Executive Summary – Strategic Plan Report #2

This Strategic Plan review provides a promising picture of progress across the district's three priority areas: (1) Instruction + Leadership, (2) Systems + Structures, and (3) Culture. The data underscore both areas of growth and areas requiring focused attention as the district approaches the final interim Board review on May 11 and the 2025–2026 end-of-year Strategic Plan review on August 24.

Strategic Focus and Theory of Action

It is critical to emphasize that changes in interim and end-of-year Strategic Plan outcomes are driven primarily by ***educator practice***, the quality of daily instruction, and educator/student interactions experienced by students in the classroom. While District-wide systems, structures, and resources establish necessary conditions, instructional practice, educator/student relationships, and high expectations paired with appropriate support remain the primary levers for improving student outcomes.

The District leadership's and the Board's role is to create those conditions for success by providing high-quality, standards-based curricular resources; providing guidance on supportive learning environments; providing time for purposeful, high quality planning; providing job-embedded professional learning such as coaching; maintaining low class sizes; offering competitive compensation; ensuring instructional support from curriculum leaders to promote fidelity of implementation; and supporting staff and students in building capacity to reduce disruptive and unproductive behaviors.

This strategic plan is fundamentally grounded in educators thriving in their role as the professionals who will effectively leverage the aforementioned resources to bring the strategic plan's vision to life: ***ensuring an exceptional and equitable learning experience for all***. The consistent use of district-provided curricula, responsiveness to student data through purposeful collection, analysis and subsequent purposeful planning in response to the data, and a commitment to continuous professional growth to reach the diverse needs of all learners are hallmarks of a highly functioning and successful district.

The District's theory of action is grounded in a clear and evidence-based premise: ***when adult practices improve, student outcomes improve***. Sustained progress toward Strategic Plan goals depends on collective focus, shared accountability, and strong alignment between district systems and high-quality instructional practice delivered by educators in the classroom.

Instruction + Leadership

Interim academic data indicate areas of both celebration and need for continued growth. The oral reading fluency assessment is a general outcome measure that is strongly correlated to grade level reading achievement. The benchmark for this assessment increases with each term. Currently 67.7% of all students in grades 1-5 are reading at or above the grade level norm. For each cycle of the Oral Reading Fluency assessment, it is the goal to have less than 20% identified as 'at risk'. In winter 2026, this outcome was 11.9%. This is a strong metric. While there is no internal winter benchmark, there was a decrease in proficiency on the Letter Naming Fluency and Letter Word Sound Fluency for Senior Kindergarten students. Expectations for all of the aforementioned assessments increase as the year progresses, therefore performance can dip as task demands increase.

Additionally, the district remains significantly below the 30% exit rate target for students on Personal Reading Plans (PRP). With respect to the Personal Reading Plans, it should be noted that any third grade student with a PRP cannot exit until Forward data is available. Additionally, exit criteria at all grade levels include spring norms.

With respect to reading and math universal screeners, there has also been an increase in the percentage of students performing at or above the 50th percentile on both the reading (66.9% fall 2025; 71.2% winter 2026) and math (63.8% fall 2025; 68.7% winter 2026).

Tier 3 intensive interventions exceeded the 30% exit-rate threshold, reflecting effective targeted support for students with the greatest needs. The Student Support Team (SST) structure at elementary and middle school has supported need identification and equity of access to layers of support - this is a celebration of collaborative teaming in Wauwatosa. Tier 3 reading progress is also tied to Oral Reading Fluency progress. As we work to close reading gaps, these two metrics should increase.

Educator effectiveness observations remain on track for completion, supporting accountability and instructional growth.

Response to interim data is multi-faceted. When monitoring metrics reveal that a universal practice needs strengthening, a coordinated system-wide response may be required. This data may be gleaned through system-wide learning walks and assessment analysis. Responses to this may include targeted professional learning and focused support from curriculum coordinators and instructional coaches. Division leaders and building administrators partner to ensure clarity, alignment, and consistency across schools while remaining responsive to site-specific needs identified through data.

When data reveals a need at a specific grade level, the response is more targeted, with grade-level professional learning, coaching cycles, and collaborative planning aligned to the identified need. Dedicated instructional coaches provide job-embedded professional development both system-wide (at the direction of the Division of Academic Performance) and at the building-level (at the direction of the building principal). The implementation of Educator Effectiveness also supports educator instructional acumen through the cycle of observation, feedback, and reflection.

Response to current literacy data is being addressed at the classroom level. This is through response to individual student data. This may look like different intentional partnerships, small group instruction, greater purposeful planning, and/or direct coaching or consultation with an instructional coach to name a few strategies.

Systems + Structures

This goal area reflects fiscal stewardship and sustained operational stability across the District. Monthly budget updates continue to demonstrate revenues and expenditures within 2.5% of projections, underscoring disciplined financial planning and effective monitoring practices. In addition, the 2024 referendum spending website remains current and serves as a transparent, accessible, and reliable source of public information regarding the use of voter-approved funds.

The Recreation Department winter to winter data shows a slight increase in enrollment. In an effort to further boost enrollment, the Recreation Department will transition to a paper guide so that more Wauwatosa residents can access the catalog.

Currently, the healthcare utilization metric is trending positively. It is worth noting that this metric changes monthly and current data is available through December 2025. This work has contributed to cost containment while maintaining access to high-quality benefits for employees. Moreover, this work is supported by a Health and Wellness Committee, made up of members of Human Resources, Finance + Operations, and staff.

An area that has been frequently highlighted in past discussions—management and oversight of the District's financial affairs—is now clearly demonstrated through multiple objective metrics. Together, these indicators affirm that the District's strong financial systems, internal controls, and governance practices are sound and functioning as intended. This stability is the result of deliberate Board guidance and effective implementation by District leadership.

Community members are encouraged to engage with these systems by visiting the District's Financial Office website and reviewing past Finance and Operations

Committee meetings. These resources provide additional insight into the rigor, transparency, and accountability that characterize the District's financial stewardship.

The information from each 2024 referendum monthly update also has been directly embedded on the District website to comply with ADA requirements and provide accessibility to all community members. Additionally, this information is regularly shared in each month's District newsletter for a proactive approach and invitation for community members to engage in the progress of this work.

Culture

The district continues to retain effective teachers and voluntarily retained staff, signaling a positive workplace culture. Staffing levels remain strong, with fill rates for educational and operational positions exceeding 96%. Employee attendance is slightly below the district target of 96%. The Division of Human Resources continues to partner with supervisors to improve employee attendance.

Student attendance narrowly missed the goal of 95% of students achieving a 90% or higher attendance rate, with current performance at 94.2%. Our initial attendance efforts centered around improving the integrity of data and consistency across the system along with increased home and school communication. These areas will continue moving forward as they are demonstrating to have improvements in the data. In addition, attention to bolstering universal and layered supports and interventions will be the focus of the building-based teams.

Of significant concern is a 37% increase in Office Discipline Referrals (ODR) compared to this time last year, warranting deeper analysis to understand contributing factors and needed support. Through data study, it was found that some of the increase could be related to the 2025/2026 implementation of the "away all day" personal communication device policy, which was anticipated. Secondary schools are continuing to refine their response and support for students as they adjust to this policy.

An area for further exploration is our system's use of the insubordination code, which accounts for 32% of our Office Discipline Referrals (ODR). We are working with buildings to understand what specific behaviors this code represents in order to align supportive measures to decrease this outcome. We suspect that some of the insubordination referrals are related to the PCD policy implementation, as well as our increased focus on attendance and engagement throughout the school day. Finally, we continue to work to decrease incidents of physical aggression and fighting, which together account for 28% of our referrals.

Our buildings are strengthening their use of Student Support Teams (SSTs) to routinely review behavioral incidents and ensure students are accessing social,

emotional, and behavioral interventions to build skills. Through their advancement, data is centering their conversations and bringing light to additional areas of improvement. Our system has dedicated considerable energy over the past several years to build a Multi-level System of Support (MLSS), including universal instruction in social emotional learning, along with culturally responsive learning environments, plus core social emotional interventions for students with greater needs. We will continue efforts around MLSS and closely monitor ODRs.

Other Areas of District Success - Non-Strategic Plan Metrics

State Report Card results

- The Wauwatosa School District's **"Exceeds Expectation"** rating and overall score of **75.3** places in the **top 19%** of the state's 4K-12 public school district. As a district, we experienced an overall 4-point increase, which is truly a point of pride for our entire Wauwatosa community.
  - Two of our schools increased in their category ranking
    - **Longfellow Middle School** demonstrated tremendous growth, improving its report card score by 10 points in just one year.
    - **Underwood Elementary** saw a remarkable 9.2-point increase and now meets state expectations for performance.
  - **Eisenhower, Madison, and Underwood** elementary schools, which collectively achieved an impressive 4.9-point increase.
  - **Ten of our schools** increased their overall score indicating they are making progress.
  - Of the **16 schools** that make up the district report card, **five schools** received a *Significantly Exceeds Expectations* rating, **six schools** received an *Exceeds Expectations* rating, **four schools** received the *Meets Expectations* rating and **one school** received the *Meets Few Expectations* designation.
  - **Six of our schools are ranked in the top 50 in the state compared to schools similarly structured to them:**
    - **WSTEM Elementary** is ranked 1 out of 6 for K5-5 public charter schools.
    - **Montessori** is ranked 3 out of 19 for 4K-8 public schools that are not charters.
    - **Roosevelt Elementary** is ranked 19 out of 445 for 4K-5 public schools.
    - **Wauwatosa East** is ranked 19 out of 382 public schools that serve grades 9-12.
    - **Lincoln Elementary** is ranked 20 out of 445 for 4K-5 public schools.
    - **Washington Elementary** is ranked 38 out of 445 4K-5 public schools.

National Merit Scholars

- 6 Semi-Finalists
- 5 Commended Scholars

Advanced Placement Program Awards (2024-2025)

- 142 AP Scholars
- 82 AP Scholars with Honor
- 70 AP Scholars with Distinction
- 10 Students Earned AP Seminar + Research Certificate
- 19 Students Earned AP Capstone Diplomas
- East and West named to AP Honor Roll

Scholastic Art Awards

- 60 Regional Award Winners
    - 12 Gold Keys
        - 1 Gold Key Portfolio
    - 19 Silver Keys
        - 1 Silver Key Portfolio
    - 29 Honorable Mentions
        - 3 Honorable Mention Portfolios

Wauwatosa Strategic Plan Report #2

WAUWATOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT

STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

- **Ensure an exceptional and equitable learning experience for all.**

MISSION

We believe in a relentless commitment to academic achievement for all. We will ensure that we have excellent educators in our schools and that they have the support and resources they need. We will evaluate the resources, structures, and practices within the system in order to empower all to thrive.

THEORY OF ACTION

If adult practices improve, then student outcomes improve.

PRIORITY AREAS

Systems + Structures

GOAL STATEMENTS

- The district will enhance the Academic and Career Planning experience for students and families by expanding opportunities, and resources, and establishing clear universal communication mechanisms.
- The district will demonstrate operational efficiency and prudent management through a long-range plan for facilities, budgeting, and staffing projections.

Instruction + Leadership

GOAL STATEMENTS

- All educators will teach to the rigor of the grade-level standards and engage in collaborative planning to ensure high-quality instructional delivery.
- Effective planning and instruction will be supported by providing feedback to educators in order to improve student outcomes.

Culture

GOAL STATEMENTS

- The district will strengthen students' Academic and Career Planning through consistency of its implementation and through professional learning for staff.
- The district will improve academic and social-emotional outcomes for students by hiring effective educators and maximizing employee retention.

Interim Metrics

WAUWATOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT

STRATEGIC PLAN LOGIC MODEL

INTERIM METRICS

PRIORITY AREA	OUTCOMES

Instruction + Leadership

GOAL STATEMENTS

- All educators will teach to the rigor of the grade-level standards and engage in collaborative planning to ensure high-quality instructional delivery.
- Effective planning and instruction will be supported by providing feedback to educators in order to improve student outcomes.

Percentage of students at/above 50th percentile on Oral Reading Fluency (grades 1-5)		69.7%	67.7%	NA
Less than 20% of students in grades 1-3 'at-risk' on Oral Reading Fluency.		11.3%	11.9%	NA
Percentage of students at/above 50th percentile on Letter Naming Fluency + Letter Word Sound Fluency	District LNF	78.8%	64.2%	NA
	District LWSF	83.5%	63.1%	NA
Less than 20% of students have 1 or more Ds or Fs.	Student D's	NA	28.4%	NA
	Student F's	NA	8.2%	NA
Meet or exceed 30% exit rate on Personal Reading Plans.		NA	2%	NA
Meet or exceed 30% exit rate in Tier 3 intensive intervention.		NA	33%	NA
80% of students at/above 50th percentile on Universal Reading Screener (grades 6-10).		66.9%	71.2%	NA
80% of students at/above 50th percentile on Universal Math Screener (grades 1-10).		63.8%	68.7%	NA
Percentage of Educator Effectiveness Observations Completed.		28%	50%	NA

WAUWATOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT
STRATEGIC PLAN LOGIC MODEL

INTERIM METRICS

PRIORITY AREA	OUTCOMES			
Systems + Structures	No material findings on financial audit.	NA	100%	NA
	Monthly budget updates will demonstrate revenues & expenses within 2.5% of projections.	100%	100%	NA
	2024 referendum spending website will be updated monthly and demonstrate that projects are on time and on target at the interim report.	100%	100%	NA
	Recreation Department registrations will increase as compared to previous season.	Fall #'s	2536	NA	NA
		Winter #'s	2118	2148	NA
		Spring #'s	1392	NA	NA
		Summer #'s	4660	NA	NA
	Employee health insurance utilization will be equal to or less than 95% of fully insured equivalent.	101.5%	75.5%	NA

GOAL STATEMENTS

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- The district will demonstrate operational efficiency and prudent management through a long-range plan for facilities, budgeting, and staffing projections.

WAUWATOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT

STRATEGIC PLAN LOGIC MODEL

INTERIM METRICS

PRIORITY AREA | **OUTCOMES**



Culture

GOAL STATEMENTS

- The district will strengthen students' Academic and Career Planning through consistency of its implementation and through professional learning for staff.
- The district will improve academic and social-emotional outcomes for students by hiring effective educators and maximizing employee retention.

Retention of effective teachers meets or exceed 90%.	94.4%	NA	NA
Voluntary retention of teachers meets or exceeds 90%.	90.5%	NA	NA
Vacancy fill rate of Educational/Operational staff meets or exceed 96%	97%	97.9%	NA
Vacancy fill rate of Teachers meets or exceeds 99%.	99%	99.5%	NA
Major ODRs decrease from previous year.	14%↑	37%↑	NA

Employee attendance rate meets or exceeds 96%.	95.7%	95.7%	NA
95% of students will achieve a 90% or higher attendance rate.	91.5%	94.2%	NA

EOY Outcomes

WAUWATOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT
STRATEGIC PLAN LOGIC MODEL

END-OF-YEAR OUTCOMES

PRIORITY AREA	OUTCOMES

Instruction + Leadership

GOAL STATEMENTS

- All educators will teach to the rigor of the grade-level standards and engage in collaborative planning to ensure high-quality instructional delivery.
- Effective planning and instruction will be supported by providing feedback to educators in order to improve student outcomes.

Graduation rate will meet or exceed 98%.		**93.8%**
50% of students will meet or exceed the 2.8 GPA and ACT Composite of 21.		**43.9%**
The percentage of students in grades 6-12 with 1 or more semester grades of F will decrease by 5%.		**10.5%**
70% proficiency on Forward in ELA (grades 3-8), Math (grades 3-8), Science (grades 4 + 10), Social Studies (4 + 10)	ELA	**63.7%**
	Math	**62.7%**
	Science	**64.6%**
	Reading	**69.8%**
70% of 9th grade students will meet or exceed Pre-ACT subject area benchmarks	ELA	**59.7%**
	Math	**36.7%**
	Science	**39.7%**
	Reading	**49%**
70% of 10th grade students will meet or exceed Pre-ACT subject area benchmarks	ELA	**55.6 %**
	Math	**43.3%**
	Science	**36%**
	Reading	**42%**
15% or fewer students SK-3 will be at-risk on early literacy screener		**30.6%**
At the end of the evaluation cycle, the percentage of staff rated as 3 or 4 on Standard 2: Instructional Planning (teachers) or Standard 4: Program Planning + Management (specialists) in Educator Effectiveness will meet or exceed 95%.		**90.6%**
At the end of the evaluation cycle, the percentage of staff rated as 3 or 4 on Standard 3: Instructional Delivery (teachers) or Standard 5: Program Delivery (specialists) in Educator Effectiveness will meet or exceed 95%.		**92.2%**

WAUWATOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT

STRATEGIC PLAN LOGIC MODEL

END-OF-YEAR OUTCOMES

PRIORITY AREA	OUTCOMES	
Systems + Structures	By graduation, 100% of students will have completed a work-based learning experience, earned an industry credential, taken a dual enrollment course, or scored 3 or higher on an AP exam.	42.6%
	By December of each school year, the financial audit will be shared with the Board of Education.	Auditor will be ready in Jan.
	Monthly Budget updates will be shared with the Board of Education.	100%
	Updates to the staffing plan will be made on a quarterly basis with a download from Skyward to the public-facing staffing report, thus ensuring accuracy.	On Track
	Spending of facilities referendum dollars will be tracked on the transparency website.	100%
	Academic + Career Planning Audit Response on track.	In Progress

GOAL STATEMENTS

- The district will enhance the Academic and Career Planning experience for students and families by expanding opportunities, and resources, and establishing clear universal communication mechanisms.
- The district will demonstrate operational efficiency and prudent management through a long-range plan for facilities, budgeting, and staffing projections.

WAUWATOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT

STRATEGIC PLAN LOGIC MODEL

END-OF-YEAR OUTCOMES

PRIORITY AREA	OUTCOMES		
Culture	Effective teacher retention rate meets or exceeds 90%.		**94.9%**
	Voluntary teacher retention rate will meet or exceed 90%.		**90.3%**
	Employee attendance rate will meet or exceed 97%.		**95.5%**
	The overall number of major office disciplinary referrals (ODRs) will decrease by at least 5% annually.	District	**1791**
		Delta	**16.1%↑**
	The percentage of students who participate in at least one co-curricular activity will meet or exceed 70%.		**62.1%**
	95% of students will achieve a 90% or higher attendance rate.		**87.1%**

GOAL STATEMENTS

- The district will strengthen students' Academic and Career Planning through consistency of its implementation and through professional learning for staff.
- The district will improve academic and social-emotional outcomes for students by hiring effective educators and maximizing employee retention.