

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2021

**THE LEARNING COMMUNITY
CHALLENGES AND ADDRESSES
THE OPPORTUNITY GAP FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
ACROSS THE METROPOLITAN
AREA, MAKING OUR
COMMUNITIES STRONGER AND
BETTER PLACES TO LIVE.**

**learning
community**
**DOUGLAS
SARPY**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

p. 3

Learning Community
of Douglas and Sarpy Counties

p. 4

Introduction

p. 5

Strategic Priority I
VALUE-ADDED &
DIVERSIFIED FUNDING

p. 6

Strategic Priority II
EXPANDED PROGRAMS &
OUTCOMES

p. 7

Strategic Priority III
COLLABORATION &
ENHANCED COMMUNICATIONS

p. 9

Annual Review

OUR MISSION

Together with school districts and community organizations as partners, we demonstrate, share and implement more effective practices to measurably improve educational outcomes for children and families in poverty.

OUR VISION

That all children within the Learning Community achieve academic success without regard to social or economic circumstance

CORE VALUES

Demonstrating innovation with a child-family focus.

Committed to accountability and good stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Pursuing a culture of continuous improvement.

Ensuring that programs and practices are culturally respectful.

Fostering an inclusive approach across the metro region.

LEARNING COMMUNITY OF DOUGLAS AND SARPY COUNTIES

The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties is an educational subdivision focused on outcomes and opportunities for children and families. We demonstrate impact through a collaborative network of metropolitan area school districts and community organizations.

LEADERSHIP TEAM



DAVID PATTON
Chief
Executive
Officer



RENEE FRANKLIN
Executive Director
Elementary Learning
Centers



DAVID MOON
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JAMALIA PARKER
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COORDINATING COUNCIL



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INTRODUCTION

The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties embarked upon a comprehensive strategic planning process in the fall of 2016. Our goal was to shape a vision leading to a five-year strategic plan.

TIME OF OPPORTUNITY

With a newly structured Council of 12-members soon to take office, the organization needed current, comprehensive and relevant feedback. The Council and staff embraced the idea that the plan would aim for the continuous improvement that characterizes Learning Community programs.

LISTENING AND LEARNING

A broad community of stakeholders informed this first-ever strategic plan. Key groups included parents, families, school district superintendents, civic and business leaders, child advocates, program partners, community childcare providers, non-profit leaders, local school board members, community activists, higher education leaders and former Coordinating Council members.

Focus groups, surveys and individual interviews provided a foundation for a Staff-Coordinating Council retreat in February 2017. The retreat yielded strong consensus on themes to investigate. Further staff exploration produced a strategic roadmap. In June 2017, the Council approved strategic priorities to guide the future of the Learning Community.

KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Value-Added and Diversified Funding
2. Expanded Programs and Outcomes
3. Collaboration and Enhanced Communications

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Action plans are now in place with timelines, clear accountability and measures for success. Included in ongoing strategic plan evaluation is an important pause. An annual workshop allows the staff and council to discuss progress and consider changes if needed.

PROGRESS NEVER STOPS

Strategic plan development has always been on parallel tracks with work to fulfill the Learning Community mission. During this planning process, the Learning Community has completed many milestones including development of the Community Achievement Plan.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY I

VALUE-ADDED & DIVERSIFIED FUNDING

Advocate for the Learning Community to achieve the best possible outcomes for children, families and the entire Omaha metro region. Secure additional funding sources and expand partnerships to increase collaborative opportunities.

GOAL 1.1 By May 2018, establish a user-friendly and flexible strategic planning and communications process with actions, measures and timelines for success.

ACTION: By fall 2018, begin implementing a series of connected strategies to engage the business community, child advocates and influential members of the community.

ACTION: Explore business community relationships including a Business Advisory Task Force

GOAL 1.2 May 2019: Increase acceptance and engagement with key educational entities.

ACTION: Become actively engaged and accepted with the ESU Coordinating Council (ESUCC).

GOAL 1.3 By May 2020, increase awareness of the Community Achievement Plan and the importance of improved pathways for all students and families.

ACTION: Develop Evaluation Plan

ACTION: Develop CAP Communications Plan

GOAL 1.4 May 2018: Begin planning for a collaborative network to support operations and future programs.

ACTION: Secure funding to support full implementation of six school Early Childhood Partnership, add new Parent University classes and expand other successful programs.

GOAL 1.5 October 2018: Create a planning strategy to explore a Learning Community foundation to attract and manage outside donations.

ACTION: Explore and present structural framework for accepting and attracting outside funds for program and operational support.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY II

EXPANDED PROGRAMS & STRONG OUTCOMES

Grow innovative and family centered 2-Gen programs, especially in high poverty communities. Demonstrate proven outcomes to increase impact from birth to Grade 3 and contribute to comprehensive child development.

GOAL 2.1 By September 2018, explore post-secondary and workforce collaborations to expand current 2-Gen programs.

ACTION: Finalize service design, budget and present program concept.

ACTION: Implement service and begin collecting benchmark data.

GOAL 2.2 By fall 2018, explore the Gomez Partnership and collaborative potential including outside support.

GOAL 2.3 By summer 2018, conduct a human capacity analysis to inform staffing levels for possible expansion. Weigh the benefits of employees vs. contracted positions.

ACTION: Analyze results and present staffing recommendations.

GOAL 2.4 By fall 2018, expand the Learning Community South family learning program.

ACTION: Complete the transition to a three-year program and provide for more in-depth services.

GOAL 2.5 Fall 2019: Expand Early Childhood Partnership for six school full implementation as planned.

ACTION: Expand Parent University offerings

ACTION: Develop sustainable plan for before/after school program at Kellom and Conestoga schools.

GOAL 2.6 Fall 2018: Begin investigating a third community center and its potential to serve children and families from Achievement Subcouncils three, four and six.

ACTION: Develop a timeline to complete a needs assessment, conduct key interviews, evaluate the level of support and impact on the overall budget.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY III

COLLABORATION & ENHANCED COMMUNICATIONS

Enhance communications and collaboration to effectively advocate for the Learning Community mission. Increase community awareness and build support for the organization and early childhood education. Build upon demonstrated success to increase national recognition.

GOAL 3.1 May 2021: define and share the Learning Community's purpose with key audiences to measurably increase awareness and community appreciation.

ACTION: Develop clear message, elevator speech and related communications in collaboration with staff and Coordinating Council, using focus group, media analysis and other available resources.

ACTION: Establish a template for the organization's first Community Report. Continue refining in following years to support fundraising, advocacy and partner appreciation.

ACTION: Refresh branding to support expansion decisions as part of the overall campus plan.

GOAL 3.2 Fall 2018: Develop strategy for legislative advocacy and define new opportunities for effective outreach in support early childhood education, the needs of children and families and the role of the Learning Community itself.

ACTION: Refresh brand guidelines for user-friendly advocacy by the Learning Community brand ambassadors: staff, Council, partners, families and supporters.

ACTION: Continue improvements towards a more user-friendly Legislative Report. This includes a 20-page summary to replace the Demographics section.

GOAL 3.3 Fall 2018: Develop plan to engage with high level entities and advocate for children, families and public-private education.

ACTION: Engage Business Community & Explore Business Advisory Task Force

ACTION: Develop website toolkit to support early childhood advocacy.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

COLLABORATION & ENHANCED COMMUNICATIONS

cont'd

GOAL 3.4 Fall 2018: Develop a plan for higher level leadership and policy relationships so that the Learning Community is in position to earn its “place at the table”.

ACTION: Encourage site visits to develop relationships with state and national decision-makers

ACTION: Develop strategies for more consistent outreach to local school boards, educational affiliates.

ACTION: Enhance expanded 2-Gen relationships starting with Aspen Ascend Network

GOAL 3.5 August 2018: Expand upon updated Learning Community identity to build a Co-Branding Strategy for successful partner relationships and more effective collaboration.

ACTION: Introduce partner branding guide and toolkit to support shared goals. Summer 2018.

ACTION: Hold a first-ever Partner Appreciation with the intent of scaling up yearly to showcase the Learning Community partner network.

GOAL 3.6 June 2018: Begin to integrate newly defined message and elevator speech into expanded strategies for positive community engagement. Build awareness of the Learning Community’s value to support funding and expansion goals.

ACTION: Phase in a more proactive Media Strategy including outreach to the Omaha World Herald editorial board.

ACTION: Develop strategies to build positive visibility and engagement including social media, paid and non-paid advertising as outlined in the Communications Plan.

ACTION: Expand communications capabilities with materials and tools including a new mobile responsive website and community report template.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The educational and community landscape is always changing. An annual review in February continues our strategic planning process in a systematic way. This check-point ensures that the 2017-2021 Learning Community Strategic Plan remains relevant and aligned to our mission.

After completing the program evaluation process (fall) and legislative report (January), the leadership team will thoroughly review each strategic priority to answer two key questions:

1. Are the components of each strategic priority still appropriate?
2. Does progress meet expectations? If not, what are the obstacles?

The Learning Community Coordinating Council Workshop will be held annually to review clearly summarized results to evaluate progress and assess new opportunities. The workshop will also benefit newly sworn in council members and build upon their onboarding experience.