

# Strategic Plan for Excellence in Volusia County Schools



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*Adopted December 8, 2015*

# Strategic Planning Committee

*The Board wishes to thank the following who diligently worked to identify priorities, performance targets, and strategies. We are grateful for the time, energy, hard work, and creativity given by so many in the development of this plan.*

*As we continue to move forward, this strategic plan will be used to guide our direction in doing that which is in the best interest of our students.*

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# Introduction



Volusia County School's Strategic Plan is a detailed roadmap that will lead us toward a future of continuous academic success. School districts around the state and nation are being reorganized to improve efficiencies and reduce costs. While each of us has different roles, collectively we can make a huge impact on our students' educational experience.

Initial work began in January 2015. Six major focus areas were identified by the School Board. A representative committee was organized, consisting of students, parents, teachers, administrators, staff members, and community leaders, with the task to develop a three-year strategic plan for Volusia County School District. Ellen Darden was selected as the facilitator. The entire team met several times in the spring and summer of 2015. Six sub-committees were identified and met to accomplish their assigned tasks.

The Superintendent and cabinet reviewed the goals, performance targets and strategies, receiving input from their respective departments. Final edits were reviewed by a representative team and submitted to the School Board for approval in December 2015.

Baseline data for all performance targets will be documented by the Digital Learning and Assessment Team, and progress on the targets will be managed, with summative progress monitoring linked on the district's website for public view.

This strategic plan reflects positive changes that are designed to:

- ✚ ensure student achievement;
- ✚ assess progress towards meeting performance targets;
- ✚ manage resources to effectively deliver instructional services;
- ✚ integrate technology into instruction; and,
- ✚ continue to engage the community in educational processes.

The performance targets and strategies detailed in this plan require new and innovative partnerships among parents, students, staff, and the community. The success of our students must be collaborative in the process of life-long learning.


# District Vision

Ensuring all students receive a superior 21st century education.



# District Mission

Volusia County Schools will ignite a passion for learning by providing a challenging, creative curriculum in a safe, supportive environment where students reach their highest potential.



# Areas of Focus

- ✦ Student Achievement
  - ✦ Curriculum
  - ✦ Internal/External Communications
  - ✦ Human Resources
  - ✦ Fiscal Management
  - ✦ Operations/Infrastructure
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# Guiding Principles

Dedication to student achievement

Commitment to finding solutions to problems

Mutual respect and positive relationships with all stakeholders



# Belief Statements

- ✚ All students deserve a quality education that prepares them for success beyond graduation.
- ✚ All students are capable of learning and achieving high standards.
- ✚ Safe, caring environments are essential for maximizing learning and the well-being of all students.
- ✚ School, family and community partnerships are vital to student success.
- ✚ It is the responsibility of all employees to improve their practice to contribute to the success of all students.
- ✚ Flexibility and openness to new ideas create effective change and continued growth.
- ✚ A collaborative environment built on mutual respect and positive relationships is essential for generating solutions.
- ✚ Fiscal responsibility requires that resources be prioritized and allocated to support student achievement.

## 5 Essentials

The “**5 Essentials**” is an evidence-based system designed to drive improvement in schools nationwide. The 5E system reliably measures changes in a school organization, predicts school success, provides individualized actionable reports to schools, districts, parents, community partners; and offers professional development to school leadership and teachers.

**The “5 Essentials” are embedded in all focus areas.**

- ✚ **Effective Leadership:** The principal works with teachers and staff to implement a clear, strategic vision for school success.
- ✚ **Ambitious Instruction:** Classes are academically demanding and engage students by emphasizing the application of knowledge.
- ✚ **Supportive Environment:** The school is safe and orderly. Teachers have high expectations for students. Students are supported by their teachers and peers.
- ✚ **Collaborative Teachers:** The staff is committed to the school, receives strong professional development, and works together to improve the school.
- ✚ **Involved Families:** The entire school staff builds strong relationships with families and communities to support learning.

# Focus Areas, Goals, Performance Targets

## **FOCUS AREA: Student Achievement**

Personalize learning as a means to increase individual student performance outcomes.

### ➤ *Performance Targets:*

- ✓ Under the calculations outlined in Florida's System of School Improvement and Accountability, **Volusia County Schools will earn an "A" district grade.**
- ✓ The Volusia graduation rate will show continuous improvement by meeting or exceeding the state average.
- ✓ District achievement on all statewide and national assessments will meet or exceed state and national averages. [Florida Standard Assessments, End of Course (EOC), FCAT, ACT, SAT, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Industry Certification]
- ✓ Increase student enrollments in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), Advanced Placement (AP), Career and Technical Education (CTE), Dual Enrollment, and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) courses.
- ✓ By the end of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade school year, 75% of the students will earn a Digital Tools Certificate.

### ➤ *Strategies:*

- ✓ Promote high quality early childhood educational experiences **that will ensure kindergarten readiness.**
- ✓ Combine rigorous academics with relevant career and technical opportunities for learning that meets individual needs, while providing opportunities for choice.
- ✓ Provide facilities that support student learning environments.
- ✓ Encourage student involvement in extra-curricular activities to promote student achievement.
- ✓ Increase student access to digital learning tools.
- ✓ Deliver differentiated experiences in professional learning for all employees to support individual needs for improved student achievement.
- ✓ Maintain a positive partnership with families, business partners, and the community.
- ✓ Place highly qualified (evaluation rating) school leaders in the lowest performing schools.

- ✓ Ensure continuous monitoring of student performance, working together with families to understand assessment results, grading and reporting of data.
- ✓ Fund and support effective remediation/intervention programs for targeted students not mastering grade-level and/or course standards.



## **FOCUS AREA: Curriculum**

**Increase the academic achievement of all students through effective instruction, a challenging, rigorous curriculum, and multiple instructional pathways for students to meet their individual needs.**

### **➤ Performance Targets:**

- ✓ Academic improvement for all students by enhancing academic relevance and rigor, measured by an increase in the performance targets.
- ✓ Meet Least Restrictive Environment expectations in state performance plan by ensuring that 80% of students with disabilities are instructed with their non-disabled peers at least 80% of the school week.
- ✓ Increase availability of digital content, virtual courses and blended learning classrooms across all grade levels and subject areas.
- ✓ Expand access to Virtual Learning Labs in all schools to provide access and support for the growing number of students enrolled in part-time virtual instruction and other personalized learning solutions.
- ✓ Expansion of postsecondary curricular offerings available to students, including but not limited to dual enrollment, transition fairs and summer programs.
- ✓ Increase program offerings and enrollment in Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses and career academies, with equitable access districtwide.

### **➤ Strategies:**

- ✓ Align instructional plans developed by coaches and teachers with school improvement plans and the district's strategic plan.
- ✓ Guide assessments in an appropriate scope and sequence for student success.
- ✓ Strengthen the continued implementation of district support to schools using a system of liaisons to identify and provide appropriate and differentiated supports to advance student achievement.
- ✓ Expand implementation of sustainable interventions within a multi-tiered system of supports to address students' academic, social, emotional, behavioral, health, and/or mental health needs.
- ✓ Continue to offer professional learning for integrated curriculum and project-based learning, aligned with the Florida Standards.
- ✓ Increase professional learning offerings for teachers whose courses include industry certification exams.

## **FOCUS AREA: Internal/External Communication**

**Improve internal and external communication systems to maximize student achievement, promote collaboration and build positive relationships.**

### **➤ Performance Targets:**

- ✓ Responses to the climate surveys Advancing Excellence in Education Accreditation – (AdvancED) will exceed the minimal required responses required: 20% of families, 40% students, and 60% staff.
- ✓ District reports will indicate improvement in each of the 5 accreditation standards derived from the results of the spring surveys.
- ✓ Increased number of business and postsecondary partners.

### **➤ Strategies:**

- ✓ A newly created Comprehensive Communication Plan will be monitored to support a tight alignment to the strategic plan.
- ✓ Utilize multiple marketing and media platforms to share success stories and positive information about students, staff, schools, instructional programs, and projects, including the half-cent sales tax, promotion/graduation requirements and post-secondary opportunities.
- ✓ Disseminate time sensitive information with expedience and accuracy, including mass email and text messaging.
- ✓ Redesign monthly administrative meetings into professional learning sessions for the purpose of increasing administrator knowledge of Florida Standards, instructional best practices (Volusia System for Empowering Teachers - VSET), and instructional leadership (Volusia System for Empowering Leaders - VSEL, Volusia District Administrators Evaluation System - VDAES).
- ✓ Increase opportunities for the Volusia community, business partners and families to collaborate with district and school leaders on instructional programs that support increased student achievement and success.
- ✓ Expand partnerships with universities, municipalities, legislative delegations, and other organizations to increase opportunities that will move our school communities forward.
- ✓ Support all families with language barriers in facilitating translations and interpretations of documents; ensuring that a document library is accessible.
- ✓ Individual schools use their website/apps to increase student/public awareness of their school-based activities and general campus information.

## **FOCUS AREA: Human Resources**

**Attract, hire, continuously develop, retain, and reward highly qualified staff to improve academic achievement and student success.**

### ➤ *Performance Targets:*

- ✓ All staff will be high performing in their area of specialty.
- ✓ Volusia's beginning teacher salary will be within the top 10% in Florida in order to recruit the best and brightest university graduates.
- ✓ Increase the number of school volunteers who will serve in a variety of ways to support student achievement, such as mentors, tutors, or career development.

### ➤ *Strategies:*

- ✓ All staff will collaborate through a simplified online professional growth system, which includes evaluation evidence, deliberate practice plans, and aligned professional learning opportunities for targeted role-based support.
- ✓ The enhanced professional growth / evaluation system will integrate career management, succession planning, and compensation/benefits to support instructional excellence.
- ✓ Partner with local colleges and universities to provide instructional framework training and support to educational staff and student interns, with the goal of increasing the number of preservice teachers hired after graduation.
- ✓ Identify exemplary teacher education universities, technical schools and specialized programs to actively recruit the graduates.
- ✓ Ensure all professional learning opportunities meet Florida Professional Learning Protocol Standards; align with evaluation systems; and support individual, school and district needs.
- ✓ Encourage all staff to pursue professional learning opportunities.
- ✓ Realign teacher schedules to allow time for professional learning opportunities that emphasizes high-effect-size instructional strategies aligned to the Volusia System for Empowering Teachers (VSET).
- ✓ Maintain School Leadership Teams for the purpose of creating, monitoring and supporting School Improvement Plans and facilitating embedded school-based professional learning plans.
- ✓ Expand Transformational Teacher Leadership to include more opportunities for teacher leaders to grow and lead.
- ✓ Create an environment where support personnel are valued for their experience, expertise and contributions.
- ✓ Recognize highly qualified staff and encourage them to share best practices.

## **FOCUS AREA: Fiscal Management**

Ensure that all resources in the district are allocated to support the highest level of student achievement and the strategic plan priorities with fiscal responsibility and transparency.

### ➤ *Performance Targets:*

- ✓ The newly created Project Oversight Committee, comprised of seven members (one selected by each board member and two selected by the superintendent), will review the capital budget and oversee the half cent sales tax program, presenting yearly to the School Board.
  - ✚ Districtwide electric consumption will be reduced by 5%.
  - ✚ A committee will review current district and school practices for business partnerships, advertising, and fundraising ideas, following up with reporting best practices, recommendations and proposed guidelines.

### ➤ *Strategies:*

- ✓ Establish an internal auditor/efficiency expert who is directly accountable to the superintendent and school board.
- ✓ Maintain Request for Proposals (RFPs) to comply with school board policy 602 and 702.
- ✓ Explore options to provide budgetary discretion afforded to schools and departments to properly and efficiently allocate funding within their site.
  - ✚ Establish appropriate framework, with allowable criteria and dollar amount, for each site administrator, with oversight in place. These items would be purchased using centralized purchasing procedures. This process will be completed by the end of school year 2016-17.
  - ✚ Provide the necessary training for six (6) pilot schools – three (3) elementary, two (2) middle schools, and one (1) high school to establish and monitor decentralized budget during the 2017-18 school year.
  - ✚ Analyze the outcomes of the pilot schools to determine expansion of decentralized budget system during the 2018-19 school year and beyond.
- ✓ Establish a report to track change orders to meet construction best practices.
- ✓ Eliminate unnecessary internal redundancies.
- ✓ Establish a district cost saving initiative for employees.
- ✓ Review multi-year contracts to ensure financial efficiency.
- ✓ Collaborate with local communities, municipalities and legislators in a sustained, effective and concerted effort to ensure a proper understanding of and support for our financial needs.

## **FOCUS AREA: Operations/Infrastructure**

**Prioritize and provide resources for a safe, secure, supportive, and innovative learning environment that cultivates 21st century learners.**

### **➤ Performance Targets:**

- ✓ All students will have access to a digital learning infrastructure with appropriate bandwidth, devices, and resources to support the highest levels of achievement.
- ✓ All teachers and students will have access to their personal technology resources through a Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT) wireless network, separate from the Volusia Wide Area Network (WAN), assisting in the development of real-world, 21st-century skills.
- ✓ 100% of district and school-based instructional and support staff will attend role-based professional development to acquire the skills necessary to access and manage the new student information system.
- ✓ Updated security systems and procedures will be monitored and documented through continuing communications and partnerships with local law enforcement agencies.
- ✓ Custodial service providers will meet contractual requirements through posted quality control inspections.

### **➤ Strategies:**

- ✓ Ensure accuracy of data through the Florida Technology Resource Survey to appropriately plan equitable technology access for all students.
- ✓ Construct and retrofit school facilities to incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> century construction and infrastructure best practices, sustainable and viable for decades to come.
- ✓ Complete a strategic multi-year Digital Classrooms Plan as required by s. 1011.62, F.S., ensuring collaboration between administrators, staff and the community.
- ✓ Incorporate a five-year refresh cycle for instructional technology tools.
- ✓ Provide additional technical training and support for the implementation of the new student management system enterprise solution.
- ✓ Maintain and retrofit school facilities to ensure that the infrastructure supports instructional needs, athletic needs, and access to resources.
- ✓ Continue working with municipalities to share resources in support of student success.
- ✓ Identify unused classroom technologies, reallocate resources and provide assistance and training as needed.
- ✓ Improve customer service through increased proactive work orders and improved communications and staff feedback.
- ✓ Create a centralized procurement department to assist with new guidelines, regulations and legislation necessary to facilitate the purchasing process.

## **Evaluation/Accountability**

This strategic plan will be used to guide decision making at both the school and district level, and to help evaluate current programs for effectiveness and contribution to Volusia's vision and mission. Each section of this strategic plan is managed by a member of the Superintendent's cabinet:

- ✚ Student Achievement and Curriculum: Chief Academic Officer
- ✚ Internal/External Communication: Director of Community Information Services
- ✚ Human Resources: Chief Human Resources Officer
- ✚ Fiscal Management: Chief Financial Officer
- ✚ Operations/Infrastructure: Chief Operations Officer

All district planning documents will be aligned to the strategic plan. Performance targets will be reviewed quarterly by the cabinet and progress will be managed through a strategic planning dashboard, accessed through the district's website.

The Superintendent and Cabinet will report to the School Board annually on progress made with strategic plan performance targets. The report will then be available to the community and Strategic Planning Committee via the District Website.

Performance targets and strategies will be adjusted as needed.