hiring of the best candidates for all positions.
- 1.2. Activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Revamping job postings to attract candidates
 - Attending job fairs
 - Incorporating a "grow our own educator" efforts
 - Partnering with a local college to provide a strong relationship with new teacher candidates
 - Working to increase the diversity of the employee base that more closely reflects the student diversity within the school
- 1.3. We will give serious consideration to hiring experienced teachers and coaches for new openings when those persons will provide critical, added value to the district, especially when uniquely qualified individuals are finalists for such positions.
- 1.4. We will provide targeted training to support our teachers in all areas that align with district initiatives but, especially, to support new and struggling teachers.
- 1.5. We will evaluate the use of outside agencies that provide support services to the district to ensure that we are providing the type of support consistent with our district beliefs.

2. Safety

IF we continue to address safety matters of concern, **THEN** our community will have an increased sense of security and enhanced pride in the fact that the system continues to look out for the welfare of all.

Action Steps

- 2.1. We will explore ways to better address effective, safe drop-off and pick-up processes at all schools, including an analysis of physical and procedural changes as well as the consideration of transportation offerings and potential expansion of transportation services.
- 2.2. We will work to provide enhanced security personnel support for after school extracurricular events.
- 2.3. We will continue to improve procedures, hardware & software solutions, and other efforts that provide a safe environment for all students, staff, and visitors.

3. Facilities

IF we continue to maintain our existing facilities and look to effectively utilize other, available, district-owned space in creative ways, **THEN** we will be able to create comfortable school settings that best meet the educational needs of our students.

Action Steps

- 3.1. We will improve existing school facilities to meet the community desire for clean, modern, safe places for students to gather and learn.
 - Activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Updating the libraries at the elementary and middle schools
 - Updating the locker rooms in the high school gymnasium
 - Ensuring a welcoming feel at all school entrances

 - Maintaining effective HVAC systems in all school buildings
 - Maintaining well-paved parking lots on all school campuses
 - Working to update the outdoor athletic spaces beyond our turf stadiums
 - Maintaining all school building roofs and providing for the replacement of roofs according to the district replacement cycle
- 3.2. We will consider new facilities that may enhance the school experience and improve the overall community access and benefit of our small school system.
 - Activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Considering a dedicated space for alternative school programming
 - Exploring the idea of a recreation center that will provide improved facilities for both school sport and community-based programs to access

- Incorporating inclusive playground equipment at the elementary and middle schools
 - Exploring potential uses of other district-owned land in the community that can benefit the system
- 3.3. We will create a school environment where our employees work to provide a building that meets the highest expectations for cleanliness and that those who use our facilities respect and support the goal to be a school system that takes pride in our buildings.

4. Instructional Program

IF we expand our instructional program and specific curricular initiatives, **THEN** we can target opportunities to meet student interest and address instructional areas of concern.

Action Steps

- 4.1. We will target our special education program to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all students through appropriate programming.
- 4.2. We will purposely include opportunities for staff to meet to address student transitions between buildings and ensure that we are fostering careful vertical articulation between the grades/buildings.
- 4.3. We will continue to expand the AVID program as a way to ensure that quality educational opportunities are within reach of all students.
- 4.4. We will work to foster strong, internal vocational programs that address the interests of students who want to move from the secondary school experience directly into quality career experiences that offer opportunities for continued growth.
- 4.5. We will integrate alternative educational programs and pathways to enhance our ability to support non-traditional students' efforts to achieve their high school diploma and better prepare them for post-secondary success.

5. Community Outreach

IF we increase the number of ways that we reach out to the community and employ creative ways to get information to all corners of the school community, **THEN** the existing pride in GCSD will grow, people will be able to speak about the district's points of difference that separate us from others, and all will feel an increased sense of belonging.

Action Steps

- 5.1. Will include more events and practices that spotlight the cultural diversity of our students and the overall school community.
 - Activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Surveying the community related to cultural experiences connected to the school and ways that we can enhance student experiences.
 - Utilizing our parents and community members (including alumni) to better ensure strong cultural awareness in the manner that the school district operates.
 - Recognizing all cultures through various means, including the recognition of important cultural events throughout the year.
- 5.2. We will purposely work to improve the Gloucester City School District's image to properly reflect a new, inclusive community where all are welcomed and everyone belongs.

6. Diversity/Culture

IF we work to recognize, celebrate, and utilize the tremendous advantage that is presented by a growing and increasingly diverse school community, **THEN** all will be able to feel a part of the school community and the school community can better reflect those who walk our halls.

Action Steps

- 6.1. We will incorporate family/community night programs that connect our community to the school program and help to utilize our facilities to benefit all.
 - Activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Increasing the number of family engagement nights at all schools, all grade levels
 - Coupling events to provide for cross-over interests and increased opportunities for involvement
- 6.2. Will will increase the variety of communication methods so as to provide an even stronger connection to those in the school community.
 - Activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Increasing the existing newsletter's frequency of publication
 - Providing communication to meet language needs of the community (especially providing Spanish versions of important communication)
 - Working to target non-parents with our social media initiatives to promote the good work of the school
 - Ensuring that we are utilizing multiple methods of communication
 - Employing a yearly survey that will allow for the district to ensure the community's voice is heard with respect to the effectiveness of communication methods (and overall school programming, etc.)
- 6.3. We will work to build special relationships with local business and tradespeople so as to cultivate new educational opportunities for our students.

Gloucester City School District Board of Education

Michelle Wright, President
Meredith Flinn, Vice President
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Bernadette James
Keith O'Donnell
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Harry Ulmer
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Strategic Planning Steering Committee

Board of Education Members

Michelle Wright (President)
Meredith Flinn (Vice President)
Mike Smollock
Kass Maas (Brooklawn Representative)

Parents

Stephanie Cohan
Carla Herbert
Maureen McDonnell
Autumn Martinez

High School Students

Landon Johnston
Thaha Alam
Nicholas Smith

Community Members

Brian Morrell - Chief of Police & City Administrator
Bladimir Ventura - GHS Graduate

Staff

District

Sean Gorman - Superintendent
Kim Chiodi - Assistant Superintendent
Kasey Bobo - Director of Counseling & Student Services
Colleen Blake - Instructional Supervisor
Jen Daubert - Instructional Supervisor
Denise Dunham - Culture & Climate Coach
Eliza Rawley - Director of Special Services
Cal Loughlin - Director of Technology
Stefano Osuji - Student Mentor at GMS & GHS

CSS

Bill O’Kane - Interim Cold Springs Principal & Director of Early Childhood Center
Allison Zimecki - Kindergarten Teacher & Grade Level Leader
Kristina Vasquez - Preschool Master Teacher & Grade Level Leader

GMS

Donna Lacovara - Middle School Principal
Matt Anderson - Middle School Guidance Counselor (Grades 7 & 8)
Laila Gansert - Middle School Special Education Teacher & GCEA Union President

GHS

Nick Wright - Science Teacher & Athletic Coach

Additional Participants in the Strategic Plan’s Development

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Background Information

The strategic planning process was announced to the school community in the summer of 2022. At that time, a community survey was made available electronically for any community member to complete. The goal was to assess the current sentiment with respect to the overall operation of the school district. Nearly 300 surveys were completed.

Members of the school community were invited to be part of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee. The twenty-nine steering committee members met over the course of two days (October 7 and 8, 2022). During this meeting time, the committee conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of the school district, identified points of difference associated with the district, and reviewed the results from the community survey.

The steering committee also worked to produce important products that are at the heart of defining the district: district beliefs, a district vision statement, and a district mission statement. Finally, the group also determined six areas of focus for the strategic goals that structure this overall strategic plan.

Next, the entire school community was invited to participate in an open event on the evening of November 30, 2022 to help finalize the action steps that would be connected to each of the strategic goals. The action steps were prioritized and the administration then worked to determine a subset of these steps that could be targeted for implementation over the course of the three years of the plan.

Finally, a final draft of the strategic plan was produced and presented to the board of education for discussion at the February 7, 2023 meeting. The plan was adopted by the Board at this February meeting and will be a guiding document for district decisions for the 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26 school years.