Ashley Community Schools

104 N New Street - PO Box 6, Ashley, Michigan 48806

#ClawAndConquer

District Strategic Plan: Becoming Excellent Achievers Ready to Serve (BEARS II)

Approved by the ACS Board of Education (June 26, 2023) as guidance for 2023-2028

District Mission Statement

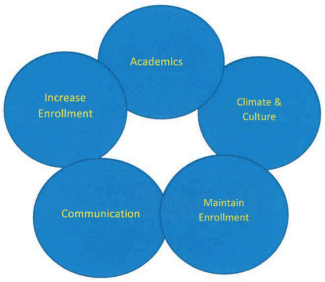
Ashley Community Schools will provide a quality education with a variety of learning experiences, developing confident students with strong character and excellent work ethic, as they become lifelong learners and contributing members of society.

District Vision

Ashley Community Schools will provide a quality education in a safe learning environment that celebrates individual differences of all students and empowers them to be active lifelong learners.

Focus Areas

Consensus by the strategic planning committee recommended focusing upon Maintaining Enrollment, Climate & Culture, Academics, Communication and Increasing Enrollment. Each Focus Area has outlined goals and actions - with some requiring the review of data periodically throughout the year. .



Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)

Stakeholders conducted a SWOT analysis to identify the key factors that either support or hinder future success…

- **Strengths:** Dedicated Staff Members, Experienced New Teachers, Strong Sense of "Extended Family", Safe Environment, Supportive Community, Strong Student Body, Successful Graduates, Management Class Sizes
- **Weaknesses:** Staff Retention, Student Enrollment, Classroom Rigor, Curriculum Differentiation, Online Elective Materials, Preparation for Higher Education, Engaging New or Out-of-District Families, Alumni Database
- **Opportunities:** Dual Enrollment, Educational Development Plans, K-12 Art Courses, CollegeBoard Advanced Placement Classes, Increasing Grant Writing, Pursuing Donations, Alumni Networking, Utilizing the Train
- **Threats:** Lack of Housing, Daycare Facilities, Local Employment, Restaurants and Community Business, Social Services, Community Activities

Strategic Planning Committee Members

Marty Cartwright, Adrian Cervini, Stephanie Combs, Dustin Crumbaugh, Kurt Densmore, Jenny Fabus, Tammy Fath, Traci Gavenda, Steve Hardman, Amber Hinterman, Amanda Kiefer, Michael Kiefer, Ryan Kiefer, Jennifer Porter, Heather Rhodes, Ashleigh Shaw, Deann Smith, Lucus Studt, Stefanie Throop, Danielle Wenzlick, Cindy Wilson

Becoming Excellent Achievers Ready to Serve (BEARS II) - Focus Area Summary



Climate & Culture

As overseen by our ACS Board of Education, Staff, Administration, and the Climate and Culture Committee, **the goal is to establish and maintain a positive, collaborative culture among staff, students, families, and throughout our community**. Measured through the use of surveys, observations, and communication, the district will monitor the positive culture among staff, students, parents, and the community and review data each October and March - and ultimately each June via our annual ACS Perception Survey data.



🐻 Action Items include a) utilizing the student-parent-teacher compact; b) completing and annually reviewing the district perception survey; c) publicly and positively recognizing student and staff achievements; d) hosting assemblies and workshops aimed at creating togetherness, teamwork, and school pride; e) modeling the behaviors desired to see in school; f) sharing feedback, asking questions, attending meetings, and encouraging colleagues; g) focusing on communication within the scope of professional development activities; and h) creating a positive and consistent educational environment.



🐻 Standards of Excellence objectives include a) supporting the academic and social wellbeing of each student by learning about their strengths / challenges / interests, celebrating accomplishments, tracking progress, building self-advocacy skills, and assisting to help as necessary, b) creating traditions that are fun and engaging for students and staff; and c) completing, collecting, and utilizing the signed student-parent-teacher compact - to be reviewed each October and March.



🐻 Additional Standards of Excellence objectives for ACS Staff include a) working effectively / productively with colleagues to review, create, and share educational materials; b) engaging in the life of the school by attending and participating in extracurricular and school activities; c) participating in the growth of the school by sharing and promoting school-wide initiatives and goals with colleagues; d) communicate and work effectively with students to review and share their educational progress; e) inspiring students to go beyond self-imposed limits to help develop communication and leadership skills; and f) conveying enthusiasm for the subject and a belief in all students' ability to reach high standards.

Maintain Enrollment

Measured through the use of Pupil Accounting Data and overseen by our ACS Board of Education, Staff, Administration, and the Enrollment Committee, **the goal is to maintain enrollment from Spring to Fall and from Fall to Spring each year**.



🐻 Action Items include a) regularly updating the district brochure, b) advertising the positive activities occurring throughout the school district, c) promoting and reviewing school-affiliated organizations, d) continually researching childcare program opportunities, and e) providing info regarding community services and housing opportunities offered around our school district.

🐻 Standards of Excellence objectives include a) supporting the academic and social wellbeing of each student both inside and outside of the classroom and b) sharing / highlighting news regarding accomplishments and student extracurricular / enrichment activities - to be reviewed biannually.

Academics

As overseen by our ACS Staff and Administration, **the goal is to provide and implement a modern curriculum that challenges students to learn in an engaging manner**. Measured through the use of surveys and observations, the district will monitor the engagement of learning activities.

🐻 Action Items include a) ongoing and continual integration of curriculum, b) developing and implementing consistency in expectations from classroom to classroom, and c) providing students with varied (hands-on, demanding, challenging, etc) instruction.

🐻 Standards of Excellence objectives include a) using varied activities, technologies, and teaching strategies to meet a variety of student learning styles; b) asking higher-order thinking questions, promoting discovery, and supporting complex thinking; and c) the development and implementation of rubrics in the content area that identify and promote a logical progression on curriculum objectives - to be reviewed biannually.

Communications

Measured through the frequency of the platform use / staff feedback regarding the use of the manual and overseen by our ACS Board of Education, Staff, Administration, **the goal is to create and improve a unified communication plan**.

🐻 Action Items include a) researching platforms to best communicate with parents and community and b) creating and implementing a staff manual that identifies resources into sections (field trip information, chain of command, etc).

🐻 Standards of Excellence objectives include a) initiating conversations with parents in an effort to partner with them to better the educational outcomes of the child and b) working effectively and productively to provide feedback, refine, and create a shared compilation of resources and materials for the manual - to be reviewed each January and June.

Increase Enrollment

Measured through the use of Pupil Accounting Data and overseen by our ACS Board of Education, Staff, Administration, and the Enrollment Committee, **the goal is to increase enrollment from Spring to Fall and from Fall to Spring each year**.

🐻 Action Items include a) regularly updating the district brochure, b) advertising the positive activities occurring throughout the school district, c) aim to be a magnet school in some subject area; d) continually research for childcare program opportunities; and e) providing info regarding community services and housing opportunities offered around our school district.

🐻 Standards of Excellence objectives include a) supporting the academic and social wellbeing of each student both inside and outside of the classroom and b) sharing / highlighting news regarding accomplishments and student extracurricular / enrichment activities - to be reviewed biannually.

Becoming Excellent Achievers Ready to Serve (BEARS II) - Facilities & Grounds

Overview

The Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the Facilities & Grounds Needs Assessment to align our physical campus goals with upcoming budgetary cycles. During the evaluation, the committee discussed that the project priority list is inherently fluid. The project priority list will shift based on the influx of external grants and donations. If a funding source earmarks a specific need, that project will be accelerated - allowing ACS to maximize financial opportunities as they arise.

✅= Complete 🚧= In-Progress ❌= Incomplete

Completed or In-Progress Projects

- ✅ Address Softball / Baseball Bleachers**;** Purchased New Volleyball Net; Purchased Nail Drag for Baseball / Softball; Purchase Signage (No Vaping, No Pets, Etc); Purchase Emergency / Basic Needs "To-Go Bags"; Install Controller Wire to Baseball Dugout from Scoreboard
- 🚧 Fix Cracked Individual Bleachers in Gym; Reseed Football Field; Top-Dress Baseball Field and Adjust Pitcher's Mound; Address Van Fleet (10-Passenger, 2016; 7-Passenger, 2012 and 2018); Address Bus Fleet (72-Passenger, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2016; 68-Passenger, 2010, 2018)

Priority 1

- ✅ Install Boot / Door Security System; Install a Microphone to the Principal's Office; Update Gym Speaker System; Install Shades / Window Coverings; Paint Hallways and Cafeteria
- 🚧 Update Phone System; Replace High School Doors; Purchase and Install Handicap Door Openers
- ❌ Update Stairs to Football Press Box; Remove 9" Asbestos Flooring in the Elementary Wing; Exterior Painting (Trim, Doors, Window Frames); Install Emergency Panic Button for Fire Doors; Purchase Floor Machine

Priority 2

- ✅ Fill Cracks, Seal, and Paint Parking Lots; Purchase Hand Drag for Baseball / Softball Fields; Purchase Battery String Trimmer
- 🚧 Upgrade Baseball / Softball Dugouts; Replace Exterior Door Lights; Update District Signage and Branding; Install Concrete Under Pavilions
- ❌ Replace Water-Damaged Ceiling Tiles Throughout District; Install Sink in Mrs D Smith's Office; Replace Old Carpet; Relocate Gate from Gas Pumps to Ticket Booth; Complete Fencing Enclosure at Athletic Fields; Replace Football Scoreboard

Priority 3

- ❌ Parking at Football Field; Storage at Baseball / Softball Fields; Address District Storage Space; Install Water Bottle Fillers in Main Gym - Filter First; Install Press Boxes at Baseball and Softball Fields; Address Remaining Tile Floors in Building; Purchase Branded Carpets for the Main Gym; Bleacher Cover / Branding for Football Bleacher Sides and Back; Address Drainage, Electrical, and Security of Stadium Press Box; Address Concession Stand / Bathroom Building at Stadium

Becoming Excellent Achievers Ready to Serve (BEARS II) - Bond Information

Bond Overview

While some public school districts within Michigan are financially assisted by a voter-approved "Sinking Fund" or "Operating Millage", Ashley Community Schools works under a "Bond" or "Debt Millage" model. In short, bonded debt is a long-term loan. When voters approve a school bond, the district sells bonds to investors and receives the money up front to immediately build / renovate facilities - repaying the debt (plus interest) over many years through a dedicated debt millage on property taxes. Bond proceeds generally **can be used** for new school construction, additions / major renovations, roofs / boilers / hvac, athletic facilities, buses, technology, etc. Bond proceeds **cannot be used** to fund teacher salaries, pay for utilities, purchase textbooks / curriculum, manage routine maintenance, help cover operating expenses, etc.

Bond / Debt Millage - History (1996-2028)

On June 10, 1996, by way of a **279 (Yay)** to **102 (Nay)** vote, our school district approved a bond proposal for $2,450,000. On September 28, 2004, by way of a **282 (Yay)** to **79 (Nay)** vote, our school district our school district passed the following language via general election for $3,465,000 over 30 years at an estimated annual millage rate of 4.41 mills:

Shall Ashley Community Schools borrow not to exceed $3,465,000 for erecting, furnishing and equipping additions to and partially remodeling, furnishing and refurnishing, equipping and re-equipping the Ashley Community School; acquiring, installing and equipping the facility for technology; developing and improving the site?

In 2014, internal decisions were made at the district level (and supported by our Board of Education) to refinance our loan based upon rate levels (etc). Then, on November 8, 2016, by way of a **457 (Yay)** to **304 (Nay)** vote, our school district approved a bond proposal for $2,240,000 for the "*Remodeling the school building; purchasing school buses; and developing and improving the site*."

All bonded debt has a final payment scheduled for May, 2033. As of July, 2026, Ashley Community Schools does not have plans to approach our school community for any further financial assistance - and will only revisit matters through our formal District Strategic Plan process.

Conclusion

This strategic plan for Ashley Community 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, Ashley Community Schools can achieve its strategic goals and provide an outstanding educational experience that meets the diverse needs of all our students.

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