

MARCH 14, 2025



# New Salem-Almont School District

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 - 2026



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals and volunteers contributed significantly to this strategic plan, including staff, community members, and students. Thank you to the individuals listed below for their time and commitment to the strategic planning process.

**Administrators:** Brian Olson, Lauren Bennett, and Brian Christopherson

**Board Members:** Jackie Lausch, Austin John, and Tammy Gilstad

**Teachers:** Garrett Mosbrucker, Tesslin Heupel, Mary Roehrich, Jamie Deutsch, Meghan Olson

**Parents:** Garrett Schultz, Tania Christian, Emily Remmick, NaTesa Messerschmidt, Tucker Norton

**Students:** Maksim Nelson and Baily Maier

*Dr. Jeffrey M. Schatz, consultant at Schatz & Associates, LLC, guided the process.*

## STRATEGIC PLAN INTRODUCTION – LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

*Our District is looking to establish a clear vision, mission, and plan that aligns with the district's goals and values by collaborating with all stakeholders in the district. We need to define academic excellence, improve resource allocation, and support the professional development of staff. It is a plan to ensure long-term sustainability and continuous improvement, guiding the district toward measurable student achievement and community engagement success. Brian Christopherson, Superintendent*

*To achieve the desired outcomes of our strategic plan, the New Salem-Almont School district has outlined the necessary steps for success. They include:*

1. **Strategic vision and mission:**
  - Create a clear, defined vision, mission, and measurable strategic plans.
  - Ensure engagement and smooth operation within the school environment.
2. **Academic excellence and innovation:**
  - Strive for academic excellence beyond test scores.
  - Drive towards long-term academic and post-secondary success for students.
  - Encourage new and innovative thinking for district advancement.
3. **Unified goals:**

- Establish clear, sustainable goals for alignment among all stakeholders in the district.
- Aim for shared goals among staff, board, community, and students.
- 4. **Consistency and follow-through:**
  - Create sustainable plans to ensure alignment in academic and financial resources.
  - Increase consistency and follow-through in various areas such as finances, resources, maintenance, curriculum, etc.
- 5. **Planning for growth and development:**
  - Plan for accommodating future growth in terms of space and resources.
  - Develop a mission that involves all stakeholders and ensures a team approach towards shared goals.
  - Establish state-of-the-art standards and maintain a reputable presence in the community.

The following document outlines a strategic vision with the school district's priorities, goals, objectives, and desired results.

## **OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

To Engage, empower, and elevate for success.

## **OUR VISION STATEMENT**

Engage students through meaningful experiences, empower them with knowledge, skills, and confidence, and elevate their potential through high expectations.

## **OUR VALUE/BELIEF STATEMENT**

We value student growth, a community of support, and creating a foundation for achievement.

## OUR FOUNDATIONAL PRACTICES

Foundational practices are the basis for the education we provide for all students. We engage in these practices to inspire and offer a high-level educational experience for each student. The following are considered foundational to our work to achieve our desired outcomes.

**High Academic Expectations:** The New Salem-Almont school district sets high academic expectations to challenge our students to achieve excellence and reach their full educational potential.

**Positive Student-Staff Relationships:** The New Salem-Almont prioritizes fostering positive relationships to create a supportive and respectful learning environment. Building trust, open communication, and collaboration are critical in our interactions.

**Data-Driven Instruction Focus:** The New Salem-Almont school district focuses on data-driven instruction, using student data and assessment results to tailor teaching methods and meet individual student needs. We strive to improve teaching practices and enhance student learning outcomes by utilizing measurable data and information.

**Strong Community Support:** The New Salem-Almont school district values the strong support of our community in various forms, including volunteering, fundraising, advocacy, and partnerships. This active involvement enhances the educational experience and opportunities for our students.

## **CRITICAL ATTRIBUTES OF A GRADUATE**

The strategic planning committee identified a high school graduate's critical skills and aptitudes. The collective critical skills and aptitudes that the committee members identified include:

### **Effective Communication**

Effective communication encompasses expressing ideas clearly and concisely, actively listening, and fostering open dialogue. It includes collaborating effectively with others, utilizing various communication channels, and adapting messages to different audiences. Graduates proficient in effective communication ensure that their interactions are meaningful and productive.

### **Respect**

Respect involves recognizing and valuing the diversity, opinions, and contributions of others. It means treating all individuals with dignity and consideration and fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued. Graduates who embody respect build positive relationships and create a harmonious community.

### **Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking is analyzing information, evaluating evidence, and making reasoned decisions. It includes problem-solving skills, logical reasoning, and the capacity to question assumptions. Graduates with strong critical thinking skills can approach complex issues strategically and develop innovative solutions.

### **Empathy**

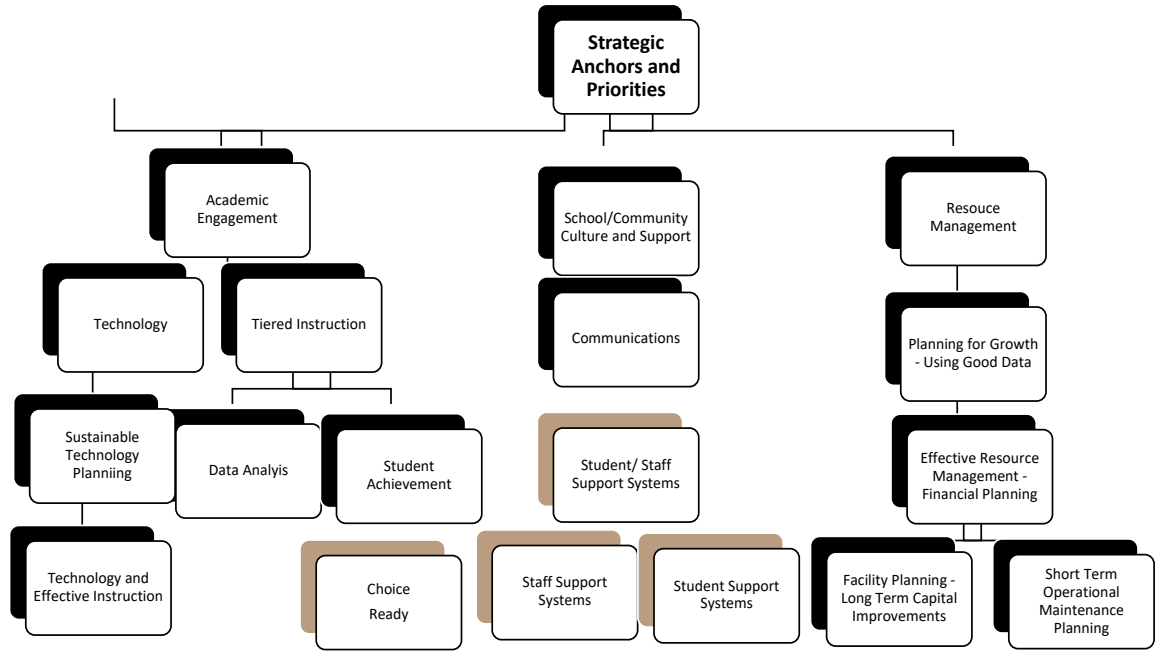
Empathy is the capacity to understand and share the feelings of others. It involves compassion, recognizing different perspectives, and sensitivity to others' emotions. Graduates who demonstrate empathy contribute to a supportive and caring community.

### **Responsibility**

Responsibility means being accountable for one's actions and demonstrating reliability and dependability. It includes managing tasks effectively, meeting deadlines, and taking ownership of one's learning and behavior. Graduates who exhibit responsibility are trusted individuals who can be relied upon in various situations.

### **Resiliency**

Resiliency is the ability to adapt to challenges and recover from setbacks. It involves perseverance, flexibility, and a positive attitude in adversity. Resilient graduates remain determined and focus on achieving their goals, even when faced with obstacles.



## I. ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

Academic engagement refers to students, teachers, and families' active participation, commitment, and investment in learning. It encompasses emotional, behavioral, and cognitive involvement that promotes meaningful learning experiences to meet or exceed the state standards at each grade level. Foundational academic practices, student ownership in learning, positive learning environments, and parental involvement are linked to student engagement. By prioritizing engagement, student outcomes can improve. Engagement is linked to improved student performance, higher graduation rates, and increased student motivation. It is a shared responsibility among all stakeholders—students, educators, and families—and is critical to fostering a thriving learning environment. This positive environment supports students' success and prepares them for future opportunities.

### Goal 1 Implement Foundational Academic Practices

**Objective 1.1** Teachers use a variety of strategies to engage students (collaborative learning, student-led activities, project-based learning, simulations, real-world experiences, technology use, scaffolded learning, etc.).

#### Indicators of Success:

- Staff observations of participation in classroom activities
- Positive feedback from students on instructional methods used
- Improved Choice Ready score on Student Engagement Survey results
- Creation of a post-graduation survey for students

**Objective 1.2** Teachers use grade-level standards to drive instruction and learning experiences

#### Indicators of Success:

- Students grow along a progression of learning based on mastery of clear measurable proficiencies
- Longitudinal growth of students and classes on classroom, interim, and state-level assessments

**Objective 1.3** Use data to make instructional decisions and place students into the pathway that best meets their educational needs and future goals

#### Indicators of Success:

- Observation of effective use of WIN (What I Need) time for elementary enrichment and intervention
- Creation of a Placement Test for correct math placements for secondary

- Growth in baseline data of students placed in interventions

**Objective 1.4** Provide staff professional development opportunities for continuous improvement of teaching practices

**Indicators of Success:**

- Staff survey of Professional Development needs
- Administration observation of implementation of new and varied strategies provided through Professional Development

**Goal 2 Enhance Student Ownership**

**Objective 2.1** Students set personal learning goals, take the initiative, and are motivated to achieve at their highest levels of learning.

**Indicators of Success:**

- Teacher observation of students performing self-assessment of learning and next steps
- A consistent score of above 70 points at the high school level and 150 points at the elementary level on the Student Engagement Survey (School Accountability)
- Less than 1% of students will be considered chronically absent

**Objective 2.2** Students complete all assigned work with a high level of quality.

**Indicators of Success:**

- Less than 10% of students have missing assignments
- Reduction of behavior indicators

**Objective 2.3** Students take on personal responsibility in academic and extracurricular activities

**Indicators of Success:**

- Active engagement in academic and extracurricular activities
- Inclusion of students in decisions that impact them

### **Goal 3 Promote Positive Learning Environments**

**Objective 3.1** Students feel safe, welcomed, and connected at school and in classrooms.

#### **Indicators of Success**

- All Students have a connection to at least one adult in their building
- Relationship Mapping or a similar survey to gauge student connections
- Minimal office reported peer to peer incidents
- Parent survey

**Objective 3.2** Staff collaboration to help accommodate the needs of diverse learners

#### **Indicators of Success**

- PLC (Professional Learning Communities) & MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) meetings held regularly
- Grade level & department meetings held regularly
- Vertical meetings between buildings

### **Goal 4 Foster Parental Involvement in Academic Progress**

**Objective 4.1** Establish consistent communication channels between school and parents to discuss academic progress

#### **Indicators of Success:**

- Use of building consistent LMS (Learning Management System) or communication platforms
- Provide frequent communication that promotes student learning on a consistent basis

**Objective 4.2** Provide opportunities for academic support to parents

#### **Indicators of Success:**

- Positive feedback provided on the parent survey about resources and opportunities provided

**Objective 4.3** Families engage in academic events held by the school

**Indicators of Success:**

- Parent-Teacher Conference attendance
- Attendance at academic events held by the school

## II. SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CULTURE AND SUPPORT

A strong school and community culture is essential for a thriving learning environment. Building trust and a culture of support involves promoting open communication and fostering collaboration and mutual understanding. Establishing and maintaining relationships among students, staff, and the broader community is a priority for a thriving school culture. Active community engagement enhances school pride and unity, reinforcing the district's commitment to participation, responsiveness, and adaptability in meeting future challenges.

### Goal 1 Strengthen Student and Staff Relationships

**Objective 1.1:** Implement peer mentorship and advisory programs to foster student connections and provide support.

**Indicators of Success:**

- Provide opportunities for upper and lower grades to interact and through meaningful learning experiences
- Provide leadership opportunities in co-curricular activities

**Objective 1.2:** Conduct regular team-building activities and professional development focused on collaboration and communication.

**Indicators of Success:**

- Provide school-wide team-building activities once a quarter
- Provide quarterly opportunities focusing on collaboration and communication
- Provide staff with a welcome back gathering and a service/retirement celebration hosted by the administration and/or the school board
- Administration ensures there are professional development opportunities for all staff to grow professionally

**Objective 1.3:** Promote a Culture of Respect and Unity

**Indicators of Success:**

- Implement, with fidelity, a wellness and character development curriculum.
- Utilize a K-12 system to track behaviors
- Establish positive feedback and recognition systems to celebrate achievements and contributions
- Utilize surveys to gauge the climate and culture of the school district

## **Goal 2: Enhance Community Engagement and Partnerships**

**Objective 2.1** Encourage community engagement by actively promoting and supporting participation in various school-hosted events.

### **Indicators of Success:**

- Schedule and promote school-wide events
- Utilize a yearly community engagement survey to evaluate interest in school-hosted activities
- Provide opportunities for stakeholders to volunteer

**Objective 2.2** Establish partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and families to support student learning and extracurricular activities.

### **Indicators of Success:**

- Engage with the Parent-Teacher Organization to facilitate partnership-driven initiatives annually, such as fundraising events, volunteer programs, or mentorship opportunities
- Provide and communicate more opportunities for students to volunteer in community activities or organizations
- 80% completion rate of the Work Based Learning program

## **Goal 3: Prioritize Communication and Collaboration**

**Objective 3.1:** To keep stakeholders informed and engaged, utilize multiple communication platforms, including social media, newsletters, and school board meetings.

### **Indicators of Success:**

- Utilize school social media to celebrate student accomplishments.
- Post communication consistently
- Provide transparency through public meetings in the school district
- Utilize surveys to gauge the climate and culture of the school district

**Objective 3.2** When necessary, establish a student, staff, and/or parent advisory council to meet to provide feedback.

### **Indicators of success:**

- Engagement in opportunities between students, staff, and parents to collaborate

### III. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

As a result of the New Salem-Almont Public School's efforts, the school district will secure and allocate the resources needed to fund and implement this strategic plan adequately. In these processes, the district maintains a conservative mindset with the community in mind while still meeting all students' needs and striving for the highest quality of education. Providing equitable opportunities across the school district is a priority in all decisions made to educate our students. This will be accomplished by creating and maintaining current long-range and yearly operational plans.

#### Goal 1: Resource Allocation and Financial Sustainability

**Objective 1.1** Develop and Maintain a Balanced Budget

**Indicators of Success:**

- Annual budget approval by the school board with no deficit spending.
- Expenditures prioritized and aligned with the district's strategic plan (e.g., academic programs, facilities).

**Objective 1.2** Enhance Revenue Sources

**Indicators of Success:**

- Raise 1% of revenue through grants, donations, and partnerships.
- Increase revenue growth from local, state, and federal sources compared to previous fiscal years.

**Objective 1.3** Ensure Long-Term Financial Health

**Indicators of Success:**

- Maintain or increase general fund reserves to meet or exceed the district's policy thresholds.
- Completion of a 5- to 10-year financial sustainability plan, including forecasts and capital improvement needs.
- Transparency regarding financial decisions with the public through annual communications and monthly school board meetings.

**Objective 1.4** Long-Range Facilities Planning

**Indicators of Success:**

- Develop and implement the long-range facilities plan using the necessary resources to maintain existing facilities and design or remodel new ones as needed.

- Annual Operational Maintenance—Systematically plan maintenance projects for completion annually, including a detailed list of annual needs and a schedule to ensure completion.
- Complete and maintain facility and demographic studies to provide additional data for long-range planning.

## **Goal 2: Operational Effectiveness**

### **Objective 2.1** Conduct Comprehensive Facility Assessments

#### **Indicators of Success:**

- Complete a district-wide facility condition assessment every five years to identify and prioritize maintenance and improvement needs, ensuring all schools meet safety, accessibility, and functionality standards.

### **Objective 2.2** Preventative Maintenance Compliance

#### **Indicators of Success:**

- Each spring, prioritize the district’s preventative maintenance schedule for all facilities, reducing reactive maintenance costs and extending the lifespan of assets.

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The New Salem-Almont Public School District is committed to making data-driven decisions to ensure continuous improvement and accountability. The district will conduct a comprehensive building—and district-level evaluation and accreditation process using the Cognia School Improvement and Accreditation Model.

The last review process was conducted in 2021. The outcome of that process identified two areas of improvement:

1. Implement a continuous formal data analysis process to assess and evaluate its programs' organizational effectiveness and improve student learning.
2. Implement a system of achievement measures that include benchmarks and timelines for final achievement.

This strategic plan will address both areas of improvement.

## STRATEGIC PLAN MEASURES, EVALUATION, AND ANNUAL REVIEW

The New Salem-Almont School District Strategic Plan will serve as a compass to maintain the school district's priorities, goals, and achievements. This plan to the sustainability of programs, and community needs. The strategic plan will be evaluated for continuous improvement during each school year. In *June* of each year, the plan will be reviewed by the administrative leadership team and presented to the Board of Education to consider annual adjustments to the plan.

This strategy will allow the school district administrators and teacher leadership team to contribute significantly to the overall strategic plan and how it is measured. The progress indicators must be either qualitative and quantitative metrics or both. Specific measures will be identified through the operationalization of this plan and will include:

- Indicators of Success monitoring are identified in each strategic priority category.
- Cognia Accreditation - School accreditation indicators
- Annual Plan Review – a summative determination of the plan's effectiveness and suggested yearly adjustments.
- The ongoing Professional Development Plan is aligned with the strategic priorities outlined in this document.

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