Waterford Public Schools

Strategic Coherence Plan

2022 - 2025

August 2022
Waterford Board of Education

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Strategic Coherence Plan represents a comprehensive update to the 2017-2022 plan that commenced in the 2017-2018 school year. Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, the District Analysis and Action Team and the District Equity Team conducted an in-depth analysis on the goals, components, and indicators in the previous plan obtaining evidence of progress in each area. That analysis led to the development of this 2022-2025 Strategic Coherence Plan.

The world we are preparing our children to live in is rapidly changing. With the advent of the digital age and the interconnected global economy, the definition of what it means to appropriately prepare a student for life learning and work beyond school has been transformed. Content knowledge and high test scores are no longer the only variables that indicate student success; we know now that students also need to develop a sophisticated set of skills to ensure they can navigate the challenges we know they will encounter. In Waterford, we believe the priorities among those required skills include the ability to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences, acquire, understand, evaluate, synthesize and apply information, use critical and creative thinking to find and solve authentic problems, construct and defend arguments based on evidence, and demonstrate digital fluency and purposeful application of tools for learning. Without these skills, we know students will have limited choices and will not have the ability to appropriately adjust and learn as circumstances and opportunities change throughout their lives. This planning process was designed to determine to what degree a Waterford Public School education makes certain that a student who graduates from here will leave with these skills and the content knowledge needed to succeed regardless of their future path of choice. The actions identified by the plan outline what needs to happen to realize that vision.

Unlike traditional strategic planning which seeks to collect data and set goals related to numerous and frequently unrelated topics, this Strategic Coherence Plan was totally focused on just those elements of work that support the development and improvement of skill-based student success. How are PK-12

teaching and classroom experiences facilitating student practice of Waterford's key academic skills? How are we measuring our success and using that PK-12 data to create accountability and the continuous improvement of student performance in those areas? How do we budget, plan, and make sure that all our PK-12 work is designed to increase the number of children who leave Waterford ready to perform these skills at a high level? By asking these questions and building the answers based on the good things that are already happening in Waterford, the members of the Strategic Coherence Planning team have identified the steps that need to be taken over the next three years to help every student build their skills.

This notion of building on past success and redefining our focus is a key theme. This plan seeks to create a unified focus around student success that will accelerate Waterford's unified vision of successful preparation of all students. On a day to day basis, as the plan is rolled out and the proposed actions are implemented, the district-wide focus will increasingly spotlight how students can demonstrate the degree to which they have mastered the practice of independent and critical thinking. Students will encounter lessons and projects where specific feedback on how well they are applying their skills and what they need to do to improve in all their classes throughout their Waterford educational experience. Parents will be hearing more about what kinds of work students are doing that support these skills and they will be learning the language that the Waterford schools use to measure and evaluate how well they are doing them. Over time, they will see the evidence that their children can apply the district's foundational skills effectively and they will be reported on so all are accountable for their acquisition.

As we work to improve practice and build student capacity for communicating effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences, acquire, understand, evaluate, synthesize and apply information, use critical and creative thinking to find and solve authentic problems, construct and defend arguments based on evidence, and demonstrate digital fluency and purposeful application of tools for learning, we intend to maintain the successful aligned practices that Waterford is currently engaged in. However, we will also build on them so that teachers have the instructional space and resources they need to do quality work at a reasonable pace focused on those things that the Waterford community values most.

This report is designed to tell the story and results of the entire planning process – from the "vital few" rationale and assumptions that guided it, through the data collection and analysis activities, and then to the priority strategies and specific actions that will guide the next 2-3 years of work to be done. Those strategies are the start of a multi-year effort to reframe the public school experience so that the district's Mission to engage students in authentic learning experiences allows Waterford to empower all students to thrive as global citizens.

WATERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mission and goals

MISSION

Waterford Public Schools is a community of learners that fosters and supports high aspirations, ensuring every student acquires the skills and knowledge necessary to be a responsible citizen, prepared to contribute and succeed in an ever-changing world.

In support of this Mission, we believe:

- ❑ Education is a collaborative responsibility requiring a partnership among the individual, family, school system, and community.

- ❑ Safety, integrity, and respect are critical to support success for all learners.

- ❑ The greatest potential for learning occurs when an individual's social, emotional, and academic needs are met.

- ❑ Student growth and achievement are enhanced when curiosity, creativity, and continuous improvement are valued by all members of the learning community.

- ❑ Evidence and information are the foundation of sound decision-making.

VISION OF THE GRADUATE

Graduates of Waterford High School demonstrate mastery of the
WPS Transferable Skills:

Communication	Research and Understanding	Critical Thinking	Responsible Citizenship	Self-Direction

Communication
- Listen actively to understand the information or viewpoints presented.
- Select and use an appropriate method of communication to fit the audience, context, and purpose.
- Create a logical and evidence-based argument to support ideas.
- Deliver a clear, professional, and effective presentation.

Research and Understanding
- Use appropriate research tools to acquire information from a variety of sources.
- Evaluate the bias and validity of information.
- Synthesize information to solve problems and defend claims.

Critical Thinking
- Identify a problem, ask key questions, and make predictions.
- Analyze data in order to draw conclusions.
- Demonstrate flexibility and determination when solving problems.

Responsible Citizenship
- Demonstrate respect for others and diverse cultures, identities, and perspectives.
- Make appropriate choices with words, actions, and mindset to address the needs of self and others.
- Take actions that promote ethical principles and equality.
- Use technology ethically to promote positive, reliable, and factual information.

Self-Direction
- Persevere through frustration when challenging situations or temporary failures arise.
- Demonstrate flexibility, resourcefulness, and collaboration.
- Recognize how thoughts, feelings, and actions affect achievement.
- Set goals, prioritize steps, and take actions to achieve them independently.

GOALS

1   Communication & Alignment

The district is committed to a clearly communicated and purposeful vision, shaped by our mission and defined, prioritized goals, which will ensure student progress and success.

2   Rigor & Assessment

The district is committed to delivering high quality instruction and assessing progress in a consistent, accurate, and timely manner in order to ensure student progress and success.

3   Social & Emotional Learning

The district is committed to supporting the social and emotional needs of all students.

4   District Equity

The district is committed to advocating for and building a district that promotes equity.

The district is committed to a clearly communicated and purposeful vision, shaped by our mission and defined, prioritized goals, which will ensure student progress and success.

Components:

A. Communicate school and district goals on a consistent and regular basis, with an emphasis on ensuring understanding of why these goals are vital to the Mission.

B. Increase focus on mission-driven work within existing structures.

C. Measure definitively the degree to which goals are being met.

Present State:

- Mission and Vision are used in the decision-making process as well as to inform and formulate district, administrator, school, department, grade level, teacher and student goals.
- There is consensus among students, families, and stakeholders regarding the Vision of the Graduate attributes and expectations of a graduate that will allow them to be successful in life, learning, and work beyond school.

Beginning:

- Consistent and clear communication around goal alignment and coherence is delivered to all stakeholders and support is provided to assist in the development of focused goals.
- Develop and implement consistent practices to communicate Mission, Vision and district goals to students, families and community stakeholders.
- Ongoing assessment of effective stakeholder engagement & identify and implement opportunities for improved communication.

Progressing:

- A majority of stakeholders are able to clearly articulate how and why School Growth Plans and other goals are vital to the district mission and as a result are able to develop goals independently in alignment with the district vision and mission.

Accomplishing:

- The district's Mission and Vision are explicitly identified in goal development and decision-making, and district staff and stakeholders understand the intent of School Growth Plans and other goals and how their work helps to contribute to the completion of the school system's broader goals.

Component A:

Communicate school and district goals on a consistent and regular basis, with an emphasis on ensuring understanding of why these goals are vital to the Mission.

Present State:

- The Mission and the Vision of the Graduate are communicated to the faculty at all grade levels.

Beginning:

- The Mission and Vision of the Graduate are embraced through shared understanding and collaborative effort to develop instructional strategies that remain true to district curriculum while supporting transferable skills.

Progressing:

- Instructional planning and delivery reflect the Mission, all five transferable skills of the Vision of the Graduate. Student outcomes consistently reflect a progression of strengthened skills in communication, research and understanding, critical thinking, responsible citizenship and effective self-direction.

Accomplishing:

- The Mission and the Vision of the Graduate's transferable skills are widely understood, embedded in coursework at all grades and subject areas, and demonstrated through student actions, outcomes, and artifacts.

Component B:

Increase focus on mission-driven work within existing structures.

Present State:

- A process and structure for monitoring progress on district goals is defined. Potential data sources for progress monitoring are identified.

Beginning:

- Review data sources and gap areas to define a consistent process and structure across grade levels for monitoring progress on district goals. The district data team has established roles, responsibilities, and protocols.

Progressing:

- The district data team meets to regularly measure the degree to which goals are being met. Building level teams support the work of the district data team.

Accomplishing:

- There is a clear data driven process and structure for measuring progress towards the district's goals. District goals are monitored, adjusted, and revised by a standing district data team. Progress is communicated to all stakeholders on a regular basis.

Component C:

Measure definitively the degree to which goals are being met.

The district is committed to delivering high quality instruction and assessing progress in a consistent, accurate, and timely manner in order to ensure student progress and success.

Components:

A. The district is committed to creating a unified district focus on Higher Order Thinking Skills. (*See Addendum A - Bloom's Taxonomy 2001*)

B. Define a district framework for assessment of student learning and develop associated measurement tools.

C. Train staff in the creation and calibration of common rubrics.

D. Utilize data regularly and appropriately to enhance instructional practice.

Present State:

- There is consensus among the instructional staff regarding what will be the universally agreed upon definition of what Higher Order Thinking Skills are.

Beginning:

- Provide sufficient professional learning for all instructional staff to instruct and evaluate students on Higher Order Thinking Skills.

Progressing:

- Multiple learning opportunities are provided for students across all grade levels to demonstrate mastery of these skills.

Accomplishing:

- Student work represents students' utilization and mastery of our identified Higher Order Thinking Skills.

Component A:

The district is committed to creating a unified district focus on higher order thinking skills.

Present State:

- There is a well-defined Vision of the Graduate.
- Examine existing rubrics, identify gaps and assess district-wide alignment with our mission and academic expectations.

Beginning:

- The Vision of the Graduate is clearly understood across all grade levels.
- Faculty is learning how to use the framework to guide classroom practice.
- Develop rubrics for all gap areas.

Progressing:

- There are rubrics in use that measure all academic expectations. These rubrics are scaled in age-appropriate ways for use across all grade levels.

Accomplishing:

- Student work represents students' utilization and mastery of the Vision of the Graduate.

Component B:

Utilize the Vision of the Graduate rubric as an assessment of student learning and embed Vision of the Graduate skills across all grade levels.

Present State:

- Rubrics are used in certain content areas and grade levels.

Beginning:

- Examine existing rubrics, identify gaps and assess district-wide alignment with our mission and academic expectations.
- Begin to develop content rubrics K-12.

Progressing:

- Train teachers in the use and calibration of rubrics.
- Grades levels and departments are required to calibrate their rubric usage on an ongoing basis.

Accomplishing:

- Teachers consistently use appropriate rubrics and participate in calibration activities with enough frequency to ensure consistent assessment of student work across the district.

Component C:

Train staff in the creation and calibration of rubrics to ensure consistency.

Present State:

- Revisit existing assessment plan to determine which assessment tools we want to use and how best to use them.
- Assessment results are being stored in a central location.
- There are defined PLC data cycles grades K-5.

Beginning:

- Teachers are trained in the use of assessment tools and there is a clear plan developed for their use to guide instruction.
- Student success criteria are being identified and starting to be implemented.
- Faculty are being trained in how to access information in the district data warehouse.
- Revisit PLC student work and data protocols.
- Introduce PLC data cycles grades 6-12.

Progressing:

- Faculty members know how and why to use assessment data to guide instruction and to give feedback to students.
- Teachers utilize data regularly and appropriately to enhance instructional practice and improve student performance.
- Consistent use of student work and data protocols across all PLCs.

Accomplishing:

- Student work incorporates use of actionable teacher feedback to improve student performance.
- Teacher goals are clear, concise, and aligned with student success criteria and able to be measured for their efficacy via specific tools.
- High functioning PLCs that are regularly engaged using data to drive future instruction.

Component D:

Utilize appropriate assessment tools to analyze data regularly and appropriately to guide instructional practice and student feedback.

The district is committed to supporting the social and emotional needs of all students.

Components:

A. Develop a consistent, systemic, and coordinated program that both proactively and responsively supports the social and emotional needs of all students.

B. Implement lessons on digital citizenship and online safety.

C. Communicate the district's continuum of supports and resources to families.

D. Provide an environment whereby students develop a positive personal connection with at least one or more adult(s) in the school.

Present State:

- There is a consistent, systemic and coordinated Social and Emotional (SEL) program delivered PK-12.
- Tier I SEL programs are being delivered with fidelity.

Beginning:

- A subcommittee of professionals across schools will audit systems currently in place, including but not limited to current staffing levels, and use that information to coordinate tiered interventions.
- The committee will investigate the use of a universal screening tool for SEL.

Progressing:

- Schools develop a consistent procedure to identify students that need Tier II/III support, and implement evidence based interventions.
- Progress towards greater alignment of Tier I, Tier II and Tier III SEL support and opportunities for students.
- The SEL committee will use the universal screening tool to address SEL needs of students.

Accomplishing:

- At each developmental level, schools implement a consistent, systemic program with a tiered approach that both proactively and responsively supports the social and emotional needs of all students.

Component A:

Develop a consistent, systemic and coordinated program that both proactively and responsively supports the social and emotional needs of all students.

Present State:

- Grades PreK-5 have digital citizenship resources available.
- Grades 6-8 school counseling curriculum includes a lesson co-taught with the SRO regarding internet safety/social media/texting.
- Grades 9-12 Personal, Mental, Emotional, and Social health lessons address Technology and media influences.

Beginning:

- Inform all staff of the K - 12 technology plan, including the digital citizenship components.
- The District Technology Committee will look for opportunities to embed the digital citizenship components into appropriate content areas.

Progressing:

- The District Technology Committee will revise the district Technology Plan.

Accomplishing:

- Digital Citizenship skills are embedded in our curriculum.
- Committee continuously updates curriculum and responds to societal trends.

Component B:

Implement lessons on digital citizenship and online safety.

Present State:

- Parents and families have an awareness of the social and emotional supports offered by the district and community partners.

Beginning:

- Survey parents and families to gauge awareness of available resources and how to access them.

Progressing:

- A plan for communicating supports offered to parents and families is implemented.
- Disseminate pertinent information regularly and in different formats to parents regarding societal trends in Social Emotional learning.

Accomplishing:

- Parents and families appropriately access social and emotional supports.
- Re-administer survey to parents and families as a means of assessing growth.

Component C:

Communicate the district's continuum of supports and resources to families.

Present State:

- At all grade levels, systems and programs are in place to provide opportunities for students to have a positive connection with at least one adult in the school who may serve as a role model.

Beginning:

- Utilize SEL screener to determine which students identify as having a positive connection with at least one adult in the school district.
- Building based teams will utilize this information to ensure all students will have a positive connection with at least one adult.

Progressing:

- At all grade levels, systems and programs will be monitored to provide opportunities for students to have a positive connection with at least one adult in the school.

Accomplishing:

- The building based teams will assess this goal in an ongoing manner.

Component D:

Provide an environment where students may develop a positive connection with at least one or more adult(s) in the school.

The district is committed to advocating for and building a district that promotes equity.

Components:

A. The district will provide ongoing learning opportunities for staff and students through professional development and curriculum revision which will lead to greater equity embedded in classroom instruction.

B. The district will invest in educational resources and opportunities to build the capacity of staff and students as we work towards a more equitable educational community.

C. The district will review, implement, and revise processes and policies through an equity lens to ensure success and respect for all staff and students.

Present State:

- There is an established District Equity Team that meets regularly.
- Individual buildings have established equity teams.
- Representation of equity team member(s) on the professional learning and evaluation committee.
- Curriculum revision teams PK-12 are reviewing lessons, units and resources through an equity lens.
- The district is working with an equity consultant.

Beginning:

- Building level equity teams will maintain a regular meeting schedule.
- The District Equity Team and building equity teams will establish consistent training for all staff.

Progressing:

- There will be multiple times for staff to engage in professional learning on equity.
- The District Equity Team will be responsible for monitoring progress towards the Strategic Plan.
- Progress will be communicated to all stakeholders on an ongoing basis.

Accomplishing:

- Professional equity library available and being used at each building.
- All curriculums PK-12 have been revised through an equity lens.

Component A:

The district will provide ongoing learning opportunities for staff and students through professional development and curriculum revision which will lead to greater equity embedded in classroom instruction.

Present State:

- Curriculum revisions include an examination of resources to ensure representation of varied perspectives.
- Other district resources, such as newsletters, handbooks, and policies, are being examined through an equity lens.

Beginning:

- Other district resources, such as newsletters, handbooks, and policies, have been examined through an equity lens.
- Ongoing curriculum revisions that are representative of Waterford's increasing diversity.

Progressing:

- Ongoing revision and inclusion of resources that are representative of Waterford's increasing diversity.

Accomplishing:

- District resources are representative and reflective of the Waterford community.
- District publicizes and maintains an equity resource database for staff, students and families.

Component B:

The district will invest in educational resources and opportunities to build the capacity of staff and students as we work towards a more equitable educational community.

Present State:

- A BOE policy review from an equity lens has been completed.
- Some school disciplinary rules, practices and procedures have been examined and revised through an equity lens**.**
- The district has an established Plan for Minority Staff Recruitment.

Beginning:

- All schools will continue to examine and revise school rules, practices and procedures through an equity lens.
- The district will develop contacts with local training and educational institutions, including those with high minority enrollments, to publicize job openings within the school district and to solicit referrals of qualified minority candidates.
- The Board will develop contacts with local minority community organizations to publicize job openings within the school district and to solicit referrals of qualified minority candidates.

Progressing:

- Building based teams will review discipline, suspension, and office referral data to determine if students of color are disproportionately represented.
- Middle school and high school building based teams will examine and increase access to higher level course work for all students.

Accomplishing:

- District-wide alignment in rules, practices and procedures intended to promote educational equity.
- The District will review on an annual basis the effectiveness of the Plan for Minority Staff Recruitment in increasing minority applicants and attracting qualified candidates for employment.

Component C:

The district will review, implement, and revise processes and policies through an equity lens to ensure success and respect for all staff and students.

ADDENDUM A

Bloom's Taxonomy 2001