

# **Vision 2025**

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



***Cass School District 63***

**Darien, Illinois**

**[www.cassd63.org](http://www.cassd63.org)**

***Strategic Plan Progress Review  
June 2023***

The Cass School District 63 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%)

This is not intended to be an exact science, but just a simple method to provide a quick visual overview of our progress. Work and progress toward the Vision 2025 Strategic Plan will take place with the leadership team and staff, while progress will be monitored quarterly by the Board.

# Pillar 1 - Academic Growth and Achievement

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



1.A. June 2023 Progress Review – 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 with appropriate benchmarks for comparison.

2. 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 June 2023 Progress Review – New math curriculum resources were researched, approved and implemented for the fall of 2022, followed by science and STEM resources for the fall of 2023. A new STEM program was implemented at Concord Elementary School in the fall of 2022. The staff will be studying social studies curriculum materials for potential implementation in the fall of 2024.

3. 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 June 2023 Progress Review – The leadership team is working on a method and timeline for reporting overall assessment data and information to the school community

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



1.D June 2023 Progress Review – 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.

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



1.E June 2023 Progress Review – 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, our new staff are highly qualified and licensed to perform their duties. Progress has been made and every effort will continue to hire and retain a diverse staff that is representative of our students and community.

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



1.F June 2023 Progress Review – 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 35 staff members hired over the previous three years, mostly through the new teacher mentoring program. Orton-Gillingham phonics and dyslexia training has been provided for all staff from kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, including all new recently hired staff. 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. Training has also been implemented in the area of safety and security, including training all staff in the ALICE model, and specified district administrators holding ALICE-certified trainer qualifications. The district also continues to look 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.

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



1.G June 2023 Progress Review – 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.

## Pillar 2 - Student Services and Support

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



2.A June 2023 Progress Review – 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 June 2023 Progress Review – 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 June 2023 Progress Review – 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. In June of 2023, the district's leadership team and school service staff and specialists began planning for improvement to the district's MTSS framework to better meet the changing needs of our student population. Work will continue over the course of the 2023-24 school term with how best to structure our program, determine assessments and interventions, build a system to house the necessary data, and provide our teachers and staff with the training and resources necessary to meet the needs of our students.

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



2.D June 2023 Progress Review – 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 onsite service to determine adequate staffing levels.



2.E June 2023 Progress Review – The district hired a full-time nurse for the first time for the 2022-23 school term, which had a major impact on 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 June 2023 Progress Review – 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 June 2023 Progress Review – The district now hosts an annual Art and Jazz Show at Cass Junior High School each Spring. The district is at the beginning stages of planning a cooperative cultural event with the involvement of students, staff, parents and families for later in the 2023-24 school year.

## 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 June 2023 Progress Review – In November 2022, the district passed a referendum to address safety, security and HVAC needs, including the development of a geothermal heating and cooling system. Design and engineering work is underway with planned construction and installation scheduled for the summer of 2024.

- 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 June 2023 Progress Review – In November 2022, the district passed a referendum to address safety, security and HVAC needs, including addressing various safety and security needs. Planning and work is under way for implementation of various improvements over the course of the summer of 2023 and 2024.

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



3.C June 2023 Progress Review – 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 June 2023 Progress Review – 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 cyber security audit to determine any necessary safety protocols to ensure the protection of student and district data.



3.E June 2023 Progress Review – In June of 2023, the district installed network security improvements, including separating various components so not all services are compromised in the event of a cyber security attack.

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



3.F June 2023 Progress Review – In the spring of 2023, the district conducted a public transportation bidding process which will allow the district to retain drivers for in-house special education routes, while outsourcing regular transportation routes.

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



3.G June 2023 Progress Review – Progress has been made with communications and cooperative planning with the Darien Police Department. These efforts will continue as the school district staff has been trained in ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate) and district leaders are now trained as certified ALICE instructors. More training and work with the police department will be provided to staff over the course of the 2023-24 school year, and with the implementation of the BluePoint Security system.