

Sun River Valley Public Schools

Strategic Plan

2016

Overview

The Sun River Valley Public Schools (hereinafter referred to as “District”) 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, the District has begun a strategic planning and thinking process that will lead to a stronger and more vital school district. This process will be ongoing as the District moves into the future. This strategic plan is intended to help the District in focusing its resources in a manner that will best benefit the children enrolled in the District.

The Sun River Valley Board of Trustees and staff began the strategic planning and thinking process necessary to fit with its commitment to children, to community engagement and to knowledge-based decision making processes.

As part of its preparation for strategic planning, the District brought in Debra Silk of the Montana School Boards Association to help facilitate the strategic planning process.

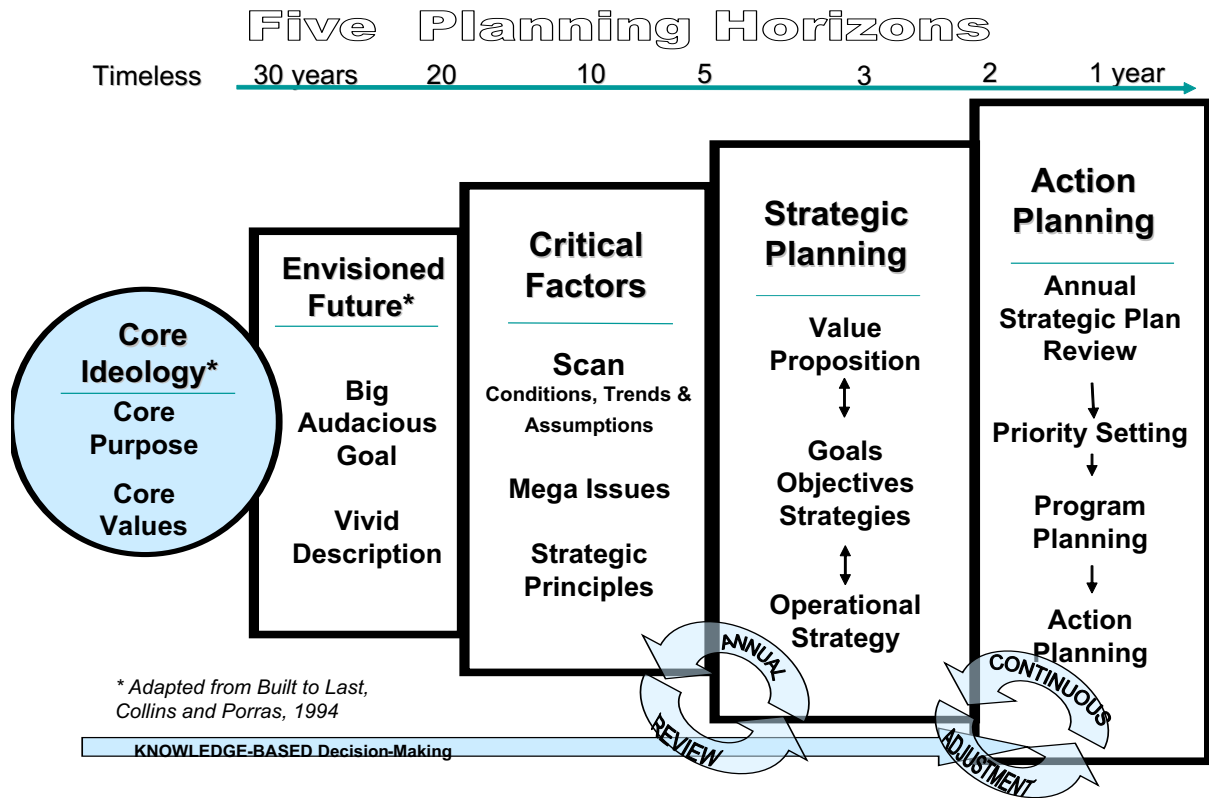
On August 9, 2016, the Sun River Valley Public Schools Board of Trustees formally adopted its new strategic plan.

The District views the process of strategic planning as an ongoing process within the school system. This is not a "strategic planning project" that is completed. Adoption of a 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 plan strategic objectives will be assessed at least annually, and the plan will be updated based on achievement and changes in the needs of the children served by the District.

Strategic Planning Framework

The framework used by the 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.



Core Ideology of the Sun River Valley Public School District

Core ideology describes a school district's consistent identity that transcends all changes related to its relevant environment. It consists of two elements - **core purpose** - the school district's reason for being - and **core values** - essential and enduring principles that guide a school district. **Envisioned future** conveys a concrete yet unrealized vision for the school district. It consists of a **big audacious goal** - a clear and compelling catalyst that serves as a focal point for effort - and a **vivid description** - vibrant and engaging descriptions of what it will be like to achieve the big audacious goal.

The Core Purpose of Sun River Valley Public Schools is to provide a quality, well-rounded education in a positive, safe environment where our students ultimately succeed as productive, responsible members of a global society.

Core Values of the Sun River Valley Public Schools:

Respect – We value having and outwardly showing respect for others at all times. We value the acceptance of differences in people and embrace those differences without judging the characteristics or opinions of others.

Excellence – We have high expectations of our students, staff, parents and community members. We value a strong work ethic, commitment and dedication and believe that hard work will result in excellence and success.

Accountability – We understand that we are accountable to each other and to the community and students we serve. We take responsibility for our actions and recognize and embrace that holding ourselves accountable and responsible will only make us better.

Compassion – We genuinely care for and are kind to one another and help others in need. We value working together and showing a united front when faced with diversity and celebrating our successes.

Honesty and Integrity – We believe in honesty and integrity in everything we do. Honesty and integrity lead to trust and we know that trust is vital to our success.

15-20 Year Planning Horizon

Envisioned Future of the Sun River Valley Public Schools

Big Audacious Goal:

Sun River Valley Public Schools is known throughout Montana as a cutting-edge, innovative District, which families and students are drawn to because of our exceptional programs, and services that are designed to drive the success of each student.

A Vivid Description of the Desired Future:

- We have a state-of-the art, facility that serves the needs of our students and our surrounding communities.
- Our school schedule and offerings meets the needs of students and families on their terms.
- Our parents are highly engaged in the school and school activities.
- We collaborate with our school systems to provide the best educational opportunities for not only our students, but students from other districts benefit from the expertise and knowledge of our staff.
- Our progressive recruitment and retention of staff has resulted in highly engaged and dynamic staff that are student-centered from the classroom to extra and co-curricular activities.
- Not only does our school provide a high quality education and other opportunities for our students, we provide adult education programs that benefit parents and other community members.
- Because of our vast course offerings, our students have access to college courses and credits well before they enter post-secondary institutions.
- We have outstanding vocational programs for students who desire an alternative path to college.
- Our early education opportunities and collaboration with others is designed to ensure the success of each student as they progress through our school.
- Our course offerings in the science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematic fields are unmatched.
- We take an individualized approach to education and offer tracks that coincide with each student's skills and desires for their future.
- Through our efforts and the support of our community and others, we have tapped into alternative sustainable funding sources for our school.
- The technology that we utilize is contemporary and provides our staff and students with global, culturally diverse learning opportunities and the tools necessary to succeed globally.
- We have effectively tapped into the vast human resources in our community to provide enhanced opportunities for our students.

- We have effectively incorporated a required community service component into our curriculum.
- Our students are provided with hands-on, practical, business-oriented applications as part of our course offerings.
- Because of our efforts, our school is the hub of activities in the Sun River Valley and the community fully supports the school, our vision for success and our strategies to succeed.

5-10 Year Planning Horizon

Assumptions Regarding the Relevant Future for the Sun River Valley Public Schools

In order to make progress against the 20 year Envisioned Future, Sun River Valley Public Schools 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 the District to constantly recalibrate its view of the relevant future, a basis upon which to update the strategic plan on an annual basis. As the outcome-oriented goals that will form the basis of the long-range strategic plan will be based on this foresight, annual review of these statements will be an appropriate method of determining and ensuring the ongoing relevance of the strategic plan.

Creating the Assumptions - during the Strategic Planning meetings held in 2015, the Sun River Valley Public Schools Board of Trustees, Staff Leadership Team, and faculty made many assumptions about the future. While many different assumptions were made, see Appendix “A” to this Plan for those assumptions that are likely to have the greatest influence on the success of Sun River Valley Public Schools.

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 Sun River Valley 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 Sun River Valley Schools Board, Staff Leadership Team, and faculty.

Goals of the Sun River Valley Public Schools

Goal Area 1: Student Programs and Services

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five years: As a result of our efforts, we have exceptional programs and services that benefit all students and enhance the learning opportunities for each student.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

- We will implement a track system that allows students to take courses of instruction and have access to opportunities that follow the desires and skillset of each student.
- We will enhance student opportunities in the areas of dual credit and self-study courses for students who excel in these types of learning environments, including but not limited to, exploring alternative hours of instruction to give our students these enhanced opportunities.
- We will enhance opportunities for students to engage in problem solving, critical thinking and project-based learning that instill a sense of work ethic and skills necessary to be successful in life.
- We will solicit information from non-traditional public school families for the purpose of offering programs and services that fit the needs of these families and their children.
- We will make enhancements in our offerings with the goal of implementing an individualized approach to education.

Goal Area 2: Community Engagement

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five years: The Sun River Valley community is engaged in our educational programs and school-related activities alike. As a result of this collaboration, our school and our community have prospered.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

- We will enhance our relationship with local clubs and groups with the goal of increasing the involvement of participants in community activities.
- We will increase our adult educational offerings, courses and activities.
- We will actively promote the positive attributes of our school and our community locally and externally.
- We will enhance the opportunities for our community members and others to volunteer in our programs and activities that provide our students with increased opportunities.

Goal Area 3: Enhanced Resources

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: We have successfully sought out and obtained non-traditional resources. As a result of our efforts, our District, community, students and staff enjoy vast opportunities that have not been possible in the past.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

- Through the promotion of our school and community, we will increase our student enrollment counts.

- We will enhance our collaboration with businesses and other local resources to give our students and staff additional opportunities for growth and experiences.
- We will explore alternative, non-traditional funding sources such as grants, donations, partnerships, and collaborations with other individuals/organizations with the goal of ensuring long-term sustainable funding sources to enhance the programs, services and opportunities for students and which benefit our community.

Goal Area 4: Staff Recruitment and Retention

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: Through our efforts in actively promoting our community and our school, we have successfully attracted and retained quality staff who are highly enthusiastic and actively engaged in our school and community functions.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

- We will explore and actively seek alternative housing options for our staff within our community.
- We will actively promote our model of positive leadership and supportive professional development.
- We will explore options for enhancing both the financial and intangible offerings to employees that attract and keep quality staff employed in our District and invested our community.
- In order to enhance the collaboration and team spirit among our staff, we will provide enhanced opportunities for our staff to interact in informal, social settings.

Goal Area 5: Technology

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: We have effectively incorporated technology into all aspects of the District to enhance our educational opportunities for students, our public relations initiative and to ensure that our students, parents and community have access to relevant and contemporary technological advancements.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

- We will seek out funding sources that support our technology initiative.
- We will enhance technological applications that provide our students with improved learning opportunities.
- We will enhance our collaboration with advanced educational/vocational institutions that can provide our students with greater opportunities using technological advancements, including but not limited to, access to on-line courses.
- We will provide enhanced professional development opportunities for our staff with the goal of effectively using relevant and contemporary technologies to enhance teaching and learning and in preparing students for their futures.
- We will provide increased opportunities to inform and to showcase to parents and community members the technology advancements and other innovations we are effectively using to enhance student learning.

Goal Area 6: Facilities

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: We have maintained and upgraded our facilities to meet the contemporary needs of our students, staff and community.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

- We have a facilities plan that anticipates the future needs of our students, staff and community.
- Our community understands our facility needs and supports our short-term and long-term goal of having contemporary facilities that enhance student achievement and enhance our community programs and activities.

Appendix “A”

Megatrend Analysis to Help Inform and Assess Sun River Valley Public School District’s Strategic Plan

Assumptions about the future (5-10 years)

Assumptions: The following are 5-10 year assumptions concerning the key external trends, challenges, or issues facing Sun River Valley Public School District in the future. They may represent either future opportunities or threats to the District.

5-10 Year Planning Horizon

Assumptions Regarding the Relevant Future for the Sun River Valley Public School District

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Creating the Assumptions - during the Strategic Planning meetings, the Sun River Valley School Board, Staff Leadership Team, faculty and community made many assumptions about the future. While many different assumptions were made, what follows are those assumptions that are likely to have the greatest influence on the development of Sun River Valley Public Schools' Strategic Plan.

Assumptions about the future

Demographics

- We anticipate that the trend of increased out-of-district and fewer in-district students attending school elsewhere will continue.
- We anticipate that the trend of an aging local population will continue.
- The Sun River Valley covers a vast geographic area. As a result, we have no centralized community. We do not anticipate that this will change.
- We anticipate that the trend of the Mennonite population purchasing property in the Sun River Valley will continue. As a result, we need to reach out and better collaborate with this segment of our community.
- We anticipate that the trend of having a transient population with non-traditional family structures will continue.

Business and Economic Climate

- We anticipate that the Sun River Valley will continue to be a bedroom community to Great Falls and as a result, we do not anticipate that our business climate will significantly change.
- The lack of a local restaurant has impacted the connectivity and social aspect of the area. Unless we get that back, we anticipate that this will continue to impact our opportunities for social interaction with others.
- We have vast Vo-Ag resources in this area and we anticipate this trend to continue. As a result, we need to tap into these opportunities for our students.

Politics and Social Values

- The trend of not having our staff participate in activities needs to change. If we are going to be successful, we need the support and buy-in from the staff on all issues that impact our students and the District.
- We anticipate that kids who are at-risk will continue to need the assistance and intervention of the District in order to be successful.
- We anticipate that the quality of life that we enjoy in the Sun River Valley will continue to be of value and we can tap into this in order to positively promote our area, community and our District.

Technology and Science

- We anticipate that advancements in technology will continue to enhance individualized educational opportunities for our students.
- With advancements in technology, we will need to be proactive in educating students and others about the appropriate use of technology.
- Our Ag Department is far more advanced than other programs. We need to continue our efforts to maintain our competitive advantage over others.
- We anticipate that the trend of students having opportunities other than college-bound will continue. As a result we need to ensure that we are meeting the needs of students and tapping into the vast vocational resources and opportunities that exist.

Legislation and Regulation

- We do not anticipate any additional funding from the state or the federal government.
- We anticipate that the issue of recruitment and retention will continue to be a priority for school districts, including our District.
- We anticipate that the issue of aging school facilities will be a focus of discussion in coming years.

5-10 Year Planning Horizon

Mega Issues facing the Sun River Valley Public 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. These questions can serve as an ongoing "menu" of strategic issues that, using a knowledge-based approach in gathering insights relative to Sun River Valley Public Schools' strategic position and directional choices for each of the issues, can be used by the Board to create regular opportunities for strategic dialogue about the future issues facing the school district.

Note: The questions are not necessarily arranged in priority order.

Mega Issues for Consideration

- How do we increase our financial capacity and other resources to ensure that we have the ability to provide a state-of-the-art, dynamic public school for the community and students we serve?
- How do we effectively promote our school and our community to ensure that the Sun River Valley community is a vital area that attracts people who want to remain in the area and become truly invested in our community?