

# OKEMOS PUBLIC SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN

2012-2016

2016-2018

2019-2020

*“Together...educating with excellence, inspiring learners for life.”*



[HTTP://WWW.OKEMOSSCHOOLS.NET](http://www.okemosschools.net)  
4406 NORTH OKEMOS ROAD  
OKEMOS, MI 48864

# **Okemos Public Schools**

## **2012-2016 Strategic Plan March 2012**

### **Prepared by:**

Dr. Catherine J. Ash, Superintendent  
and

Mrs. Patricia Trelstad, Deputy Superintendent  
Okemos Public Schools

OKEMOS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FINAL REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND.....3  
PLANNING PARTICIPANTS .....4  
MISSION STATEMENT.....4  
VALUE STATEMENTS .....5  
VISION STATEMENTS .....6  
K-12 LEARNER OUTCOMES .....7  
STAKEHOLDERS .....8  
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN.....9  
CRITICAL ISSUES.....11  
STRATEGIC GOALS AND STRATEGIES.....11  
APPENDIX A.....14

## BACKGROUND

---

In the spring of 2006, the Okemos Public Schools' Board of Education adopted a Strategic Plan that would establish priorities and focus the district's efforts from 2006 through 2010. This Strategic Plan was developed by utilizing the expertise of an external consultant (Dr. Carmelita Murphy, President of LEAD, Inc.) who facilitated this relevant and meaningful work. From January to April 2006, the strategic planning process was characterized by "full and active participation of its 38 planners." Participants developed mission, vision and value statements, as well as K-12 learner outcomes to guide their thinking and to serve as a foundation for their work. Planners identified the critical issues that were facing the district, as well as developed strategic directions and strategies to address the critical issues from 2006-2010.

In 2010-11, the district was in a state of transition. During that year, as a result of financial challenges and to promote economic efficiencies, the district implemented a reconfiguration of K-8 grade levels. Grade configurations changed from K-5 and 6-8 to K-4, 5-6, 7-8. Further, in response to the retirement of the superintendent, a change in district leadership was initiated that year. Recognizing the magnitude of the challenges incurred by the district during the 2010-11 school year, updating the strategic plan was postponed. The 2006-2010 Strategic Plan still served to focus the district's efforts.

With the onset of the 2011-12 school year, it was time to re-visit the existing strategic plan to ensure that Okemos Public Schools continued to focus on relevant and essential topics, as viewed by all stakeholders. It was important to develop an updated strategic plan that would provide structure and guide "next steps" as Okemos Public Schools continued to strive to maintain quality programs that would meet the needs of our children, within a collaborative and productive environment during fiscally challenging times. The 2006 strategic planning process served as a guide for our 2011-12 strategic planning work.

The strategic planning process began in October, 2011 and was facilitated by Dr. Catherine Ash (Superintendent) and Mrs. Patricia Trelstad (Deputy Superintendent). Once again, the strategic planning process was characterized by "full and active participation" of 36 planners. The committee determined that the mission, vision and value statements, as well as the K-12 learner outcomes developed in 2006 were still meaningful and relevant. Through analysis and discussion, the mission statement was validated without revision. The committee determined that the vision and value statements, as well as the K-12 learner outcomes required some revisions to more accurately reflect who we are as the Okemos Public Schools. The planners identified the critical issues facing the district today, as well as developed strategic directions and strategies to address the critical issues from 2012-2016. The final document honors the ideas brought forward by board members, administrators, parents, teachers, support staff and students during the planning sessions.

## PLANNING PARTICIPANTS

---

The participants in the planning process included:

### **Board Members**

Deborah Baughman  
Amy Crites  
Damian Fisher  
Melanie Lynn  
Vincent Lyon-Callo  
Jeffrey Theuer  
Steve Vagnozzi

### **Principals**

Tara Fry  
Sue Hallman  
Barbara Hoewel  
John Hood  
Gary Kinzer  
Noelle Palasty  
Asja Wilcox

### **Directors**

Errin Chapman  
William Wilcox

### **Parent Representatives**

Dawn Bentley  
Dyanna Clark  
Brett DeGroff  
Susan Donohue  
Rolinda Jarema  
Fred Sudler  
Amy Suhrheinrich

### **Support Staff Representatives**

Jackie Larivee  
Jennifer Smith

### **Teacher Representatives**

Marsha Chance  
Josh Coty  
Lisa Crites  
Melinda Derby  
Pam Kliewer  
Ursula Morris  
Paula Pulter

### **High School Students**

Yoolim Jung  
Prabhu Ragunathan

### **Community Members**

Ronald Styka  
Peter Trezise

*Facilitators: Dr. Catherine Ash and Mrs. Patricia Trelstad*

## MISSION STATEMENT

---

**Together...educating with excellence, inspiring learners for life.**

## VALUE STATEMENTS

---

### WE BELIEVE THAT:

- academic, artistic, athletic, civic and social excellence results from high expectations, both in teaching and learning
- recognizing and embracing the uniqueness of every student inspires each one to reach his or her fullest potential
- authentic collaboration and open communication among all stakeholders', teachers, administrators, parents, students and community members, is the foundation for a quality education

### WE VALUE:

- a broad, relevant, challenging curriculum with differentiated instruction that is innovative and meets the needs and interests of each student
- an inviting, safe learning environment
- the active process of creating and maintaining a culture of respect, caring, and integrity
- people and their individual differences
- responsibility and accountability in decision making, planning, implementation and delivery of programs and services
- all post high school educational, life and career paths
- and embrace diversity and the different perspectives it brings to our schools and our community at large

## VISION STATEMENTS

---

Together, we will create and maintain an environment where teachers, administrators, parents, students and community members, collaborate to support and enhance the education of all of our children regardless of their ability.

In such an environment:

### **STUDENTS WILL...**

- reach their full academic, artistic, athletic, civic and social potential
- possess the skills and confidence to adapt to an ever-changing world
- possess meaningful memories of classroom experiences, friendships, and people who cared about them
- possess the passion for lifelong learning to shape an evolving world
- possess a sense of social and community responsibility
- realize that accomplishment is derived from their hard work, problem solving and persistence and appreciate the feeling that comes from such accomplishment

### **TEACHERS AND STAFF WILL...**

- provide experiences that challenge and support students in their active pursuit of full academic, artistic, athletic, civic and social potential
- enhance student learning through the use of current technology and methodology
- provide purposeful instruction that addresses the varying needs and unique learning styles of students
- seize opportunities for developing leadership and the collegial sharing of ideas
- provide a safe and supportive learning environment
- utilize data to inform their instruction

### **PARENTS AND/OR COMMUNITY MEMBERS WILL...**

- support and actively participate in their child's education
- embrace the families of all of our students and Okemos residents from preschoolers to senior citizens
- partner with the school community sharing their time, talents and resources
- celebrate students' academic, artistic, athletic, civic and social achievements
- embrace and value diversity
- recognize the need to extend financial support

Through this vision Okemos Public Schools will strive to set a higher standard for schools throughout the state and nation.

## K-12 LEARNER OUTCOMES

---

Outcomes are the culminating skills and abilities that we expect of each graduate of Okemos Public Schools. These outcomes are embedded in demanding academic programs and learning activities to ensure that our students adapt to the challenges of change throughout their lives and are prepared for success in the global community. An Okemos graduate will:

1. Demonstrate core knowledge and skills in academic areas in a variety of different ways.
2. Work both independently and collaboratively with diverse groups of people to identify, access, integrate, and use available resources and information to reason, make decisions, and solve complex problems in a variety of contexts.
3. Use a variety of different technologies to uncover knowledge, achieve academic goals, and enhance learning.
4. Demonstrate ethical behavior, democratic values, self-respect, and respect for individual and cultural differences in a global society.
5. Communicate effectively through speaking, listening, reading, writing and artistic expression.
6. Contribute willingly the time, energy, and talent to improve the welfare of others and the quality of life in the community.
7. Demonstrate the skills of a critically reflective learner, responsive to a global community and an ever-changing world.
8. Exhibit creative strategies and skills to effectively manage change, stress, conflict and transition in the face of challenges.
9. Demonstrate knowledge of and appreciation for the physical, emotional and social value of personal fitness, wellbeing and health.
10. Demonstrate knowledge of and appreciation for artistic and creative expression.
11. Demonstrate specialized knowledge and skills in academic, vocational and/or functional areas specific to the student's interests and aptitudes.

## **STAKEHOLDERS**

---

A stakeholder is an individual or a group who is in relationship with the organization and can affect its future. Our stakeholders include:

### **Immediate School District**

Administration  
Board of Education  
Faculty  
Parents  
Students  
Support Personnel  
Taxpayers: Community Businesses and Community Residents

### **School Support Organizations**

Individual School Parent Groups  
Meridian Senior Center  
Okemos Education Foundation  
Okemos Parent Council  
Support Groups

### **Educational Institutions**

Michigan Association of School Administrators  
Michigan Association of School Boards  
Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals  
Michigan Education Association  
Michigan Elementary & Middle School Principals Association  
Michigan School Business Officials Association  
Michigan State Board of Education

### **Government**

Charter Township of Meridian  
Federal government/educational agencies  
Michigan Department of Education  
Michigan Department of Treasury

## ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

---

The planning participants reviewed the organizational strengths and weaknesses in the areas of resources, processes and performance. The external environment was reviewed for social, political, religious and economic trends that have the potential to act as opportunities or threats.

The following are the prioritized strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified by participants that formed the context for developing strategies in support of strategic directions.

### INTERNAL REVIEW

#### **STRENGTHS perceived were:**

- Committed, dedicated, knowledgeable, professional staff
- Parental support
- Diverse, involved parents and community
- Facilities and infrastructure
- Technology
- History/reputation/tradition of excellence
- Motivated students
- Supportive, collaborative environment among community, staff, leadership, board
- Shared values among the community, parents, staff
- High expectations among all key stakeholders
- Academics, fine arts, athletic programs
- Safe learning environment
- Partnership with MSU teacher preparation program

#### **WEAKNESSES perceived were:**

- Funding limited and unpredictable, resulting in ongoing budget reductions
- Aging facilities and air quality
- Loss or reduction in programming
- Lack of programming for students to promote acceptance and connections
- Staff not reflective of diverse student body
- Lack of foreign language in elementary and middle school
- Not consistently meeting the needs of the non- traditional learner
- Reductions in staff and services
- Lack of organized volunteer opportunities within our schools
- Lack of consistency with differentiated instruction focusing on all students
- Resistance to change
- Increased class size, declining enrollment trends
- Scheduling conflicts due to shared staff between buildings
- State mandated focus on standardized testing
- Achievement gaps in subgroup populations
- Additional demands on administrators, teachers and support staff – impacts stress and effectiveness
- Not enough programming/strategies to meet the needs of changing demographics
- Underutilization of technology (classrooms and offices)
- Lack of understanding of diverse cultures
- Increased student mobility into and out of district

## EXTERNAL REVIEW

### **OPPORTUNITIES perceived were:**

- Collaboration and partnerships in and among the community, MSU, government, other districts
- Diverse cultures – valuing and awareness
- Parents and community as resources
- Growing awareness of school funding challenges
- Community support for schools – historical
- Educational research to inform practice
- Mentoring and apprentice programs
- World and social connections through technology
- Creative solutions, problem solving
- Changing demographics

### **THREATS perceived were:**

- Budgetary impact of unpredictable, inadequate funding
- External policy-making/mandates at the federal and state levels
- Declining, unstable enrollments
- Public polarization of K-12 education; politics
- Impact on programs without funding support
- Economic stress on families
- External decisions/pressures to implement specific educational initiatives (i.e. student achievement, teacher/administrator evaluation, STEM)
- Devaluing of public education – morale
- Outsourcing specific services
- Substances – drugs and alcohol
- Technology and the social media

## **CRITICAL ISSUES**

---

The following are the critical issues that have the greatest strategic importance to the long-term well being of Okemos Public Schools:

### **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

#### **DIVERSITY**

#### **FACILITIES**

#### **FINANCES**

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

#### **SOCIAL ISSUES**

#### **TECHNOLOGY**

## **2012 – 2016 STRATEGIC GOALS & STRATEGIES**

---

Strategic goal statements and strategies were developed for each of the critical issue areas:

### **CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTION**

**GOAL 1:** Develop programs beyond the core that make Okemos unique and competitive.

**Strategies:**

- A. Continue to offer and explore world language, fine arts, and extra-curricular opportunities throughout the K-12 environment.
- B. Continue to be innovative around technology to enhance instruction and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.
- C. Enrich/enhance instructional strategies and programs to challenge gifted and talented students.

**GOAL 2:** Align a local curriculum and develop programs to target the Common Core State Standards.

**Strategies:**

- A. Develop a comprehensive scope and sequence across and between grades (K-12) that aligns with the Common Core State Standards.
- B. Enhance instructional strategies to support the needs of students of all ability levels.
- C. Develop comprehensive systems of support to address the needs of all learners.

## DIVERSITY

**GOAL 3:** Establish the district as a leader within the community for promoting and establishing a positive direction toward inclusive diversity.

**Strategies:**

- A. Develop appropriate policies/practices to uphold inclusive diversity.

**GOAL 4:** Create a school environment where students, staff and community recognize and appreciate the diverse attributes and identities of each other.

**Strategies:**

- A. Identify and promote a respect and understanding of diversity.
- B. Develop appropriate policies and practices to uphold inclusive diversity.

## FACILITIES

**GOAL 5:** To efficiently maintain attractive, safe, functional and high-quality facilities and grounds.

**Strategies:**

- A. Assess current status to determine future needs of facilities and grounds.
- B. Develop short and long term plans to maintain or improve facilities and grounds.

## FINANCES

**GOAL 6:** Manage financial resources to support instruction and services that sustain a quality educational experience.

**Strategies:**

- A. Influence political process to stabilize K-12 school funding.
- B. Maximize access to additional revenue sources.
- C. Identify systematic efficiencies to maximize use of financial resources.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

**GOAL 7:** Collaboratively develop efficient and effective systems to deliver the educational program.

**Strategies:**

- A. Provide professional development opportunities for all staff to benefit student learning.
- B. Develop leadership capacity within all levels of the organization.
- C. Assess efficiency and effectiveness of organization's systems.

**GOAL 8:** Communicate effectively with the public and within the district.

**Strategies:**

- A. Develop systems to regularly monitor the communication between each building and the building at next level up or down.
- B. Maintain and establish a variety of methods for two way communication with parents and community regarding critical issues.

**GOAL 9:** Continue to develop community involvement in and support for the district.

**Strategies:**

- A. Strengthen and develop partnerships with community organizations that support the district and student learning.
- B. Maintain and strengthen parental involvement in school community.
- C. Connect with non-school community members to become invested in the district.

**SOCIAL ISSUES**

**GOAL 10:** To ensure a safe educational environment for all students to maximize learning.

**Strategies:**

- A. Identify and promote healthy and safe life choices.
- B. Develop consistent policies and practices to address appropriate social interactions and expectations.

**TECHNOLOGY**

**GOAL 11:** Provide effective technology to enhance teaching and learning.

**Strategies:**

- A. Enhance technology utilization by district staff members and students.

**GOAL 12:** Support the overall operations of the district through technology.

**Strategies:**

- A. Identify and implement emerging technologies that promote district operations.

## APPENDIX A

---

Through the development of strategic goals and strategies, potential objectives started to emerge. The objectives reflect the “how to” of the strategies. The ideas generated through the Strategic Planning process have been captured in this document. As the Leadership Team develops the Operational Plan, the italicized objectives will serve to inform their thinking.

### CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTION

**GOAL 1:** Develop programs beyond the core that make (Okemos) unique and competitive.

**Strategies:**

- A. Continue to offer and explore world language, fine arts, and extra-curricular opportunities throughout the K-12 environment.
  - 1. *world language at elementary; access at OHS (limited due to MMC); increase K-8 music, art, PE instruction*
- B. Continue to be innovative around technology to enhance instruction and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.
  - 1. *Professional development*
- C. Enrich/enhance instructional strategies and programs to challenge gifted and talented students.
  - 1. *Evaluate current practices/programs (Gifted and Talented; Advanced placement)*

**GOAL 2:** Align a local curriculum and develop programs to target the Common Core State Standards.

**Strategies:**

- A. Develop a comprehensive scope and sequence across and between grades (K-12) that aligns with the Common Core State Standards.
  - 1. *Utilize Professional Learning Communities (early release)*
  - 2. *Gap analysis*
- B. Enhance instructional strategies to support the needs of students of all ability levels.
  - 1. *Focus on life skills (day to day)*
  - 2. *Utilize community experts to supplement classrooms*
  - 3. *Develop instructional practices to reflect the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, global community*
  - 4. *Professional development – effective teaching*
- C. Develop comprehensive systems of support to address the needs of all learners.
  - 1. *Individualized plans/differentiation*
  - 2. *RTI initiatives – support all learners that are underperforming (subgroup populations: economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, English language learners etc...)*

## DIVERSITY

**GOAL 3:** Establish the district as a leader within the community for promoting and establishing a positive direction toward inclusive diversity.

**Strategies:**

- A. Develop appropriate policies/practices to uphold inclusive diversity.
  - 1. *Communicate a clear message*
  - 2. *Examine current practices*
  - 3. *Educate community*
  - 4. *Open dialogue and active participation*

**GOAL 4:** Create a school environment where students, staff and community recognize and appreciate the diverse attributes and identities of each other.

**Strategies:**

- A. Identify and promote a respect and understanding of diversity.
  - 1. *Utilize an inclusive process to define diversity*
  - 2. *Educate staff/parents/ student*
  - 3. *Open dialogue and active participation*
  - 4. *Include Native Americans as one of the areas of focus- committee*
  - 5. *Communicate a clear message*
- B. Develop appropriate policies and practices to uphold inclusive diversity.
  - 1. *Inclusive process for planning activities*
  - 2. *Examine current practices*

## FACILITIES

**GOAL 5:** To efficiently maintain attractive, safe, functional and high-quality facilities and grounds.

**Strategies:**

- A. Assess current status to determine future needs of facilities and grounds.
  - 1. *partner with outside organizations (MSU)*
  - 2. *analyze effective use of facilities as K-12 population changes*
  - 3. *consider 21<sup>st</sup> century model /schools*
  - 4. *seek input from staff, community (survey)*
- B. Develop short and long term plans to maintain or improve facilities and grounds.
  - 1. *Seek input from staff, community, etc. . . .*

## FINANCES

**GOAL 6:** Manage financial resources to support instruction and services that sustain a quality educational experience.

**Strategies:**

- A. Influence political process to stabilize K-12 school funding.
  - 1. *Establish connections/communication/focus/plan of action with community, other districts*
- B. Maximize access to additional revenue sources.

1. *Grants*
  2. *Technology/transportation bond*
  3. *Research/implement revenue enhancing educational opportunities (Example: distance learning)*
  4. *Identify priorities through an inclusive process*
- C. Identify systematic efficiencies to maximize use of financial resources.
1. *Identify priorities through an inclusive process*
  2. *Share services with other districts/entities*

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

**GOAL 7:** Collaboratively develop efficient and effective systems to deliver the educational program.

**Strategies:**

- A. Provide professional development opportunities for all staff to benefit student learning.
  1. *Utilize on-line training opportunities*
- B. Develop leadership capacity within all levels of the organization.
  1. *Job shadowing opportunities*
- C. Assess efficiency and effectiveness of organization's systems.
  1. *Data based decision making*

**GOAL 8:** Communicate effectively with the public and within the district.

**Strategies:**

- A. Develop systems to regularly monitor the communication between each building and the building at next level up or down.
  1. *Communication within a building (departments, grade levels)*
- B. Maintain and establish a variety of methods for two way communication with parents and community regarding critical issues.
  1. *Develop political capacity and involvement*

**GOAL 9:** Continue to develop community involvement in and support for the district.

**Strategies:**

- A. Strengthen and develop partnerships with community organizations that support the district and student learning.
  1. *Identify community liaisons to develop connections (district, per building)*
  2. *MSU partnerships*
  3. *Proactively recruit*
- B. Maintain and strengthen parental involvement in school community.
  1. *Educational opportunities, training for parents and future parents.*
- C. Connect with non-school community members to become invested in the district.
  1. *Utilize professional experts to supplement classrooms*
  2. *Educational opportunities, trainings.*

## SOCIAL ISSUES

**GOAL 10:** To ensure a safe educational environment for all students to maximize learning.

**Strategies:**

- A. Identify and promote healthy and safe life choices.
  - 1. *Education of students/parents*
  - 2. *Use variety of strategies/activities to enhance learning; including experiential*
  - 3. *Involve students, parents, faculty, community*
  - 4. *Topics: bullying, substances, sexuality, peer pressure*
  
- B. Develop consistent policies and practices to address appropriate social interactions and expectations.
  - 1. *Social network*
  - 2. *Involve students, parents, faculty*

## TECHNOLOGY

**GOAL 11:** Provide effective technology to enhance teaching and learning.

**Strategies:**

- A. Enhance technology utilization by district staff members and students.
  - 1. *Facilitate remote learning outside the school day/ building utilizing on-line and/or self-paced curricula*
  - 2. *Allocate funding for professional development*
  - 3. *Utilize technology standards to create consistent and aligned experiences across grade levels*
  - 4. *Expand use of technology to incorporate multiple learning approaches for students*
  - 5. *Create a culture that supports technology as a critical component of developing 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills*

**GOAL 12:** Support the overall operations of the district through technology.

**Strategies:**

- A. Identify and implement emerging technologies that promote district operations.
  - 1. *Identify and secure funding sources that will enable the district to achieve its technology goals*
  - 2. *Establish public/ private partnerships for access to technology and group purchasing*