

Consortium for Educational Change Strategic Planning Process



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Steps in the Process	Description
Readiness	<p>The purpose of the Readiness/Introduction Session is to acquaint the district with the strategic planning process. It is essential in alignment with CEC’s mission that the process be a joint endeavor between labor and management and include leaders of the board, union and management. Leaders representative of those groups must attend the introduction session. This session will be facilitated by CEC.</p> <p>Following this session, CEC will finalize a contract and submit it to the district to establish final expectations, roles, responsibilities, costs and timelines.</p>
Orientation	<p>The purpose of the Orientation is to answer the question, “WHO ARE WE AND WHAT ARE WE BEING ASKED TO DO?” The Orientation session paints the “The Big Picture” of the strategic planning process so that all strategic planning team members have a shared understanding of the process and their roles and responsibilities in helping the district set clear direction for the future.</p>
Environmental Scan; Data Retreat; SWOT Analysis	<p>The purpose of the Data Retreat is to answer the question, “WHERE ARE WE NOW?” During this day the strategic planning team will develop a shared understanding of the current situation of the district as identified through data. The outcome of the day is to paint a clear data picture of the district so that the strategic planning team can identify what is working well (STRENGTHS), what is not working well (WEAKNESSES), what are possible areas of need (OPPORTUNITIES), and what are potential impacts (THREATS). This is called a SWOT analysis. This is a recommended six-hour session.</p>
Vision Retreat; Preferred Future Statement	<p>The purpose of the Visioning Retreat is to answer the question, “WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?” During this day the strategic planning team will develop a shared understanding of the current</p>

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	<p>mission, vision, values/beliefs/commitments and goals of the district. The team will review the components of a continuous improvement framework. In addition, it will look at essential information to shape a future vision based on the SWOT analysis from the data retreat. This provides the team with an opportunity to look at best practice research that guides improvement. The outcome of the day is to paint a clear vision of where the district hopes to be in the future. This is a recommended six-hour session.</p>
<p>Setting Direction Retreat; Draft of Plan</p>	<p>The purpose of the Setting Direction Retreat is to answer the question, “HOW DO WE GET FROM WHERE WE ARE TO WHERE WE WANT TO BE?” The strategic planning team works to provide a draft of the strategic vision/plan that can be shared with stakeholders to provide opportunities for input and feedback. The team will address long-range goals, preview goal indicators and measures and identify the most urgent strategies that need to be addressed during the plan’s duration to move the district to a higher level of performance. This is a recommended six-hour session.</p>
<p>Refinement/ Recommendations Meeting</p>	<p>The purpose of the Final Meeting of the strategic plan team is to review feedback from stakeholders on the draft of the new plan and make any refinements to the plan before it is presented to the superintendent who will recommend plan approval to the board of education. This is a recommended three-hour session.</p>
<p>Strategy Action Plans</p>	<p>It is recommended that the district use a Plan-Do-Study-Act process to develop strategy action plans. Leaders of the action teams should be trained to ensure the PDSA process is used consistently. Be certain action plans are SMART. Align key action plans with district department leaders and shared decision-making committees. Be certain those impacted by the action plans have opportunities to provide input to their design and development. Be certain the action plans identify tasks that are research-based and ensure action will be different from what has been done. Doing the same things</p>

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	<p>produce the same results. Recognize the importance of “study” and “act” of the PDSA process.</p>
<p>Plan Approval; Living the Plan</p>	<p>There are several critical strategies to be certain the plan does not sit on the shelf and collect dust: <u>Critical strategies that CEC offers to ensure the return on the investment include:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Align goals and strategies to a data system (Indicators, Measures, and Targets).</i> 2. <i>Align the data system to a progress monitoring and reporting system for all stakeholders.</i> 3. <i>Align the plan to the work structures and processes to ensure ownership, responsibility and accountability.</i> 4. <i>Align the plan to individual and team performance and program evaluation (goal setting, feedback, reflection, and improvement).</i> 5. <i>Align the plan strategies to PDSA action plans to develop a two-way communication and collaboration system to listen and learn.</i> 6. <i>Align the plan to resources of time and money to ensure focus and priority.</i>

Orientation

Essential Question:

Who is in the room and what are we charged to do? The Orientation is for team members to get to know one another. It is an opportunity to be familiar with the strategic plan process. It is an opportunity to review commitments plan team members must make.

Outcomes: The Orientation is an opportunity for the strategic plan team to learn of their roles and responsibilities. It is a chance to begin to develop relationships with plan team members.

- Learn who is on the strategic plan team.
- Learn about the strategic plan process.
- Learn about roles and responsibilities of the strategic plan team.
- Learn about roles and responsibilities of the core team.
- Learn about the strategic plan that has been in existence for the past several years.
- Preview another district’s strategic plan.



Time Allocation/Format:

Two hours: Face-to face or using virtual collaboration tools. Interaction among team members, sharing ideas about a homework article, exploring what a good plan looks like, and understanding the current plan status in the district.

Product:

The Orientation Meeting paints the “Picture” of the Strategic Planning process so that all team members have a shared understanding of the process and their roles and responsibilities in helping the district set clear direction for the future.

District Responsibilities:

- The district assists in following the process to select members of both the strategic plan and core teams.
- The district selects homework articles to set the stage for strategic planning roles and responsibilities
- The district prepares a short report summarizing the state of the current strategic plan.
- The district ensures that all plan team members understand the importance of attending all team meetings.

Data Retreat

Essential Question:

Where are we now? How would you describe what is working and what needs attention in the past and present? What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as described by data, information and perceptions? What does the data picture look like today?

Outcomes: The Data Retreat provides an opportunity for the Strategic Plan Team to review the following data sources:

- Results of the Environmental Scan/System Assessment
- Academic/Achievement/Learning data
- Human Resource/Personnel data
- Learning Environment data
- Social/Emotional Student data
- Demographic data (student and community)
- Financial data (district)
- Satisfaction/Climate data (student, family, staff, community) such as the 5Essentials



Note: Trend, comparative, and cohort data are optimal, where possible.

Time Allocation:

Six hours: Face-to face or using virtual collaboration tools. Three 2-hour virtual sessions: Perception Data Analysis, Evidenced-based Data Analysis (District Reports) and drafting a SWOT.

Product:

The Data Retreat allows the Strategic Plan Team to know strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and to capture baseline data so a new vision can be established. The SWOT describes the current state of the district and answers the question, **“Where are we now?”**

The SWOT is then shared with stakeholder groups between the Data Retreat and the Vision Retreat to solicit feedback. The feedback is reviewed at the next meeting of the team.

District Responsibilities:

The district assists CEC in collecting and organizing the feedback from stakeholders for the plan team review of the Environmental Scan data.

The district organizes and presents data reports and each report is approximately 40 minutes:

- Academic Data: Student growth and achievement
- Learning and Working Environment: Culture and climate
- Resources: Financial, Facilities and Technology

Stakeholder Engagement

Essential Question:

Do internal and external stakeholders believe we are on the right track? What do you think about the draft SWOT analysis? What suggestions do you have to improve the draft materials? Do you believe this plan will help the district reach its mission and vision?

Outcomes: Community engagement provides an opportunity for the Strategic Plan Team to reflect on their work and ensure they are on the right track in representing the beliefs and feelings of the internal and external communities through the following:

- Staff engagement sessions
- Parent and community engagement sessions
- Student focus groups (if selected)
- Specially designed surveys to gather feedback from internal and external stakeholders
- Neutral third-party survey analysis
- Summarizing reports for the strategic plan team
- Stakeholder engagement occurs immediately following the Data Retreat and the Setting Direction Retreat.



Time Allocation for Engagement Sessions:

4-6 hours (usually a session lasts no more than 1.5 hours but to save the district money, a staff session is held in the afternoon typically at around 3 p.m. and a community session in the evening somewhere between 6-7:30 p.m.) Usually this occurs 1-2 weeks following the Data Retreat and the Setting Direction Retreat.. A survey also is offered for those unable to make engagement sessions. CEC provides a number of options for districts to choose from related to both electronic and face-to-face engagement sessions.

Time Allocation for Draft Plan Survey:

A survey is completed following the Setting Direction Retreat as well. This usually occurs 2 weeks after the Setting Direction Retreat and is typically open at least one week.

Product:

After the community engagement and first survey, a report is created on the findings that is used by the plan team during the first hour of the Vision Retreat to make changes to the SWOT. After the second survey, a report is created on the findings that is used by the plan team during the Final Meeting of the Team to make changes to the draft strategic plan.

District Responsibilities:

The district promotes the community engagement sessions and the surveys. The district reviews the reports prior to being shared with the public to ensure interpretation of district-specific information was correctly represented.

Vision Retreat

Essential Question:

Where do we want to be? What are our best hopes for the future? How do we want to be different in 5 years? What is the preferred future?

Outcomes: The Vision Retreat provides an opportunity for the Strategic Plan Team to invent the future to identify how the district will look, feel and sound differently several years ahead.

- Revisit stakeholder engagement and refine the SWOT from the Data Retreat
- Revisit the current Strategic Plan to reflect on mission, vision, and core values/commitments
- Develop a shared understanding of a continuous improvement framework and the research-based effective practices of a high performing organization
- Examine impact of future mandates and legislation
- Investigate student agency, career choice readiness, engagement, ownership, and learning outcomes
- Draft a Preferred Future Statement that describes how the district will be different at the end of the strategic plan life.



Time Allocation:

Six hours: Face-to face or using virtual collaboration tools. Three 2-hour virtual sessions: Revising the SWOT from the Data Retreat based on stakeholder engagement and revisiting Mission, Vision, and Core Values, Exploring the Future for Learning and Teaching, and drafting a Preferred Future Statement.

Product:

The Vision Retreat allows the Strategic Plan Team to revisit mission, vision and values. It focuses on culture and relationships. The Preferred Future Statement describes the future state of the district and answers the question, “**Where do we want to be?**”

The Preferred Future Statement is then shared with stakeholder groups between the Vision Retreat and the Setting Direction Retreat to solicit feedback. The feedback is reviewed at the next meeting of the team.

District Responsibilities:

- The district assists CEC in collecting and organizing the feedback from stakeholders for the plan team review of the SWOT analysis.
- The district assists CEC to organize and select resources for the strategic plan team to investigate innovation, change theory, creativity, and research-based practices.
- The district assists CEC with an understanding of the current mission, vision and values of the organization.

Setting Direction Retreat

Essential Question:

How will you get from where you are to where you want to be? What will everyone do differently to get improved results? What research-based strategies will everyone implement with fidelity? How will what we do drive professional development planning and implementation? How will what we do drive the use of district resources?

Outcomes: The Setting Direction Retreat provides an opportunity for the Strategic Plan Team to make decision related to goals and high-leverage strategies. What are the Priorities?

- Review the Preferred Future Statement and make any refinements.
- Examine current long-range goals.
- Establish future long-range goals.
- Preview Key Performance Indicators for current long-range goals,
- Provide input into Key Performance Indicators for future long-range goals.
- Identify high-leverage strategies to focus district work for the duration of the plan.
- Prioritize high-leverage strategies.
- Align high-leverage strategies to the future long-range goals.



Time Allocation:

Six hours: Face-to face or using virtual collaboration tools. Three 2-hour virtual sessions: Reviewing the Preferred Future Statement and Affirming Long-Range Goals, Providing Input to Key Performance Indicators and Measures for Each Goal, and Identifying Aligned Critical Strategies for Action. These three activities will lead to a draft of the strategic plan.

Product:

The Setting Direction Retreat allows the Strategic Plan Team to identify and prioritize critical goals and strategies to move the district closer to achieving its mission and vision. The Strategic Plan Draft describes provides a first look at the new, evolving strategic plan and answers the question, ***“What will we do to move us from where we are to where we need to be to achieve our mission and vision?”***

The Strategic Plan Draft is then shared with stakeholder groups between the Setting Direction Retreat and the Final Meeting of the Plan team to solicit feedback. The feedback is reviewed at the last meeting of the team.

District Responsibilities:

- The district assists CEC in collecting and organizing the feedback from stakeholders for the plan team review of the Preferred Future Statement.
- The district will assist CEC in the first draft of Key Performance Indicators.
- The district will ensure that any major projects that are currently unfinished are incorporated into the discuss of high-leverage strategies.

Final Meeting of Strategic Plan Team

Essential Question:

What final changes need to be made in the plan to reflect patterns of stakeholder feedback? What will make the plan better? What will make the plan clearer? What changes should be made that are supported by data and evidence?

Outcomes: The Final Meeting of the Strategic Plan Team is an opportunity to make any refinements to the draft of the plan before it is given to the superintendent who will recommend plan approval to the board of education.

- Examine staff feedback.
- Examine parent feedback.
- Examine community feedback.
- Examine board feedback.
- Examine management team feedback.
- Examine union feedback.
- Examine parent organization feedback.
- Examine student feedback.
- Make final refinements, additions or deletions to the plan draft.
- Ready the plan for the superintendent to present to the Board of Education for approval.



Time Allocation:

Two hours: Face-to face or using virtual collaboration tools. A session to review stakeholder feedback and to make final adjustments to the strategic plan. The strategic plan team will provide feedback to CEC in preparation for a final recommendation to be approved by the Board of Education.

Product:

The Final Meeting of the Strategic Plan team allows the Team to reflect on stakeholder feedback to make additions, deletions or refinements in the plan draft. This meeting answers the question, ***“What if any changes need to be made in the strategic plan draft to improve the recommendation?”***

The Strategic Plan is then taken by the superintendent to the Board of Education for approval. The strategic plan team is invited to attend the board meeting.

District Responsibilities:

The district assists CEC in collecting and organizing the feedback from stakeholders for the plan team review of the draft of the new Strategic Plan.

Seeking Feedback from Stakeholders is Unique to the CEC Process

A key component of the Strategic Planning process is to continually go back to constituent groups for reactions to, and comments upon, the Strategic Plan Team's work. This is to ensure the work is truly district-wide, representing the perspectives of all groups concerned. It also provides for stakeholder ownership in the planning process and ensures there will be little surprise when the recommendations are finalized. At three points in the process, the Strategic Plan Team decides, with the assistance of the Facilitator/Consultants, how to solicit stakeholder feedback:

- Between the Data Retreat and the Vision Retreat
- Between the Vision Retreat and the Setting Direction Retreat
- After the development of the draft Strategic Plan (one page)

The Strategic Plan Team's work from each Retreat will be captured within 48 hours by the Facilitator/Consultants, who will produce a common summary document that will be the document to share with constituent groups for reaction and feedback. By design, each Strategic Plan Team Retreat is a month apart from the previous Retreat, allowing team members a minimum of two weeks to gather feedback and submit it to the Site Coordinator. The Site Coordinator and Facilitator/Consultants will organize the feedback and input and determine the method for reporting it to the Strategic Plan Team at its next Retreat. This component can be enhanced with an additional partnership with CEC where the community engagement is expanded.

There are several options for seeking feedback and input within this proposal. Those options can be expanded with an additional partnership:

- **Partner with CEC to conduct Community Engagement and Create Surveys:** See detailed information on overview sheet about community engagement and surveys provided by CEC.

In addition, or if the decision is made not to utilize CEC for community engagement:

- **Staff (Administrators, Teachers and School Support Personnel):** A formal option is to seek feedback at a staff meeting. This provides a captive audience and ensures more participation in the feedback process. The staff would have an opportunity to review the documents at the end of each Strategic Plan Team meeting and to provide feedback and input through post-it-notes, Gallery Walk, Plus/Delta, posters, etc. Other options for staff could include a survey. Additionally, grade level/department teams could review the documents and provide input at team session designed for this purpose.
- **Board members:** Board of Education representatives on the Strategic Plan Team should take the products from each meeting back to a board meeting for feedback and response. It is imperative that board members have input along the way rather to wait until the end. The board has the responsibility to approve the plan.
- **Parents and Community:** These stakeholders can participate in a variety of parent and community organization meetings, specially scheduled parent and community Single Topic Forums, and surveys to provide feedback.
- **Students:** Surveys and forums with representative students from the high school provides for feedback or discussion.

Environmental Scan

"Environmental Scanning" is a business term used to help leaders survey the landscape of competitors, customers and new innovations for products and services. The district should be looking for opportunities to make a difference in the lives they lead and in those who come into contact with the company. **What are the ideas and perceptions of stakeholders and influencers that can shape the future of the organization through better preparation today?**

There are key questions about the future that will assist the strategic plan team receive some initial input and feedback from the stakeholders they represent as well as trends in education.

1. A primary source of an environmental scan is often found in perceptions of stakeholders: student, families, staff, community.
2. A secondary source of an environmental scan is often found in the workplace, careers, global trends and needs.
3. A final source of an environmental scan is often found in shifts in the educational profession-impacts that are making a difference as we look to improving both teaching and learning.

Environmental scanning is most effective when it becomes a part of the culture or "mind-set" of the organization as a whole. The value of feedback and expert participation as well as staff participation is formalized in a "read and review" process. Such a process supports the mind-set orientation of environmental scanning as a decentralized and legitimate activity within the organizational climate. Environmental scanning is a continuous, systematic alertness to the external environment in a way that helps build an understanding of what sort of future the educational community wishes to create/



The well-prepared leader is one who pays attention to the signs present in the culture. A scan of these signs would include a review of the economic, social and judicial changes that would impact the business. A leader should review any signs of new things that will impact their business or how they do business at the local, national and international levels.

CEC offers districts a number of ideas as to how to collect environmental scan data prior to the strategic planning effort. These ideas are great to announce the process. These ideas include virtual and non-virtual ideas as to how to collect data and information to assist the strategic plan team prepare for its work. Environmental scan data reminds the strategic plan team of their role to not only bring forward their ideas, but to represent those not on the team.

Strategic Management System

Strategic Plans Developed with CEC as a Partner are embedded in the Strategic Management System developed by the Strategy Management Group's Scorecard Institute. CEC Facilitators of this process have been certified through their process. This system is based on being able to answer two essential questions:

- Are we doing things RIGHT as an organization?
- Are we doing the RIGHT things as an organization?

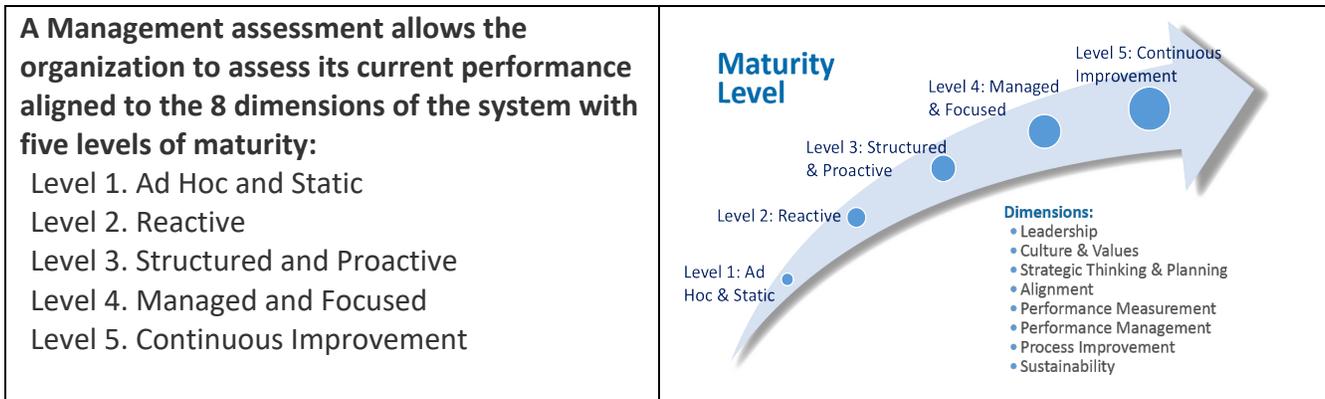
The first is operational, the second strategic.

This system further allows an organization to assess the growth and performance aligned to the dimensions of the strategic management system. It further allows the organization to benchmark its performance across districts or central office departments within a district to learn from one another to accelerate action and build capacity.

It recognizes that the return on investment of establishing a strategic plan rests on the organization's ability to execute strategic to get better results.

The Strategic Management System is built around five most important factors to successfully execute strategy

1. An **accountability model** must be clearly defined and embraced for each element of the strategy.
2. The organization-wide **strategy must be effectively cascaded down into the business units, support functions, teams and individuals down through the organization.**
3. **Adequate resources (time, budget, skills and capacities)** must be available.
4. Managing change on a consistent and professional basis is vital. **Change management is the primary responsibility of the executive leadership team.**
5. Establishing a **performance culture** is a fundamental requirement for effective implementation and a frequent failure point in many strategic planning and management processes



The eight dimensions listed in the figure above define the components of the management system. Strategic Thinking and Planning are one of the dimensions.

We begin our process by assisting the organization assess its strategic management system.

8 Strategic Management Dimensions for Living the Plan

What is “Living the Plan?”

“Living the Plan” is what a district does to make sure the Strategic Plan is fully implemented with fidelity. But a district needs to have certain organizational structures and processes in place to successfully do that.

What is Strategic Management?

Strategic management is a process that any district can follow. Strategic management provides a roadmap for a district to plan, monitor, analyze and assess what is necessary to implement its Strategic Plan with fidelity by fully addressing the Plan’s mission, vision, values, goals and strategies.

The strategic management process has the following virtues:

- helps districts take stock of their present situation, chalk out strategies, deploy them and analyze their effectiveness
- leads to continuous improvement
- leads to higher performance at all levels of the district
- continuously identifies what is working well and what needs attention
- helps to focus precious time and other district resources to those policies, practices, and procedures that are positively impactful.

CEC can help districts implement the strategic management process once its Strategic Plan is identified and approved.

What does the Strategic Management process look like?

The Strategic Management process has eight dimensions. These dimensions were developed by the Strategy Management Group/ Scorecard Institute.

Eight Dimensions of a Strategic Management System



These eight dimensions are rated across five levels ranging from Ad Hoc & Static at the lowest level to Continuous improvement at the highest level. The rubric below describes how each dimension looks at each level.

3 BALANCED SCORECARD INSTITUTE		Assessment: Strategic Management Maturity Model™				
	Level 1: Ad hoc & Static	Level 2: Reactive	Level 3: Structured & Proactive	Level 4: Managed & Focused	Level 5: Continuous Improvement	
Leadership	Leaders dictate / command & control; otherwise disengaged	Leaders dictate but gather feedback sporadically	Leaders model desired behaviors and values but engage with direct reports only	Leaders empower many employees through on going engagement	Leaders & employees fully engage in a continuous dialog based on a team-based culture	
Culture & Values	Vision & values undefined or not shared	Vision & Values published, but not lived	Vision & Values communicated & understood	Vision & Values collaboratively developed	Vision & Values fully integrated into organization culture	
Strategic Thinking & Planning	No strategic planning occurs within the organization; no goals defined	Strategic planning is the responsibility of a small team and dictated to the organization	A structured and open planning process involves people throughout the organization every couple of years	Plans are developed and revised regularly by trained, cross-functional planning teams	Strategy drives critical organizational decisions and a continuous improvement planning process is maintained	
Alignment	Work is narrowly focused based on organization structure, with little customer input	Customer needs and feedback start to influence more aligned decision making	Employees know their customers and align strategy to those needs	Vision, Customer Needs, Strategy, and employee reward and recognition systems are cascaded and aligned	All structures and systems are aligned with strategy, and organizational alignment is continuously improved	
Performance Measurement	No data, or only ad hoc performance measures are collected	Performance data collected routinely, but are mostly operationally focused	Strategic performance measures are collected, covering most strategic objectives	Strategic measures are broadly used to improve focus & performance and inform budget decisions	Measurements comprehensively used and routinely revised based on continuous improvement	
Performance Management	No emphasis on using performance as a criterion to manage the organization	Performance reviews required but not taken seriously; no accountability for performance exists	Measures are assigned owners and performance is managed at the organizational and employee level	Measurement owners are held accountable and performance is managed at all levels	Organizational culture is measurement and accountability focused; decisions are evidence-based	
Process Improvement	Processes are undocumented and ad hoc with evident duplication and delays	A few key processes documented, and process improvement models (TQM, Lean Six Sigma, etc) introduced	All key processes are identified and documented, and strategy guides successful process improvement initiative and improvements	All key processes are tracked and improved on a continuous basis and new process improvement ideas are accepted	Employees are empowered and trained, and a formal process exists for improving process management	
Sustainability	Lack of structure and champions lead to short-term focus on tasks	Strategy "champions" identified	Formal organization structure in place to maintain focus on strategy	Organization has an "Office of Strategy Management" or equivalent	Strategic thinking and management are embedded in the culture of the organization	

How does my district get the ratings?

The strategic management process has a survey that is based on the eight dimensions and five levels. The survey can be taken electronically in less than 10 minutes. The district provides the contact information for those who will take the survey and sends an invitation letter to those chosen to take it. CEC provides a report with the survey results and ratings for each dimension. CEC also provides support for initiating the survey and using its results. Over time and through multiple surveys, the district acquires data that describes its progress toward becoming a continuously improving organization.

Leadership: Effective strategic management starts with leadership. Leadership includes the following traits:

- a) leaders set a clear and consistent vision or "picture of the future" of the organization;
- b) leaders are pro-active in preparing the organization for the future;
- c) leaders are visible and engaged to ensure that staff understand the common vision and can translate it into terms relevant to their roles;
- d) leaders "walk the talk" in exemplifying the values, ethics and policies of the organization;
- e) leaders don't micromanage, but trust and encourage employees to contribute their ideas and grow in their careers;
- f) leaders "walk around" and work alongside staff to encourage teamwork.

Leadership Dimension Opportunities Checklist	Priority	Little Fidelity	Some Fidelity	High Fidelity
CORE: Setting up leadership structures, roles and responsibilities for strategic plan management, coordination, responsibility, and accountability: Goal Champions, Action Team Leaders and Members				
CORE: Preparation to kick off the year with a new strategic plan to focus direction and the "Big Picture"				
CORE: Preparation to kick off each year of the plan's duration with a refocus and renewed energy to keep the priorities and impacts at the center of attention				
CORE: Developing communication structures, processes and training to ensure all members of the organization sees how their work connects to the strategic plan				
CORE: Aligning strategic management practices to meeting protocols and agendas - BOE, Cabinet, Administrative, Union, School, Team				
EXTEND: Providing professional development for leaders throughout the system in knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be a strategic leader				
EXTEND: Developing print communication tools and resources for internal and external stakeholders to increase awareness, performance, impacts, and next steps				
EXTEND: Developing virtual communication tools and resources for internal and external stakeholders to increase awareness, performance, impacts, and next steps				
EXTEND: Ensuring leaders' continuous improvement to build collective purpose, language, commitment and cohesion for all stakeholders				
EXTEND: Implementing an annual summer Leadership Retreat focused on strategic plan progress, challenges and celebrations.				

Values and Culture: Evidences of mature workforce culture and values include:

- a) thoughtful applications of change management principles and practices by the leadership;
- b) the degree of ownership that employees feel for the mission, vision and values of the organization;
- c) their degree of participation in shaping the organization's culture and ways of working;
- d) the level of trust, transparency and freedom to communicate with candor, as opposed to a culture of fear and denial;
- e) the degree of flexibility and willingness to change to align to new strategic priorities;
- f) the level of awareness and consistency of adherence to stated values and policies.

Culture and Values Dimension Opportunities Checklist	Priority	Little Fidelity	Some Fidelity	High Fidelity
CORE: Fostering internal organizational health; ensuring better internal understanding and commitment to district mission, vision, and core values				
CORE: Collecting, analyzing, reporting and acting upon satisfaction data from all stakeholders				
CORE: Collecting, analyzing, reporting and acting upon team effectiveness data				
CORE: Continuing to annually collect, reflect and act upon the Strategic Management survey data collected during the development of the strategic plan				
CORE: Clearly defining, training and monitoring understanding of strategic, tactical and operational roles in promoting shared decision-making				
CORE: Implementing structures and processes for collaborative decision-making (DLTs, SLTs, PLCs)				
EXTEND: Ensuring staff mindset for continuous improvement to by building collective purpose, language, commitment and cohesion for all stakeholders				
EXTEND: Cultivating a change management process. Making it safe to innovate, experiment, investigate, take risks, make mistakes.				
EXTEND: Addressing staff engagement and agency by addressing the social and emotional needs of the adults in the system				
EXTEND: Fostering external organizational health by ensuring better external understanding and commitment to district mission, vision, and core values.				
EXTEND: Considering interest-based bargaining, conflict, difficult conversation training and coaching				
EXTEND: Ensuring ways to successfully address trust, conflict, commitment, accountability, and trust among all stakeholders				
EXTEND: Collecting, reflecting and acting upon 10 Principles for Modern Schools survey data				

Strategic Thinking and Planning: Strategic thinking involves several traits:

- a) the ability to use consistent definitions of planning terms and to understand their distinctions;
- b) awareness of the distinctions between project planning and strategic planning;
- c) the ability to discuss and describe items in plans at the appropriate "strategic altitude";
- d) awareness of the dynamic system effects in organizations, such as delays and feedback;
- e) openness to new ideas and encouragement of creativity and innovation;
- f) openness of the planning process to a team of employees of various ranks and functions;
- g) degree to which alternative strategies and scenarios are considered;
- h) linkage of strategic planning to budgeting;
- i) ability to write and speak with clarity and simplicity. Evidence for the degree of strategic thinking can be found in the organization's strategic planning documents.

Strategic Thinking and Planning Dimension Opportunities Checklist	Priority	Little Fidelity	Some Fidelity	High Fidelity
CORE: Transitioning from strategic planning to annual action plans by including people at various levels of the organization in action planning efforts				
CORE: Linking and connecting strategic planning to school improvement plans				
CORE: Adopting an evidence-based improvement process (ex. - Plan-Do-Study-Act)				
CORE: Creating user-friendly communications and resources to make expectations explicit through common messaging and common continuous improvement terminology				
CORE: Developing and sustaining strong Board-Management-Union cooperation and joint communications to strengthen continuous improvement initiatives and shared decision-making				
EXTEND: Linking and aligning strategic planning/school improvement planning to district budgeting				
EXTEND: Developing audience-specific communications strategies, including newsletters and annual reports, to assist all stakeholders in better understanding strategic actions impacts				
EXTEND: Examining and acting upon district efficiency and cycle response times				
EXTEND: Encouraging strategic thinking through research, networking, professional development, exploration of 21 st century learning and teaching best practices to encourage creativity and innovation				

Alignment: Alignment refers to *strategic alignment*, that is, the degree to which the organization's people and resources are focused on the strategy. The opposite of alignment is "chaos", where managers, programs and projects are aiming at different goals and there is lack of a common vision, leading to wasted energy, delays, conflict and confusion. Features of the organization that can be aligned include values, vision, mission, strategic plans, budgets, policies, procedures, functions, themes, objectives, information standards and organization structure. Alignment measures the degree to which:

- people at all levels are motivated by a common vision and strategy;
- people understand that supporting the strategy is their job;
- people are self-motivated, not merely by compliance to rules.

Alignment Dimension Opportunities Checklist	Priority	Little Fidelity	Some Fidelity	High Fidelity
CORE: Cascading a data system from the classroom to the boardroom				
CORE: Prioritizing end users having access to fast, reliable, relevant, high-quality data				
CORE: Doing the right things, doing things right and understanding the difference				
CORE: Setting priorities to address staff feelings of being overwhelmed and under-supported				
CORE: Developing a common, consistent, data-driven goal-setting process used at all levels of the organization				
CORE: Identifying Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and measures aligned to district and school goals and strategies				
CORE: Identifying Key Performance Indicators and measures aligned to the achievement of district mission, vision, and core values				
EXTEND: Aligning the budgeting process to strategic initiatives and actions				
EXTEND: Aligning the strategic plan to human resource processes, mentoring, and induction				
EXTEND: Ensuring everyone is self-motivated to personally contribute to a common vision and to common strategies that they understand relate to their jobs				

Performance Measurement: Without performance metrics or measures, managers are "flying blind". Features to look for in strategic performance metrics are:

- metrics derived from and aligned to the strategy, not just "KPI's" for operations;
- metrics that focus on outcomes and results, not just money spent, tasks accomplished, or outputs delivered;
- metrics that use appropriate ratios, sample sizes and other features in order to be more meaningful;
- metrics that are measured and reported frequently enough to drive decision making;
- "team" and "organization" performance, not only individual performance is being tracked;
- a balanced set of metrics that cover a range of different dimensions including not only financial data but also customer satisfaction, internal process performance and capacities of the organization.

Performance Measurement Dimension Opportunities Checklist	Priority	Little Fidelity	Some Fidelity	High Fidelity
CORE: Measuring district, school, team results				
CORE: Prioritizing measurable outcomes goals that are SMART				
CORE: Utilizing baseline data by which to set challenging yet attainable targets				
CORE: Implementing a data analysis protocol that defines what kinds of data are necessary for which level of the organization – district, school, team, individual teacher, individual student				
CORE: Using satisfaction, demographic and fiscal data to determine goals, identify KPIs and set targets				
EXTEND: Using multiple measures to determine whether targeted expectations are being met.				
EXTEND: Focusing on fidelity measures to determine successful group implementations				
EXTEND: Measuring individual student and student subgroup results				
EXTEND: Identifying KPIs that address standards-based learning expectations				
EXTEND: Emphasizing KPIs, measures and targets to establish a results orientation				
EXTEND: Comparing results to cohort, comparative and trend data				

Performance Management: Performance management deals with the degree to which performance metrics are use in decision making. Features to look for are:

- recognition of the organization as a dynamic system;
- the use of feedback loops – so managers get to see the results of their decisions;
- managers are able to change things based on timely reporting;
- strategic performance measures are available to test the strategy;
- leaders have placed the entire organization into a "learning loop" so that they can validate their vision;
- ultimately the organization is learning what works to satisfy customers and improve the organization. The degree to which leaders and managers feel they have the information they need to make decisions defines the level of performance management.

Performance Management Dimension Opportunities Checklist	Priority	Little Fidelity	Some Fidelity	High Fidelity
CORE: Use data to both drive and assess the effectiveness of decision-making and accountability				
CORE: Monitoring goals that align across every level of the organization – Board, District Leadership, School Leadership, Teams, Staff Members, Students – and analyzing their results to regularly assess improvement				
CORE: Implementing a School Improvement Plan (SIP) cycle that aligns school goals to both district goals and team goals				
CORE: Implementing an annual spring Data Retreat where District and school results from the school year are assessed and new District and school goals for the next year are set				
CORE: Establishing common monitoring and reporting forms, including a reporting schedule for their regular use				
CORE: Utilizing a District Scorecard, school dashboards, and team results as vehicles to regularly report on progress toward measurable goals				
CORE: Utilizing a data system that makes the right data for the right audience in the right formats for the right needs easily and quickly accessible at all organizational levels				
CORE: Establishing feedback loops for leaders so results from decisions can be objectively assessed and acted upon				
EXTEND: Sharing accountability for improving results across all levels of the organization				
EXTEND: Informing all critical decision-making with data at all organizational levels				
EXTEND: Regularly reporting on results through an established and public reporting schedule across all levels of the organization				
EXTEND: Implementing a progress monitoring system at every organizational level				
EXTEND: Aligning goals and targeted results to Board and Administrative performance assessments				
EXTEND: Aligning goals and targeted results to staff performance assessments				

Process Improvement: Process improvement includes an assessment of:

- a) the organization's knowledge about its strategically important work processes;
- b) how well these processes are being improved updated and documented;
- c) how efficiently these processes perform compared to industry benchmarks;
- d) skills, practices and technologies used to improve process quality and efficiency;
- e) knowledge of core competencies and capacities of the organization and how well they are employed in running the processes;
- f) the level of employee awareness of customers and their expectations;
- g) existence of contingency plans for future risks, such as disasters, funding shortages, and leadership succession.

Process Improvement Dimension Opportunities Checklist	Priority	Little Fidelity	Some Fidelity	High Fidelity
<u>CORE:</u> Identifying, promoting and modeling district-wide "tight" benchmark comparisons, educational norms and standards				
<u>CORE:</u> Clarifying district-wide instructional processes				
<u>CORE:</u> Clarifying expectations for collaborative shared decision-making at every district level				
<u>CORE:</u> Determining and applying criteria for fidelity of implementation and execution				
<u>CORE:</u> Determining and supporting roles of instructional coaches and teacher leader positions in process improvement				
<u>CORE:</u> Developing comfort in shared practices within and across teams				
<u>CORE:</u> Implementing SIP cycle visitation schedule and participation protocols for District administrators				
<u>CORE:</u> Implementing scorecard collection and reporting schedules – Board, Dist. Admin., Union Leadership				
<u>CORE:</u> Implementing a process for the alignment of professional development offerings to the district's long-term, high-level strategies				
<u>EXTEND:</u> Implementing a schedule and protocols for responding to satisfaction data, including communicating the district's responses to those who generated the satisfaction data				
<u>EXTEND:</u> Leader understanding of techniques of "coaching up or coaching out"				
<u>EXTEND:</u> Role of co-teaching in process improvement				
<u>EXTEND:</u> Aligning feedback processes, including walk-throughs and professional development for those processes				
<u>EXTEND:</u> Providing time to ensure deep understanding to be able to implement with fidelity				
<u>EXTEND:</u> Scheduling and structuring leaders' feedback loops				
<u>EXTEND:</u> Clarifying district-wide non-instructional processes				

Sustainability: Sustainability of the strategic management of the organization is defined by:

- a) how well the organization is maintaining its focus on its strategic vision, plans and initiatives;
- b) people, systems, and communication activities are in place to maintain the momentum of desired change;
- c) a sense of urgency in the staff and workforce;
- d) reward and recognition systems that support efforts to motivate employees to do the right things;
- e) presence of "champions" to keep the workforce informed about the strategic priorities and levels of performance that are desired;
- f) presence of an "Office of Strategic Management" to deploy the strategy and track performance;
- g) degree to which strategic management has been institutionalized, so that "strategy is everyone's job".

When a high level of maturity is achieved, the organization is on a journey of continuous learning and improvement.

Sustainability Dimension Opportunities Checklist	Priority	Little Fidelity	Some Fidelity	High Fidelity
<u>CORE:</u> Celebrating results; creating a sense of making a difference and instilling pride throughout the organization				
<u>CORE:</u> Sustaining a sense of urgency to continuously improve individually, as a team and as an organization.				
<u>CORE:</u> Ensuring responsibility and accountability within district office leaders and departments for strategic management				
<u>CORE:</u> Continuous training for a team of Strategic Managers				
<u>EXTEND:</u> Using the strategic plan to drive hiring new leaders and recruiting new board members				
<u>EXTEND:</u> Developing and implementing succession plan				
<u>EXTEND:</u> Instilling a service orientation and attitude at every level of the district				
<u>EXTEND:</u> Addressing research-based factors for long-term sustainability				

What are ways to use the strategic management process to enhance improved service, productivity and performance?

Remember, the strategic management process is a roadmap, not your destination. Strategic management will not improve your district without a continuous focus on what is in place and what needs attention. The roadmap will show how the district can reach its destination through monitoring and tracking its own performance, focusing on celebrating what is working and addressing what needs attention.

Some aspects of strategic management might need training or coaching with an external expert. CEC is ready to assist in any way to meet those needs. Here are three ways districts might consider future needs and actions:

1. Continued annual use and analysis of the Strategic Management Survey. Gradually increase the number of participants taking the survey. Begin disaggregating survey results (BOE, Union, Management, Building Leaders, Teacher Leaders, Others). This action could involve certification through CEC in strategy management training. Identify areas of growth. Identify areas of opportunity. Celebrate and report growth. Determine focus areas and target improvement. Develop plans to improve.
2. Working with a CEC strategic management coach in a series of ninety-minute to two-hour electronic coaching sessions focused on strategic management targeted areas of opportunity
3. Networking through CEC with other districts to share practices, products, artifacts and other solutions to strategic management challenges.

Please let us know how CEC can help. Once again, thank you for selecting CEC to facilitate your strategic plan.

Selecting the Strategic Plan Team

1/3 Staff..... 1/3 Parent and Community 1/3 Management Students

Stakeholder Group	Number	Suggested Selection
Board of Education	2	Board
Superintendent	1	Superintendent
Key members of the Superintendent's Cabinet	2-3	Superintendent
Building Leadership	2-3 per level: elementary, middle, high	Principals
Union Leadership	1 per organization (Certified staff, Support staff, etc.)	Union(s)
Parent Organization Leadership	1-2 from all Parent Organizations	Parent Council or Superintendent and Board
Family Representatives	1 per school or, depending on district size, 3-4 from elementary, 3-4 from middle, and 3-4 from high school	Parent Teacher Organization
Community Representatives	3-5	Superintendent and Board
School Representatives	1 per school or, depending on district size, 3-4 from elementary, 3-4 from middle, and 3-4 from high school	School Leadership Teams
Student Representatives in K-12 districts	6-8	Student Council

The responsibilities of the planning team members include:

- Attend all meetings of the planning team.
- Prepare for each meeting by reading materials aligned to each agenda.
- Conduct a data SWOT analysis of the district by reviewing key data indicators and measures to determine the district's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Develop a shared understanding of the needs of stakeholder groups through a review of an environmental scan or stakeholder satisfaction data.
- Explore educational, demographic, political, economic, social, and technological impacts on the future of the district.
- Explore research-based, effective practices of high performing districts.
- Review and revise the district's shared mission, vision, values/commitments and goal.
- Provide suggestions for indicators and measures for long-range goals to define district success.
- Identify key strategy gaps that identify what the district needs to do differently to improve its results over the duration of the plan.
- Present a draft of the plan for stakeholder review and input.
- Revise and finalize the draft of the plan based on stakeholder review and input.
- Recommend the strategic plan to the superintendent.
- Learn about the responsibilities to live the Plan.

Selecting the Core Team

Stakeholder Group	Number	Suggested Selection
Board of Education	1	Board
Superintendent	1	Superintendent
Key member of the Superintendent's Cabinet	1	Superintendent
Building Leadership	1	Principals
Staff Leadership	1	Staff
Parent Organization Leadership	1	Parent Council or Superintendent and Board

The responsibilities of the core team members include:

- Be members of the strategic planning team and assume all responsibilities expected of team members.
- Attend an initial strategic planning meeting to finalize customization of the process for the district.
- Attend virtual 30-40 minute meetings one week prior to each meeting of the strategic plan team.
- Make decisions to finalize each agenda for the strategic planning team.
- Provide feedback related to the process to the facilitator(s).
- Attend a final meeting to learn of ways to live the plan. Others may be invited to this meeting.

EXAMPLE OF A SWOT ANALYSIS FROM THE DATA RETREAT

STRENGTHS: What do we consider to be our strengths? What advantages do we have? What do others say our strengths are?

- Financial stability
- Staff- highly qualified and dedicated
- Technology
- Restoring programs that were lost due to budget reductions
- High school graduation rate increasing
- Pride
- Safety
- Middle and High School extra-curricular activities; clubs
- Dual Language, STEM, Running Start program choices
- New leadership

WEAKNESSES: What do we consider to be our weaknesses? What are we most criticized for or receive the most complaints about? What do we seem to have a hard time doing well?

- Trust/ morale
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Shared decision-making; input
- Alignment of assessment and differentiated instruction to newly establish K-12 curriculum
- Student Achievement Gaps; underperforming schools
- Intervention and enrichment systems
- AP tests, scores or 3 or higher
- Low test scores
- Inconsistent procedures and practices
- Low income programs and services
- Student engagement
- Professional development
- Parent involvement
- Aging facilities

OPPORTUNITIES: What opportunities for improvement do we know about, but have not addressed? Where with a little work could we change a weakness into a strength?

- Student-centered, personalized learning
- Preparation for life "Whole child"
- Social/emotional curriculum and supports
- Data systems for progress monitoring and reporting
- Customer service
- Math supports
- Staffing diversity
- Labor-management relationships
- Program evaluation
- Time, schedule, day, extended day, year, summer
- Debt management

THREATS: Who or what threatens us the most? What challenges are coming that we must respond to? What might block our progress?

- State finance
- Student changing demographics
- ESSA
- Pension Reform
- Prospective Employee Pool
- Student enrollment
- Community growth
- Social media; social issues

Top Ten Reasons for Using CEC's Strategic Planning Process

Number	Reason
10	One page plan with supporting documents keeps it “big and simple.”
9	Sets clear focus and priorities. Sets direction for operational action planning.
8	Sets direction for operational action planning. Identifies strategies for improvement.
7	Defines commitments and non-negotiables. Establishes what we all need to do well together.
6	Based on a clear understanding of the data system that provides evidence of what is working and what needs attention.
5	Based on a vision for the future that is reflective of research-based practices.
4	Determines gaps between current performance (where we are) and preferred future performance (where we want to be).
3	Includes stakeholder participation to ensure collaboration and ownership.
2	Defines how we measure success through goals, indicators, measures and targets.
1	Ensures a sustainable process that brings the plan to life once approved through alignment with leader and teacher performance evaluations, meeting agenda, and progress monitoring and reporting dashboard system.

Most Recent References for Strategic Planning:

Superintendent	District	Email Contact
Daniel Woestman	Belvidere District 100	dwoestman@district100.com
Daniel Booth	Carbondale 95	dbooth@ces95.org
Michael Connolly	CCSD 21	michael.connolly@ccsd21.org
Art Fessler	CCSD 59	fessler.art@ccsd59.org
Steve Olson	CHSD 155	solson@d155.org
Paul Hertel	Des Plaines District 62	hertelp@d62.org
Mary Hendricks-Harris	Francis Howell District- St Charles, MO	mary.hendricks-harris@fhdschools.org
Tamara Prentiss	Hinsdale District 86	tprentiss@casedupage.com
Larry Hewitt	Northbrook District 28	lhewitt@northbrook28.net
Ed Condon	River Forest District 90	condone@district90.org

CEC Certified Facilitators of Strategic Planning

Arlana Bedard

Arlana Bedard specializes in providing support to schools and districts in a variety of areas, including leadership, strategic planning, school improvement, teaming, equity, and student agency.

Arlana has worked in schools for over 30 years in a variety of roles, including teacher, curriculum specialist, elementary and high school principal, and district administrator. Some site leader accomplishments (over 80% low income, over 80% students of color) include receiving a Distinguished Principal award, improving NWEA math growth performance in two years from 50% to 84%, improving overall performance of students with IEPs by 30 percentage points in one year, improving staff retention from 70% to 95% in two years, and moving the school ranking from #55 to #2 of all high schools in the Chicago Public Schools in one year.

Arlana earned degrees from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and the University of California, Los Angeles.

Jill Engel

Jill's expertise includes assessment design, coaching, Danielson's Framework for Teaching, the development of highly effective teams, the successful design and implementation of effective teacher and principal evaluation plans, including the implementation of the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA). Jill has successfully supported many districts, administrators, and teachers in these areas.

Jill's 28 years in public education includes teaching in both elementary and secondary school settings, serving as a special education coordinator, building principal, and as a district level assistant superintendent for human resources.

Jill holds a Doctorate in Curriculum, Instruction, and Educational Psychology from Loyola University, Chicago; a Master's in Educational Administration from Roosevelt University, Chicago; and a Bachelor of Arts in Education and Psychology from Barat College, Lake Forest.

Perry Soldwedel

Perry Soldwedel is a Director for CEC and a trainer and coach for SMART Learning Systems. He manages CEC programs, partnerships, and content for strategic planning, school improvement planning, and team collaboration (PLC) as well as oversees day-to-day operations of CEC's contracted services.

A former teacher, union leader, and district and school-level administrator, Perry serves PK-12 settings with strong collaborative practices focused on continuous improvement. He has a strong background in facilitating and leading professional learning communities as described in his books, *Aligning Districts as PLCs* (2011) and *The School Board Fieldbook: Leading with Vision* (2009), each with Solution Tree. He also coaches teams at all levels of the system.

Perry has degrees from the University of Illinois, Bradley University, and Western Illinois University. He is an adjunct professor for the University of Illinois.

Mark Van Clay

Mark is a systems specialist who works through CEC to perform school board, superintendent, principal, central office and professional learning communities (PLC) teacher teams in training and role alignment around district-based continuous improvement best practices.

He is the co-author of "The School Board Fieldbook -- Leading with Vision" (2009), "Aligning School Districts as PLCs" (2011), and has published articles on a school board's use of data, developing a school and district scorecard, and a revenue-sharing collective bargaining approach. Dr. Van Clay is the content co-designer for Illinois' Principal Evaluation training program.

He was a public school teacher, principal, and superintendent for 34 years in Illinois. He has twice been a recipient of the U.S. Department of Education's Blue Ribbon Schools Award, once as a principal and once as a superintendent, each in a different school district.

Mark has degrees from De Pauw University (Greencastle, IN), Purdue-Calumet University and Northern Illinois University.