

ELKHART COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022: The Elkhart Promise

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROVIDE THE BEST
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ELKHART STUDENTS



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ELKHART
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Board of School Trustees Welcome

To the Elkhart Community:

The Board of School Trustees is pleased to present the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan: The Elkhart Promise to the greater Elkhart community. It is a plan built to meet the challenges of today, while preparing our students and our community for a better tomorrow.

Highly effective schools, businesses and not-for-profits regularly identify a direction or a plan, they take action, track results, and stand ready to make adjustments if conditions change. The Board has established a promise for the school district which will guide our schools for the next five years. The Board will make every effort to provide the resources needed to accomplish the plan's goals. A main component of the plan is the regular reporting to the community on the progress of meeting the plan's goals.

The plan is made with an understanding of the challenges currently facing the school district, while also anticipating future challenges. Schools across Indiana face pressures related to economic inequality, uncertainty of state assessment and accountability systems, a teacher shortage, loss of local school board control, and reduced state investment in public education. Locally we face the financial pressures of open enrollment laws, coupled with the understanding the City of Elkhart is experiencing little to no population growth in key demographic areas. We acknowledge the impact of homeownership and mobility. We understand the need for fostering and promoting community, business, not-for-profit and intergovernmental partnerships.

To meet the needs of our students and to allocate limited resources, the Board is not reacting, but is *proactively planning for the future*. In this way, the district can make decisions which are sustainable, while meeting the needs of all students. Regardless of these obstacles, Elkhart Community Schools has a responsibility and commitment to contribute to the well-being of Elkhart through teaching, providing unprecedented opportunities for students, and demonstrating a commitment to service leadership. Developing appropriate solutions to these challenges will determine the quality of education students will receive and the sustainability of the district over time.

The Board believes this plan represents the promise of what can be accomplished over the next five years. This plan sets high expectations in order to ensure the success of all of our students and the greater Elkhart community. The Board invites you to partner with us as we strive to achieve this transformative plan for a better tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Board of School Trustees
Elkhart Community Schools

Elkhart Community Schools Leadership

ECS Board of School Trustees



Back, from left: Glenn L. Duncan, Susan C. Daiber, Karen S. Carter

Front, from left: Carolyn R. Morris, Douglas K. Weaver, Dorisanne H. Nielsen, Jeri E. Stahr

For additional information about the Elkhart Community Schools Board of School Trustees, please visit: <http://elkhart.k12.in.us/home/administration/board-of-school-trustees/>.

If you wish to contact any member of the Board of School Trustees, please contact the board secretary at 574-262-5506.

The Elkhart Promise



OUR PROMISE

Every student is known by name, challenged and supported by highly effective staff, and in partnership with the community, will graduate career/college ready and life ready.

YESTERDAY

Elkhart Community Schools has a rich history of educating students who have become leaders in the Elkhart community and beyond. We have successfully worked alongside the community with changes in the economy, population and educational needs of our students.

TODAY

The climate of education has changed public schools in many ways, including funding and state-required assessments. Although ECS has demonstrated continued growth on state standardized assessments, they are only one indicator of the success of our students, staff, and schools. The rapidly changing educational field and state leadership require schools to quickly react to changes that directly impact our students, staff and schools.

TOMORROW

As ECS looks to the future, we understand the continued need to excel on state standardized testing, but we also recognize that our primary goal of successfully educating and preparing students for the future **will never waver**. Through looking to the future and setting high goals for ourselves and our students, we are dedicated to ensuring every student graduates career ready, college ready, and life ready, with a superior education.



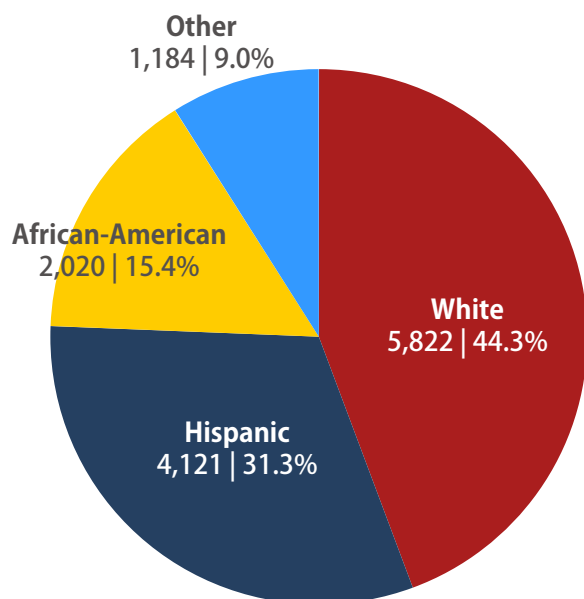
Elkhart Community Schools Data

13,147
STUDENTS

21
SCHOOLS

1
FAMILY

STUDENT ENROLLMENT 2015-2016



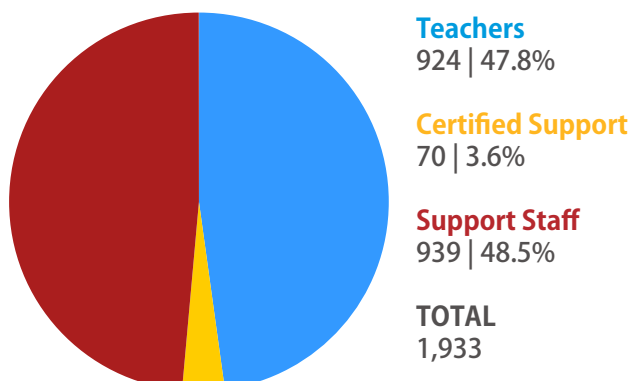
Limited English Proficiency: 1,877 | 14.3%
Economically Disadvantaged: 8,538 | 64.9%
Special Education: 2,057 | 15.6%

CAMPUSES

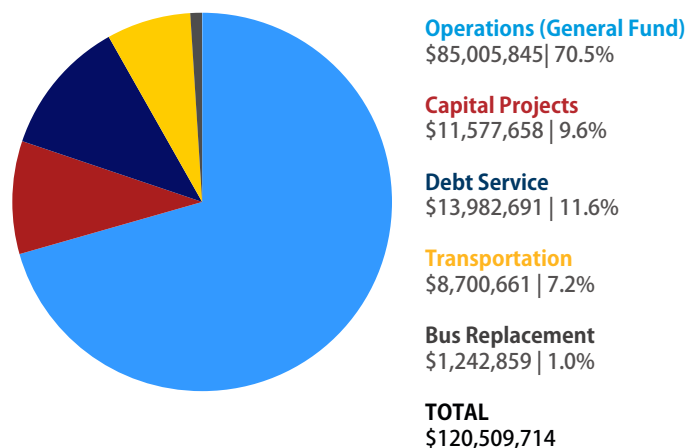


**Includes Elkhart Area Career Center and
Elkhart Academy at Tipton Street*

EMPLOYEES



BUDGET



Strategic Plan Development

In the fall of 2015, Elkhart Community Schools embarked on the development of a strategic plan. The objectives inherent in the process were to formulate goals, which would provide a future focus for Elkhart Community Schools and to guide the decision-making of the Board of School Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff. The proposals being considered establish goals and strategies aimed at achieving significant progress toward ECS's aspiration of becoming an educational destination location, preeminent in offering unprecedented opportunities for students, community service leadership and characterized by excellent teaching and engagement.

- The process began with a review of the 2012 Action Plan and results, which included the 2014 referendum.
- The next steps involved community meetings and surveys led by Ball State University.
 - Chief among these findings was the need to develop marketing and communication plans and the need to build unique partnerships with businesses, non-profits, and other local entities in order for the entire community to achieve greater success.
 - Ball State University's School of Education also began examining several aspects of ECS and comparing Elkhart Community Schools to other districts across the state.
 - One key finding was many students living in the Elkhart Community Schools district were choosing other public school options to attend. Ball State University also reached out to 187 households to determine why families had chosen a different public school option. The following are examples of the comments received during the telephone interviews which serve to highlight parent concerns: (a) a limited focus on middle and higher-level students, (b) the length of summer vacation, (c) inadequate programming for students with learning difficulties and (d) less than optimal middle school experiences.
 - ECS and Ball State also surveyed community and staff regarding programming, familiarity with the district, perceived performance, and the selection of schools. Two key questions in the survey were: "How familiar are you with Elkhart Community Schools?" to which 88.7% responded they were either "Very Familiar" or "Familiar." When asked the question: "How satisfied are you with the quality of education students receive through Elkhart Community Schools?" 61.6% responded they were either "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied". 11.6% responded they were "Dissatisfied" or "Very Dissatisfied".
- During the months of November and December a focus group comprised of representatives from the community, including parents, staff members and Elkhart community members, was established to determine the next steps. The focus group members heard presentations and conducted conversations on budget and finance, open enrollment, free and reduced lunch status, early childhood education, international programming, technology, transportation, school calendar, school start times, schools of choice, survey results and grade configuration. The focus group made several recommendations for the board to consider. Over the next several months the board met to consider the recommendations of the focus group and to establish the framework of a strategic plan.
- The final step before the board considered approval of a strategic plan was to receive public input through a series of staff meetings (May) and widely-publicized community meetings (June/July). Specifically the board wanted input on school start times, school calendar, and building configurations.

Following the community meetings, the board met to produce a first draft of the plan and present it to the community for comment. The Board is tentatively scheduled to vote on the plan's adoption in October 2016.

The 2017-2022 Strategic Plan consists of four parts:

1. Strategic Plan Goals (School Board)
2. Strategic Plan Action Plan (Superintendent)
3. Strategic Plan Quality Indicators (School Board)
4. Annual Cycle Review (School Board)

Building a Bold Plan

These outcomes are the result of three strategic plan goals:

Goal 1: Educate, Retain and Attract Students

Goal 2: Ensure a Highly Effective Staff

Goal 3: Create Vibrant Relationships to Ensure Successful Students, Schools and Community

Together with parents and the community, Elkhart Community Schools sees great potential for our students. By building a bold plan and setting high strategic plan goals, we are determined to provide unmatched academic opportunities for our students. The following outlines the goals for our students, staff and community.

Staff	Elementary School	Middle School	Freshman Division	High School
<i>All staff will feel proud to be an ECS employee.</i> Staff salary schedule will be regionally competitive and reflect career earning potential Staff will be supported through meaningful, ongoing professional development in a wide range of areas ECS culture will encourage collaboration ECS will improve internal / external communication Staff will be surveyed annually regarding job satisfaction	<i>All students entering kindergarten in 2017 will meet or exceed standards for reading by the end of grade 3.</i> Align curriculum district-wide Ensure grade-appropriate assessments Provide professional development for staff Incorporate PreK-12 learning pathways Expand PreK Offerings Public/private partnerships Increase Head Start programming Build relationships with local childcare providers	<i>All students entering grade 6 in 2017 will pass three high school credited classes by the end of grade 8.</i> Implement block scheduling, conducive to creating a sense of community Expand high school level offerings Create processes that ensure successful transition from middle to high school courses Teach prioritization skills Institute a career capstone project for middle school students	<i>All students completing grade 9 will successfully attain 10 credits and identify direction for their high school study.</i> Research students' personal strengths and weaknesses Develop a laser-like focus on student success Offer courses designed to help students identify areas of career interest Provide greater opportunity for student leadership Expand and strengthen the current Freshman Academy programs Develop capstone project	<i>All students will graduate with a superior education that prepares them for success in career/college and life.</i> One high school campus that provides a greater depth of knowledge in areas of study, including: early college, STEM, Health and Human Services, Arts and Humanities, Business and Management. Provide unmatched opportunities to attain college credits and job certification Provide opportunities for students to excel in Polytechnical industries and achieve workforce certification Expand school-to-career opportunities, such as internships and work-study Develop capstone project and service projects

Community

The Elkhart community will be engaged in the success of ECS students and schools. ECS students and schools will be committed to the success of the community.

Strong family involvement
Service learning projects

Strong partnerships with non-profit organizations
Alignment with businesses for student opportunities

Greater connection between our educational programs and community needs
Dedication of our district to the success of a vibrant community

Goal One: Educate, Retain and Attract Students

All students will experience a world-class education which will allow them to graduate career/college and life ready, as measured by data driven results.		
FOCUS	ACTION STEPS	DATA SOURCES
Set and communicate high, clear expectations.	Establish a process and cycle for reviewing curriculum and expectations for students PreK-12	
	Identify and establish individual instruction plans for students who need instruction in a non-traditional classroom setting, including high ability and special education	
	Identify and adopt literacy standards for PreK-12	
	Communicate academic performance expectations to parents and students at the beginning of each school year	
	Achieve district-wide accreditation from a nationally-recognized source	
	Achieve state and national recognition for student achievement	
Create an environment where all students feel challenged, supported and accepted.	Employ highly-effective staff	
	Provide meaningful, ongoing professional development for staff	
	Offer a wide-range of co- and extra-curricular activities for students, starting at the elementary level	
	Pursue a plan to operate grade 6-7-8 middle schools at North Side, West Side and current Elkhart Central, based on boundaries	
	Pursue a plan to open and operate a 6-7-8 middle school at Pierre Moran, as a magnet option	
	Pursue a plan to open and operate a vibrant Freshman Division	
	Pursue a plan to open and operate a top-tier stand alone grade 10-11-12 High School	
	Survey students annually, regarding school environment	
Create unique, engaging and motivating programs.	Employ highly effective staff and coaches	
	Create a culture that welcomes mentors	
	Develop a policy which creates a career success certification and service learning graduate requirement (capstone)	
	Explore flex-credit opportunities for students	
	Create regional, national and international programming and travel opportunities for ECS students	
	Create school of choice opportunities within the district	
	Conduct ongoing research and development of 21st Century career and college opportunities	
	Create a secondary book study program and a leadership speaker series for students	

Goal One: Educate, Retain and Attract Students

All students will experience a world-class education which will allow them to graduate career/college and life ready, as measured by data driven results.		
FOCUS	ACTION STEPS	DATA SOURCES
Align resources and infrastructure to achieve student learning expectation.	Instructional leadership establishes a process and cycle for reviewing curriculum and expectations for students K-12	
	Implementation of the Strategic Plan annual review cycle	
	Implementation of a 10-year facilities plan	
	Seek grants and other outside funding sources	
Provide environments that are welcoming, clean, safe and conducive to learning.	Review and upgrade operational plans for Food Service, Transportation, Safety and Security, and Building Maintenance	
	Establish an ongoing priority on technology to create a relevant and personal education, with technological integration	
	Survey parents on calendar and start times	
	Implementation of a 10-year facilities plan	



Goal Two: Ensure a Highly Effective Staff

ECS will create and maintain a climate and a culture which attracts and retains highly effective staff members.		
FOCUS	ACTION STEPS	DATA SOURCES
Institute measures that improve workplace climate and culture.	Develop a culture which supports innovative practices and collaborative decision making	
	Improve internal communication	
	Research feasibility of an employee childcare center	
	Secure/develop a headquarters that represents the standards of our district	
	Provide employees with opportunities to support students, innovative teaching, extracurriculars, and the community through a variety of established non-profit organizations	
	Commitment to retain all existing teachers on staff throughout implementation of the strategic plan	
	Survey staff annually, regarding job satisfaction	
Strengthen recruitment and retention of staff.	Establish and maintain a regionally competitive salary schedule	
	Develop a recruitment strategy which demonstrates a commitment to excellence and inclusion	
	Institute an employee program which reflects career earning potential	
	Research feasibility of a policy which allows staff living in Michigan to pay a reduced rate of tuition for their students to attend ECS	
Strengthen professional development and evaluation.	Create an evaluation system designed to improve staff performance	
	Research and implement effective teaching strategies, efficient curriculum formats and digital content applications for all subjects	
	Institute a professional development program for all certified and classified staff	



Goal Three: Create Vibrant Relationships to Ensure Successful Students, Schools and Community

Elkhart Community Schools will enter into relationships and partnerships essential for student, school, and community success.		
FOCUS	ACTION STEPS	DATA SOURCES
Strengthen family involvement.	Create a culture that welcomes families and encourages involvement	
	Establish active parent organizations in each building	
	Provide parents with an opportunity to volunteer	
	Provide parents with the opportunity to meet with the superintendent and other building/district administrators in a face-to-face, casual setting	
	Communicate academic performance expectations to parents and students at the beginning of each school year	
	Meaningful and ongoing professional development for staff, regarding customer service and effective communication	
	Effectively communicate with families and the community	
	Encourage schools to continue hosting family activity events	
	Communicate community-wide programs (Boys and Girls Club, Lifeline, Triple P classes, Five Star, etc) with parents and encourage attendance	
	Survey parents annually, regarding school experience	
Strengthen school and community partnership.	Establish annual meetings with Elkhart City/County departments, civic groups, non-profit organizations, local real estate agencies and local religious groups	
	Establish robust community center and adult education program, located at Pierre Moran	
	Work collaboratively with community partners to secure funding for a post-secondary feasibility study	
	Work collaboratively with youth-based organizations to secure funding to improve afterschool offerings for students	
	Continue to provide support for the development of the Elkhart Education Foundation	
Promote, support and strengthen strong relationships with students, staff and the community.	Create awareness in the business community about ECS' school to work, internships and volunteer programs	
	Seek various ways to outsource ECS resources and services to other educational institutions and community groups	
	Implement marketing strategies to promote ECS students, staff and programs, as well as the greater Elkhart community, including establishing an annual Quality Profile and strengthening existing relationships with media outlets	

Quality Indicators: Measures of Success

Results

Elkhart Community Schools has the responsibility to our community to meet and exceed our goals, as we continue to grow and develop the opportunities in our district. We have developed the following criteria to help us measure our progress. Updates on our progress will be communicated through our annual Quality Profile.

Goal One: Educate, Retain and Attract Students

INDICATOR (STATE)	BASELINE 2016	GOAL 2017	GOAL 2018	GOAL 2019	GOAL 2020	GOAL 2021
1. Report Card						
2. IREAD-3						
3. AMAO						
4. Indiana Standardized Test, ESSA Compliance						
5. High School Graduation Rate						
6. ACT/SAT - % of students taking a college entrance exam						
7. Average ACT/SAT Score						
8. Advanced Placement - % of students taking/passing exam						
9. Attendance						
10. Number of 4-Star Schools						

INDICATOR (LOCAL)	BASELINE 2016	GOAL 2017	GOAL 2018	GOAL 2019	GOAL 2020	GOAL 2021
11. Enrollment						
12. Number of graduating seniors enrolling in a post-secondary institution						
13. Number of college/certification credits earned						
14. Number of Advanced Placement courses offered						
15. Number of Dual Credit courses offered						
16. Number of students enrolled in Dual Credit courses						
17. Number of students enrolled in a CTE course						
18. Number of high school credits earned at the middle school level						
19. % of students demonstrating growth on NWEA						

Quality Indicators: Measures of Success

Goal One: Educate, Retain and Attract Students

INDICATOR	BASELINE 2016	GOAL 2017	GOAL 2018	GOAL 2019	GOAL 2020	GOAL 2021
20. Ratio of students to electronic educational devices						
21. Number of students participating in extra-curricular and co-curricular offerings						
22. AdvancEd accreditation						
23. Number of service learning hours performed by students						
24. Number of students enrolled in regional, national and international programming						
25. Number of students participating in internships or work study programs						
26. Number of students earning a career/habit of excellence certification						
27. Number of PreK classrooms						

Goal Two: Ensure a Highly Effective Staff

INDICATOR	BASELINE 2016	GOAL 2017	GOAL 2018	GOAL 2019	GOAL 2020	GOAL 2021
28. % of highly qualified teachers						
29. Number of Nationally Board Certified teachers						
30. % of staff who feel they are valued						
31. % of staff who feel they make a difference						
32. % of staff who feel empowered to try innovative practices						
33. % of staff who feel involved in collaborative decision making processes						
34. Number of staff who are evaluated as highly effective						
35. Number of staff who participate in professional development						
36. % of staff with a tenure of five or more years						
37. % of staff turnover (for reasons other than termination, retirement or death)						

Quality Indicators: Measures of Success

Goal Three: Create Vibrant Relationships to Ensure Successful Students, Schools and Community

INDICATOR	BASELINE 2016	GOAL 2017	GOAL 2018	GOAL 2019	GOAL 2020	GOAL 2021
38. Number of active parent teacher organizations						
39. Develop and administer school experience survey						
40. Number of parents participating in the school experience survey						
41. % of parents/guardians who feel welcomed and engaged by ECS						
42. Number of community members participating in the school experience survey						
43. Number of mentors registered with CARES						
44. % of students impacted by "Youth Service" providers						
45. Development of a marketing plan for increased enrollment and community awareness						



Annual Cycle: 2017-2022 Strategic Plan

Timeframe	Annual Cycle: 2017-2022 Strategic Plan
January	State of the Schools Address Quality Profile: review, publish, and distribute to the community
February	Board Retreat: • Board reviews Strategic Plan • Makes the recommendation to affirm or revise • Superintendent formally revises if needed
March	Programming & Operations Budget review and workshop
April	Programming & Operations Budget recommendations
May	Programming & Operations Budget recommendation embedded into the budget process
June	Local Property Tax Funds and Budgets reviewed with the Board of School Trustees
July	General Fund and budget reviewed with the Board of School Trustees School Improvement Plans Developed at the building level Informal Contract negotiations
August	Beginning of School Year Issue Contracts Contract negotiations begin
September	Community Hearings and Board Approval of Budget Conclude Contract Negotiation and Approve Contract
October	Insurance Committee recommendation School Improvement Plans Submitted to the State
December	Budget Approval from the State of Indiana and revised budget established





ELKHART COMMUNITY SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROVIDE THE BEST
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ELKHART STUDENTS

elkhart.k12.in.us