



Colstrip Public Schools Strategic Planning Process

Overview

The Colstrip Public School District (Colstrip Public Schools) has created a new direction for the school district to strategically focus its resources on identified wants, preferences, and needs of its community. As part of this process, Colstrip Public Schools has begun a strategic planning and thinking process which will lead to a stronger and more vital school district. This process will be ongoing as Colstrip Public Schools moves into the future. This strategic plan is intended to help Colstrip Public Schools in focusing its resources in a manner which will best benefit the children enrolled in Colstrip Public Schools.

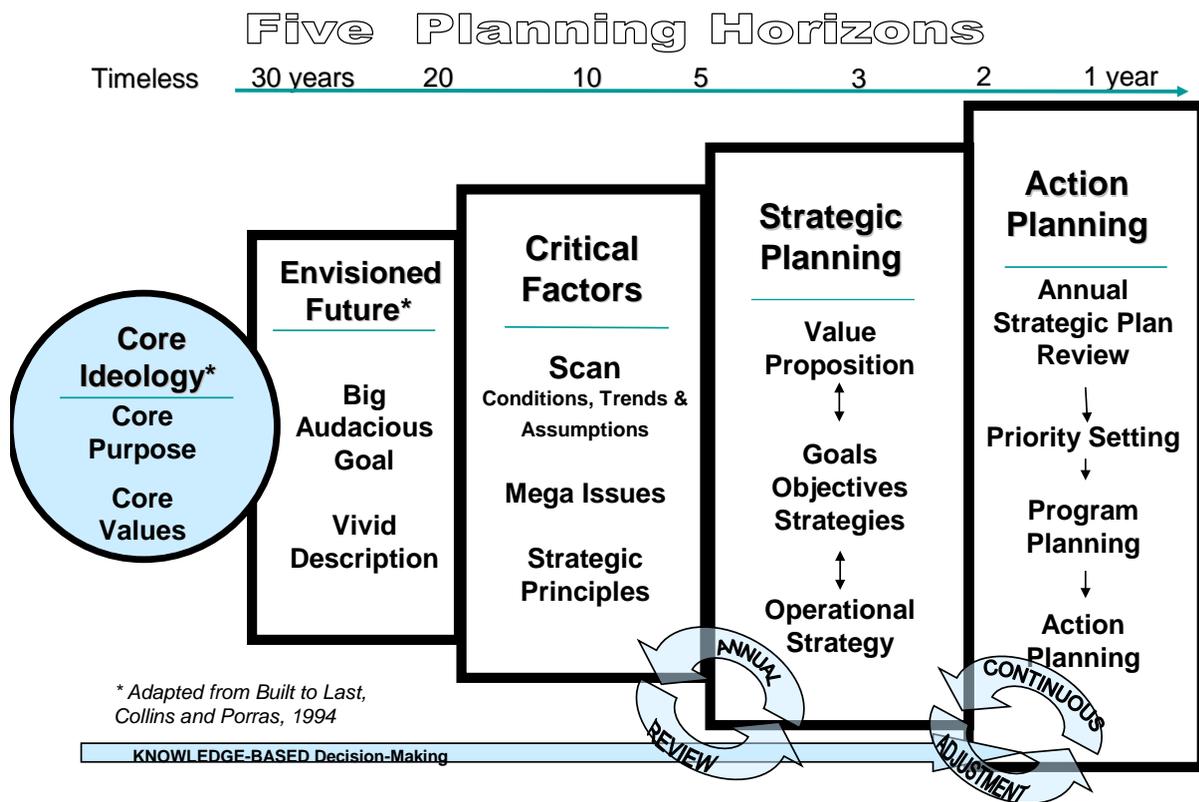
The Colstrip Board of Trustees and Staff Leadership Team began the strategic planning and thinking process necessary to amend its current educational goals to better fit with its commitments to children, to community engagement, and to knowledge-based decision making processes. The Board and Staff, through this process, to date have discussed at length how it could best meet the present and future needs of the students of the Colstrip Public Schools.

The information generated from the Board's and Staff's discussion during the initial stages of the Strategic Planning process was used to prepare a draft of Colstrip School District's Strategic Plan. As part of its preparation for setting the direction of the District, Debra Silk of the Montana School Boards School assisted Colstrip School District by facilitating the process.

On 4/13/09, the Colstrip Board of Trustees formally adopted its new Strategic Plan. Colstrip Public Schools' Board and Staff Leadership Team embrace the method of strategic planning as a continual and ongoing process to set the direction of the District for years to come. This is not a "strategic planning project" that is completed. Adoption of a strategic plan is an affirmation of the general intent and direction articulated by the Core Ideology, Envisioned Future and Goals and Strategic Objectives. It is understood that progress toward achieving strategic objectives will be assessed annually, and the plan will be updated based on achievement and changes in the needs of the children served by the Colstrip School District.

Strategic Planning Framework

The framework used by the Colstrip School District for its strategic planning process was adapted from a model developed by Jim Collins, author of “Built to Last” and “Good to Great.” The Board focused on five different planning horizons, starting with the long term issues first to provide focus to shorter term efforts. The following chart identifies the five planning horizons utilized by the Colstrip School District during the strategic planning process facilitated by MTSBA:



Core Ideology of the Colstrip School District

Core ideology describes a school district's consistent identity that transcends all changes related to its relevant environment. The Core Ideology consists of the following two elements:

- 1) **Core Purpose** - the school district's reason for being,
- 2) **Core Values** - essential and enduring principles that guide a school district.

Envisioned Future conveys a concrete yet unrealized vision for the school district and consists of the following two elements:

- 1) **Big Audacious Goal** - a clear and compelling catalyst that serves as a focal point for effort,
- 2) **Vivid descriptions** - vibrant and engaging descriptions of what it will be like to achieve the big audacious goal.

Core Purpose of the Colstrip School District:

The Core Purpose of Colstrip Public Schools is to provide a safe, healthy and secure environment in which to educate & prepare students for the demands of the future by engaging children in lifelong learning.

Core Values of the Colstrip School District:

- **Loyalty, Trust and Respect** – We believe that mutual loyalty, trust, and respect amongst key stakeholders (students, staff, board, and community) are vital to the success of our students.
- **Responsible Citizenship** – We believe that it is important to prepare students to be cognizant of and to be positive contributors to all levels of the democratic process.
- **Stable, Positive, Safe and Healthy School Climate** – We believe that accepting, appreciating, and embracing diversity and the uniqueness of all people contributes to a positive, safe, and healthy school climate for both students and staff and the long term values of our community.
- **Shared, Ethical Leadership** – We value shared leadership with our community where there is a common understanding and philosophy that we are all responsible for the success of our students. We believe that community involvement and support are essential to the achievement of our goals and the success of our students.

Twenty-Year Planning Horizon

Envisioned Future of the Colstrip School District

Big Audacious Goal:

Colstrip Public Schools is regarded as a model school. The District has developed partnerships with local businesses and with local education foundation(s). Student alumni are well-educated, prepared for a global economy, and successful in their adult lives.

A Vivid Description of the Desired Future:

- Teachers and students thoroughly enjoy teaching and learning.
- The District has incorporated technology, parental involvement and other global advancements into all aspects of its educational programs with a focus on fulfilling the unique needs of individual students.
- Through the use of various models, we educate students for a one hundred percent completion rate with adequate knowledge base and academic excellence, utilizing strong leadership skills and community involvement.
- Colstrip Public Schools has attained cooperative learning environments between the School District, universities, government, and businesses, thereby providing for additional educational opportunities.
- Colstrip Public Schools has expanded multi-cultural learning opportunities, job shadowing, and multiple-certification opportunities for students.
- Colstrip Public Schools has been highly successful in promoting and maintaining the relationship between the community and the School District.
- The Colstrip community is highly supportive of the Board's values and goals, and demonstrates this by its enthusiastic financial support and its involvement in community-based leadership opportunities.
- The local education foundation, including the alumni of Colstrip Public Schools, provides significant financial resources to the District.
- The leadership, staff, and students are respected by the community for the high standards of educational attainment, integrity and hard work to which they adhere.
- Colstrip Public Schools provides rigorous professional development opportunities for the staff in order to ensure that the staff is highly effective in their positions with the District and to foster continuous life-long learning.

Five-to-Ten Year Planning Horizon

Assumptions Regarding the Relevant Future for the Colstrip School District

In order to make progress toward the twenty-year Envisioned Future, Colstrip School District must constantly anticipate the strategic factors likely to affect its ability to succeed and to assess the implications of those factors. This process of building foresight about the future will help Colstrip School District to constantly recalibrate its view of the relevant future, a basis upon which to update the strategic plan on an annual basis. Because the outcome-oriented goals will be based on foresight, annual review of these statements will determine and ensure the ongoing relevance of the strategic plan.

Creating the Assumptions - During the July 29, 2008, meeting, the Colstrip Board of Trustees and Staff Leadership Team made many assumptions about the future. While many different assumptions were made, what follows are those assumptions which are likely to have the greatest influence on the development of Colstrip School District's Strategic Plan. On July 25, 2011, the Trustees and Staff Leadership Team reassessed and developed more assumptions about the future.

Assumptions about the future

Demographics

- The average age of the workforce in the Colstrip area will be approximately 40 years of age.
- The District may experience enrollment fluctuations due to an uncertain energy industry which will impact staff levels.
- The Senior citizen population will increase.
- There will be an increase in special levies because of the decreased state funding.
- Other communities will continue to tap into Colstrip's resources.
- We will continue to see a highly educated population, including highly educated senior citizen group.
- There will be uncertainty and fluctuations in the number of out-of-district students that attend Colstrip Public Schools given that the busing agreement between Colstrip and Lame Deer is a year-to-year agreement.
- The District will experience increased enrollment in kindergarten.
- There is uncertainty regarding the impact on enrollment as a result in the fluctuations in job availability.
- We will continue to experience a shortage in available housing which impacts our ability to recruit and retain staff.

Business/Economic Climate

- Changes in federal energy policies will continue to drastically impact the energy industry and population in Colstrip.
- There will be a change in how business is done and how products and services are delivered due to the continued changes in technology.
- The District may experience enrollment fluctuations due to an aging workforce, and an uncertain energy industry which will impact staff levels.
- There will be new partners in the local energy industry and the industry's support of schools.

- There will be a lack of availability of service-oriented business.
- People who own property in Colstrip are not selling and property that is selling has “right of first refusal” options.

Legislation/Regulation

- Accountability will continue under federal regulations.
- We will continue to see national curriculum standards.
- The District will continue to struggle with the State’s inability to adequately fund schools.
- The issue of protested taxes will continue to have an impact on schools.
- Distance/virtual learning regulations and opportunities will continue to evolve and impact the delivery of education.
- Health insurance issues will continue to impact public education.
- Schools will continue to struggle with the impact of unfunded state and federal mandates.
- The younger population will become more involved in the political process.

Technology

- There will be continued advancements in technology.
- Technology advancement and diversity will require highly trained people.
- We will have an increased need for an honor-based accountability system to address the ethical issues associated with advancements in technology
- There will be an increase in technology sites.
- The use of personal handheld electronic devices will be incorporated into the educational programs.
- There will be an increased need for accuracy of the information given the use of technology and potential for manipulation of information.
- The costs of technology will continue to increase and it will be a challenge for the District to keep up with the costs.
- Additional human resources will be needed to keep up with technological demands and it will continue to be a struggle to employ qualified individuals with expertise given the salaries offered.
- The fact that new technology is available does not mean that it is “necessary.”
- Application Service Providers (ASPs) will be the norm.
- Because of standardization, the State will have certain providers who meet the requirements.
- Currently, technology is ahead of the application. By way of example, handheld devices are the norm today, but there is no current demand for electronic textbooks.

Social Values

- In light of technologic advances, face-to-face interactions will continue to be increasingly important.
- There will be increased community-based interactions.
- Public schools will face the challenge of addressing and guiding social issues.
- Students will continue to struggle with issues of drug/alcohol/health/mental issues, etc.
- The impact of special needs issues on the school system will continue.
- The issues of student bullying, including cyber-bullying will continue.
- When warranted, we will continue to be forced to take on the role and responsibility of the

- parent.
- We will need to bridge the gap between generations.
- Generational social issues will continue to be a challenge for the District.
- Bullying is the “test” that will change everything.
- We will continue to see less parental involvement in academic and moral issues.
- It will be a challenge for parents to keep up new techniques that are being taught as parents will be trained in those areas.
- We will continue to see a gap in technological advances of the District (e.g., power schools) and access by parents.

Five-to-Ten Year Planning Horizon

Mega Issues facing the Colstrip School District

Mega issues are issues of strategic importance, which represent choices the school district will need to make in defining the ultimate direction of its long-range plan. These issues represent potential impediments to achievement of the Envisioned Future and form a basis for dialogue about the choices facing the School District. Using a knowledge-based approach in gathering insights relative to Colstrip Schools’ strategic position and directional choices for each of the issues, these questions can serve as an ongoing "menu" of strategic issues and can be used by the Board to create regular opportunities for strategic dialogue about the future issues facing the school district.

Mega-Issue Questions:

Demographics

- How can we plan for fluctuations in enrollment and staff levels due to an uncertain energy industry which will impact staff levels?
- How do we address the issue of educating those individuals in our community who do not have children attending school in our system about the necessity of supporting the School District and the impact of their support on student achievement?
- How do we continue to protect the resources that we have and ensure that we are utilizing our available resources in an effective and efficient manner?

Business/Economic Climate

- What can Colstrip Public Schools do to plan for the changes in the energy industry in Colstrip including, but not limited to, global changes which will impact Colstrip’s energy industry, new partners in the energy industry, and the impact of these changes on the delivery of our educational system?

Legislation/Regulation

- What can the school district do to positively impact legislation as it relates to the issue of protested taxes and adequate funding from the State and the impact of protested taxes on

Colstrip Public Schools?

- What can the school district do to positively impact legislation to ensure that the students in Colstrip Public Schools have adequate funding from the State to provide a quality education to all students?
- How can we effectively advocate for local control in light of the initiative for national curriculum standards and continued mandates under federal law?
- How can the District address the rising costs of health insurance to ensure that the interest of the District and its employees are addressed?

Technology

- What are the most effective ways which Colstrip Public Schools can encourage increased use of technology by students and staff while also monitoring, and guiding appropriate use, ensuring that we avoid isolating and denigrating the value of personal interaction and the development of social skills of the students in our schools?
- How do we effectively embrace the technology that students use on a day-to-day basis while at the same time educating students about the need for both responsible and appropriate uses of such technology?
- How do we ensure that our staff has the professional development opportunities and necessary training to effectively incorporate technology into the curriculum and prepare students for a global economy?
- What can we do to ensure that we are adequately accessing/evaluating staff effectiveness in the delivery of education?

Social Values

- What can Colstrip Public Schools do to ensure that students who are faced with issues which negatively impact student success have the necessary resources and/or avenues to provide support to such students on social issues including, but are not necessarily limited to, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic abuse, pregnancy, mental health issues, etc.?
- What can Colstrip Public Schools do to address the issues of student bullying, harassment, intimidation, hazing and the expansion of these issues as a result of the use of student access to technology?
- How does the District address the need to continue taking on the role and responsibility of the parent while at the same time educating parents about the need to be involving in their child's education?

Knowledge-Based Decision Making Process

In addressing identified mega-issues that have the potential of impeding the School District's ability to achieve the Envisioned Future, Colstrip Public Schools is committed to applying a knowledge-based decision making process. The framework for this process in addressing and finding solutions to the mega-issues identified above is as follows:

Question #1 – What do we know our students' / parents' / community's / needs, wants and preferences that is relevant to this decision?

Question #2 – What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics of our community that is relevant to this decision?

Question #3 – What do we know about the capacity and strategic position of the Colstrip Public Schools that is relevant to this decision?

Question #4 – What are the ethical implications of our choices?

Five-Year Planning Horizon

Outcome-Oriented Goals and Strategic Objectives

The following thinking represents goals for the next five years. They are areas in which Colstrip Public Schools will explicitly state the conditions or attributes it wants to achieve. These outcome statements will define, "what will constitute future success." The achievement of each goal will move the school district toward realization of its Envisioned Future.

Strategic Objectives provide direction and actions on how the school district will accomplish its articulated goals. All strategies included in the strategic plan should be considered accomplishable at some point in the future. Strategic Objectives are reviewed annually by the Colstrip School Board, Staff Leadership Team, and faculty.

Goals of the Colstrip School District

Goal Area 1: Student Achievement

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five years: Colstrip Public Schools has set a high academic bar with a one-hundred percent graduation rate. We have established an educational program which meets the individual needs of students and allows students to progress according to their individual capabilities.

One to Two Year Strategic Objectives:

1. We will implement core academic areas that address student needs by:
2. We will prepare students for vocational/higher education/direct workforce by:

3. We will instill student leadership/volunteerism/community service by:
4. We will provide positive behavioral supports and foster student awareness of the need to develop acceptable social skills by:
 - a. Addressing generational awareness through . . .
5. We will provide innovative opportunities for students by:
6. We will ensure effective delivery of education by:
7. We will need to ensure that when we implement successful programs, we are implementing such programs on a district-wide basis by:

Goal Area 2: Fiscal Prioritization/Innovation

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five years: Colstrip Public Schools has a fiscal prioritization plan and a plan/model for other methods of providing adequate funding of Colstrip Public Schools and its programs.

One to Two Year Strategic Objectives: *(Note: The priorities identified are listed in alphabetical order, not in order of priority.)*

1. We will identify priorities: activities, AYP, curriculum, educational services, staff, etc. by:
2. We will plan for the maintenance/upkeep of our facilities/transportation by:
3. We will increase energy efficiency in our buildings, District vehicles and other District property by:
4. We will continue to refine Technology plan by:
5. We will create an Education Foundation that provides needed support to the District by:
6. We will advocate for adequate funding for Colstrip Public Schools by

Goal Area 3: Community Involvement/Engagement

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: Colstrip Public Schools has created an environment of collaboration with families of students and with other educational stakeholders in the community. As a result, the community is engaged educationally and interactively in the school environment. Partnerships vital to the academic success and well-being of our students have been formed with educational stakeholders to assist the District in the delivery of our educational programs.

One to Two Year Strategic Objectives:

1. We will develop community education regarding school funding by:

2. We will create innovative methods of supporting Colstrip Public Schools, financially and non-financially, including but not limited to, creating an Education Foundation that provides needed support to the District by:
3. We will develop a process for a student representative on the Board that provides a student(s) with a meaningful learning / civic opportunity- and student input into the board process by:
4. We will develop student leadership/volunteerism/community service by:
5. We will inform the community of the needs of the District and recognize those that have assisted the District in the delivery of its educational programs and offerings by:

Goal Area 4: Safe and Healthy Environment for Students and Staff

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: Colstrip Public Schools has systems in place to ensure that students and staff thrive in a safe and healthy environment. We have established collaborative and cooperative relationships with outside organizations/support groups which assist students in dealing with social issues which are an impediment to student achievement.

One to Two Year Strategic Objectives:

1. We will develop a Wellness Program for staff and students by:
 - a. Developing a crisis team
 - b. Concussion training
2. We will improve retention/recruitment of Staffby:
3. We will take steps to address the housing shortage by:
 - a. Engaging in discussions with other business leaders regarding possible solutions to the housing shortage
4. We will identify, assess, and assist students and staff with social /health issues by:
5. We will address the issue of bullying and harassment by training staff, students and the community on appropriate conduct by:
6. We will ensure that school facilities are safe for students and staff by:

Goal Area 5: Technology

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: Colstrip Public Schools has incorporated technology into all aspects of its educational offerings in such a manner as to prepare our students for a global environment. We have done this in a systematic manner to ensure that our staff are comfortably utilizing technology through professional development opportunities and that our students are benefiting from the use of technology and other advancements, while at the same time educating students and staff about the ethical and accountability issues associated with the use of technology.

One to Two Year Strategic Objectives:

1. We will provide the necessary tools and training for staff by:
2. We will provide technology that will be widely available and used by students, staff and community by:
3. We will assess and monitor student issues relating to cell phones and other handheld devices and adjust policies as necessary by:
4. We will pursue innovative ways to deliver training and education utilizing technology by:

Goal Area 6: Recognition of/incorporation of American Indian culture

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: Colstrip Public Schools has been successful at both recognizing American Indian Culture and incorporating such culture into the curriculum. Students and staff understand and embrace diversity of our citizens and show a genuine appreciation for having the benefit of learning and understanding the importance of American Indian Culture.

One to Two Year Strategic Objectives:

1. We will develop a process of a recognized American Indian liaison on the Board of Trustees by:
2. We will continue to promote integration and coordination of the Circle of Schools by:
3. We will coordinate educational goals by:
4. We will continue to focus awareness and education on the American Indian culture by:
 - a. Recognizing the differences in social values and finding positive ways to find common ground and learn from each other.

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