



Tell Your Story
Define Your Success
HYA's Strategic Planning Process

Strategic plans can shape powerful narratives that redefine student success, engage stakeholders, and support strategic leadership

hyastrategicplanning.com

HYA

Table Of Contents

Tell Your Story _____	6
Define Success _____	7
We'll Meet You Where You Are _____	8
Where To Begin _____	9
Implementation Alignment _____	10
Strategic Dashboard _____	11

HYA | EDUCATION
EXPERTS

Mailing Address

HYA Corporation

909 W. Euclid Ave #926
Arlington Heights, IL 60006

(847) 250-7261

hyastrategicplanning.com

Published in 2026



Transparency builds trust. Trust builds momentum.

This is not simply strategic planning.

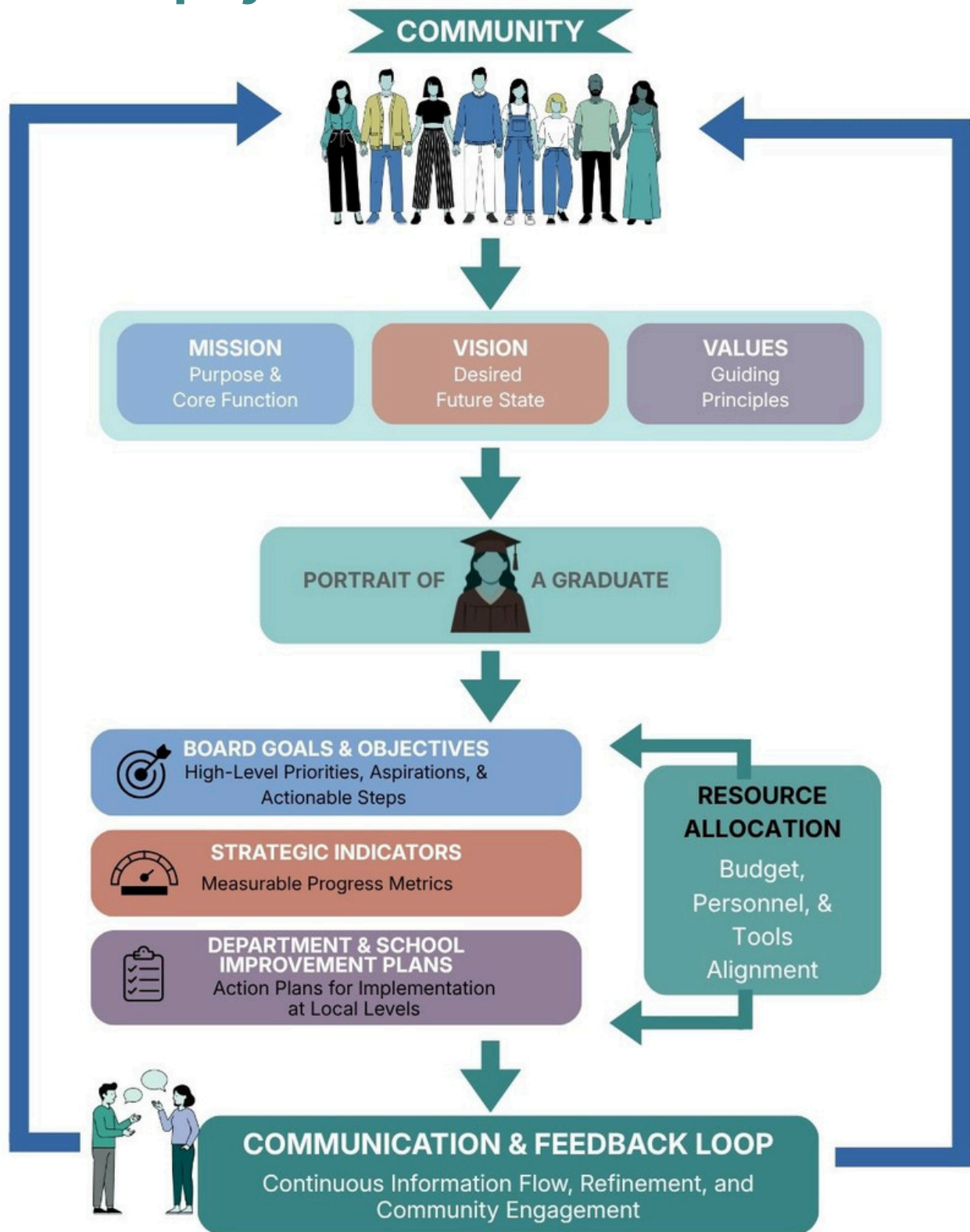
This is a district aligned in purpose, united in action, and energized by its future.

Imagine...

- ▶ A school district that pauses long enough to **truly listen to hear the hopes, aspirations, and expectations** its community holds for the future of its children.
- ▶ Educators **standing arm in arm** with parents, business, and industry leaders, higher education partners, and philanthropic organizations **united in defining the essential skills every graduate must possess to thrive** in a changing world.
- ▶ Students, teachers, staff, and families **speaking a common language** about where the district is headed, confidently naming the plan, understanding its purpose, and **seeing themselves in its promise**.
- ▶ Your story of progress told openly and proudly. **A customized online dashboard reflects the community's chosen measures of success**.
- ▶ Cabinet leaders and principals **not just supporting the strategy, they're championing it**.
- ▶ Department plans and school improvement efforts **aligned seamlessly with board priorities**, ensuring that every initiative, every resource, and every action advances the shared vision.

The result is palpable. A spirit of unity. A culture of coherence. An unmistakable energy that comes from a community moving forward together, confident in its direction and inspired by what is possible for every learner.

HYA Strategic Planning Philosophy



Tell Your Story

Great stories masterfully share details, and for school districts, the details are the strategic indicators in the strategic plan.

Successfully implementing a strategic plan requires a focused approach.

Storytelling is a fundamental human experience that reveals emotions and unites people, establishing stronger and deeper connections. The ability to articulate and substantiate a compelling vision ultimately speaks to the return on investment that local schools provide to the communities they serve.

So how do you tell your school district's story?

Start by engaging with stakeholders in authentic ways. Then collaboratively create a clear compelling vision for student success that aligns to community voice and values.

As you tell the story of your district, it's important to provide details in the form of data. Details are how stories come alive and resonate with readers. The details of your story are your strategic indicators. Therefore, measuring what matters to your community is critical to crafting your narrative.

Do You Have a Mantra?

Do you have a mantra? How many of your employees could articulate it? What proportion of your extended community is aware of your direction? Give life to your strategic plan by giving it a name.

Consider a few examples:

- "Future Ready" - Guilford County Schools, NC
- "We INSPIRE" - Los Gatos Union School District, CA
- "Think Different" - Apple
- "Make People Happy" - Disney
- "Just do it" - Nike
- "Redefining Ready" - Township High School District 214 and AASA

Define Success

The first step toward telling your district's story is committing to measuring what matters and to knowing your numbers.

The volume of available data can seem overwhelming, making it difficult to decide where to focus. But what truly matters? What matters is what your community values. You are what you measure.

Consider the adage:

"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."

As you think about establishing strategic indicators, take pause. Do not establish strategic indicators merely because they are available and convenient. Beware of the trap of reporting what is easy to report.

You will also identify indicators that you believe matter, that may not be able to be reduced to a number. These are qualitative indicators. It is important to find creative ways to include these qualitative items as well.

A manageable set of strategic indicators that the board and Superintendent speak of regularly reinforces organizational values and provides ongoing accountability that will move the needle in the direction of the district's vision.

Before adopting any strategic indicators, challenge yourself to answer the following questions:

- **Does it matter to my community?**
- **Does it count?**

"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."

William Bruce Cameron



We'll Meet You Where You Are

No two school districts share the same history, challenges, assets, or aspirations, so no strategic plan should ever be one-size-fits-all. Customization means facilitating only the conversations, structures, and supports that are needed.

- Some districts come to the table with a clear mission, vision, and guiding principles already in place and seek a focused process centered on sharpening goals, defining measurable objectives, and identifying meaningful indicators of success.
- Others may be welcoming a newly appointed superintendent or recently elected Board and desire not a new plan, but thoughtful opportunities for community listening, relationship-building, and affirmation of existing priorities.
- In some cases, the greatest need is not planning, but disciplined implementation.

HYA works with you to calibrate the scope and depth of engagement to align with district needs, available time and budget resources. Whether the process is comprehensive and community-wide or targeted and strategic, the resulting plan maintains the same essential architecture:

- a clear Mission,
- a compelling Vision and/or Portrait of a Graduate,
- Guiding Principles,
- focused Goals,
- actionable Objectives, and
- measurable Strategic Indicators

Where to Begin

Below is a sample pertaining to academic achievement

Focus Area:

Academic Achievement

Goal:

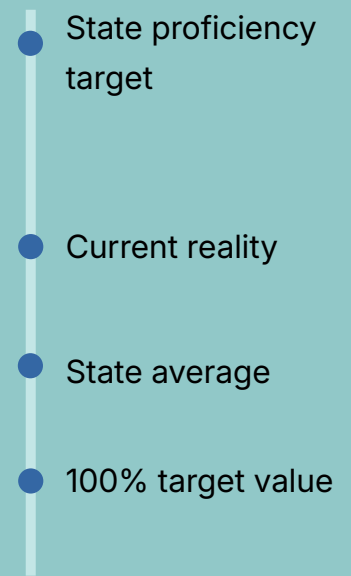
Ensure all students are academically prepared for success in high school, college, and career.

We recommend districts have 3-5 goals that are aligned to the mission, vision, guiding principles, and Portrait of a Graduate.

Strategic Indicators:

1. **Academic proficiency:** measures the percentage of students demonstrating grade level proficiency in ELA and math in grades 3-8 and grade 11 via the state assessment system disaggregated by district, building, subject, grade-level, and student groups.
2. **Core curriculum mastery:** measures the percentage of students receiving a C or better as a final grade in all core curriculum courses.
3. **Graduation rate:** measures the four-year high school graduation rate, disaggregated by district, building, and student groups.
4. **Professional development:** measures the percentage of staff that has received professional development aligned to the district strategic plan, disaggregated by year, building, and staff groups.

Benchmarks:



Objectives

1. **Strengthen Curriculum Quality and Rigor:** Conduct a comprehensive review of the core curriculum to ensure academic rigor and alignment with state and national proficiency standards and assessments.
2. **Ensure Instructional Coherence and Consistency:** Establish a guaranteed and viable curriculum for like core courses and grades, delivering the same scope and assessment practices, regardless of teacher.
3. **Guarantee Equitable Access and Targeted Supports:** Design and implement a system of supports and interventions to ensure every student can successfully access and master the core curriculum.
4. **Integrate Applied and Experiential Learning:** Embed applied learning experiences within the core curriculum to deepen understanding, increase engagement, and strengthen skills.
5. **Build Adult Capacity to Support Student Achievement:** Provide coaching and professional learning to strengthen educator effectiveness and improve student outcomes.

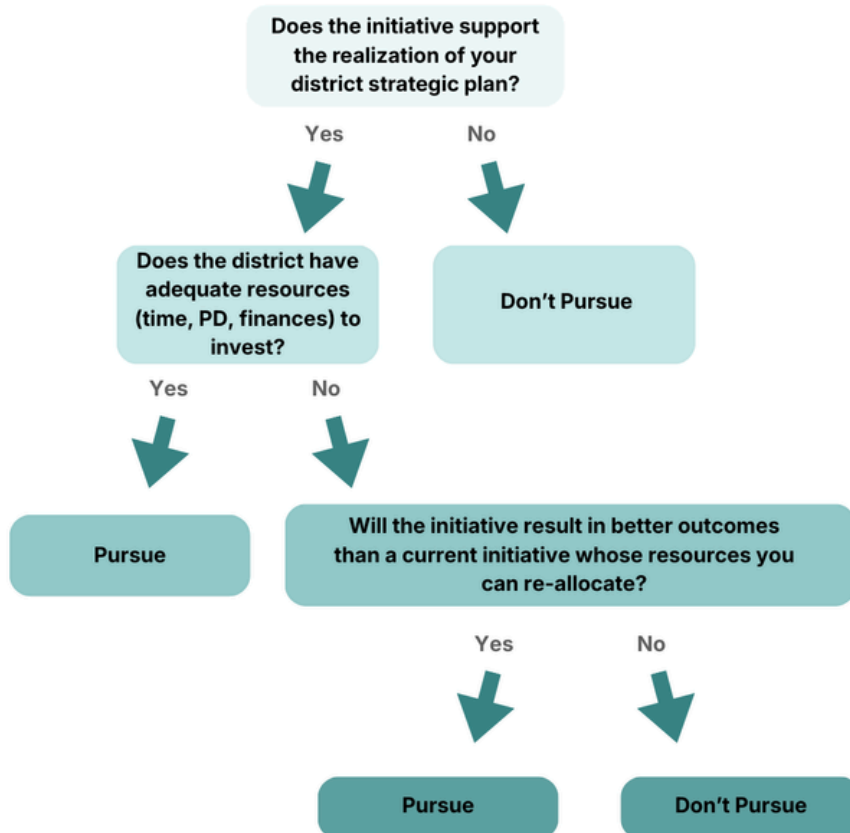
Implementation Alignment

For a strategic plan to be meaningful, it must be tightly aligned from district goals to the work occurring in schools and departments. Clear vertical alignment between the district's Goals and Objectives and each School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Department Improvement Plan (DIP) ensures that principals, teachers, and staff are collectively advancing the district's Vision, Portrait of a Graduate, and strategic priorities. This work is cyclical and continuous.

Each year, districts use performance data to review progress and refine school and department plans, creating an ongoing cycle of reflection, adjustment, and improvement. In this way, the strategic plan becomes the framework guiding budget decisions, program development, professional learning, and evaluation processes throughout the year. Equally important, the strategic plan provides a clear filter for decision-making.

Initiatives and ideas that do not advance the district's stated goals must be intentionally set aside so that time, resources, and energy remain focused on the priorities that matter most. To sustain this alignment, department and school improvement plans should be a reflection of the district's strategic plan. Agendas, newsletters, and meetings with faculty, staff, parents, and community groups should reinforce the strategic priorities and highlight the aligned actions taking place through the SIPs and DIPs.

The strategic plan provides a clear filter for department and school improvement plans





Strategic Dashboard

Telling your district's story via a strategic dashboard provides a tremendous opportunity for district leaders to engage their communities in productive dialogue related to the outcomes that matter.

While most school districts engage stakeholders through visioning or other strategic planning processes, few engage communities around tangible student and system-level outcomes. By following guidance shared in this document, districts can begin their journey toward crafting an inspiring narrative that motivates all stakeholders to help their district ensure that all students reach their full potential. The foundation of evidence-based practice is aligning the

strategic plan to a set of strategic indicators used to measure impact and govern progress. A strategic dashboard provides a data infrastructure needed to operationalize your strategic plan. However, the most important work in shaping a more meaningful definition of student success and school quality is a commitment from all levels of the organization to measure what matters. A sustained focus on a manageable set of strategic indicators will provide clarity to all stakeholders.



**We are education experts.
We're here to support your
leadership journey.**

HYA is a network of education experts that work for boards/trustees and administrators to recruit and develop great leaders, plan for the future, provide additional human resources to move critical projects and initiatives forward, and evaluate program and department effectiveness.

HYA Corporation

909 W Euclid Ave #926
Arlington Hts, IL 60006

(847) 250-7261

hyasearch.com

Published in 2026