

Vision 2025

***Strategic Plan Mission,
Beliefs, Values and Pillars***



Cass School District 63

Darien, Illinois

www.cassd63.org

***Quarterly Progress Review
December 2022***

Purpose and Method of the Progress Review

After collecting data and feedback from our local community, the Cass School District 63 Board of Education developed and adopted the [Vision 2025 Strategic Plan](#) in November of 2021. As part of this plan, the Board also clarified our mission and adopted a clear set of [Core Beliefs and Values](#) that are shared by our school community. Details can be found under the links above.

Our strategic plan is built on three pillars, with seven underlying indicators for each of the pillars. The pillars are as follows:

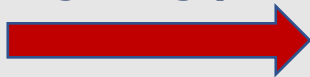
Pillar 1 - Academic Growth and Achievement

Pillar 2 - Student Services and Support

Pillar 3 - Student Health and Safety

An effective strategic plan requires not only clear goals and indicators of success, but also a method to monitor progress. Our method is to categorize and show progress for each pillar and indicator under the following four categories:

Beginning (0 – 25%)



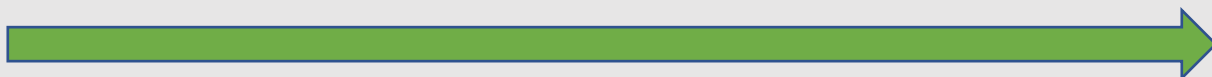
Developing (26 – 50%)



Emerging (51 – 75%)

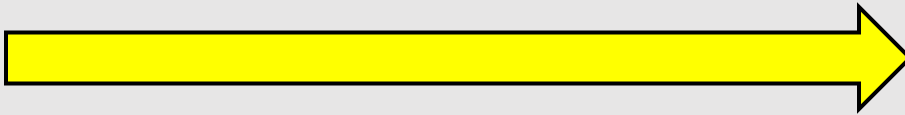


Implementing (76 – 100%)



In addition to the above categories, narrative substantiating the selected category is provided in red. The purpose is to provide a quick and simple overview of our progress toward the Vision 2025 Strategic Plan. Work will take place with the leadership team and staff, while progress will be monitored quarterly by the Board. Superintendent Mark Cross will report on the progress of the strategic plan to the greater school community.

Pillar 1 - Academic Growth and Achievement



- A. Evaluate current progress reporting to determine if there are more effective methods for communicating academic and behavioral progress to parents.



1.A. Quarterly Review Comments – Over the spring and summer of 2022, staff and administration worked to develop the new academic grading system. This system, which was implemented in the fall of 2022, combines the strengths of standards-based grading with the traditional clarity about how a child is performing academically. Work will continue on reporting assessment and student growth results.

- B. Research and evaluate current data and needs to determine recommendations regarding curriculum, materials and resources for the Mathematics, Science and STEM, Social Sciences, Reading and English Language Arts and special curriculum areas.



1.B Quarterly Review Comments – New math curriculum resources were researched, approved and implemented for the fall of 2022. Additionally, the new STEM program was implemented at Concord Elementary School in the fall of 2022. The staff is currently studying science curriculum materials for potential implementation in the fall of 2023.

- C. Provide comprehensive periodic reporting regarding the academic achievement and growth of our students on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) and the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments.



1.C Quarterly Review Comments – The leadership team is working on a method and timeline for reporting overall assessment data and information to the school community.

- D. Review data of recent graduates to determine high school preparedness and identify areas in need of improvement.



1.D Quarterly Review Comments – Local school district leaders are collaborating on a data collection process for our recent graduates through the High School Transition Student Survey. The purpose of this data will be to assess and review how our recent graduates feel about their preparation for high school and help the leadership team and staff identify areas of strength and potential improvement.

- E. Recruit and retain a high quality and diverse staff that is reflective of our students, families and community.



1.E Quarterly Review Comments – Employing a highly qualified and diverse faculty and staff is one of the greatest challenges in schools today, particularly with challenges of recruiting new employees with a shortage of teachers, school service personnel and workers in general. For the 2022-23 school year, the district employed 16 new staff members, representing over 10 percent of the district’s workforce, and many in what are considered hard to fill positions. Despite the challenges, are new staff are highly qualified and licensed to perform their duties, and every effort will continue to be made to hire a diverse staff that is representative of our students and community.

- F. Develop a comprehensive professional development plan and enhance growth opportunities for teachers and staff.



1.F Quarterly Review Comments – Since returning to normal from the global pandemic, the school district has resumed normal professional development activities and support for our staff. The district has provided mentoring and support for approximately 30 staff members hired over the previous two years, mostly through the new teacher mentoring program. Orton-Gillingham phonics and dyslexia training has been provided for all staff from kindergarten through 3rd grade, including all new staff trained in 2022. The school district has also provided cultural competence and student engagement training to help meet the needs of our students from various backgrounds, as well as their social and emotional needs. Future areas of focus include training in the area of safety and security, and also looking at our needs as it relates to the social and emotional needs and growth of our students. To help ensure our staff development is aligned with long-term goals, work is in progress to align our professional development plan in these areas with other components of the strategic plan.

- G. Conduct surveys and student exit interviews to provide input into areas of potential improvement.



1.G Quarterly Review Comments – The superintendent is in the process of developing an exit interview process for staff who leave employment from the district. It is possible that this item will be combined with strategic plan indicator 1.D since graduate surveys are in the process of being planned and disseminated.

Pillar 2 – Student Services and Support

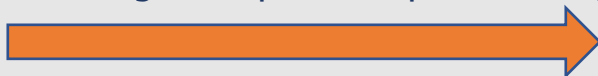


- A. Review and evaluate social and emotional curriculum and learning opportunities available to our students.



2.A Quarterly Review Comments – This has become a much greater priority post-pandemic. Additional support with an additional half-time social worker has allowed for much greater support of our students in both schools. In addition to having a full-time guidance counselor at each school, the district now employs 1.5 social workers and a full-time school psychologist and a full-time district nurse. Continuing professional development will be necessary in this area to help identify students at risk and provide interventions whenever necessary.

- B. Encourage and promote parental engagement and involvement.



2.B Quarterly Review Comments – The school district continues to seek ways to involve parents in their child’s education in a meaningful way. The key part of this is communication from the district to the parents and between the parents and teacher and school. Much of this is accomplished through the Cass63 Connections, which retains a high level of readership and engagement when needed, but more work will continue on how to engage parents meaningfully at school and through the CARE organization.

- C. Review the multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) to determine any areas of need.



2.C Quarterly Review Comments – The district’s goal of providing education to our students in the least restrictive environment is critical to meeting needs and providing the greatest opportunity for academic and social growth. Additional clarity has been provided regarding the response to intervention and data collection process for student academic and social/emotional needs as follows:

Academics

Tier 1 – district curriculum with differentiation

Tier 2 – Interventions provided by teachers, ELL support and school service personnel

Tier 3 – Identification and support by special education teachers

Social and Emotional

Tier 1 – building-wide, classroom SEL and incentive programs

Tier 2 – Skills for Learning and access to school counselor (peer mediation, problem-solving, friendship groups, check-in/check-outs, mentoring adults)

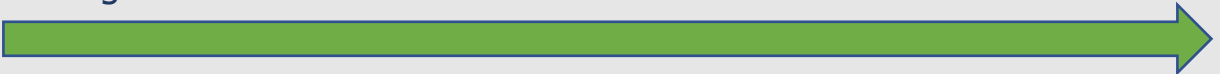
Tier 3 – Social work, psychologist, outside neuropsychologists/other medical professionals and assistance with IEP needs met in the school setting

- D. Conduct an evaluation of services for English language learners (ELL) to determine if a greater continuum of services is needed.



2.D Quarterly Review Comments – A number of district teachers have become certified to work with English language learners, and this is an ongoing priority. One of the challenges is the district does not have one primary language outside of English spoken in the district, but many. Work continues with our staff and students in this area.

- E. Analyze student medical needs and on-site services to determine adequate staffing levels.



2.E Quarterly Review Comments – The school district has hired a full-time nurse for the first time for the 2022-23 school term. This has already had a major impact with meeting the many medical needs of our students in the school setting, as well as providing better long-term, proactive planning.

- F. Evaluate community demographic data and enrollment trends to determine impact on long-term staffing needs.



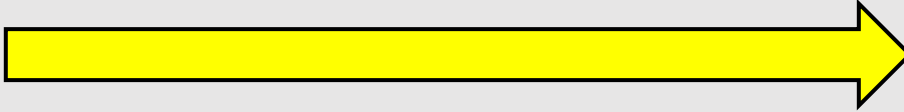
2.F Quarterly Review Comments – Long-term enrollment trends show that district's total enrollment is unchanged over the most recent 12 year period. Staffing levels are monitored annually and the leadership team is working on a staff plan for the next two years. The largest driver of this plan is student enrollment and need by grade level to determine if three or four sections of a particular grade level are needed.

- G. Provide cultural events and opportunities for students, families and the local community.

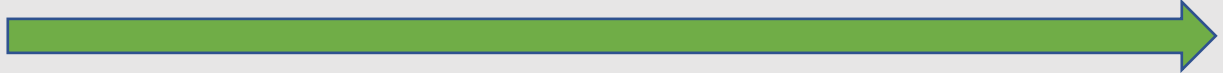


2.G Quarterly Review Comments – The first Art and Jazz Show was held at Cass Junior High School in the Spring of 2022. Providing these and other opportunities to celebrate the various cultures and backgrounds of our students and families will be a continued area of focus over the course over the next two years.

Pillar 3 – Student Health and Safety



- A. Develop a comprehensive master plan for the improvement and replacement of heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.



3.A Quarterly Review Comments – With the assistance of the Facilities Committee and district architects and engineers, in early 2022 the school district developed a comprehensive long-term plan for replacement of the district’s HVAC systems.

- B. Research and make recommendations for upgrading video surveillance systems, phones and internal communication equipment, security lighting, fire alarm panels and other safety and security needs.



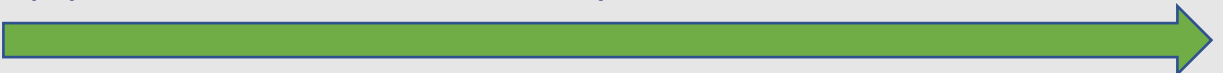
3.B Quarterly Review Comments – The leadership team and Board of Education are in the final phases of reviewing options and costs for identified safety and security needs. A plan is expected to be implemented in the summer of 2023.

- C. Complete necessary requirements to maintain ongoing health and life safety compliance.



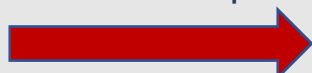
3.C Quarterly Review Comments – The school district has made progress with compliance with all health life safety items from the 2017 survey at both schools, and final documentation should be provided to ISBE in 2023. The school district also recently passed its annual health life safety visits with the DuPage Regional Office of Education.

- D. Determine the most efficient options to finance the necessary improvements to indoor air quality and HVAC systems, safety and security equipment, and health and life safety needs.



3.D Quarterly Review Comments – In November of 2022, school district voters approved the payment of bonds for financing the related improvements for the identified safety, security and HVAC needs.

- E. Conduct a cyber security audit to determine any necessary safety protocols to ensure the protection of student and district data.



3.E Quarterly Review Comments – More progress on this item is needed and will be discussed with the school district’s informational technology and insurance provider.

- F. Research and develop a comprehensive plan for student transportation staffing and services.



3.F Quarterly Review Comments – The school district is assessing its transportation needs with a preliminary plan to address the district’s staffing and capital outlay needs for buses through the possibility of a contracted service for regular transportation and employing special transportation with district employees.

- G. Conduct comprehensive, periodic reviews of the Emergency Operations and Crisis Plans with local law enforcement and other emergency services.



3.G Quarterly Review Comments – Progress has been made with communications and cooperative planning with the Darien Police Department. These efforts will continue as the school district staff is trained in ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate) and district leaders are trained as certified ALICE instructors. More training and work with the police department will be provided with staff early in 2023.