

# Progress Without a Plan? Not Possible!

85<sup>th</sup> Annual CASB Conference  
December 12, 2025

Cheryl W. Ryan  
[cwryan59@gmail.com](mailto:cwryan59@gmail.com)



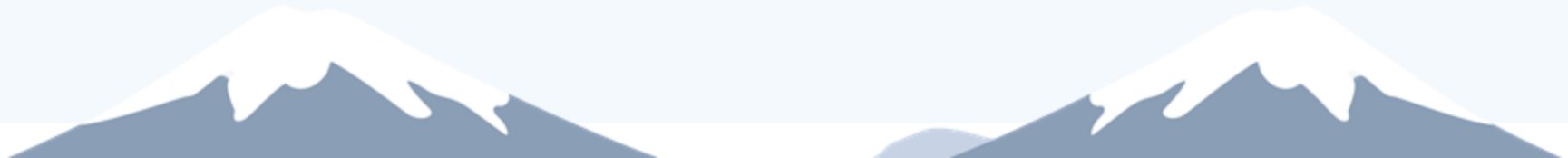
# What We'll Talk About Today

1. Why Strategic Planning Matters – from the board member and school district perspective.
2. The basic pieces of a strategic plan.
3. How a good strategic plan helps board members, superintendent, staff and community members get onboard (and stay onboard) your district's 'bus'!



# What We'll Talk About Today

4. How a good strategic plan keeps the district moving forward with long-term goals and shorter-term strategies.
5. How the board benefits from the strategic plan in terms of focus, governance and messaging.
6. Practices and processes to plan, take action, monitor, evaluate and stay invested in the Plan.



# Why Strategic Planning Matters – from the board member and school district perspective

## Common Vision

---

Everyone connected to the district knows the direction and priorities

## Resources

---

Helps the district allocate scarce resources where they most matter

## Agility

---

Increases ability to manage challenges, assess risk and make better decisions

## Accountability

---

Provides measurables and consistent information

# The Basic Pieces of a Strategic Plan



# Vision

Represents the ideal. It's may be ephemeral, emotional, even unattainable. It represents the district in an almost-perfect state.



Engaged, empowered and energized for excellence.



**Providing a positive, safe and stimulating environment where all children learn, belong and feel valued.**

Supporting and nurturing children, our staff and their families to value life-long learning

Ready for Tomorrow!



Building skills in each child for success and independence from preschool to graduation and beyond.

# Mission

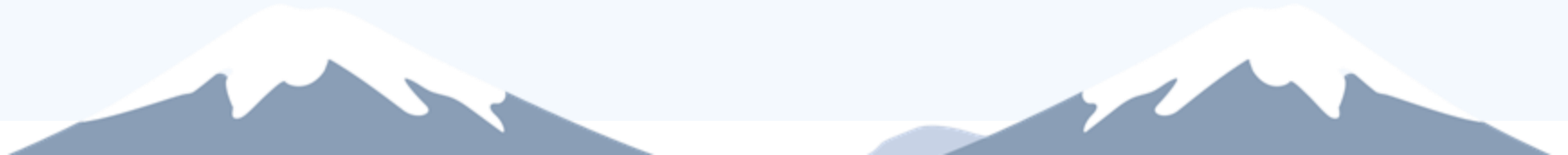
**The mission is often much more concrete. This tells everyone:**

**What you do**

**Why you do it**

**How you do it**

**For whom you do it**



# Mission

Our talented and professional staff provide high-quality learning experiences based on a broad and balanced curriculum so all children can experience success.

We prepare and motivate our students for a rapidly changing world by instilling critical thinking skills, supporting emotional development, encouraging a global perspective, and building respect for honesty, perseverance, and compassion.

In partnership with families, all staff members are fully committed to preparing students for success throughout their school years and for college and career readiness.



## Goals

**The Strategic Plan's goals should be broad.**

**The Strategic Plan's Goals should be stable and long-lasting.**

**Strategic Plan Goals are often referred to as "buckets" or "pillars" and most often number 3-5.**

**Every strategy and tactic within the plan should be "housed" within one or more of the Strategic Plan's Goals**


## **Awesome County School District Goals**

An agile, engaging and rigorous curriculum

Facilities that are safe, secure and provide flexibility for current and future learning

A school environment and culture that supports all staff with relevant professional development, training and opportunities to demonstrate leadership

Broad array of athletic and extra-curricular opportunities to spur excitement and interest in each student.



# Analysis and Strategies

Vision, mission and goals are normally derived from a series of conversations with the strategic planning committee.

The process includes discussing gaps, challenges and issues keeping the district from meeting the demands of its mission and moving it toward its mission.

This information is used by administrators and staff, along with other relevant data and evidence, to draft strategies that will be housed within each goal area.

Strategies are actionable projects, programs or processes that satisfy the data and help close gaps.



# Action

Approved strategies are prioritized, assigned a champion(s), planned, assigned a time-line, benchmarks and then implemented. Steps within each strategy should be measurable and transparent.

# Monitoring and Evaluation



# The Strategic Plan “Bus”



At every board meeting, remind all of the district’s vision and mission.

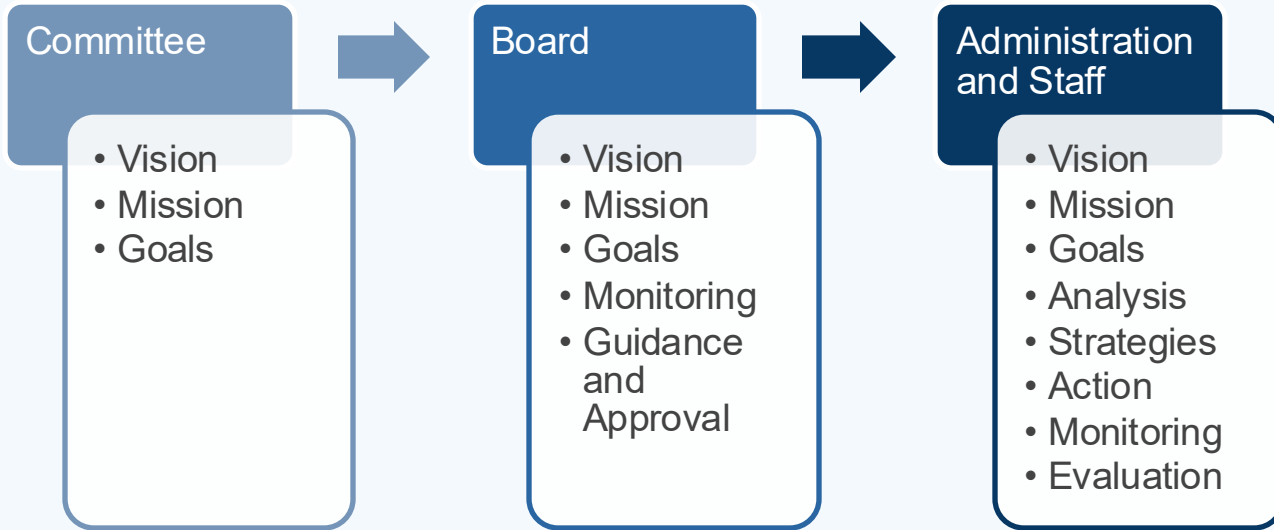
Speak in terms of the district’s goals...always.

Board members should have open and transparent access to strategic planning documents and monitoring systems.

Considering “theming” board meetings around one of your goals – highlight progress and discuss challenges and workarounds.

Insist that all formal communications feature vision, mission or goals in a direct or indirect way.

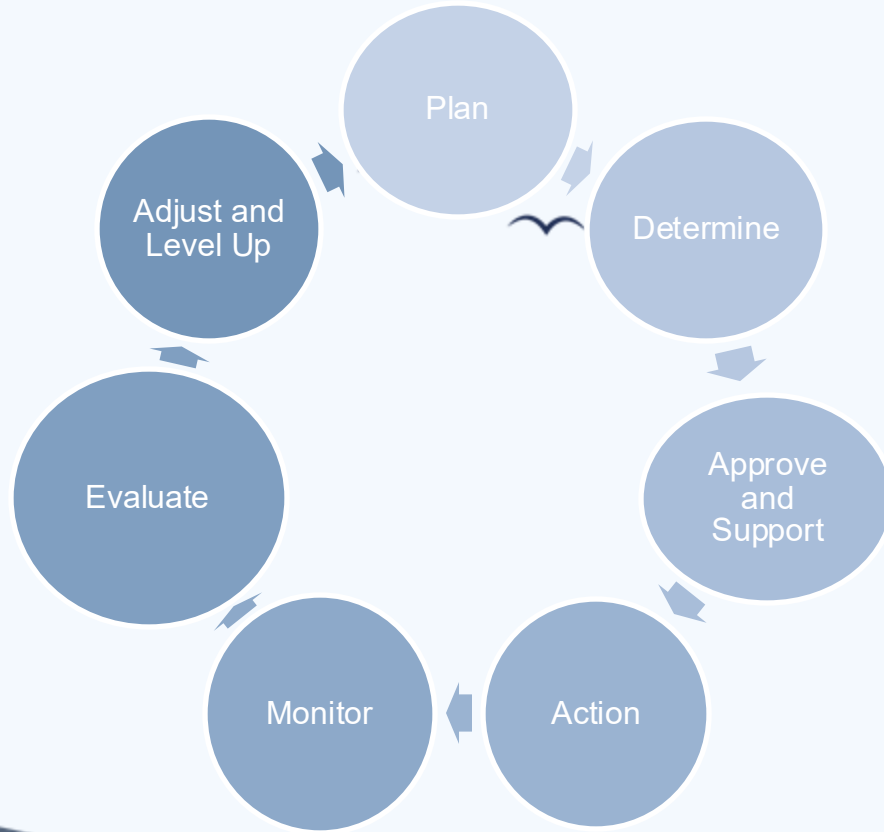
# Roles and Responsibilities



# Tools and Methods for Monitoring, Measurement and Evaluation

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**
- **Realistic Timelines**
- **Budgetary and Financial Metrics**
- **Reviews through Regular Communication and Progress Meetings**
- **Online Dashboards and Reporting Tools**

# Strategic Planning is a Continuous Process



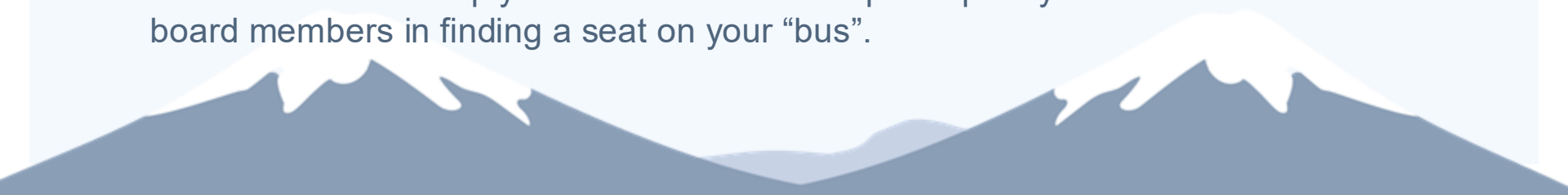
# Don't Forget

Crow about your progress: Letters to families; micro-site devoted to the plan; credit to staff at board meetings; annual reports and newsletters

## Ask Critical Questions

- How will we/do we know this is working?
- How long do you expect it to be before we finish/see results from this strategy?
- How does this strategy affect others?
- What happens if this strategy isn't effective (i.e., What is Plan B?)
- Once this strategy is implemented, what's next?

Review your Vision, Mission and Goals annually...they may not change but the conversation will keep you focused. It also helps to quickly orient and assist new board members in finding a seat on your “bus”.



Vision and strategy aren't enough. The long-term key to success is execution. Each day. Every day.

--Richard M. Kovacevich, former CEO, Wells Fargo/Norwest Bank





# Thank you Happy Holidays!

Cheryl W. Ryan  
[cwryan59@gmail.com](mailto:cwryan59@gmail.com)