



Destination 21
Odyssey to the Future

Division Strategic Plan

Cumberland County Public Schools

2015-2021

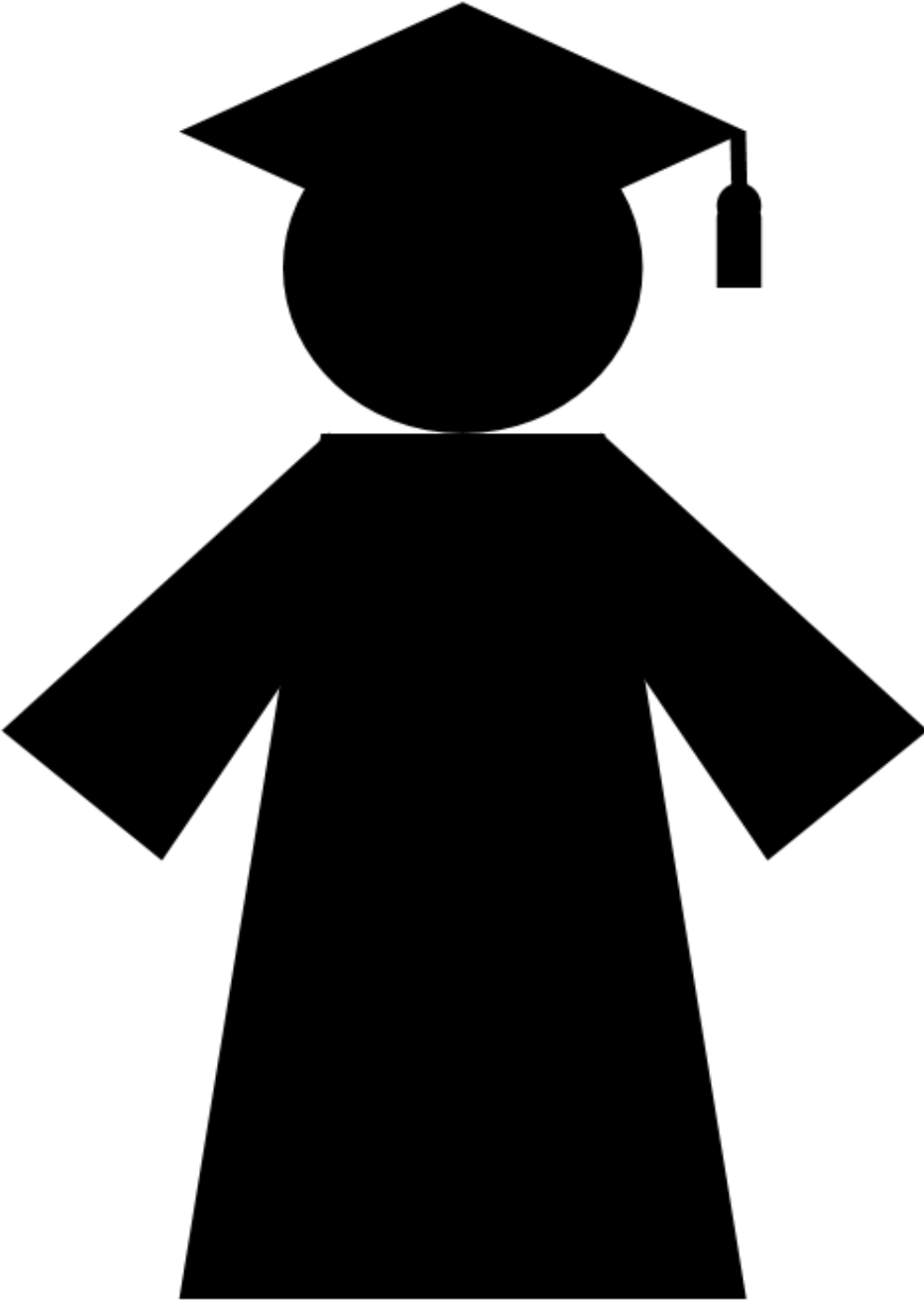


Overview

Every important journey begins with a destination in mind and starts with a clear view of the future ahead. The **Destination 21** strategic plan for Cumberland County Public Schools (CuCPS) is designed to prepare each and every student to be a 21st Century learner, worker, and citizen. To do this, we aim to foster deep learning experiences that develop essential competencies and prepare students for the workplace. We believe skills such as communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving are just as important as content knowledge. Students must know how to use and apply knowledge. We seek to inspire the natural curiosity of our students by cultivating engaging learning environments, hands-on learning experiences, and real-world learning opportunities. These are important to us and our larger community as evidenced by feedback in our recent strategic planning process.

As we reflect on our strategic direction, we imagine what the world will be like when students in kindergarten graduate and what skills they will need to thrive in the future. For Cumberland County Public Schools, our destination is a place where every graduate leaves our schools prepared for a lifetime of learning in a rapidly changing world. Successful navigation of the route requires unity of purpose among those making the journey and dedication to following an established plan. The Cumberland County Public Schools Plan guides us toward our destination.

Portrait of a Cumberland Graduate



Expectations

Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objective

Vision:

The Cumberland County School System will be a model school system that serves as the educational and resource center for the community.

Mission:

Our mission is to inspire and prepare all students with the confidence, courage and competence to achieve their dreams; contribute to community; and engage in a lifetime of learning.

Purpose:

Our purpose is to prepare all students to be successful 21st Century learners, workers, and citizens.

School Board Goals:

- Cumberland County Public Schools will be student centered.
- Cumberland County Public Schools will expand opportunities for learning.
- Cumberland County Public Schools will develop committed stakeholders who build positive relationships. Stakeholders are defined as students, faculty and staff, parents and community members.

Strategic Goal:

Cumberland County Public Schools has adopted a single Strategic goal:

All Cumberland County Public Schools students will graduate having mastered the skills needed to succeed as 21st Century learners, workers, and citizens.

The Cumberland County School Board developed five objectives to support this goal and set specific priorities.

Our guiding objectives are our Commitments for how we intend to prepare each and every student to be a 21st Century learner, worker, and citizen.

We will
engage every
student.

We will
implement
balanced
assessments.

We will
improve
opportunity and
achievement.

We will
create and expand
partnerships.

We will
optimize
resources.

Objectives

1. We will engage every student.

Cumberland County Public Schools will engage every student in meaningful, authentic, and rigorous work through the use of instructional best practices and supportive technologies that will motivate students to be self-directed and inquisitive learners.

2. We will implement balanced assessments.

Cumberland County Public Schools will implement a balanced assessment system that accurately reflects student demonstration and mastery of learning.

3. We will improve opportunity and achievement.

Cumberland County Public Schools will improve learning opportunity and achievement for all students and enrollment groups.

4. We will create and expand partnerships.

Cumberland County Public Schools will create and expand partnerships with parents, community, and business leaders to fulfill their essential roles as actively engaged partners in supporting student achievement and learning outcomes for student success.

5. We will optimize resources.

Cumberland County Public Schools will optimize fiscal, tangible, and human resources to proactively support student achievement.

Strategic Priorities

The Division's Strategic Priorities provide the target toward our collective effort and resources that should be aimed in order to realize our goal.

1. All students will graduate prepared for citizenship, post-secondary education, and workforce entry levels.
2. Increase the number of student accruing college credits and career pathways credentials prior to graduation.
3. Increase the efficacy of our instruction staff by developing the pedagogical expertise essential to contemporary learning.
4. Achieve a fully-funded capital and operational budget that meets the schools system's needs for learning space modernization, instructional innovation, digitalized learning, and competitive recruitment and retention of personnel. Optimize the use of all allocated fiscal resources to meet the goals of the division.
5. Increase early intervention programs and services.

These Strategic Priorities are aligned with stakeholder feedback during the Strategic Planning Process. Stakeholders reported the following specific priorities:

- Career and Technical Courses and Opportunities
- Leadership and Community Service Opportunities (Citizenship)
- Adequate Resources for Students
- Adequate Staffing
- Competitive Salaries
- Replacing CCES Carpet

Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority/Target One

All students will graduate prepared for citizenship, post-secondary education, and workforce entry levels.

Rationale: The economy is changing rapidly based on new technologies and global corporate structures. Many middle class jobs, from skilled trades to professional roles, will likely disappear as technology changes the workforce. Students of today will be faced as adults tomorrow with an increasingly complex-geo political and environmentally challenged world. To ensure our students have the skills they need to become engaged citizens and viable members of the future workforce, we must help them develop skills that can be more effectively used by humans than machine, and actively engage students in developing healthy lifestyles, and becoming community contributors.

Objectives Addressed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Action Steps:

- Include community service as a graduation requirement.
- Increase service learning, community-based learning, work opportunities, and internships.
- Continue the implementation of 21st Century learning skills into curricula. 21st Century learning skills are defined as written and verbal communication; collaboration; critical thinking and problem solving; curiosity and imagination, accessing and analyzing information; and entrepreneurialism.
- Increase the number of students participating in a range of year-round, extra- and co-curricular, and elective experiences including arts, health/wellness, humanities, and STEM experiences.
- Integrate K-12 entrepreneurial learning opportunities and increased student participation in application of entrepreneurial skill-sets across curricula.
- Increase partnerships with the local workforce community and higher education specific to increasing student and educator access to a range of work experiences and career learning opportunities.
- Increase career and technical opportunities, especially at the middle school level.

- Support the establishment of a system to communicate with graduates on postsecondary outcomes.
- Continue to support the Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) Program and other alternative education options for students that are drastically behind in their graduation requirements.
- Continue to support online course opportunities for all students including homebound and private placed students.

Strategic Priority/Target Two

Increase the number of students accruing college credits and career pathway credentials prior to graduation.

Rationale: Students who build career pathways demonstrate multiple indicators of preparedness for post-secondary education and career entry. If students are to graduate having evolved a transition plan for next steps after high school, they need to be actively engaged in considering options as they move from middle school to high school to adulthood. Career pathways work should begin in the middle school years with the assistance of a tool to help student identify and modify their career pathways.

Objectives Addressed: 1, 3, 5

Action Steps:

- Continue use of the virtual career planning tool that, beginning in a student's seventh grade year, engages students, parents, counselors, and teachers in knowledge about career possibilities and develops career readiness skills as they explore pathways.
- Increase percentage of students by demographic leaving middle school with advanced math credits.
- Increase percentage of middle school students, by demographic, earning a high school credit prior to ninth grade.
- Increase opportunities and percentage of students leaving middle school with CTE electives and career exploratory participation.
- Increase percentage of high school students by demographic with advanced CTE/STEM participation and credits.
- Increase the percentage of high school students completing work-based, independent study, or practical learning experience.
- Expand career pathways opportunities to reflect changes in student/community, workforce areas of need.
- Support opportunities for students to have access to college-level courses in high school, including dual enrollment and Advanced Placement.
- Support the establishment of programs that promote accountability for graduation rates for all student subgroups in schools.

- Promote the identification of industry certification opportunities for Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers and students who lack such credentials
- Support the strengthening and expansion division-wide of the student advisement program to provide comprehensive services to address the individual needs of students.

Strategic Priority/Target Three

Increase the efficacy of our instructional staff by developing the pedagogical expertise essential to contemporary learning.

Rationale: The most effective teachers have high efficacy and demonstrate a strong desire to continually refine their instructional methodologies based on the needs of their students. Educators are serving students in schools with more challenging demographics and are preparing them for communities and careers that will be different than those of the 20th century. Ensuring our teachers take advantage of and apply high-quality professional development based upon new tools, new neuroscience learning research, and changing workforce and post-secondary learning needs, will ensure our students have access to instruction that will build their proficiency in learning.

Objectives Addressed: 1, 2, 3, 5

Action Steps:

- Increase of higher order thinking skills, student engagement, and content taught through 21st Century learning skills.
- Increase use of Project Based Learning and Performance Based Assessment.
- Continue to support K-8 English/Language Art and math professional development and coaching.
- Support teacher preparation programs and pre-service programs to improve their skills in teaching reading.
- Support initiatives that provide additional information to parents and teachers to help them identify areas of reading strength among students and target assistance to student in areas of greatest weakness.
- Support collaborative work and professional learning communities.
- Provide differentiated professional development based on data points and interests.
- Support initiatives to increase the number of high quality teachers, especially for hard-to-staff positions, such as secondary mathematics and science teachers.
- Promote increasing the pool of teachers entering the profession by supporting initiatives such as the career switcher program, Teacher cadet program, Call Me Mister program, and other incentive programs for qualified teachers.

- Support ways to attract and retain career and technical education teachers whose training and expertise meet the demands of students and employers.
- Support professional development and technical assistance for educational personnel, working with professional education associations and teacher educators.
- Support professional development strategies that the schools will use to help ensure the development of high qualified professional education personnel and paraprofessionals.
- Continue to support a mentor program for new staff.

Strategic Priority/Target Four

Achieve a fully-funded capital and operational budget that meets the division's needs for learning space modernization, instructional innovation, digitalized learning, and competitive recruitment and retention of personnel. Optimize the use of all allocated fiscal resources to meet the goals of the division.

Rationale: Cumberland County Public Schools (CuCPS) mirrors the reduction in funding findings of both the recent VASS survey and the JLARC report to the General Assembly. In 2008-2009, CuCPS operated on a budget of \$17,438,271 including local, state, and federal dollars. Currently, we operate on a \$14,736,161 budget. Due to the drastic reduction in funds, cuts were made in staff, salaries, and instructional programs/supports for students. In 2008-2009, CuCPS employed 262 individuals compared to the 219 employees now serving the students of Cumberland. During the 2010-2011 school year, full-time employees took a 5% pay cut. In addition to staffing and compensation, our students lost instructional supports such as New Beginnings and AVID, as well as chorus, elementary Spanish, and French programs.

In a perfect storm scenario, along with the reduction in funding came additional unfunded mandates, revised standards, and more rigorous assessments. Although many would agree that the additional mandates and the increase in rigor were needed--the lack of staff and resources has left CuCPS not "at their limits" but behind in preparation for the changes. We now have to prepare students for a new type of workforce--an Innovative Economy.

Objectives Addressed: 3, 5

Action Steps:

- Create School Board Legislative Priorities focused around the development of more resources and funding from the locality and state.
- Build community-wide support for a fully-funded budget by engaging parents and community members in systematic learning opportunities that highlight the importance of excellent schools for the entire community.
- Develop a Board-driven communication plan to share accurate information about resource challenges, captured efficiencies and needs with parents, business community, and the greater community.
- Research alternative funding sources.
- Implement digital learning in all grades.
- Research and support universal broadband access for all students in the county.

Strategic Priority/Target Five

Increase early intervention programs and services.

Rationale: Research demonstrates that from the time of birth to the first day of kindergarten, childhood development proceeds at a pace exceeding that of any subsequent stage of life. Striking disparities in what children know and can do are evident well before they enter kindergarten. These action strategies reflect the commitment of the School Board to ensure that all children are adequately prepared for school when they enter kindergarten.

Objectives Addressed: 1, 3, 4, 5

Action Steps:

- Support the Virginia Preschool Initiative, the Title I Preschool Program, and Early Childhood Special Education.
- Support preparation programs for preschool teachers and professional development opportunities for preschool teachers.
- Continue supporting the partnership with Head Start.

School Board Members:

Ginger Sanderson
Chairman, District 1

George Reid, Jr.
Vice-Chairman, District 4

Eurika Tyree
District 3

George Lee Dowdy, III
District 2

Christine Ross
District 5

Superintendent of Schools:

Dr. Amy Griffin

Comprehensive Plan Committee Members:

Marwell Aruz, Parent
Jeff Dingeldein, Middle School Principal
Bernice Ford, Supervisor of Special Education
Andre Gilliam, Parent
Virginia Gills, Elementary Principal
Nikki Holt, Parent
T. C. Huddleston, Parent
Chip Jones, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations
Jennifer Kingsley, Parent
Paula Clay Prouty, Parent
Becky Ricker, Parent
Ginger Sanderson, School Board Member
Jeff Scales, High School Principal
Jennifer Turner, Parent