



Fulton Schools

8060 Ely Highway, Middleton, Michigan 48856 / 989-236-7300

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District Strategic Plan: “Strategically Aligned and Inspired Learning” (SAIL I)

Approved by the Fulton Schools Board of Education as guidance for 2024-2028

District Mission Statement

The mission of Fulton Schools is to create pathways for students to become life-long learners and successful citizens by... Providing a safe and secure campus; Ensuring a welcoming and engaging educational environment; Fostering strong student-staff relationships; Encouraging diverse educational experiences; Integrating the needs of all students; Supporting social-emotional health; Utilizing effective communication; and Preserving community traditions.

District Vision

At Fulton Schools we envision a future where an innovative and diverse educational environment fosters the growth of successful citizens, promotes inclusiveness, relationships, and preserves community traditions.

Focus Areas

Consensus by the strategic planning committee recommended focusing upon the following areas... Continuing Successful Practices and Activities; Refining Existing Practices; Abandoning Non-Essential Practices; Initiating New Programs and Practices; Community and Student Engagement; as well as Communication and Transparency. Each Focus Area has outlined goals and actions - with some requiring the periodic review.

Focus Area #1: Continuing Practices and Activities

- 🎯 Maintain and Strengthen Current Programs and Traditions
 - ✓ Student Exchange Programming: Continue to foster global awareness and cultural exchange through travel opportunities.
 - ✓ Staff-Student Relationships: Strengthen initiatives that build strong relationships between staff and students.
 - ✓ Career and Technical Education (CTE) Options: Expand CTE to provide practical skill sets that lead to employment.
 - ✓ Community Traditions: Identify and preserve traditions that are unique to Fulton Schools.
 - ✓ Effective Communication: Maintain robust communication channels with the community.
 - ✓ Special Needs Integration: Enhance programs for integrating students with special needs.
 - ✓ Fine Arts Support: Continue to support and develop fine arts programs.
- 🎯 Welcome New Families
 - ✓ New Family Integration: Implement ambassador programs to welcome and acclimate new families.
 - ✓ School-Home Connections: Strengthen communication and engagement between school and home.

Focus Area #2: Refining Existing Practices



Evaluate and Improve Key Areas

- ✓ Sports / Athletics: Ensure sports programs are supportive but not overemphasized.
- ✓ Transportation: Optimize transportation logistics for efficiency and safety.
- ✓ Staff Recruitment: Develop strategies for attracting and retaining qualified staff.
- ✓ Data-Driven Instruction: Use data to inform instruction while avoiding over-reliance on testing.
- ✓ School Calendar / Schedules: Keep traditional calendars / schedules flexible to meet student needs.
- ✓ Standardized Test Prep: Reduce excessive focus on standardized test prep; balance it with comprehensive learning experiences.
- ✓ Professional Development: Ensure professional development is meaningful and directly enhances teaching efficacy.

Focus Area #3: Abandon Non-Essential Practices



Reduce Emphasis on Less Beneficial Activities

- ✓ Standardized Testing Focus: Minimize excessive testing and implement alternative assessments.
- ✓ Classroom Cell Phone Use: Enforce policies to limit cell phone usage during instructional time.
- ✓ College-for-All Philosophy: Promote diverse post-secondary pathways - including trades and career options.
- ✓ One-Size-Fits-All Education: Personalize learning experiences to accommodate different student needs.

Focus Area #4: Initiate New Programs and Practices



Addressing Emerging Needs

- ✓ Parent-Teacher Conference Choices: Offer flexible scheduling and formats (in-person, virtual, etc.).
- ✓ Early College Program: Develop partnerships with local colleges to offer early college credit opportunities.
- ✓ Childcare Center: Establish onsite childcare to support faculty, staff, and student-parents.
- ✓ Enrichment Activities: Provide additional enrichment activities for elementary students to foster creativity and exploration.
- ✓ Agriculture Program: Revitalize the agriculture program to support local traditions and career paths.
- ✓ Positive School Messaging: Promote positive narratives about the school's achievements and culture.
- ✓ Mental Health and Trauma Training: Prioritize professional development in trauma-responsive education and mental health support.

Focus Area #5: Community and Student Engagement



Building Stronger Connections and Support Systems

- ✓ Volunteer Opportunities: Create more opportunities for students to volunteer within the community.
- ✓ Engaging Learning Environment: Develop initiatives to make the school environment more engaging and enjoyable for students.
- ✓ Career Pathways: Ensure students have access to diverse career pathways and guidance.

Focus Area #6: Communication and Transparency

- 🎯 Enhance Community Communication
 - ✓ Improve Communication Channels: Develop new and enhance existing communication platforms to ensure transparency and engagement with parents and the wider community.
 - ✓ Transparent Decision-Making: Make the decision-making process more transparent and inclusive, involving stakeholders at every level.

Implementation Timeline

2023-24 - Year #1: Foundations and Immediate Actions

- 🎯 Launch initiatives to foster stronger staff-student relationships and build a welcoming environment for new families.
 - ➡ **Step 1... Establish Feedback Loops:** Conduct a survey or focus group with both staff and students to gather feedback on current relationships and areas for improvement.
 - ➡ **Step 2... Enhance Professional Development Opportunities:** Create a staff training program focusing on communication skills, conflict resolution, and ways to build positive relationships with students.
 - ➡ **Step 3... Strengthen Staff-Student Connections:** Develop a mentorship program where staff are paired with students to provide additional support and guidance. Also, implement regular staff-student social events or activities to foster a sense of community and connection.
 - ➡ **Step 4... Enhance In-Person Opportunities to Get-to-Know Fulton Schools:** Host orientation sessions for new families to introduce them to the school community and provide information on how they can get involved. Also, establish a welcoming committee made up of staff, students, and parent volunteers to greet and support new families as they transition to the school.
 - ➡ **Step 5... Evaluate Practices:** Continuously evaluate and adjust initiatives based on feedback from staff, students, and families to ensure they are effective in building stronger relationships and a welcoming environment.
- 🎯 Enhance communication strategies to better engage parents and the community.
 - ➡ **Step 1... Establishing a Parent and Community Engagement Committee:** The school district can create a committee comprised of parents, community members, teachers, and administrators to collaborate on communication strategies and initiatives. This committee can provide valuable insights, feedback, and ideas for how to effectively engage parents and the community.
 - ➡ **Step 2... Utilizing Multiple Communication Channels:** The school district can utilize a variety of communication channels to reach parents and the community, such as newsletters, emails, social media, websites, phone calls, text messages, and mobile apps. By using multiple channels, the district can ensure that information is reaching a diverse audience.
 - ➡ **Step 3... Hosting Community Events:** Organizing community events, such as town hall meetings, open houses, parent workshops, and school fairs, can provide opportunities for parents and community members to engage with school district staff, ask questions, provide feedback, and learn more about the district's programs and initiatives.
 - ➡ **Step 4... Providing Language Access:** Ensuring that communication materials are available in multiple languages can help to better engage parents and community members who speak languages other than English. Providing interpretation services at meetings / events can also help to improve communication and engagement with diverse populations.

- **Step 5... Implementing Two-Way Communication:** Encouraging feedback, suggestions, and questions from parents and the community through surveys, feedback forms, suggestion boxes, and community forums can help to foster a culture of two-way communication and dialogue between the school district and its stakeholders.
- **Step 6... Establishing Parent Advisory Groups:** The school district can create parent advisory groups or parent-teacher organizations to serve as a platform for parents to provide input, feedback, and recommendations on issues related to education, programs, and policies.
- **Step 7... Training Staff on Effective Communication:** Providing training to school district staff on effective communication strategies, cultural competence, and parent engagement can help to improve communication with parents and the community.
- **Step 8... Transparent Communication:** Being transparent and providing timely and accurate information on important issues, decisions, and events can help to build trust and credibility with parents and the community.
- **Step 9... Celebrating Successes:** Recognizing and celebrating the achievements, accomplishments, and contributions of students, teachers, parents, and community members can help to foster pride, unity, and engagement within the school district.
- **Step 10... Evaluating and Adjusting Communication Strategies:** Continuously evaluating the effectiveness of communication strategies and seeking feedback from parents and the community can help the school district to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to enhance engagement.

Other Year #1 Miscellaneous Action Steps

- Establish a committee to reevaluate the parent-teacher conference structure and provide more flexible meeting options.
- Begin the planning phase for an early college program
- Begin the planning phase and the establishment of a childcare center.
- Initiate mental health and trauma response training for all staff.

2024-25 - Year #2: Development and Outreach

- Implement the early college program with local colleges.
- Open the onsite childcare center.
- Enhance the agriculture program and begin offering new enrichment activities for elementary students.
- Introduce flexible professional development focusing on effective teaching practices and trauma-informed care.

2025-26 - Year #3: Expansion and Evaluation

- Increase the scope of CTE options and international/national travel opportunities.
- Fully integrate the revitalized agriculture program into the curriculum.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of sports/athletics programs to ensure balanced emphasis.
- Continue professional development based on data-informed needs and teacher feedback.
- Evaluate the impact of previous initiatives and make necessary adjustments.

2026-27 - Year #4: Sustainability and Growth

- Work on sustainability strategies for successful new programs (e.g., funding for the childcare center, ongoing support for early college credits).
- Strengthen volunteer and community engagement initiatives.
- Promote positive school stories to boost the image and community support of Fulton Schools.
- Continue to find ways to minimize the over-reliance on standardized testing and online classes, focusing on creating engaging, hands-on learning experiences.

2027-28 - Year #5: Reflection and Future Planning

- Conduct a detailed review of the strategic plan's outcomes and revise goals and actions based on community feedback and educational trends.
- Set new strategic goals for the next five years, building on the successes and lessons learned.

Process and Accountability

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Establish a Strategic Plan Oversight Committee to monitor progress and ensure accountability.
- Conduct annual surveys of parents, students, and staff to gather feedback and measure satisfaction.
- Hold biannual community meetings to review progress and gather input.
- Implement a biannual review process where key metrics and milestones are evaluated, and necessary adjustments to the plan are made.

Conclusion

This strategic plan for Fulton Schools aims to honor existing strengths, refine current practices, and introduce new initiatives that align with our vision and mission. By keeping our focus on the growth and well-being of our students, fostering inclusiveness, and preserving community traditions, we are committed to creating an educational environment that prepares our students for a successful future as engaged and thoughtful citizens.

Together, with clear communication, active community involvement, and continuous reassessment, Fulton Schools can achieve its strategic goals and provide an outstanding educational experience that meets the diverse needs of all our students.

Sinking Fund - Recent History (2021-2028)

On November 2, 2021, by way of a **290 (Yay)** to **168 (Nay)** vote, our school district approved the renewal of our Sinking Fund. This millage, the renewal of our 2.9671 mill levy, was to serve Fulton Schools for five years (from 2022 through 2026) - producing an approximate \$625,040 in annual assistance for capital improvement projects.

On November 5, 2024, by way of a **1,213 (Yay)** to **1,167 (Nay)** vote, our school district passed the following language via general election - a revision of language, millage rate, and scope of work:

“Shall the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property in Fulton Schools, Gratiot and Clinton Counties, Michigan, be increased by and the board of education be authorized to levy not to exceed 2.8442 mills (\$2.8442 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a period of 5 years, 2024 to 2028, inclusive, to create a sinking fund for the purchase of real estate for sites for, and the construction or repair of, school buildings; for school security improvements; for the acquisition or upgrading of technology; for the acquisition of student

transportation vehicles; for the acquisition of parts, supplies, and equipment used for the maintenance of student transportation vehicles; for the acquisition of eligible trucks and vans used to carry parts, equipment, and personnel for or in the maintenance of school buildings; for the acquisition of parts, supplies, and equipment used to maintain such trucks and vans; and all other purposes authorized by law; the estimate of the revenue the school district will collect if the millage is approved and levied in 2024 is approximately \$882,070?”

During the period of this tax levy, Fulton Schools has or intends to focus spending on projects listed within our [Facilities & Equipment Focus](#) document.

Operating Millage - Recent History (2017 - 2026)

On **November 7, 2017**, by way of a **229 (Yay)** to **97 (Nay)** vote, our school district approved the renewal of our Operating Millage. This millage, the renewal of our 18 mill levy, was to serve Fulton Schools for four years (from 2018 through 2021) - producing an approximate \$570,751 in annual operating assistance.

On **November 2, 2021**, by way of a **305 (Yay)** to **157 (Nay)** vote, our school district approved the renewal of our Operating Millage. This millage, reduced to 17.9334 mills rather than the standard 18 mills due to the Headlee Rollback provision* was to serve Fulton Schools for five years (from 2022 through 2026) - producing an approximate \$733,000 in annual operating assistance.

** The “Headlee Rollback” provision is a 1978 amendment to the Michigan Constitution that limits how quickly local governments, including school districts, can increase property tax revenue when property values rise. Often, when district revenues are reduced due to this rollback, school districts will go back to voters to restore what fell off due to the rollback.*

On **May 2, 2023**, by way of a **264 (Yay)** to **274 (Nay)** vote, our school district failed to approve a 0.5 mill increase to our Operating Millage. This millage was proposed to restore revenues lost due to the Headlee Rollback provision for four years (from 2023 through 2026) - producing an approximate \$14,157 in additional revenue to assist with operating expenses. Of note, our district also failed to pass its Sinking Fund proposal - an increase of .1558 to restore funding lost due to rollback loss - by way of a **239 (Yay)** to **300 (Nay)** vote.

On **April 13, 2026**, the Fulton Schools Board of Education voted unanimously to go to the public on **August 4, 2026** to renew their 17.41 mills Operating Millage using the following language:

“This proposal will allow the school district to continue to levy its authorized millage rate on all property, except principal residence and other property exempted by law, required for the school district to receive its revenue per pupil foundation allowance and renews millage that will expire with the 2026 tax levy.

Shall the currently authorized millage rate limitation of 17.7146 mills (\$17.7146 on each \$1.000 of taxable valuation) on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property. Except principal residence and other property exempted by law in Fulton Schools, Gratiot and Clinton Counties, Michigan, be renewed for a period of 6 years, 2027 to 2032, inclusive, to provide funds for operating purposes; the estimate of the revenue the school district will collect if the millage is approved and levied in 2027 is approximately 1,029,594 (this is a renewal of millage that will expire with the 2026 tax levy)?”

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