

Help Plan Our Future

CASS World Café August 16, 2018 Kananaskis

Question 1: What are ways I can “apply” my vision/organizational statements?

Comments with respect to alignment of statements and goals:

- Yearly strategic plan - 5 year - personal plan as to how it links back to the larger statements - goals with deadlines. Stay aware of alignment
- Principals present their 3-year AERR showing alignment with priorities
- Using the new assurance model, ensure that the belief statements are aligned with the outcomes that are achieved
- Do not have schools with their own vision statements. Make sure that all schools use the division's statement. This unifies all the schools and they have had a voice in creating this and does not create vision-fatigue when a new leader comes into the building
- Our "Mission" is out there and shared often, however the vision statements are not used every day. Plan to test the vision out and promote for one year informally and see if there is uptake from stakeholders to share these statements also. Want to meet with principals to see if they reflect these statements back and through dialogue. If not, these will need to be reviewed
- Permeation and constant reflection are critical. Make it so that no one can hide from it. Have everyone own it, not rent from it. (e.g. Post questions for parents to ask teachers about the vision statement)
- Ensure that school-based educational plans are aligned with district priorities and statements
- Try to ensure that Instructional Services departments also reflect the vision of the district through the actions of each employee
- Seeking to build consistency with focused questions based on AERR and priorities to seek evidence
- Assess budgets to determine priorities, ensuring funds are directed in the right place to feed into the big picture
- Common language, understanding the "why"
- All communication needs to reflect back the organizational language
- Common language/linkage between the vision
- Resources support the priorities - end up being words on paper
- How are you aligning your budget to the vision and priorities?
- Making sure everyone is aware of the vision/organizational statements - have it visible.
- Leadership team - embedding the language in all things - presentations, evaluations etc. link back to the language intentionally
- Consistency to bedrock language

Comments with respect to strategic implementation:

- Sometimes the supposedly obvious may not necessarily be so obvious for everyone involved - so repetition is key to serve as a reminder
- Provide opportunity for schools similar in scope and size to bounce their ideas and successes off each other
- Coaching to help folks see the big picture in context of the data available
- Communicate the statements everywhere and often
- Focus on the big idea, not the initiative as the long-standing ideas

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- Value statements should drive the priorities. How is this measured? This should be shared as an agenda item with principals a couple of times a year. Principals should also put this on their own agendas with their school staff
- These need to be lived with daily. Unhappy parents will use these statements to prove that we are not living up to the statements when unhappy. This can demonstrate a disconnect in practice. Conversations regularly about vision need to occur all the time, but these need to be authentic and not rhetorical
- Mentorship gives the opportunity - advise to filter through the vision
- Administrator cohorts/mentorship - get the language and support
- Returning teachers also supported
- Each school allocated and budget, given inclusive ed coordinator, coach and counselor. Centralized vision is supported as this group meet and then go back to their schools. Even the playing field in terms of budget to support the vision (instructional allocation model to support vision) e.g. FNMI, ELL, K&E
- Entire jurisdiction, going over vision and priorities, leadership meetings, stakeholder engagements
- School tours - walk about - Trustees with principals spending 1.5 hours to highlight and demonstrate their 3-year plan is alive. Specifically, how it is a living document. "Show and tell" providing examples of the three-year plan. Was able to understand the coherence and the bringing alive the vision/3 yr. plan
- Allocate dollars to certain schools to support specific programming that support goals/vision. Need to ensure accountability to ensure priorities are focused
- Always about the students and learning - how can the service teams ensure they are supporting students
- C&M intention of how a school works, getting input from teachers and students to design the space to reflect learning
- Labor management groups talk about this - types of furniture, cleaning etc. needs to be focused on student success. Recognizing what needs to be done to encourage student success
- Success for students lies at the basis of all decisions - when people come for advice, or ask "Can I do this?", the response is "Does this support success for all students?"

Comments with respect to mission and vision:

- Explicit about focusing on how actions directly feed into mission and vision. Cause and effect view in the context of ground realities
- Seeking feedback on how the schools apply and internalize the mission, through tangible examples
- Priorities viewed in the context of vision and triangulating with examples
- Priorities that are set need to be related to the three-year plan and ensuring that these are linked to the vision statements
- Communications group creates videos in normal course, but each of these start and end with reminders of the mission and vision. These go on to the website ordinarily
- Each organizational department needs to permeate the district's vision into their yearly plans and their daily work
- Using "What would it look like if the best happened?" for mission, vision, values and placing those comments visually throughout schools and district buildings. This would allow for the parents and stakeholders to really understand what the vision is for the jurisdiction
- Mission is what you want to do, vision is preferred future, so, maybe this isn't needed to be repeatable
- Vision could be an extended version of the mission statement

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- Being cognizant of "vision-setting fatigue" to ensure that there are ways to set vision in new and fresh ways for those who have been this before
- 1 on 1 conversation with folks not senior enough - help them make the connection to the vision
- Structure is important in facilitating the vision - always focused around the priorities. What are our goals, visions?
- Welcome back breakfast/safety meeting - getting Sr. Leaders to show up at non-instructional meetings to demonstrate the vision
- Begin with mission and vision at all meetings - 2 or 3 sound statements that all can relate to
- Utilizing communications department to distribute key messages that include vision and mission statements in contentious issues
- Consistency in dealing with people, reflects the vision and mission
- Embed the vision or mission when difficult conversations need to occur - "the district is "- trying to make a link with what I am saying to the global vision of the district

Comments with respect to staff interactions:

- Having non-educator staff understand these statements. Encourage them to provide examples. Provide stories and celebrate. Connect the dots
- Schools appreciate the CO visits - feel engaged if done regularly
- Connection with the Chief Super is indeed very key
- Specifically work with non-certified staff to help make that connection
- Start with staff to ensure that the vision is written to articulate the optimal experience for the students in a tangible way
- Be sure that ALL staff are engaged in the visionary process and statements, such as support staff, caretakers and bus drivers.
- Supporting non-instructional personnel to understand why certain things need to be done for students – e.g. custodial staff need to understand why certain furniture is needed

Comments with respect to barriers that may exist (and possible solutions):

- One barrier is distance for rural districts (incorporate trustee visits and walk through with principals. Try to bring people together, using data to move people forward)
- Admin. is new and very inexperienced. (Trying to develop a common language with leaders)
- Management vs. instructional leadership
- Difficulty getting subs (Balance budget with PD)
- Heavy focus on PD - push back from staff (Package and build PD and use the "train the trainer" model. Every 2nd Friday off - Allowed for PD to happen without instruction being interrupted)
- PD without needing so many human resources to support teachers being out of the classroom - need to speak more on this topic

Comments with respect to strategies for evaluation:

- PD experiences are centered on the district visionary statement, then tracked to see which schools are involved in which visionary development
- Feedback to ensure evidence exists
- Oral communications seen as inadequate - seeking to promote written and visual aids for broader teams, including principals - seen success with this
- Try to differentiate between lip service feedback and tangible feedback backed with action
- Demonstrating solid evidence of the 3-year plan that is visible

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Question 2: What evidence exists that the learning community is “living” the shared vision for all learners?

General Comments with respect to the question itself:

- Challenge in the question of the word 'all'. It's a daunting task to find evidence for every single person. Give a feeling of the American direction of "no student left behind"
- Learning community includes parents and community

Comments with respect to tools that provide evidence:

- ThoughtExchange engagements validate the work being done and re-enforce the vision.
- Surveys done reasonably frequently
- Annual school surveys (Accountability pillar survey), parent satisfaction surveys
- Overall results - could include enrolment
- AERR
- Embedded in the 3-year plan (attach quotes from the feedback)
- Feedback from community engagements - use ThoughtExchange
- Data and achievement measures (Diploma and PAT results, AERR)
- Student School budgets: where is the money being spent
- Forums and the OURSCHOOL survey
- Have soft evidence but feel it is evidence - When school developing their mission and vision statements and incorporate the district vision shows they are living the mission and vision.
- Diploma and PATs could be evidence of living Mission and Vision but may not be evidence of living vision as they are doing their own thing - high performance school may not be sharing their own vision.
- When you see the things happening that align with a belief and value – e.g. use of learning coaches - a priority to support teachers - not mandatory - how often are they used - this is tracked and is evidence
- In AERR would show at the school and district level alignment between vision and outcomes - reflected on the accountability pillar - would be qualitative and quantitative evidence
- Promised to spend a day in each school twice a year - speak to teachers - these conversations with staff and students - gives you a real sense of what is taking place in a school (e.g. Talk to student who is sitting in office)
- Evidence is being present
- Numbers only tell a certain story
- Quantitative evidence would come from tracking suspensions, completion, supports for students evident how you set up your support

Comments with respect to stakeholders:

- Posted on website - very public documents
- Accountability to the Board - monthly reporting on the Strategic Plan - provides a check and balance that we are on-track
- Celebrations of data that shows achievement towards goals (i.e. increased literacy scores)
- Monthly school presentations to the Board (over 2 years, every school would cycle through)
- Trustee attendance at all school council meetings - very intimately involved with local issues and experiences.
- Advisory committees - students, teacher advisory

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- Advisory groups - school councils
- Advisory groups with the First Nations.
- Wisdom and visioning circle - consistent participation with elders
- Weekly updates- Superintendents report (what is happening in schools)
- Teacher Advisory groups
- Be transparent in what you are doing
- Giving voice to community through word cloud - have way for quiet people to have a voice especially when you have multicultural diversity

Comments with respect to mission and vision:

- Bringing vision to life with non-education staff - connecting everyone to the mission and vision - advisory groups with employee groups (review the three-year plan with these groups as well)
- School communications - consistently using the language of the mission and vision
- Vision posted in schools
- Incorporating the vision at every board meeting
- Common language used
- When introducing initiatives, make connection between what is happening and the core purpose - does the new initiative permeate the environment - if meaningful to learning community everyone would have a frame of reference based on core beliefs
- Develop a visual that represents the vision
- the vision statement embedded in videos that are made
- When the vision comes back to you through the community (parents, staff, students) in conversations etc.
- Are schools just copying the statements and using verbiage but not enacting the Mission and Vision?
- Be clear about your Mission and Vision - What is the end in mind

Comments with respect to schools and staff:

- Is the priority on staff meeting agendas? (school staff meeting agendas reviewed at the central level)
- Going into schools and keep track of how often CO leaders visit schools
- Student leadership council
- PLCs - asked to bring evidence to these meetings
- Divisional learning days - share learning and evidence with each other
- Observe in school walk- throughs
- Demonstrated in classrooms-school visits
- Staff meeting agendas
- Office morale - you can walk into the school and know what is happening

Comments with respect to alignment:

- Alignment with three-year plan (school plans aligned with 3-year plan) - leverages the collaboration at the school level
- School visits clearly demonstrated alignment with priorities - literacy
- Analysis of PD opportunities - look for alignment on vision and priorities
- Cohorts of new teachers and administrators (mentorship) - topics align with 3-year plan
- Quarterly opportunity for school to present their evidence of how they are applying the statements and highlight for the benefit of other Principals
- Professional Development with admin and staff will have an alignment with the vision

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- How does one help with the permeation - It requires work that is intentional
- Moving from procedural structure - whether we are meeting the success of all students is a process - can articulate how
- Jurisdiction carries the voice - we are the melody and schools are the harmony - We don't want to create status quo schools - we want people to take risks - take advantage of all that is available in the community

Comments with respect to process that provide evidence:

- Interviews - internal applicants speaking to the vision and mission.
- Report card to the community and to local newspapers (after AERR results)
- Review of complaints/concerns
- Process to evaluate
- When you get a phone call from a parent - conversation challenging you are not walking the talk
- How would you know - where are you with respect to baseline?
- Intention to deliver on that - in relation to baseline
- Bring students into office to speak to three-year plan

Comments with respect to school leadership:

- Conversations with school leadership - principal meetings
- Feedback from leadership groups.
- Review at district meetings
- Information shared from admins what is happening in schools
- Place structures in place when having conversations with principals
- Have common questions for all schools
- All about the conversation - for talking about literacy, numeracy etc. - I know they are living it - all about modelling – repeat, repeat, repeat

Question 3: What process is used to facilitate ongoing review of the shared vision by stakeholders?

Comments with respect to Superintendents:

- Superintendents visiting schools frequently
- Every 3 years review, superintendent community consultation. This is done in alignment with the 3-year plan
- Each year spend 2 full days in each school
- Central office roadshow to selected schools - key messages for all staff and feedback gathering
- Sr Admin knows it is valuable, but does it really mean anything to our staff - Teachers, support staff etc.? - If we (Sr. Admin) really believe it is important, what are we doing to make the connection and resonate with the staff?
- Utilize school councils to share info and gather feedback - same process is inherent in what they do
- Meet with student leaders and ask them what their plan would be to improve things that they had specific influence over
- Need to speak with all grade levels - don't assume that younger kids don't have good ideas - kids come up with the ideas for discussion

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- Use of guiding questions to move discussion along and to see where the school's admin are and are they aligned - helps Sr. Admin to see who they need to spend more time with to help with the messaging
- Superintendent evaluation - questions are asked regarding the value statements
- Visit all the schools- how can we support them -visit 2 times a year
- Within our portfolios we meet with schools at different time- when the plan is created, specific subject identifies which super will go for more frequent touch points
- Senior admin team originally rotated from school to school as their ""office"" but now moving to a central office space so format will change
- Meet with school-based admin team 3 times a year- begin-mid-end
- Try as many strategies as we can 80% trustees are new- engagement is going to be key
- Timing and reporting of AERR/3YEP
- Gem was to track board meeting & staff meeting agendas to determine if we said something was a priority, was it evidenced in the meeting minutes.

Comments with respect to Boards:

- Board priorities are highlighted in weekly meetings. School admin meets monthly - focus on priorities
- Board survey type possibly ThoughtExchange. Use open ended question - what do you see for the future for . . .
- Trustees go to School council meetings use same questions
- As new boards come opportunity to review as an educational opportunity and flow into working on currency
- Board monitor reports allow for a nature review
- Student advisory board that presents to the board 4 times
- For programs put in a 3-year review process to keep the feedback current and brought to the board. i.e. 15 programs with 5 brought each year
- Every 3 years work with the board to reaffirm priorities with a focus group involving admin, teachers, parents, students
- With new board doing an orientation which included some of the challenges and how they are dealt with. Allows to create stage to enable them to understand their role.
- Trustees asking how the school plans are actualized in the school - can schools demonstrate this?
- Every board meeting, principal will present at one board meeting a year
- Board members attend all school council meetings
- Appetite from board members to tweak-based on feedback
- Board asks questions to delve deeper not a formal evaluation from
- Board wants to understand stuff more, 4
- Board members are active and attend lots of events
- Governance vs operations needs to be clearly explained- only one voice

Comments with respect to processes to facilitate review:

- Meet with principals every month, information online and facilitate PD
- Once a month- use circle practice based on instructional practice
- Meet 1/3 standards as direction in
- Look for evidence opportunities and guidance to tell their story- priorities set direction- why are we doing this- must be connected-3

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- Regional school council & regional student council asking feedback on priorities, what could be improved
- Dig deeper into priorities, see impact of the consistency
- Consider the focus and the data, do exit interviews with staff- they are more likely to give you feedback
- Look at the previous year's board meeting to make sure
- Staff meeting agendas to make sure they are priorities
- Tracked PD and priorities, reflected in the budget
- Annually do a review of the organizational statements - Board - Principals- staff - parents and brought back for changes
- Use of Thought Exchange
- Use Thought Exchange with public
- Use of local newspapers with 2-page ads to share successes
- Use of social media/video
- Use of specific data reports - annual results survey

Comments with respect to school leadership:

- Dedicating time at leadership meetings to share the expertise in the room to build networks. Topics include how do you build mission, vision to life
- White paper test - select topic and see how they can articulate visionary leadership
- Every year prior to teacher convention bring together all leadership including trustees reviewing education plan. could bring a greater emphasis to foundational statements.
- Need to develop the leaders we have
- Family of Schools for meetings and discussions - video conferencing in rural areas where there is great distance to travel between schools
- Each school has different needs- generally principals gather feedback-parent council meetings- new initiatives
- Video conferencing if applicable and appropriate
- 10 board meetings a year- principals report their AERR
- Admin team-input and share information from other schools
- Beginning & end of year meetings
- Brain Storm question to ask
- Schools present to supers
- Admin team present to group of supers - school plan focus

Comments with respect to stakeholders:

- Have specific stockholder groups: teacher advisory, student advisory, parent advisory, non-certified staff (support and contractors) - want everyone to be involved
- 2 full days of community engagement reviewing educational plan. involves both staff and community
- Do all stakeholders 'own' the value statements - success for all students?
- Need to look at the statements and check to see if they are really valued by all stakeholders
- Look at different stakeholders differently and how we share the specific information with them - share then in a 'world cafe' method and gather feedback
- Gather community feedback- wisdom & guidance FNMI group -review jurisdictional goals
- IT framework- survey with stakeholders (staff and students)

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- Parent-student teacher surveys
- ThoughtExchange, informal surveys, community survey
- Specific yes-no question
- Use School surveys to gather information with some open-ended questions
- Thought exchange- questions instead of one question
- Surveyed parents already and then

Comments with respect to schools and staff:

- "Make one change" which allows for teachers to view other teachers in action and what is one practice they can adopt. This has move to bringing in the community and trustees to see how the classroom is evolving to create understanding of changing teaching practices
- Schools reporting to board on something that is happening in school
- Are we training our staff properly?
- Use a PowerPoint to share the AERR with staff as a celebration rather than just a document that collects dust - message gets out there
- Exit surveys when students leave a school- what could we have done differently
- Do the same with international students

Comments with respect to the shared vision itself:

- Needs to be simple and concise - not too detailed - needs to be ongoing, a work in progress - 5 goals are reasonable and can be worked on by all stakeholders
- Strategic plans with tangibles that are on a timeline that must be completed that are linked to the District values etc.
- Change to community grouping this year-using common questions and ideas -whole
- Accountability pillar as a guide-rely on schools to provide the specifics
- Set goals
- Vision & mission is good, but it is the priorities that actualize it

Comments with respect to the benefits of review:

- Helps to facilitate communication - provide supports re PowerPoint, consistent messaging etc.
- 3-year education plan is just that - doesn't change yearly - comes directly from the 'values'
- Lack of understanding of the Value Statements and Messaging - need to look at the Why?
- Shift to true engagement from just passion - are we all growing in the same direction?
- Get evidence we are not meeting our mission, not working as well as we could be
- In order to grow we need to look at vision mission to guide

Comments with respect to potential barriers:

- Limited resources
- Difficult with so many requests/demands/requirements from the Ministry makes it difficult for jurisdictions
- Schools present budget & AERR to the board every year, it is scheduled but occasionally gets side tracked- no formal reporting
- Alignment is important - sometimes District plan does not align with school plans