



A Dynamic Planning Process for Continuous Improvement

Background and Introduction:

The Farmington Forward dynamic planning process begins as Mission 2007, the Farmington Public Schools strategic plan for the past 13 years, concludes. In 1994, Mission 2007, the District's first long term strategic plan, was launched. It was so named because the students entering kindergarten at its inception would graduate from high school in 2007; thus, charting these students and the District's course as we moved from the 20th into the 21st century.

To prepare for the conclusion of Mission 2007, the Board of Education established through the superintendent's evaluation goals, the charge to develop the next strategic plan for the District. The superintendent investigated current research and reviewed various long range planning models and recommended that the next plan be based upon a continuous improvement model, called dynamic planning, to ensure that the District builds upon its strengths and is flexible to keep pace with the ever increasing rate of change facing all 21st century organizations.

Prior to the formation of the Farmington Forward planning committee, the District's Leadership Council, District Student Achievement Team and Board of Education reviewed the District's mission and vision statements, which would be used to guide the work of the Farmington Forward planning committee. The District's mission statement was updated and strengthened by adding the commitment to "engage every student" in quality learning experiences empowering "each student" to become "thoughtful, contributing citizens in a changing world." A new vision statement was also developed and is guided by the overarching commitment to "high achievement for all students where learning is our most important work." The Board of Education adopted the new mission and vision statements at its December 12, 2006 meeting, as follows:

Mission Statement:

Farmington Public Schools, together with our community, will engage every student in a quality learning experience, empowering each student to become a thoughtful, contributing citizen in a changing world.

Vision Statement:

The vision of Farmington Public Schools is high achievement by all students, where learning is our most important work. We are a district in which:

- Students, teachers, parents, community members, support staff, and administrators work collaboratively to create a positive learning environment to ensure all students are successful, competent and productive.
- Teachers hold high expectations for all students.
- We rely on our diversity of thought, perspective and people to build on our strengths.
- All students and staff feel empowered and supported.
- Teachers use best practice in every classroom to engage each child.
- Each school provides a safe, caring and nurturing environment for students, staff and parents that enables every child to experience the joy of learning.
- Decisions are based on data and quality information.

The District Student Achievement Team (DSAT) was formulated this year to “mind the gaps between where we are and where we need to go” to ensure the success of every one of our students. DSAT was asked to develop the name for our new dynamic plan. The team chose “Farmington Forward” because the name embodies the belief that the District and all members of Farmington Public Schools must engage in continuous improvement to keep pace with change which will characterize the 21st century. Hence, “Farmington Forward” also has no ending date for the plan. Instead, we will regularly measure and report our progress and continually reassess and reset our targets.

Farmington Forward Planning Committee:

Announcement of the formation of the Farmington Forward Dynamic Planning Committee and letters of invitation were extended to parents, staff, students, graduates and community members in November and December 2006. Over forty members representing a broad spectrum of our school community were identified to serve (See Appendix A). Kay Cornell, Oakland Schools consultant, served as facilitator for the committee. The charge to the committee was to learn about the current state of Farmington Public Schools, learn about 21st century trends in

learning, technology and globalization affecting education and develop goals for the District to guide its work over the next several years.

The planning committee met six times for full day sessions from January through April. Agendas and summaries of each session are attached to this report. (See Appendix B)

**Sessions #1, 2 and 3: Learning about the current state of the District, education and future trends
January 23, February 22, March 22, 2007**

The superintendent reviewed the charge to the committee and the committee heard presentations from District staff about the current state of operations; including curriculum, instruction and student achievement, human resources, community involvement, enrollment, demographics, information technology, finances and operational services. Staff also shared current challenges facing the District in these areas.

The committee focused on learning about future trends in technology, brain-based learning and future issues. The committee discussed research articles and national reports about ways to move public education into the 21st century, reviewed a report from the Student Round Table about meeting students' needs now and into the future and heard from a panel of community members about how globalization is internationalizing education for Michigan students. Based upon all their learning, the committee developed guiding principles and community expectations to serve as a lens for developing the goals for Farmington Forward. These guiding principles and community expectations are attached. (See Appendix C)

**Session #4: Drafting the “BHAG” Goals
April 20, 2007**

Committee members organized into four subcommittees: 1) Curriculum and Instruction, 2) Community Relations, 3) Budget and Finance and 4) Human Resources, Operations and Technology to draft the goals for each area. The committee was asked to develop goals that are “BHAG” or big, hairy, audacious goals, which means they are “revolutionary” in nature and will be “evolutionary” in their implementation.

**Session #5: Input from Focus Groups
April 24, 2007**

Focus groups sessions with staff, parents and community members were held to receive input on the proposed goals, and identify strengths and challenges. A summary of input received at the focus group accompanies this report. (See Appendix D)

Session #6: Finalizing and Recommending the Goals

April 26, 2007

At its final session, the four subcommittees finalized the goals, reviewed input from the focus groups and discussed how each goal was measured by a goal rubric. The rubric used had four components:

1. Is the goal “robust” and if chosen, how will FPS be different in 3 to 5 years?
2. Is the goal based upon information received during the process?
3. Does the goal support student learning, is it understandable, measurable, achievable, broad and future focused?
4. Can the goal be supported by all sectors of the school community?

The Farmington Forward goals that will be reviewed by the Board of Education on June 12 and presented for Board approval at the June 19 Board meeting are as follows:

Goal #1: Curriculum, Instruction and Student Achievement

Farmington Public Schools will continuously grow as a community of learners integrated with the world where:

- Each member will feel physically, emotionally, and academically safe, secure and accepted.
- All learners will experience and achieve in a challenging, relevant, high-level learning environment which will prepare them to be lifelong learners, successful in a global society.
- All learners will develop into critical and creative thinkers to be adaptable citizens of the future able to embrace change through processing, accessing, designing and managing information.

Goal #2: Community Relations

Farmington Public Schools will inspire every community member to invest in our children’s future and build participation and ownership in our school district by:

- Promoting honest, trustworthy relationships through open communication.
- Seeking out and respecting each other’s diverse ideas, perspectives and abilities
- Increasing collaborations with business, government and cultural organizations to make the most of our vast community resources.

Goal #3: Budget/Finance

Farmington Public Schools will develop and implement a proactive financial management model that enables it to make decisions based upon requirements and priorities including:

- Prioritizing needs and acknowledging requirements
- Investigating renewable energy resources
- Consolidating services and facilities
- Providing access to health and wellness
- Building public support/involvement

Goal #4: Human Resources/Operations/Technology

To support and enhance educational excellence to develop all students to thrive as global citizens, Farmington Public Schools will:

- Attract, develop and retain staff with multiple perspectives who inspire and foster a world class learning community.
- Build upon and sustain a culturally competent district.
- Create and maintain exemplary physical and virtual facilities.
- Utilize cutting edge technology that supports learning and facilitates operations.

Recommendations and Challenges:

During the process of writing the goals, each of the four sub-committees also made recommendations with respect to each of the goals. (See Appendix E) This was to provide further clarification and relay discussion topics from Farmington Forward committee members. In this manner, knowledge from the committee could be passed on to the committee responsible for implementation of the goals.

For example, one of the recommendations for the first goal of Curriculum, Instruction and Student Achievement defined a community of learners as students, staff, parents and community members. The committee also intended technology to be infused throughout learning versus being a stand alone goal.

Other recommendations included a tiered academic, social and emotional intervention structure to ensure all students will be successful. This will play a large role in bridging the achievement gap. Last of all, the sub-committee suggested providing structures to support change for all of our learners.

For the second goal of community relations, the recommendations focused on ways to engage all stakeholders in order to receive feedback. Finding the most effective technology will be an integral part in inspiring every community member to invest in our students.

Recommendations for the third goal focus on budget and finance. These included investing in renewable energy resources and consolidating services and facilities. Similar to the other goal recommendations, these will hinge on building public support and involvement.

Last of all, the sub-committee for the fourth goal area of Human Resources/Operations/Technology also listed several recommendations. Many focused on how to utilize technology to its fullest. Others included building cultural competence with all stakeholders, exploring flexible and adaptable facilities and providing an intense teacher mentoring program.

With these recommendations, the committee also recognized there would be challenges. Common to all four goal areas were issues with resources and how the change process would be managed. Involving all stakeholders and managing future unknowns, such as financial issues and governmental mandates, were also identified.

Each sub-committee listed specific concerns for each goal area as a starting point for the implementation process. These reflected great thought as the future of education will look differently than it does now.

Implementation/Next Steps:

A plan to implement the Farmington Forward goals, as they relate to other District initiatives and committees, will be established. This structure will provide a clear vision for the decision making process in addition to the allocation of resources. This will be used as part of the communication plan when sharing the vision with staff, community members and students.

Over the summer, Central Office Team members will focus on developing a specific implementation strategy. This will include implementation timelines, resources and committees and/or people responsible for implementing the goal. Leadership Council, the District Student Achievement Team, instructional leaders and curriculum coordinators will finalize the implementation plans to share with all staff during August inservice days.

All of this information will be posted on the District website and shared with the community. Annual reports will be given to the Board of Education updating the progress of the implementation plan. These will also be shared with staff, parents and other community members.