

**JCBE Strategic Planning Retreat
May 15-16, 2015
Summary of Discussions**

Plan Scope

Members of the Jefferson County Board of Education (JCBE) began its discussion of the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan and the process to develop it by discussing the general scope of the new plan. General areas of agreement included:

- The Vision 2020 plan is neither a “tweak” nor a “complete rewrite” of the Vision 2015 plan.
- The Vision 2015 plan serves as a basis for the Vision 2020 plan; it is “foundational to what comes next.”
- The Vision 2020 plan should possess a creative quality and reflect our aspirations.
- Possible areas of emphasis in the Vision 2020 plan include:
 - Improving execution, efficiency, adaptability, and innovation
 - Developing a culture of service
 - Building community, inclusivity and a student sense of belonging through choice and personalization
 - Increasing teacher engagement and empowerment

Areas to be Addressed within the Plan

After a review of background materials that included data/evidence, current research and stakeholder input to date, members of the JCBE engaged in a discussion about the general areas that the Vision 2020 should address. It was noted that some items within these areas are being actively and effectively pursued by JCPS educators and staff. Still, there was general agreement that these areas reflect a priority focus, and the ways in which we do the work will need to change—and in some ways significantly.

Close the Gaps through Personalized Learning and Differentiated Instruction

- Provide equity by eliminating the achievement gaps for all student groups.
- Deepen our understanding of the gaps among student groups; describe what progress looks like for each student group
- Recognize that “one size does not fit all.” Provide flexibility and choice as a means to help students advance at their own pace.
- Acknowledge that students have different cultural backgrounds and styles of learning by providing individualized learning opportunities for every child through instructional practices, collaborative teaching, and use of technology.
- Through choice, flexibility and individualization, help the student feel that s/he belongs.
- Understand that learning is more than academics. We are helping students to be good citizens, to succeed and live a good life.

Engage Students and Families through a Culture of Service and Invitation

- Recognize that at the root of all engagement is the feeling that one belongs and can make choices among a set of good opportunities. Enable student choice so that students are more invested, actively participating in their school and extending their learning.
- Recognize the **urgent** need—not only at the district level but at every school—to develop a climate and “culture of service” that produces such opportunities.
- Become clear on the kinds of engagement that are most effective. Understand the barriers to effective engagement and eliminate them. What is the data/evidence?
- Help students/families understand their range of opportunities and how to “make their choice happen.”
- Invite students/families into a process of engagement and choice; do not merely inform them of options.

Understand the Learning Continuum of a Student

- Recognize that learning is not merely a series of discreet steps. It is a progression along a continuum that begins in early childhood prior to kindergarten and continues through high school and (hopefully) beyond. Our curricula and systems must reflect our understanding of this continuum.
- At the same time it is important to provide stability and support to students at key transition points:
 - Early childhood development
 - Kindergarten readiness
 - Third grade reading level
 - Elementary to middle school
 - Middle to high school
 - Graduation, readiness for college and/or career—and life
- JCPS must ensure that these transition points are not barriers to success in the next phase of learning, but are portals of opportunity for greater academic achievement and personal growth.
- The ability to read well is critical to a student’s ability to progress along this continuum; effective reading instruction (particularly in the early years) must remain a priority.

Facilitate Effective Professional Development

- Recognize that engaged and empowered professionals need opportunities to deepen their practice, improving the quality and effectiveness of their work.
- Recognize that good professional development leads to improved outcomes for students, more effective collaboration by educators around common goals, and personal satisfaction for JCPS teachers, administrators and staff.
- Professional development should reflect JCPS’ commitment to equity and inclusivity by including opportunities to deepen cultural proficiency.
- Effective professional development will result in teacher empowerment.

Invite More to the Mission: Developing Partnerships and Collaborations

- Currently, JCPS stakeholders recognize that it is actively engaged in forming partnerships and collaborations across the community. Whom else can we engage in JCPS' mission? How can we deepen our relationships in ways that help JCPS to live out its mission more fully?
- Build upon current community partnerships with a focus on identifying and working on common goals and leveraging community resources.

Fund the Vision

- Long-term strategies that close learning gaps, personalize education, deepen engagement, provide rich professional development opportunities and deepen partnerships require resources. JCPS must find the resources (both in terms of talent as well as funds) to implement these strategies.

Vision, Mission, Core Values and Guiding Principles

Members of the JCBE concluded their preliminary discussion of the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan with a review and discussion of the current statements about vision, mission, core values and guiding practices. They made a series of observations and suggestions.

Vision Statement

- The term "society" seems a bit quaint, old-fashioned. We are part of a global community. The vision statement should reference that reality.

Mission Statement

- JCPS is not merely "providing instruction;" it is engaging students in a process or journey of learning.
- The statement should reflect that teaching is less about input and more about facilitating the process of learning.
- If the term instruction is retained, what do we mean by it? Is it restricted to activity within the classroom itself?
- The statement needs more powerful imagery, language (e.g., "ignite")
- Should there be a reference to 21st Century Skills? Will readers know what that means?

Core Values

- Is it true that "what happens in the classroom matters *most*?" How do we reconcile this value with an understanding (and evaluation) of individual schools as "learning units" and "collections of classrooms."
- Constant "improvement" and/or "progress" needs to be stated explicitly as a value—at all levels: the individual student, teachers and staff, administration, and the district. We must have "zero tolerance" for schools that are not working hard to improve and make progress. That progress could be measured in a variety of ways: moving the student forward, developing

leadership within each school, focusing on the “whole child” in addition to assessments, better morale.

- Other values to consider:
 - Respect and integrity
 - Adaptable, efficient and innovative
 - Cultural proficiency—not merely competency
 - Creativity
 - Compassionate understanding
 - Welcoming; family friendly

Guiding Practices

- The practices should include references to:
 - Equity
 - Benchmarking against best academic systems/schools
 - Becoming the best school system for students/families whose first language is not English.