



ALABAMA
ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL BOARDS

Strategic Planning Done Right

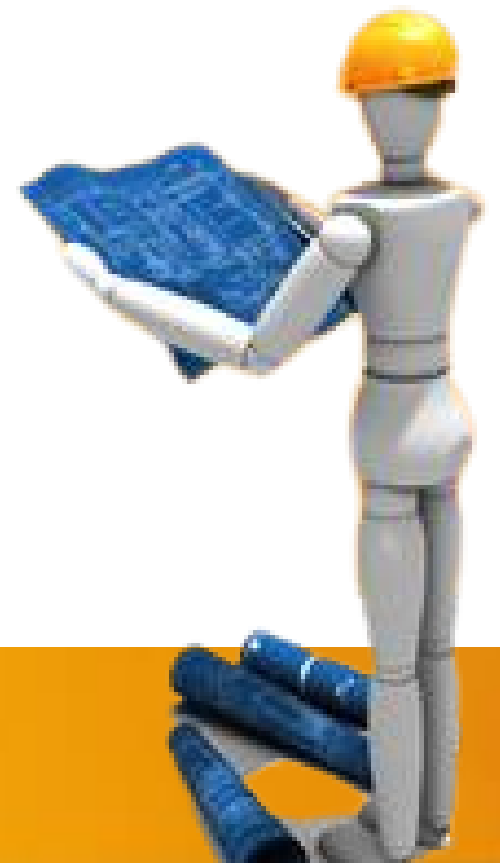
“Creating a vision for the future”

AASB Spring Academy
Leadership for Policy and Planning
March 2, 2024
Frank P. Costanzo, Ed.D.



Who am I:

- A former superintendent
- Understands administrative challenges school systems face.
- Experienced with evaluations, HR, job descriptions, compensation studies, organizational restructuring, creative resource allocation and virtually all other facets of executive leadership for school boards.
- Assists with strategic planning, evaluating both personnel and school system operations and providing leadership and direction in the event of a superintendent vacancy.
- Can conduct training for administrators, and, in partnership with AASB, can do your whole board training as well.
- Experienced working with salary schedules and involved in schedule adjustments and development; evaluation of pay scale, and other types of pertinent analysis.
- Guided strategic planning for: Andalusia, Baldwin County, Chilton County, Crenshaw County, Henry County, Houston County, Lauderdale County, Limestone County, Madison County, Scottsboro, Sylacauga, and Talladega.



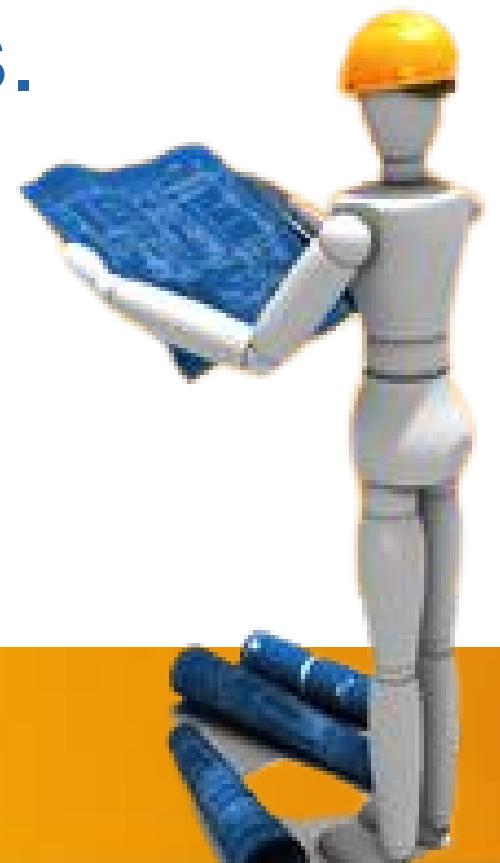
Agenda

- Welcome
- Overview of Strategic Planning
- Strategic Planning Process:
- Role of School Boards
 - Phase 1: Community Engagement
 - Community and Employee Surveys
 - Phase 2: Steering/Planning Team Committee
 - SWOT Analysis
 - Identify Goals
 - Mission, Vision, Beliefs and Values
 - Phase 3: Action Teams and Plan
 - Identify Objectives, Strategies, Activities, Timelines
 - Phase 4: Public Presentation
 - Phase 5: Implement Plan
- Questions



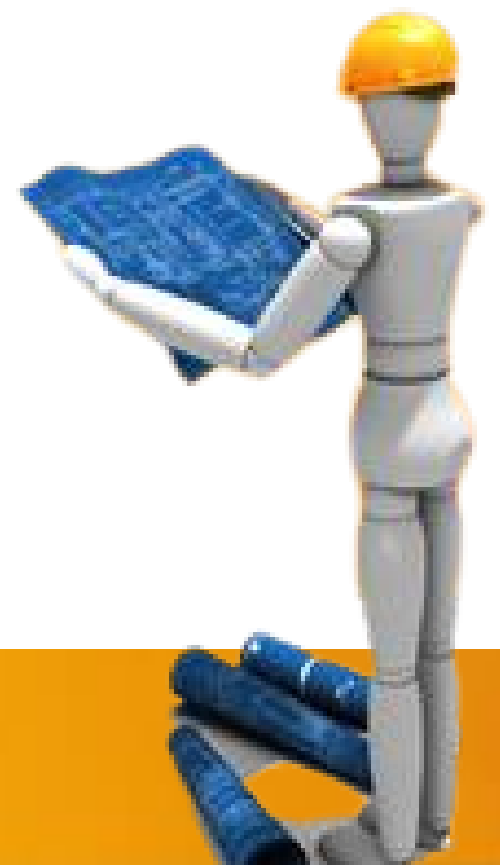
What is a Strategic Plan?

- A road map that will guide the decision-making by the board and superintendent.
- A system for monitoring and evaluating programs and practices.
- An active plan that can be adjusted to meet the needs and challenges currently facing the school system.
- A plan that ensures accountability and operational effectiveness.



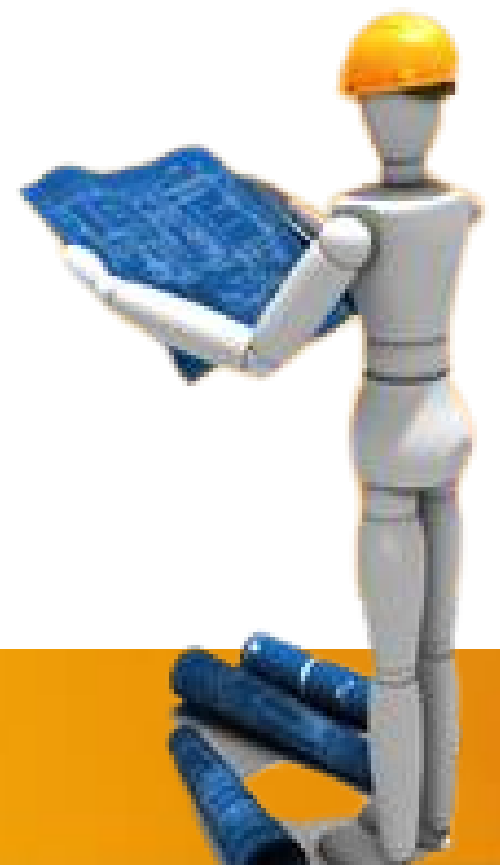
What is a Strategic Plan?

- Creates a vision/direction for the future of the school system that will translate into defined goals, objectives and strategies for achieving long-term success.
- Engages the board, administration, community, students and employees by listening to their concerns and allowing input on school system priorities.



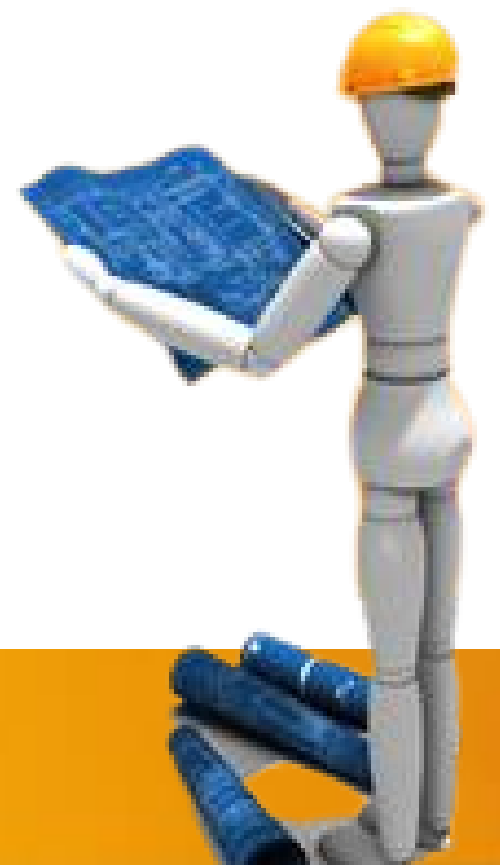
Why Strategic Planning (cont.)

- An organizational management activity used to listen to stakeholders, set priorities with the available resources, ensure stakeholders work toward common goals with a common purpose, and establish agreed upon results.
- A disciplined effort that shapes and guides an organization's purpose, where it believes it can go, and what it believes in itself.



Key Reminders

- This is a system plan.
- Work as a team.
- Listen to other stakeholders.
- The plan should focus on 4-5 objectives.
- Not a “to do” list
- Always do what’s in the best interests of the students.
They are the lifeblood of the school systems.



“In some ways, up until now, we have managed to get community engagement exactly backwards. We decide then we engage. We decide and then we defend. We tell and then we sell. We decide what the community wants for its children then we sell them the solutions.

True community engagement is just the opposite. We engage the community in answering the question at hand and then, we, as part of the community, decide. That shift in language and in actions makes all the difference.”

“Anonymous”



Keys to a Successful Plan

- Agreement/consensus on system priorities and direction
- Keep it simple
- Communication and engagement with stakeholders
- Expect the plan to change
- Plan for accountability



Strategic Planning Process Answers 5

Important Questions:

1. Where is the school system today?

(Internal and External data: Demographics, District Accreditation, Career and College Readiness, Test Results, Graduation Rates, ACIP, Facility Assessments, Capital Plans, Financial Reports, Budgets, and Survey Results)

2. Where do we want to go?

3. How do we get there?

4. What do we value and believe about our students, or employees, our schools and the community?

5. How will the plan improve student achievement and long-term success?



Necessary Assumptions...

- We can always do better
- We can always get better
- We can always plan better
- There is always room for improvement
- “If what you did yesterday seems big, you haven’t done anything today” - Lou Holtz
- “If you always do what you’ve always done, then you’ll get what you’ve always gotten” - *Anonymous*



Continuous Improvement



Components



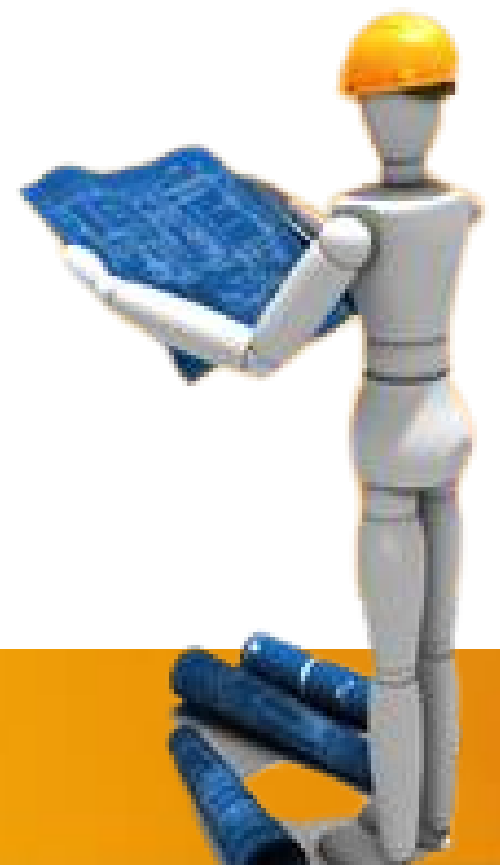
Key Roles of School Boards

- Set clear expectations
- Create conditions for success
- Hold the system accountable
- Build public will and trust
- Learn together as a team



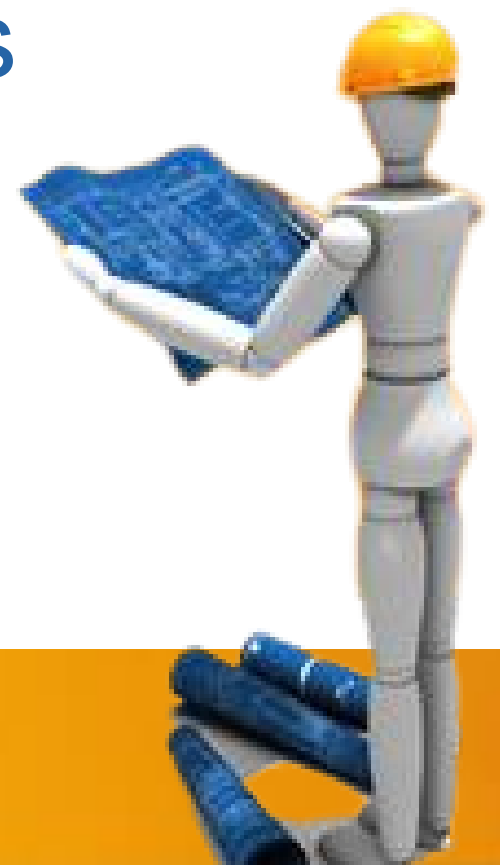
Strategic Areas

- Purpose and direction
- Governance and leadership
- Teaching and assessment for learning
- Resource and support systems
- Using results for continuous improvement
- Finance, facilities, and safety



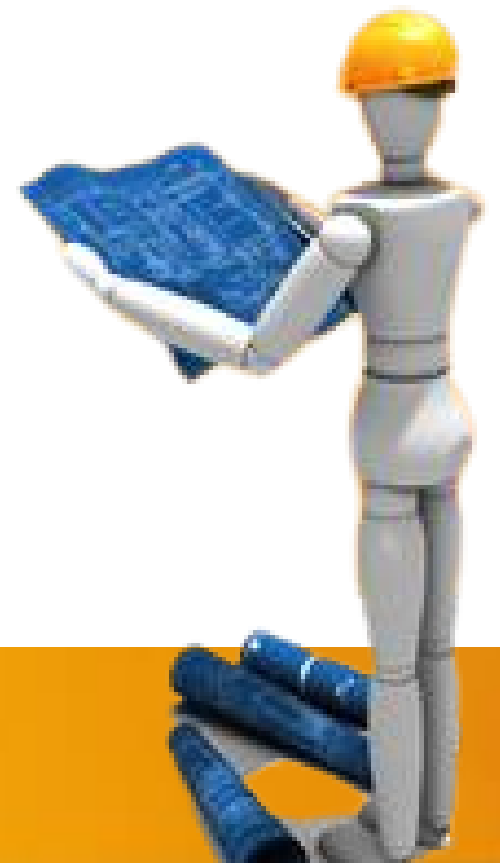
Areas of Performance to Guide the Plan

- Student Achievement at all levels: College and Career Readiness
- Recruit, Train and Retain Quality Personnel (Human Resources)
- Use of Resources, Finances and Facilities
- Operational Effectiveness
- Communication, Community and Stakeholder Relationships
- Professional Development of all Personnel
- Technology and AI



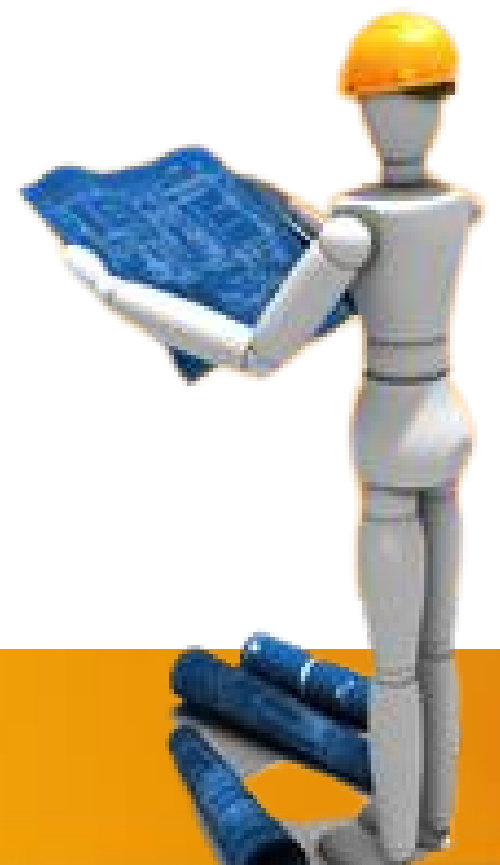
Cognia/AdvancED Performance Standards

1. Leadership Capacity: “commitment to purpose and direction”
2. Learning Capacity: “positive and productive teacher/student relationships, high expectations, challenging curriculum, and quality instruction”
3. Resource Capacity: use and distribution of resources to support the mission of the system”



Cognia's research-based planning process

“Helps school leaders create a vision, a culture of school improvement, and a theory of action to ensure effective implementation. The process results in a strategy map and implementation plan that are clear and concise for all stakeholders to understand and adopt.”



Strategic Planning: Phase 1

Community Engagement

- Community Conversations/Engagement Forums: all communities within the system are represented and engaged
- Employee Conversations/Engagement (Optional)



Community Conversation Questions

1. What are the qualities that define great, successful schools?
2. What are the features of a quality school system?
3. What are the system's strengths and accomplishments?
4. What concerns do you have about education in this community?
5. What concerns or issues do you hear discussed by individuals or groups related to public education?
6. What qualities, skills and abilities should graduates of the school system possess to be successful?
7. If you could design the ideal school or school system, what features and programs would you want to include?



Community and Employee Surveys

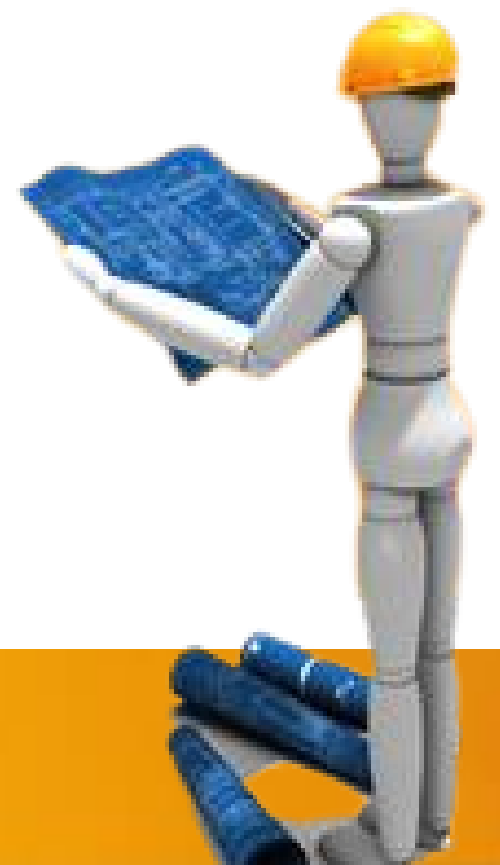
Strategic Plan Community Survey

In preparation for our school system's strategic planning project and as a part of our on going improvement effort, we are reviewing and updating our long-range goals.

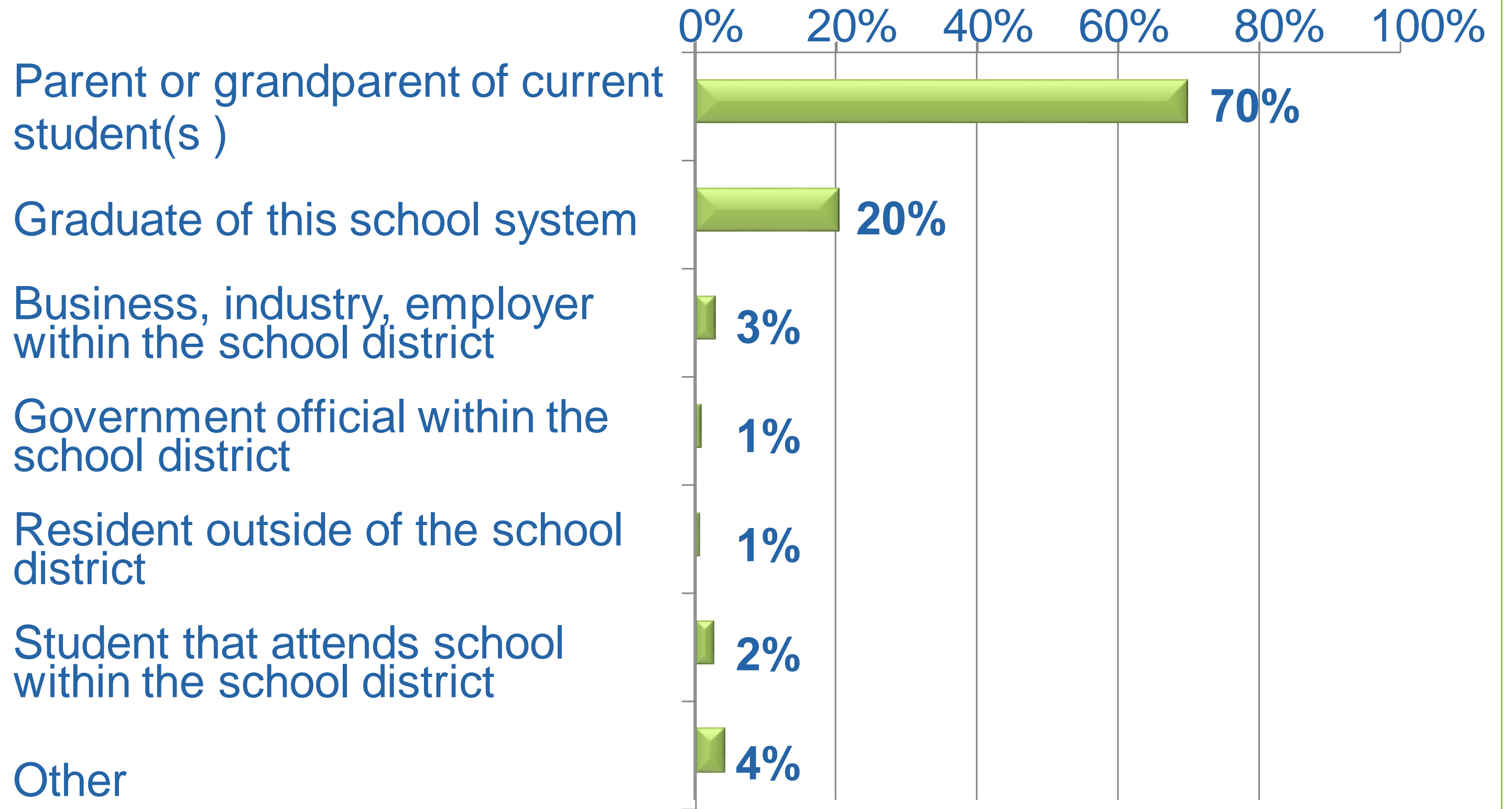
Please take the following survey so that your responses can be considered as we move forward with the completion of a five year strategic plan. Your responses are anonymous and the survey should take about 15 minutes or less to complete. The results will be included in our final strategic plan documents.

We value your input so much that we are asking for the community to share their thoughts and complete the survey.

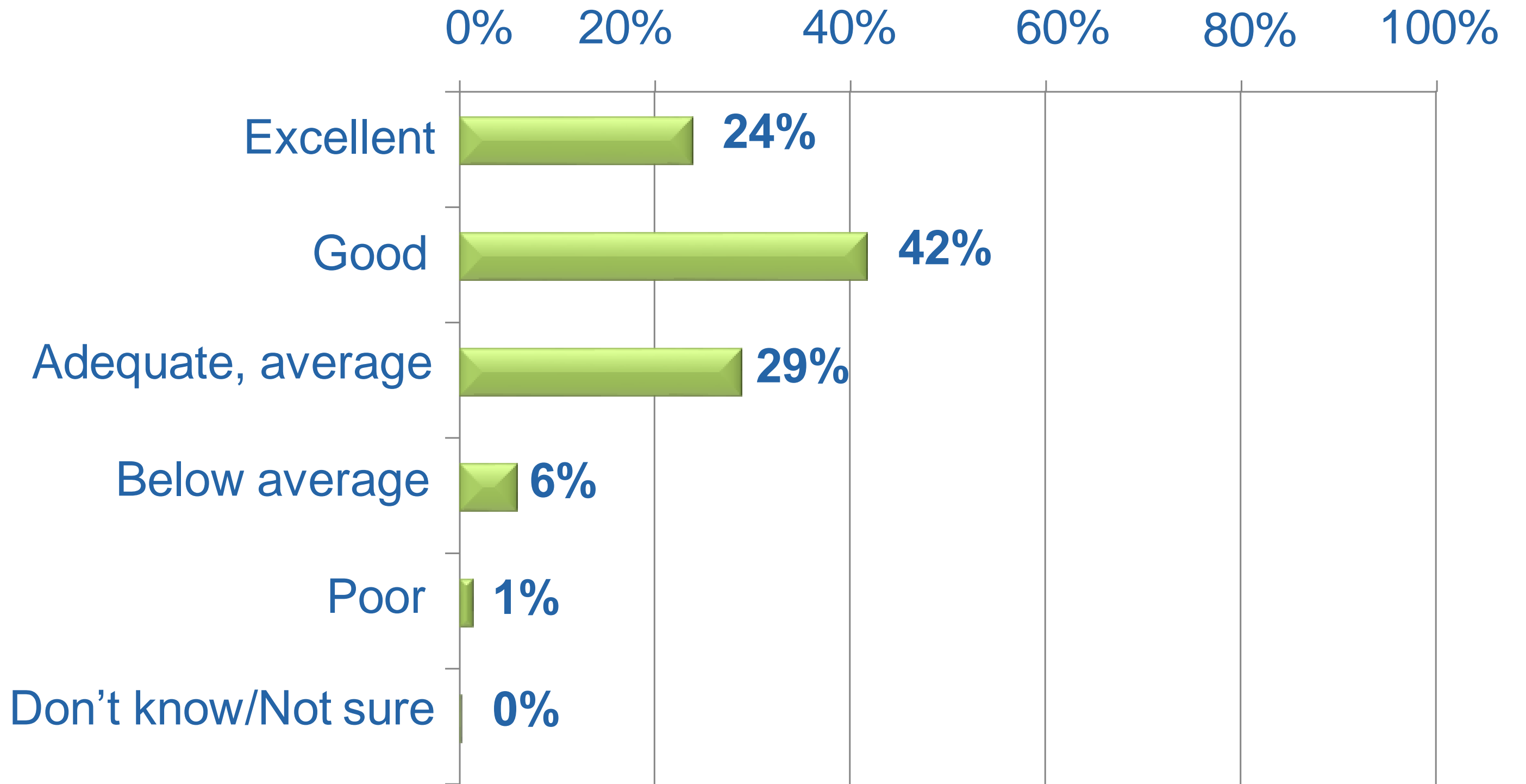
Thank you in advance for your participation!



What is your relationship with the school system?



What is your opinion of the quality of education provided by the system?



Strategic Planning: Phase 2

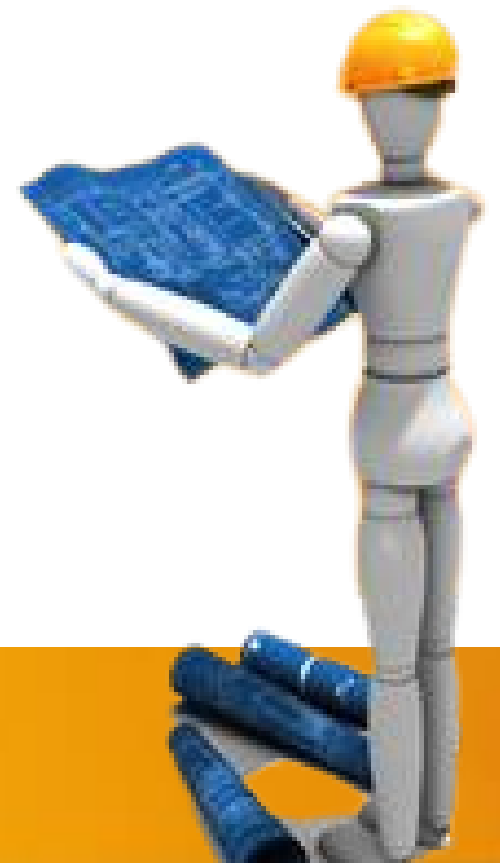
The Steering/Planning Committee:

- Board and Superintendent appoint a steering committee composed of Board members, administrators, teachers, support employees, parents, students, business leaders, city officials and community leaders (25-30 members)
- Alignment- Aligned with ACIP's, system's budget, evaluations/goals of the Board, Superintendent and Staff.



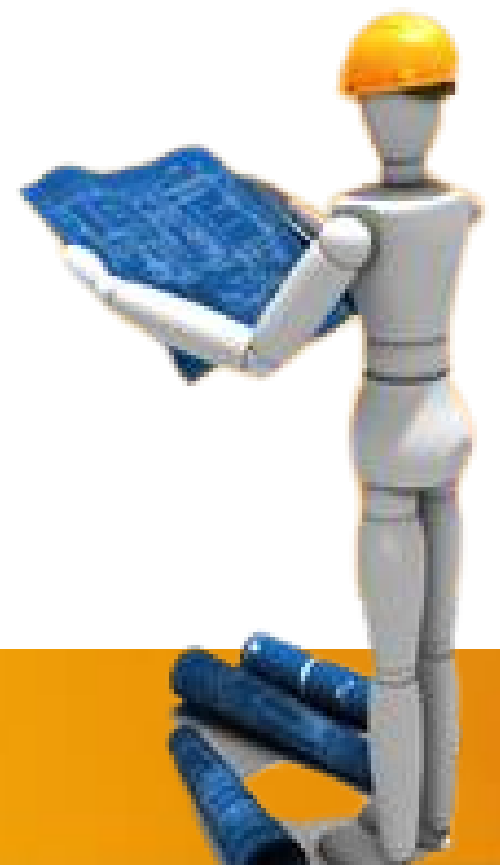
Steering/Planning Committee Roles and Responsibilities

- Analyze and validate Board and Community SWOTS and survey results.
- Identify and prioritize challenges facing the school system.
- Create a Vision Statement: What does the system want to be?
- Create a Mission Statement: Why does the system exist and what is our core business?
- Develop Core Beliefs and Values: What do the stakeholders believe about the system? What do we stand for?
- Develop Goals and Objectives required to accomplish the vision and mission of the system.



Using the board and community responses and the community and employees survey results, list goals under each focus area you would like included in the Strategic Plan.

- Teaching and learning
- Leadership and governance
- Finance
- Safety and discipline
- Stakeholder engagement and communication
- Facilities and resources
- Human resources, quality staff, and professional development
- Technology



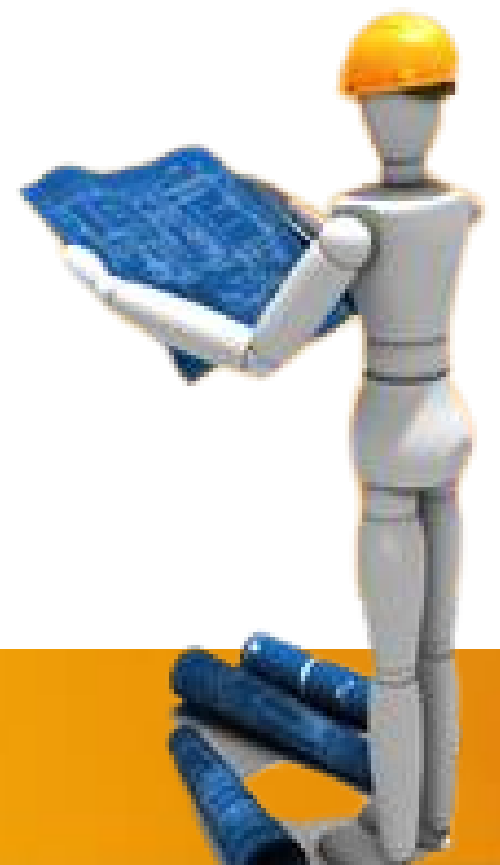
Activity: SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- What does this system do well?
- What unique resources can we draw on?
- What do others see as the system's strengths?

Weaknesses

- What could the system improve on?
- Where do we have fewer resources than others?
- What are others likely to see as weaknesses?



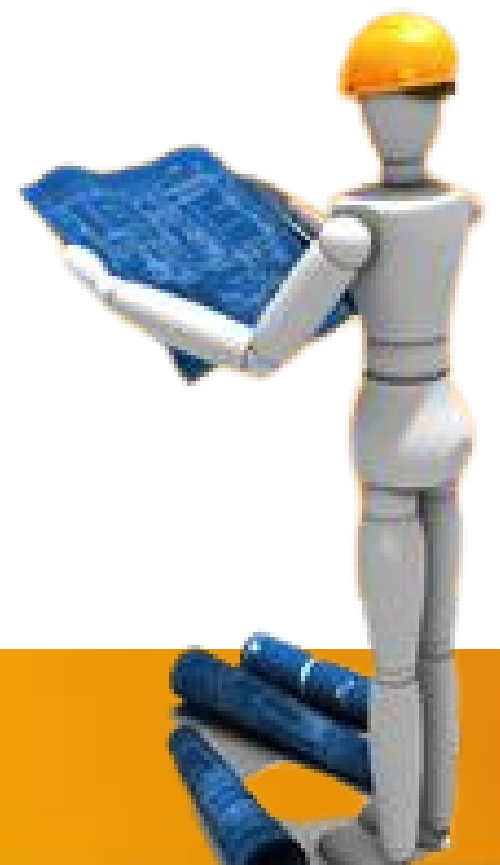
Activity: SWOT Analysis

Opportunities

- What opportunities are open to the system?
- What trends could we take advantage of?
- How can we turn our strengths into opportunities?

Threats

- What threats could harm the system?
- What is happening in the state that could impact us?
- What threats do our weaknesses expose us to?



SWOT Analysis Worksheet

Strengths

What does this system do well?
What unique resources can we draw on?
What do others see as the system's strengths?

Weaknesses

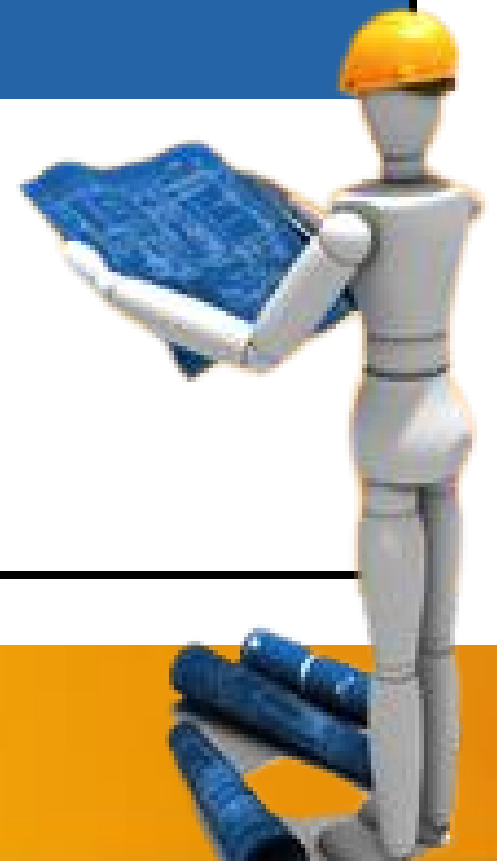
What could the system improve on?
Where do we have fewer resources than others?
What are others likely to see as weaknesses?

Opportunities

What opportunities are open to the system?
What trends could we take advantage of?
How can we turn our strengths into opportunities?

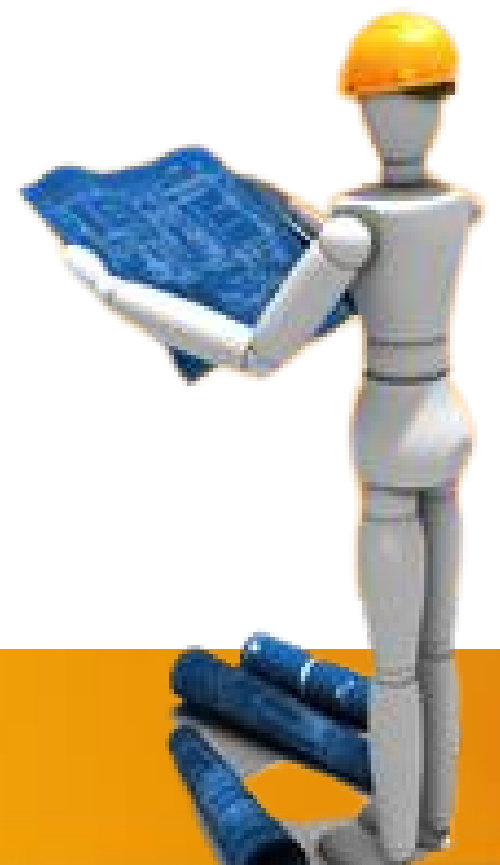
Threats

What threats could harm the system?
What is happening in the state that could impact us?
What threats do our weaknesses expose us to?



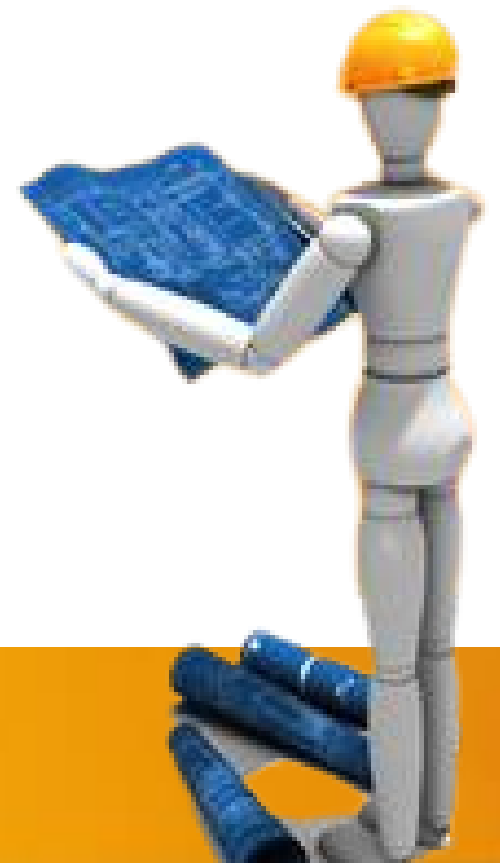
Mission, Vision, Beliefs and Values

- Mission = Purpose
- Short enough that everyone knows when asked
- Vision = To be accomplished
- Short enough that everyone knows
- Beliefs = Statements of Guidance



Vision, Mission, Beliefs and Values, Goals and Objectives

- Vision: What does the system want to be?
- Mission: Why does the system exist? What is our core business?
- Beliefs and Values: What do we believe about the system? What do we stand for?
- Goals and Objectives: Developed based on data from board and community SWOT analysis and survey results.



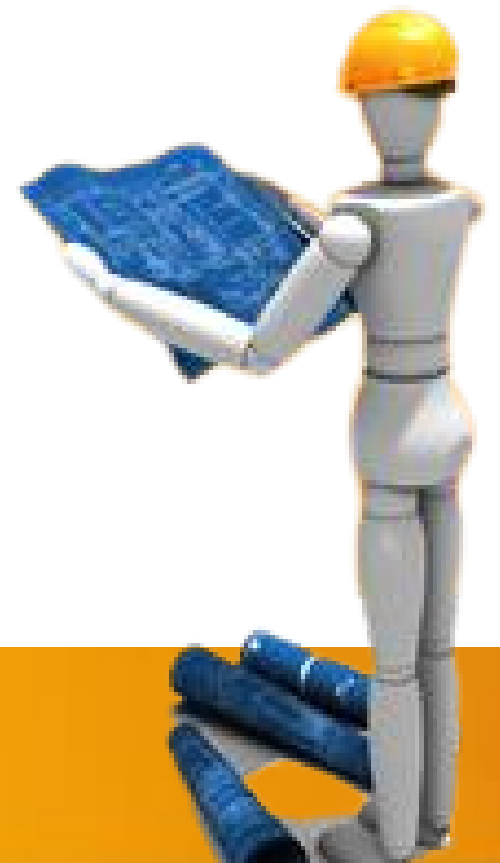
Sample Vision and Mission Statements:

Vision:

- “Learn, Grow, and Achieve”
- “Partner with families and the community to inspire and prepare graduates to be responsible and productive champions of their future”
- “Every Child, Every Future”

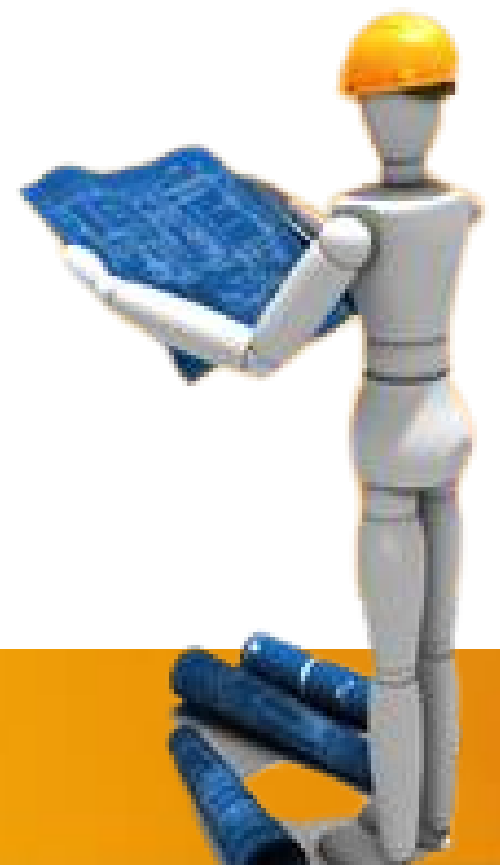
Mission:

- “The Mission of the System is to educate all students using high standards in a safe, nurturing environment fostering academic and career competencies that prepare them to be productive citizens.”



Examples of Beliefs and Value Statements

- Our schools are safe, caring learning communities engaged in continuous improvement, committed to the pursuit of excellence, and dedicated to the success of each student.
- Our employees are qualified, dedicated, innovative, student-centered, and engaged in continued learning.
- Our schools provide quality instructional programs, enriching extracurricular experiences, and a wide variety of opportunities for students to explore their interests, expand their dreams, and develop their talents.
- Our schools partner with families, business, industry, post-secondary institutions, community agencies, and government to create and sustain outstanding facilities, technology, learning resources, and experiences to maximize student achievement.
- Our schools embrace diversity, promote respectful relationships, and have high expectations and performance standards for all students and adults.
- Our schools value integrity, open communication, shared responsibility, innovation, and accountability.



Strategic Priority Examples

- A. Meet or exceed the Alabama 2020 Learning Goals.
- B. Build community pride, spirit and support for the schools because investment in our public schools equals investment in our community.
- C. Create seamless educational pathway in which every child enters kindergarten ready to learn and graduates college and career ready.
- D. Foster health and development of all students through social, emotional behavioral, and physical supports in collaboration with parents and community partners.
- E. Attract and retain qualified and inspired personnel at all levels, able to meet 21st Century learning needs.
- F. Adequately fund infrastructure critical to student outcomes including, but not limited to administrative personnel, facilities, transportation, nutrition and technology.



Strategic Goal Areas

- Provide a framework to describe the system's strategy to reach its mission and vision
- Include critical initiatives that must be addressed for the school system to be successful
- Broad in scope and may include several areas
- Three to five high-impact areas where improvement is needed

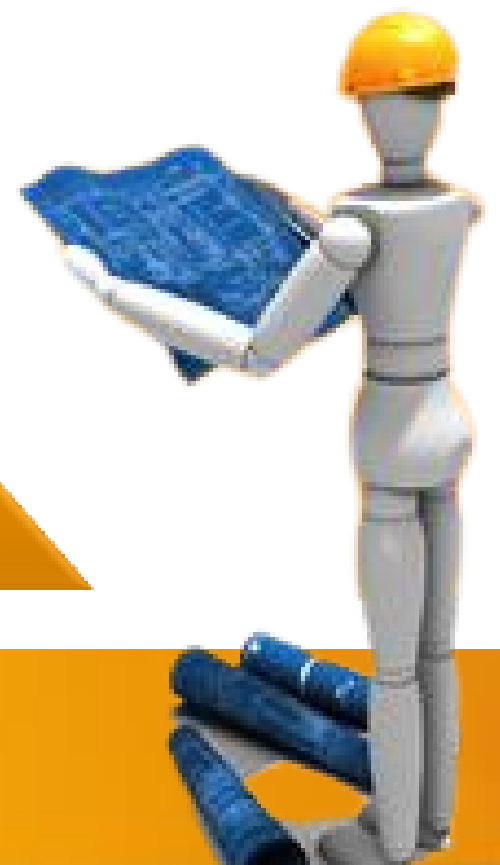


Strategic Planning: Phase 3

- Create Action Teams
- Develop specific initiatives, action steps and activities necessary to successfully execute the plan.



Strategic Planning Pyramid



Objectives

- More specific in nature and aimed at achieving the Specific Goal
- 2-5 items are recommended to achieve the Specific Goal
- Must be measurable
- Example: “Increase reading achievement on state and national assessments.”



Strategies

- Specifically directed statement to work toward successful completion of the Objective
- 2-5 items are recommended to accomplish the Objective
- Not measurable
- Example: “Encourage LETRS training for all K-3rd grade and special services reading teachers.”



Activities

- Statement that is related to completion of the Strategy
- 2-5 items are recommended to accomplish the Strategy
- Not measurable
- Type of activity, dates, resources, funding source, staff responsible
- Example: “Use Title I funds to provide LETRS training for all K-3rd teachers by 2024”
- May include timelines for completion



Strategic Planning: Phase 4

Present Plan

- Hold a work session or Board meeting to discuss the plan in detail before recommendation and approval
- Board and superintendent present the proposed plan to the public (work session) prior to the final adoption.



Strategic Planning: Phase 5

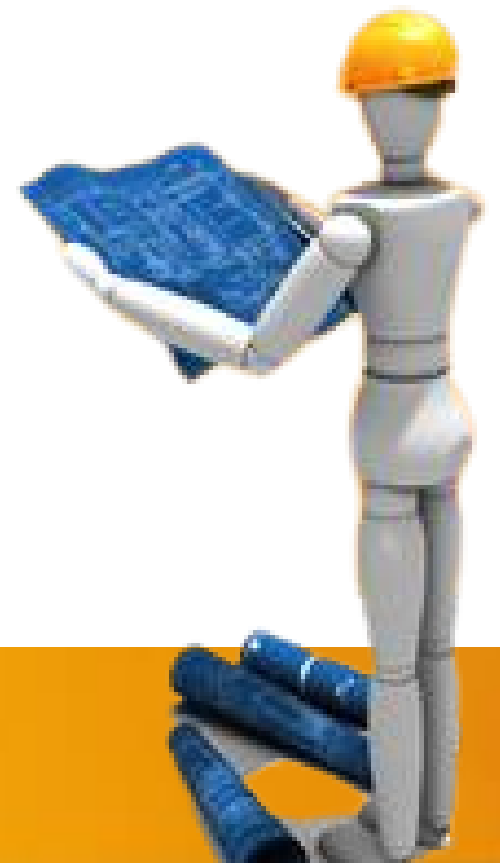
Implement Plan

- Implementation and execution
- Monitoring and reporting
- Examine initiatives, evaluate performance objectives, measures at target dates
- Adjust plan as needed during the ongoing review process



Who Are We?

- Who are we today?
- What makes our system stand out?
- What are our demographics?
- What is our “brand?”
- What is unique about us?



Where Do We Want To Go?

Strategic Goal Areas

- *List goals you would like the board to consider in each area.*
- Student Achievement (Curriculum and Instruction)
- Stakeholder Engagement and Communication
- Efficient Use of Resources/Operational Effectiveness (Finances, Facilities, Technology)
- Quality Staff and Professional Development





ALABAMA
ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL BOARDS

Questions?

Dr. Frank Costanzo

fcostanzo@criterionk12.com

205-614-2073

