



# BETHANY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Excellence For All And By All*

## DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN

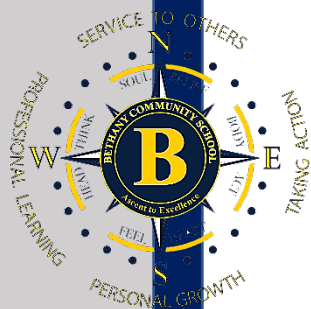


*We inspire and empower children  
to thrive in the  
world of tomorrow.*

## BETHANY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

*Adopted March 11, 2020*

# INTRODUCTION



Dear Bethany Community Member,

On behalf of the Bethany Public School District, we are pleased to present the District's Strategic Plan for 2020-2025. This Plan lays out our values and vision for the development of the District over the coming years.

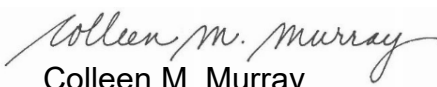
The District serves approximately 370 students, PreK-Grade 6, and is dedicated to excellence for and by all. This Strategic Plan builds upon this legacy, while providing clear direction for the future.

Developing this Plan was a collaborative effort, led by a committee that included members of the Board of Education, school administration, teachers, staff, and school parents. The Strategic Planning Committee began its work in January 2019. The Committee collected input from stakeholders in the school and community. It generated a revised Mission Statement encapsulating the District's core values and identified key goals in four major areas: Curriculum and Instruction, Culture and Climate, Community Engagement, and Future-Ready Facilities. In August 2019, the Strategic Planning Committee passed the baton to the Bethany Community School Steering Committee, consisting of educators and administrators at the Bethany Community School, which worked over the next several months to identify and prioritize specific action steps in the service of each goal. The Strategic Planning Committee put their final stamp of approval on the plan in January 2020 and sent it to the Board of Education for review and approval.

This 5-Year Strategic Plan provides an overarching framework for ongoing development and improvement, supporting and building on the outstanding work that is already happening in the District. We recognize that we can't accomplish all goals at once; however, we are confident that over time, with continued collaboration, positive relationships, and a commitment to excellence for and by all, our school district will continue to provide a first-rate education for our children and to be a source of pride for the Town of Bethany.

In continued partnership,

  
Christopher Pittenger  
Chair, Bethany Board of Education

  
Colleen M. Murray  
Superintendent



# BOARD OF EDUCATION

Christopher Pittenger  
*Chair*

Dorothy Seaton  
*Vice Chair*

Lynette White  
*Secretary*

Doreen Fox

John Paul Garcia

Lisa Gaw

Edward (EJ) Maher

Shawn Uscilla

Namita Wijesekera







## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many people contributed to the development of this 5-Year Strategic Plan, including the Bethany Board of Education, administration, teachers, staff, parents and community members. The Bethany Public School District would like to thank everyone who contributed throughout the process especially those that served in an official capacity on the Strategic Planning and Steering Committees for their commitment, dedication, and hard work.





# STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Angelo Amato

*Past Board of Education Member & BCS Parent*

Nicolette Aynat-Nolan

*BCS Parent*

James Bruni

*Math Coach & BCS Parent*

Kai Byrd

*Director-Special Services, Curriculum and Instruction*

Sue Carpenter

*Board of Education Executive Assistant*

Shannon Lane

*BCS Parent*

Colleen Murray

*Superintendent*

Chris Pittenger

*Chair, Board of Education & BCS Parent*

Tom Reed-Swale

*Principal*

Michelle Schwenger

*Media Specialist*

Dorothy Seaton

*Vice Chair, Board of Education*

Beth Sharkey

*STEM Coach*

Julia Strong

*BCS Parent*



# STEERING COMMITTEE

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Kai Byrd  
*Director-Special Services, Curriculum and Instruction*

Krista Colby  
*Reading Consultant*

Andrea Hubbard  
*Interventionist*

Mark Montesi  
*Third Grade Teacher*

Colleen Murray  
*Superintendent*

Marjorie Nusom  
*School Psychologist*

Tom Reed-Swale  
*Principal*

Amanda Royce  
*Special Education Teacher*

Michelle Schwenger  
*Media Specialist*

Beth Sharkey  
*STEM Coach*

Kim Wolcott  
*Fifth & Sixth Grade Teacher*

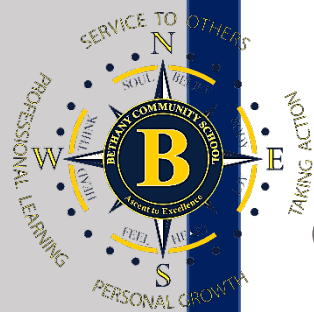


# MISSION STATEMENT

We inspire and empower children to thrive in the world of tomorrow.







# CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

## GOAL 1

We will maximize each student's potential through a relevant and authentic curriculum and a broad range of experiences.

Priorities:

- Ensure continuous academic performance improvement based on a growth mindset\*.
- Maintain a continuous cycle of curriculum evaluation, revision, and development for all subject areas.
- Embed Habits of Mind\* into the curriculum (K-6).
- Build a common understanding of and implementation plan for project based learning\*.
- Transition to standards-based reporting\* to better assess how students are performing on a set of clearly defined learning outcomes.
- Create, evaluate and refine a high-quality Grade 5 & 6 middle school model\*.
- Establish a sixth grade Capstone project\*.
- Promote the humanities by enhancing the visual and performing arts opportunities.
- Research and develop a school-wide homework plan.

## GOAL 2

We will invest in the continual development of our staff.

Priorities:

- Promote personalized learning\* opportunities to advance teaching, learning and the goals of the District.
- Create a school-wide Steering Committee\* to drive school improvement through the use of research, development and monitoring of initiatives, and to develop professional development growth plans.
- Ensure the timeliness, effectiveness, and monitoring of training.
- Develop a shared understanding of instructional rounds\* and a plan to implement.

\* See Glossary for definition.



# CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

## GOAL 3

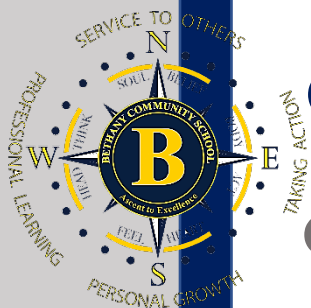
We will provide differentiated, individualized opportunities and support to foster creativity, and to meet the needs of all students.

### Priorities:

- Establish, evaluate and revise a school-wide Scientifically Research-Based Enrichment\* model that focuses on strategies to support high achievement and high growth.
- Restructure the Eureka!\* program to promote a school-wide enrichment.
- Research and implement Student Success Plans\* in Grades K-6.



\* See Glossary for definition.





# CLIMATE AND CULTURE

## GOAL

We will promote physical health and an active lifestyle, emotional health and resilience, and social well-being.

### Priorities:

- Develop and implement a plan for integrating social emotional learning\* across settings and grade levels to leverage resources and increase effectiveness.
- Research and implement trauma-informed\* best practices in the classroom.
- Continue initiatives in support of the District Wellness Council's BCS Gets Fit\* program.
- Create units of study to support functional daily living skills\*.
- Establish a school-wide common understanding of the elements of digital citizenship and integrate into day-to-day instruction.



\* See Glossary for definition.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## GOAL 1

We will cultivate responsibility and respect in our students and will promote citizenship in the school, the community, and the world.

Priorities:

- Develop consistent school-wide behavior expectations and empower students to take responsibility and resolve conflicts.
- Offer activities and experiences which promote an understanding, respect, and acceptance for all aspects of diversity.
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to participate in community service.

## GOAL 2

We will encourage and enhance collaborative relationships with parents and with the broader community.

Priorities:

To improve communication:

- Champion the new District mission statement and goals.
- Enhance the District website as an effective communication tool.
- Promote the Bethany Public School District and Bethany Community School programs and resources.

To improve engagement:

- Provide multiple opportunities for parents/guardians and the broader community to volunteer and engage in student learning.





# FUTURE READY FACILITIES

## GOAL

We will provide a safe, appropriate learning environment to support contemporary education.

### Priorities:

- Create a 5-year Facilities Plan that takes into consideration buildings and grounds as well as future-ready learning spaces.
- Maintain up-to-date Safety, Security, and Crisis Response Plans.







# GLOSSARY

## **Growth Mindset**

“In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.” (Dweck, 2015)

Whether a student holds a fixed mindset or growth mindset significantly impacts their learning experience—from elementary school to high school. Students that hold a fixed mindset give up when they can’t solve a problem and admit defeat. This can be detrimental to students’ future efforts and leads to limited student growth. With a growth mindset, students continually work to improve their skills, leading to greater growth and ultimately, success. The key is to get students to tune into that growth mindset.

## **Habits of Mind**

A pattern of intellectual behaviors that leads to productive actions. When we experience dichotomies, are confused by dilemmas, or come face-to-face with uncertainties, our most effective response requires drawing forth certain patterns of intellectual behavior.

## **Project Based Learning**

A teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge.

## **Standards Based Reporting**

Refers to systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating understanding or mastery of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education.

## **Middle School Model**

Is characterized by structures and approaches that meet the needs of young adolescents and considers the impact on student growth, rather than cross sectional student achievement.

## **Capstone Project**

A multifaceted assignment that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students that take a wide variety of forms but most are long-term investigative projects that culminate in a final product, presentation, or performance. Capstone projects are generally designed to encourage students to think critically, solve challenging problems, and develop skills such as oral communication, public speaking, research skills, media literacy, teamwork, planning, self-sufficiency, or goal setting. In most cases, the projects are also interdisciplinary, in the sense that they require students to apply skills or investigate issues across many different subject areas or domains of knowledge.



# GLOSSARY

## **Personalized Learning**

Refers to instruction in which the pace of learning and the instructional approach are optimized for the needs of each learner.

## **Steering Committee**

A committee that decides on the priorities and goals of an organization and manages the general course of its operations.

## **Instructional Rounds**

A process that districts and schools use to better understand teaching and learning in schools in order to improve learning at scale. It is these practices that are shared with the school, not information about individual teachers or students.

## **Social Emotional Learning**

The process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

## **Trauma Informed**

Teaching students about stress responses and resilience can help them better recognize their emotions, cope with trauma, and reach out for help before they act out—freeing them from emotional roadblocks so they can learn more readily and thrive in classrooms.

## **BCS Gets Fit**

A program sponsored by the District Wellness Council that promotes student, staff and family physical and mental health.

## **Functional Skills**

Skills a special education student needs to live independently in order to gain as much independence and autonomy as possible, whether their disability is emotional, intellectual, physical, or a combination of two or more (multiple) disabilities.

## **Scientifically Research Based Enrichment**

Research-based instruction and targeted enrichment all students will be successful learners. The goal is to provide students with educational opportunities to reach their fullest potential.

## **Eureka!**

A service for identified talented and/or gifted students in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. Participation is offered to students with outstanding creativity and students with extraordinary learning ability.

## **Student Success Plan**

An individualized student driven plan that will be developed to address every student's needs and interests to help students stay connected in school and to achieve educational goals.

