



STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2031

“Engaging and challenging all learners through excellence, growth, and strong partnerships”



Letter from the Superintendent

Dear Ellsworth Community,

It is with great pride and gratitude that I share with you the Ellsworth School Department's Strategic Plan for 2025–2030. This plan represents more than two years of thoughtful work, reflection, and collaboration among students, families, educators, community members, and local businesses. Our Strategic Planning Committee has been at the forefront of this endeavor. Their leadership and collaborative spirit were instrumental in building a shared vision for the future of education in Ellsworth.

From the very beginning, our goal was to ensure that every voice was heard. Through surveys, focus groups, and community forums, we gathered input from across our city and beyond. What emerged is a plan that reflects not only the priorities of our schools, but also the hopes and expectations of the broader community that supports them.

At the heart of this plan are our new mission, vision, and core values—statements that affirm our collective belief in engaging and challenging all learners through excellence, growth, and strong partnerships. These guiding principles are more than words on a page; they set the direction for the next five years and establish a framework for how we will serve our students, staff, and community.

The six strategic goals outlined in this plan focus on:

- Strengthening school culture and climate,
- Improving communication and building trust,
- Attracting, developing, and retaining exceptional staff,
- Advancing academic excellence and curriculum alignment,
- Expanding student opportunities and supports, and
- Optimizing resources, facilities, and technology.

Each of these areas responds to both our current challenges and our future aspirations. They also recognize that schools do not succeed in isolation. Strong partnerships with families, businesses, and community organizations are essential if we are to prepare our students not just for graduation, but for meaningful and successful lives beyond our classrooms.

On behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee, I want to thank every individual who contributed ideas, perspectives, and time to this process. Your input shaped this plan into a roadmap that is uniquely Ellsworth's—rooted in who we are and ambitious about who we want to become.

I invite you to review the mission, vision, and goals in the pages ahead and consider how you, as a valued member of our community, can play a role in bringing them to life. The success of this plan depends on the ongoing partnership of our schools, families, and community. Together, we will ensure that Ellsworth remains a place where every learner is supported, inspired, and equipped to thrive in a dynamic world.

Sincerely,
Amy J Boles
Superintendent of Schools



ELLSWORTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2031

Our Mission:

Engaging and challenging all learners through excellence, growth, and strong partnerships.

Our Vision:

Our vision is to be a connected and thriving learning community where all learners—from our youngest students to adult learners—are supported by passionate educators, inspired by meaningful learning, and equipped for success in a dynamic world.



Our Core Values:

Collaboration & Teamwork

We succeed through strong partnerships among staff, students, families, and the community.

Communication

We build trust through open, honest, and timely communication.

Leadership

We develop leadership at all levels to drive innovation, informed decisions, and positive change.

Growth

We value continuous learning and development for students and staff alike.

Transparency

We lead with integrity, openness, and a commitment to improvement.

Consistency

We strive to ensure equitable experiences and clear expectations across all programs and grade levels.

Community

We nurture a strong sense of belonging, unity, and shared purpose.

Learning & Achievement

We prioritize academic excellence and inspire lifelong learning.

Relationships

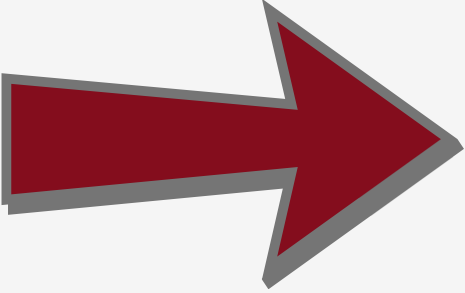
We foster respectful, trusting, and supportive connections across our schools.



Strategic Goal 1:

STRENGTHEN SCHOOL CULTURE & CLIMATE

Foster a safe, supportive, and respectful environment where all students and staff feel valued, engaged, and connected.



Why It Matters: This goal improves climate, behavior, trust, and staff/student well-being in response to current challenges with morale and engagement.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

Promote Positive and Inclusive School Environments

ACTION STEPS:

- Implement a consistent, districtwide approach that reinforces shared expectations for behavior and belonging.
- Use student, staff, and family feedback to assess and support a positive climate.
- Expand programming and resources that strengthen relationships and foster mutual respect across the school community.
- Build and sustain strong connection structures so every student and staff member are known and acknowledged.



OBJECTIVE 1.2

Build a Culture of Recognition and Belonging

ACTION STEPS:

- Continue and expand meaningful staff and student recognition practices that reflect district values and promote a sense of belonging.
- Celebrate academic growth, character, effort, and contributions to the school community through formal and informal recognition systems.
- Create opportunities for staff and students to share gratitude, appreciation, and accomplishments across schools and grade levels.
- Build time and space into the school year for school-wide and district-wide community-building events and traditions.

OBJECTIVE 1.3

Support Social-Emotional and Mental Health for All

ACTION STEPS:

- Provide consistent access to school-based mental health services and strengthen partnerships with local providers.
- Embed practices that support the whole child and trauma-informed approaches across all classrooms and routines.
- Offer ongoing professional learning in areas such as de-escalation, empathy-building, and staff wellness.
- Promote healthy workload and work-life balance for staff while supporting student stress management and self-care skills.



OBJECTIVE 1.4

Ensure Safe, Responsive, and Prepared School Environments

ACTION STEPS:

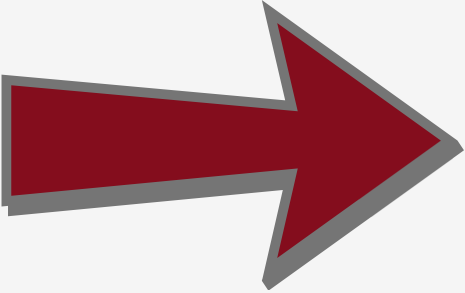
- Implement an federally regulated, options-based safety program across all schools and provide staff and student training in developmentally appropriate ways.
- Conduct regular safety drills, facility reviews, and communication audits to ensure preparedness and alignment with best practices.
- Use student and staff feedback to improve perceptions of safety, both physical and emotional, across all school settings.
- Partner with local safety agencies and first responders to coordinate emergency response and school-based supports.



Strategic Goal 2:

IMPROVE COMMUNICATION & BUILD TRUST

Establish clear, transparent, and consistent systems that enhance communication among students, staff, families and the wider community.



Why It Matters: This goal addresses communication breakdowns, parent disengagement, and a lack of shared understanding across the district.

OBJECTIVE 2.1

Improve Communication Systems Across All Stakeholder Groups

ACTION STEPS:

- Leverage school and district websites, newsletters, and social media to communicate clearly and proactively with families and the community.
- Proceduralize communication norms across the district, buildings, grade levels, and departments to improve clarity and reduce information gaps.
- Develop and share an annual communication calendar that includes major district events, meetings, and reporting cycles.



OBJECTIVE 2.2

Strengthen Family Engagement in Learning and School Life

ACTION STEPS:

- Provide families with accessible tools and resources to support student learning at home (e.g., literacy strategies, tech tips, curriculum overviews).
- Offer regular and varied opportunities for families to engage with school events, student showcases, and learning celebrations.
- Host family workshops or forums to build understanding of topics like MTSS or postsecondary planning.
- Expand translation, interpretation and literacy support services to ensure equitable communication with families.

OBJECTIVE 2.3

Deepen Community Connections and Collaborative Partnerships

ACTION STEPS:

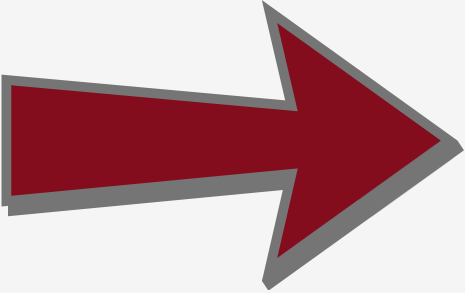
- Develop partnerships with local organizations, and businesses to enhance programming, enrichment, and career exploration.
- Create a community partner directory to help schools access support for guest speakers, project-based learning, or service opportunities.
- Encourage staff and student participation in community events, volunteerism, and service learning initiatives that build mutual support.
- Collaborate with community agencies to offer wraparound supports for students and families, including access to mental health, housing, or food resources.



Strategic Goal 3:

ATTRACT, DEVELOP, AND RETAIN EXCEPTIONAL STAFF

Create and sustain strategies that support recruitment, professional growth, leadership development, and staff well-being.



Why It Matters: This goal responds to ongoing staffing shortages, leadership gaps, and educator fatigue.

OBJECTIVE 3.1

Recruit and Hire High-Quality, Mission-Aligned Staff

ACTION STEPS:

- Continue to promote open positions through platforms such as ServingSchools and other targeted recruitment tools to attract top-tier candidates.
- Strengthen outreach efforts to ensure diverse candidate pools and timely hiring practices aligned with district needs.
- Develop messaging and branding that reflect ESD's strengths and commitment to innovation, inclusion, and student success.



OBJECTIVE 3.2

Build and Support a Strong Internal Pipeline for Growth

ACTION STEPS:

- Enhance the district's mentorship program to support all new staff with consistent coaching, professional learning, and feedback.
- Foster leadership development through internal promotions, leadership pathways, and professional advancement opportunities.
- Identify, encourage and develop emerging leaders across all roles and departments.

OBJECTIVE 3.3

Improve Internal Communication and Staff Culture

ACTION STEPS:

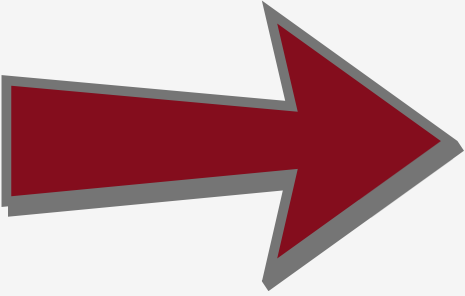
- Ensure consistent and timely email reminders and updates to staff regarding key deadlines, initiatives, and expectations.
- Establish and model clear communication protocols that follow the chain of command, ensuring consistency and clarity across all levels.
- Promote transparent, timely, and respectful communication between administration, staff, and departments.
- Gather regular feedback on internal communication and use it to strengthen staff culture and operational effectiveness.



Strategic Goal 4:

ADVANCE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Deliver a coherent, inclusive, and rigorous PreK through adult curriculum that promotes innovation, high expectations, and career readiness.



Why It Matters: This goal builds on academic strengths while addressing needs in curriculum consistency and instructional technology.

OBJECTIVE 4.1

Strengthen Horizontal and Vertical Curriculum Alignment

ACTION STEPS:

- Finalize horizontally and vertically aligned curriculum documents in all content areas, spanning Pre-K through adult education.
- Ensure inclusive collaboration in curriculum development that involves general education, special education, HCTC, and adult education staff.
- Establish clear learning progressions that support equitable access and readiness at all transitions between grade spans.



OBJECTIVE 4.2

Expand Access to Rigorous and Flexible Learning Pathways

ACTION STEPS:

- Continue to grow opportunities for all students through AP, dual enrollment, FIRST Academy, alternative education, HCTC programs, academies, internships, and work study.
- Promote flexible models of learning such as “anytime” and “anywhere” learning to increase access and personalize educational experiences.
- Monitor participation data and student outcomes to ensure these opportunities are equitably accessed and aligned with postsecondary readiness.

OBJECTIVE 4.3

Build Community Partnerships that Enhance Academic Programming

ACTION STEPS:

- Establish and sustain partnerships with local businesses, higher education institutions, and community organizations to co-create meaningful learning experiences.
- Engage stakeholders in shaping programs that reflect community needs and prepare students for emerging workforce demands.
- Leverage local expertise to expand mentorship, guest speaker, and collaborative project opportunities across content areas.



OBJECTIVE 4.4

Promote Student Innovation and Creativity Across the Curriculum

ACTION STEPS:

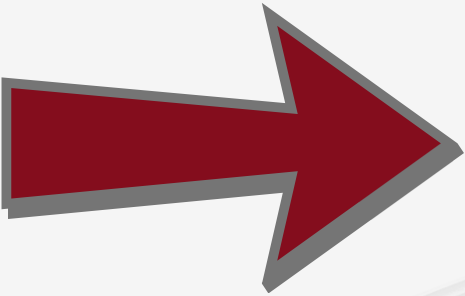
- Explore instructional strategies that embed student innovation and design thinking into daily teaching and learning practices.
- Provide students with authentic opportunities to create, problem-solve, and lead in academic and interdisciplinary contexts.
- Highlight and celebrate student-driven projects and innovations at the classroom, school, and district levels.



Strategic Goal 5:

EXPAND STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORTS

Broaden access to engaging programs—including but not limited to: flexible pathways, career and technical education, health & wellness programming, enrichment, and adult education—that support the whole learner.



Why It Matters: This goal strengthens student achievement and behavior by proactively engaging students in meaningful, personalized learning.

OBJECTIVE 5.1

Strengthen and Diversify Flexible Learning Pathways

ACTION STEPS:

- Continue to grow personalized diploma pathways at Ellsworth High School (EHS), Hancock County Technical Center (HCTC), and Ellsworth Adult Education.
- Offer multiple graduation options aligned to students' academic goals, career readiness, and postsecondary plans.
- Reinstate and expand practical programs such as home economics, shop/industrial arts, and life skills classes to meet the needs of today's learners.



OBJECTIVE 5.2

Expand Middle and High School Electives and Enrichment Options

ACTION STEPS:

- Increase the range and availability of electives in the arts, technology, business, cultural studies, and life skills Pre-K through Adult Education.
- Promote inclusive student participation in activities, service learning, and community-based enrichment experiences.
- Expand experiential learning opportunities to enhance cultural awareness and real-world understanding.

OBJECTIVE 5.3

Strengthen Career and Technical Education (CTE) and STEM Exposure

ACTION STEPS:

- Provide early exposure to diverse career fields through exploratory CTE programming at the middle level.
- Expand opportunities such as STEM camps, career fairs, and hands-on learning experiences in collaboration with HCTC and community partners.
- Ensure that students can explore and prepare for careers through internships, job shadowing, and apprenticeships aligned with high-demand fields.



OBJECTIVE 5.4

Prioritize Relevant and Real-World Learning

ACTION STEPS:

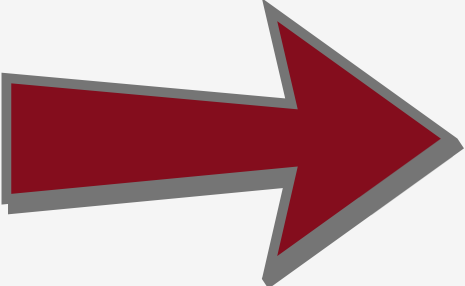
- Integrate project-based learning, cross-curricular units, and authentic assessments that reflect real-world applications.
- Encourage student voice and choice in curriculum design, particularly within enrichment and elective offerings.



Strategic Goal 6:

OPTIMIZE RESOURCES, FACILITIES, AND TECHNOLOGY

Use data-informed planning to ensure equitable resource allocation, technology access, and safe, sustainable learning environments.



Why It Matters: This goal supports long-term growth despite facility, budget, and infrastructure limitations.

OBJECTIVE 6.1

Ensure Safe, Modern, and Sustainable Facilities

ACTION STEPS:

- Conduct a comprehensive facilities audit to assess safety, accessibility, and modernization needs across all schools.
- Implement traffic-calming measures to improve pedestrian safety in high-traffic areas.
- Develop a multi-year capital improvement plan aligned with enrollment projections, instructional needs, and sustainability goals.



OBJECTIVE 6.2

Improve Operational Systems for Efficiency and Responsiveness

ACTION STEPS:

- Create and maintain a districtwide, public-facing calendar to include all scheduled events, facilities usage, and locations/times.
- Refine the districtwide facilities use request process to clarify expectations, streamline approvals, and distinguish between internal and external requests.
- Improve the transportation request process to ensure clarity, efficiency, and alignment with district operations.
- Integrate feedback loops for building leaders and support staff to refine systems on an annual basis.

OBJECTIVE 6.3

Build Capacity and Collaboration Across Support Departments

ACTION STEPS:

- Incorporate professional development for support departments—Kitchen, Facilities, Transportation, and IT—during opening days and designated districtwide PD days.
- Provide cross-departmental training opportunities to foster stronger collaboration between instructional and operational staff.
- Promote awareness and recognition of the essential roles support departments play in sustaining positive school culture and operations.



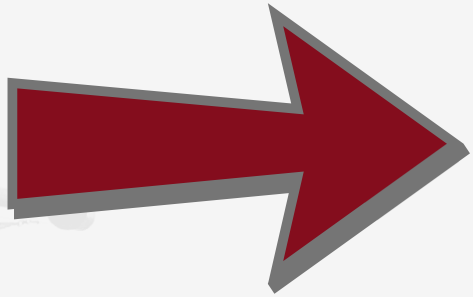
OBJECTIVE 6.4

Enhance Teaching and Learning through Equitable Use of Innovative Technologies

ACTION STEPS:

- Expand digital literacy instruction to ensure all students and staff develop essential skills in responsible technology use, online safety, media literacy, and ethical participation in digital environments.
- Integrate computer science and emerging technologies across grade levels to promote problem-solving, computational thinking, and future-ready learning opportunities for all students.
- Provide ongoing professional learning for educators and support staff to build capacity in using digital tools and technology to enhance instruction and support equity.





This plan represents the shared voice of our educators, families, and community members. It reflects our belief that when we work together, our students thrive. The success of this plan will depend on the ongoing commitment of everyone in the Ellsworth School Department community.

A sincere thanks to the members of the Strategic Planning Committee for their time, expertise, and passion for student learning. Your contributions have laid the foundation for the next chapter of our district's success.

- Amy Boles
- Nicole Chan
- Bill Tracy
- Julia Berry
- Mary Lowell
- Laura Dyer
- Bren Norwood
- Kelly McKinney
- Elizabeth Alteri
- Holly Archer
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