

HAMPTON CITY SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020



Introduction

The 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan for Hampton City Schools is based on our continuing mission to ensure academic excellence for all students by working collaboratively with each other and with our community. The foundation for this plan was actually laid in 2010 when the division's strategic planning team, led by Patricia Johnson, engaged in an extremely comprehensive process to identify our mission, our core values, our strategic focus areas and a plan for continuous improvement.

To begin the current planning cycle, the first task was to revisit the mission, values, and strategic focus areas for our work to see what needed to be changed, added or removed to shape our plan for the upcoming years. Through input gathered in over 45 sessions with teachers, administrators, parents, and community members (over 630 participants in all), it was clear that our mission, fundamental beliefs and core values had not changed. Stakeholders also agreed that continued work in all of our six areas of focus needed to be a part of the plan for the future and gave specific feedback about things we were doing well in each area in addition to areas for growth.

In the last stages of the planning process, thought leaders for each focus area from all layers of the organization and the division's leadership team came together multiple times to identify the key goals and initiatives that would best help us realize our mission. Participants were challenged to define the work that would make us *amazing*, that would make people proud to work here and would make parents excited to enroll their children with us. The initiatives are bold as are the targets for performance. There was considerable debate on the wisdom of setting such audacious goals; after discussion, however, virtually everyone concluded that setting lower standards would be an unspoken agreement to leave some children behind; and that, we will not do. We will report our progress on the plan as a whole, annually, and throughout the year, share the status of work in key initiatives with the School Board, students, parents, staff, and our community.

Education and the City of Hampton

Hampton has a rich history in many areas, and education is certainly one. The first free school in America was established here through a bequest of land, livestock and tools, in the 1624 last will and testament of Benjamin Syms. A second free school was established in 1659 through a gift from Dr. Thomas Eaton. From those two schools grew a consolidated school, Hampton Academy, which opened in 1805. Education for **all**, for the orphaned, for the poor, for freed slaves, and for native-Americans captured in the Indian Wars of 1873, as well as the children of local citizens continued to expand over the next two centuries.¹

In August of 2015 when this plan was adopted, Hampton City Schools was the 14th largest school division in the Commonwealth of Virginia, with over 20,000 students enrolled in:

- **1 Early Childhood Center**
- **18 Elementary Schools K-5** (including 1 magnet, 2 fundamental schools and 1 school for the arts)
- **1 Gifted Center (3-8)**
- **2 PK-8 Schools** (Designed with three major learning centers: PK- 2, 3-5, 6-8 and established choice programs in Engineering and Biotechnology/Medical Arts)
- **5 Middle Schools** (including 1 fundamental and 1 magnet)
- **4 High schools** (including 4 career academies)
- **1 Non-Traditional Campus** (including a Performance Learning Center, an alternative school, an eLearning Center, an Adult Education program and a GED testing center)

The city of Hampton is one of America's oldest cities, established in 1610. With miles of waterfront, it is a beautiful place to live, rich in history and small-town charm. It has been recognized as a model for youth development and civic engagement. The population is estimated at just under 137,000 with a median household income of

\$50,705. The community is racially diverse with demographics reported at 49.6% African American, 42.7% white, and the remainder made up of small percentages of bi-racial, Asian, American Indian and Hispanic households.² The school population is less balanced than the city at large with racial demographics reported at 59.7% African American, 25.3% white, 6.1% Hispanic, 6.2% bi- or multi-racial, 2.1% Asian and less than 1% American Indian or Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Since the economic downturn in 2008, there has been a slight decline in Hampton's population and an associated decline in school enrollment. A strong school system with strong performance moving forward is a critical part of economic development and the city's ability to attract families and businesses.

While the school system and its staff, families and students have many things to celebrate; there is still much work to be done to take us to our *2020 Vision for the Future*.

Accomplishments during the 2010 - 2015 plan cycle:

- Graduation rate increased more than 13% since first cohort measure in 2008
- Spratley Gifted Center opened in 2010
- Two new state of the art PK- 8 Combined Schools opened in 2010
- Multiple facilities upgrades for enhanced appearance and safety
- Truancy rate decreased by more than 46% since 2010
- Campus at Lee non-traditional learning center opened in 2012
- New security protocols to enhance student safety launched in 2014
- Hampton earns All America City Award in 2014
- City raised tax rates to support school system in 2014
- Armstrong Elementary School earned Blue Ribbon status in 2014
- Governor's STEM Academy for Architecture & Applied Arts opened at Kecoughtan High School in 2015

- First graduating class of Governor's Health Sciences Academy at Bethel High School in 2015
- Two additional academies opened: Aerospace and Information Technology Academy at Hampton High School and Information Design and Engineering Academy at Phoebus High schools
- iPad (1:1) initiative launched in 2015

Realities as we move into our next plan cycle (as of August 2015):

- 40% of Hampton City Schools are accredited, down from 97% in 2010.
- 58% of Hampton City School students are eligible for free/reduced meals, up from 47% in 2010. In addition, the reported figure is likely to be lower than the actual percentage of families facing economic challenge as the division has 6 schools where all students are given free meals without having to file an application.
- 515 students are classified as homeless, up from 211 in 2010.
- Achievement gaps in pass rates on Standards of Learning (SOL) tests are evident based on gender and race, but most notably on socio-economic and disability status. Some gaps are larger than 20%.
- Only 44% of student climate survey participants reported being challenged by the work at school and only 34% report that lessons relate to life outside of school.

Clearly there is still work to be done. What follows here are the Strategic Focus Areas that explain **where we need to focus** our work, our Strategic Goals that make clear **what we plan to accomplish** and how we will measure progress, and finally, our Key Initiatives that furnish the broad strokes of **how we will work** to meet our goals and the needs of our students.



Hampton City Schools 2016-2020 Strategic Plan

Mission:

In collaboration with our community, Hampton City Schools ensures academic excellence for every child, every day, whatever it takes.

Vision:

Hampton City Schools: the first choice for success for every student.

Core Values:

We believe that the developmental needs of children are central to every aspect of the operations of Hampton City Schools and that interactions with our stakeholders must be governed by our core values—*integrity, responsibility, innovation, excellence and professionalism.*

In Hampton City Schools we will exhibit:

- **Integrity** by being honest, sincere, and trustworthy; treating all with fairness and respect.
- **Responsibility** by being accountable and reliable.
- **Innovation** by taking risks, being creative, and recognizing that small gains are important.
- **Excellence** by exceeding expectations; committing to quality through a focus on high standards and continuous improvement.
- **Professionalism** by communicating effectively, demonstrating confidence in our abilities, maintaining competence, working collaboratively and exhibiting leadership.

Strategic Focus Model



Hampton City Schools' work for the upcoming five years is best understood with a visual model. The core of the work, **Maximizing every child's learning**, is at the center of the model, surrounded by two equally important pieces of our success, **Creating safe, nurturing environments** and **Attracting, developing and retaining exceptional staff**. The learning, the staff, and the environment, then, receive crucial support through **Enhancing family and community engagement and satisfaction** and **Maintaining effective, efficient and innovative support systems** for both students and employees. Finally, all three "inner circles" are made possible by **Managing fiscal resources effectively and efficiently**.

Maximize Every Child's Learning

Key Goals & Performance Measures

- **Increase achievement for all students**
 - SOL Proficiency and Advanced Rates in all Core Subjects 
 - Measures of growth for special populations 
 - Percentage of students earning Advanced Diplomas 
- **Increase literacy for every student every year**
 - Percentage of students at grade appropriate comprehension level or showing growth on assessments. Current literacy measures in use are the Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening (PALS) test, the Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) and the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) 
- **Intentionally close achievement gaps** 
 - Difference in SOL pass rates by group
- **Graduate 100% of our students** 
 - Virginia Graduation and Completion rate

Key Initiatives

- **Increase Relevance & Engagement for students by**
 - Redefining the role of teachers in the classroom to be facilitators of learning and collaborative work, which then results in a shift in the role of students to participants in and contributors to learning
 - Creating a system of personalized college and career plans for every student, based on student interest and aptitude and research done by students to chart a 10-year plan that includes post-secondary education and training
 - Enhancing and expanding career exploration in middle school to prepare students for academy membership at high school
 - Expanding Career Academies in high schools to engage students and prepare them for success after graduation

- Expanding the instructional use of technology through the 1:1 initiative at all grades 5 – 12 to better allow students to participate in and contribute to learning experiences both in and outside of the classroom
- **Increase Support for students by**
 - Creating a system of “rapid response” based on frequent formative assessment so there is a process to identify students who need more help *quickly* to master a skill and a structure and protocol to provide that help *without delay*
 - Instituting a comprehensive Response to Intervention (RTI) system with a continuum of interventions available and a data system to track student needs and interventions for monitoring progress and making needed adjustments
 - Providing a comprehensive PK-12 literacy program to continue instruction in reading and reading comprehension beyond the elementary grades

While these key initiatives are at the center of improving our student achievement, literacy, and graduation rates while narrowing our achievement gaps, many of the goals and key initiatives that follow are ultimately tied to student learning as well.



Learning does not happen in a vacuum, or in a school filled with disruptions, low expectations, or a climate where students (or adults) do not feel safe and valued. Our goals, measures and initiatives to assure that both students and staff come to learn and work in a safe and nurturing environment are below. Please note that cultural competence generally refers to an ability to interact appropriately and effectively with people of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. In our schools, it also encompasses understanding and appreciating diversity and making conscious efforts to avoid judgment based on stereotypes or a lack of accurate information. In places

where there is a high degree of cultural competence, individuals of all types and from all backgrounds feel welcomed and treated fairly.

Create safe, nurturing environments

Key Goals & Performance Measures

- **Increase our cultural competence and relationships**
 - Percentage of positive responses on *cultural competence* questions on annual student and staff climate surveys 
 - Percentage of positive responses on *caring and supportive adults* question on the annual student climate survey 
 - Percentage of negative responses listing bullying as a problem in schools or workplaces 
- **Increase student engagement and responsibility**
 - Decreased percentage of students missing more than 10% of instructional time 
 - Decreased percentage of students with behaviors resulting in suspension 

Key Initiatives

- **Improve relationship-building and cultural competence by**
 - Creating climate teams at every school/program to build capacity, drive job-embedded learning with differentiated experiences ensuring a commitment to relationship-building at all levels in the school community
 - Creating and using reflection tools to measure current practice, identifying strengths and opportunities for growth
 - Training leaders in effective practices and also creating an understanding of the correlation between relationship-building/cultural competence and student achievement
 - Training both new and veteran teachers with interactive and differentiated workshops where they participate in a variety of strategic activities they

can use at the classroom level and model for students the power of embracing differences and utilizing the strengths of all

- **Consciously and consistently engage in building a sense of community in schools and throughout the school system by**
 - Creating a framework to define and provide strategies for developing community at all levels in the organization
 - Establishing consistent practices for engaging school stakeholders in focused, intentional and specific activities that improve school effectiveness and exemplify best practice in collaborative work
 - Providing time and structures for collaborative learning and reflective practices for teachers to have opportunities to work with colleagues in a variety of arrangements (e.g., vertical, in-building, across the division) to ensure success for all
- **Incorporate Youth Development practices by**
 - Providing information and training for staff in the conceptual framework of youth development and the part it plays in student motivation and achievement
 - Working to revise our curricula to reflect effective youth development practices including classroom activities for teacher use
 - Researching and adopting *or* creating a framework of practices to teach young people to function effectively in business settings and to adopt these learned behaviors in our schools and other public settings



It is clear from research that the factor that most strongly affects student achievement is the quality of the teacher in the classroom, which in turn is affected not simply by content knowledge and teaching skill, but also motivation and support. Our goals, measures and initiatives to assure that our students have high quality teachers in every classroom are below.

Attract, develop and retain exceptional staff

Key Goals, & Performance Measures

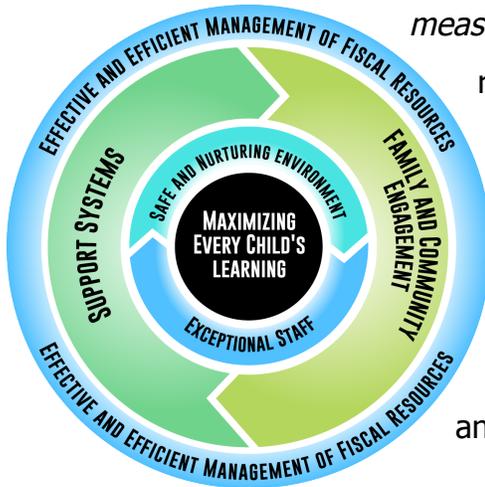
- **Staff 100% of our instructional positions with highly qualified employees by the opening day of school each year**
 - Percentage of positions staffed on the opening day of school as reported to the Board 
- **Reduce the percentage of employees who opt to leave Hampton City Schools each year**
 - Percentage of voluntary terminations reported to the board in personnel reports collated annually 
- **Increase the percentage of employees who express satisfaction with their work environment**
 - Percentage of positive responses to work environment questions on the annual staff climate survey 

Key Initiatives

- **Create and implement a comprehensive employee induction process with a unifying and inspiring culture by:**
 - Capturing and communicating the rich history of Hampton City Schools as the birthplace of the first “free school” created with a mission of teaching students from all backgrounds and means
 - Capturing and communicating the satisfaction that comes from doing our work well and changing lives
 - Creating a multi-year system of development and support that is differentiated to meet the various (technical, social, and emotional) needs of incoming employees
- **Recruit, develop and retain exceptional leadership throughout the organization by:**

- Recognizing the leadership potential in employees at all levels of the organization and working to cultivate effective leadership skills and behaviors at all levels through training and internship opportunities
- Providing comprehensive training for current and prospective leaders on effective coaching practices to enable them to coach employees for success and for improvement
- Including all facets of effective leadership in recruitment, training, and employee evaluation when applicable
- **Provide job embedded professional development differentiated by employee needs by**
 - Developing an organizational culture grounded in a “growth mindset”³ that fosters a love of learning rather than a fear of failure
 - Developing a “formative assessment” system including tools for self-assessment to measure employee skills in specific areas to provide targeted training to meet identified needs
 - Expanding the opportunities to receive coaching for both instructional and non-instructional staff
- **Maintain a competitive salary & benefit package to attract and retain exceptional employees by**
 - Considering competitive employee compensation as a key employee recruitment and retention factor in the budget process each year
 - Creating an information gathering plan and cycle to poll employees about benefit preferences.
 - Continuing to expand our benefits to include innovative components appealing to employees, unique to Hampton and based on best practices, (e.g. wellness center and pharmacy)

The strategic focus areas in the two inner circles of our model, contain all of the *measurable* goals in the plan. This is our core work. The outer rings that support the core work each have key initiatives.



The work for these will be planned and mapped with project management tools (e.g., Project Charters, Gantt Charts, Milestone Charts) and reports on progress will be included with the annual report of progress. Large projects may also generate separate reports to the board and community.

Maintain effective, efficient and innovative support systems

Key Initiatives

- **Ensure technology literacy for staff and students by:**
 - Identifying the key skills necessary to successfully navigate on-line learning systems, assessment systems, support systems, financial and business systems and creating a self-assessment tool to identify areas for training.
 - Creating multiple modes of professional learning for technology literacy
 - Creating technology experts throughout the division through a certification driven professional learning academy
- **Expand the productivity of staff by:**
 - Creating an accessible and intuitive curriculum management system with resources linked and accessible
 - Creating a comprehensive "Help Desk" system for support in any area, (e.g. maintenance, human resources, curriculum and instruction) so that employees have a single access point for assistance
- **Expand support for students by:**

- Broadening our partnerships with community groups and agencies to create programs that provide resources and services to students and families (e.g. Community Services Board, Department of Human Services)

Enhance Family and Community Engagement and Satisfaction

Key Initiatives

- **Create a welcoming environment in every school and department by:**
 - Identifying the key components to excellent customer service and creating a self-assessment tool to identify needs for growth
 - Implementing an on-going customer service training program for staff including, but not limited to, front line staff members
 - Creating a comprehensive customer feedback system
- **Expand partnerships with community groups and organizations by:**
 - Creating a process and system to match needs with potential supports that would facilitate access and problem solving for both schools and community members or groups
- **Expand marketing of great things going on in our schools by:**
 - Providing training and tools for employees, students and families to be, not only press agents, but also ambassadors for Hampton City Schools.
- **Increase effective communication between the school system and our community by:**
 - Redesigning the division's web pages for easy navigation
 - Obtaining and implementing a new message system that integrates with our student information system to improve accuracy in our target audience for messages
 - Continuing to expand our use of social media to highlight events and successes in Hampton City Schools
 - Implementing a school division mobile app to provide parents with easier access to Division, school and student information

Manage Fiscal Resources Effectively and Efficiently

Key Initiatives

- **Improve efficiency, transparency and accountability by:**
 - Introducing program-based accounting, which includes charting all accounts (including grants) with an applicable program code, creating annual spending plans for each program with program descriptors such as clients served, services provided, and results (both expected and actual) and using these data to measure return on investment
 - Creating and implementing a system to include end users in decision-making about purchases and to allow all employees to report concerns about spending and/or perceived inefficiencies
 - Instituting the use of an electronic requisition, purchasing and accounting system to automate workflow and enable enhanced reporting

By engaging in work on these key initiatives, and pursuing these goals, we believe we will move our division and community forward and further grow our ability to fulfill our mission to ensure academic excellence for every child, every day, whatever it takes.

References and Notes

¹ Eason, N., Graham, S., Power, J. and Wallisch, J. *Hampton City Schools: How Our Past Defines Our Future* (Hampton City Schools, 2010)

² Hampton City *Quickfacts* based on the most recent Community Survey data available on census.gov

³ Dweck, Carol *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (Random House, 2006) “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.”