

Ronan Public Schools' Strategic Planning Process

2013

Overview

The Ronan Public School District (Ronan Public Schools) has created a new direction for the school district to strategically focus its resources on identified wants, preferences, and needs of its community. As part of this process, Ronan Public Schools has begun a strategic planning and thinking process that will lead to a stronger and more vital school district. This process will be ongoing as Ronan Public Schools moves into the future. This Strategic Plan is intended to help the District focus its resources in a manner that will best benefit the students enrolled in Ronan Public Schools.

The Ronan Board of Trustees and Staff Leadership Team began the strategic planning and thinking process to more fully articulate its commitment to students, to community engagement, and to moving the District forward while utilizing a knowledge-based decision making process.

As part of its preparation for planning strategically, Ronan Public Schools brought in staff from the Montana School Boards Association with expertise in strategic planning for public schools to help facilitate the group through the initial strategic planning process.

On **February 11, 2013**, the Ronan School District Board of Trustees formally adopted its new strategic plan.

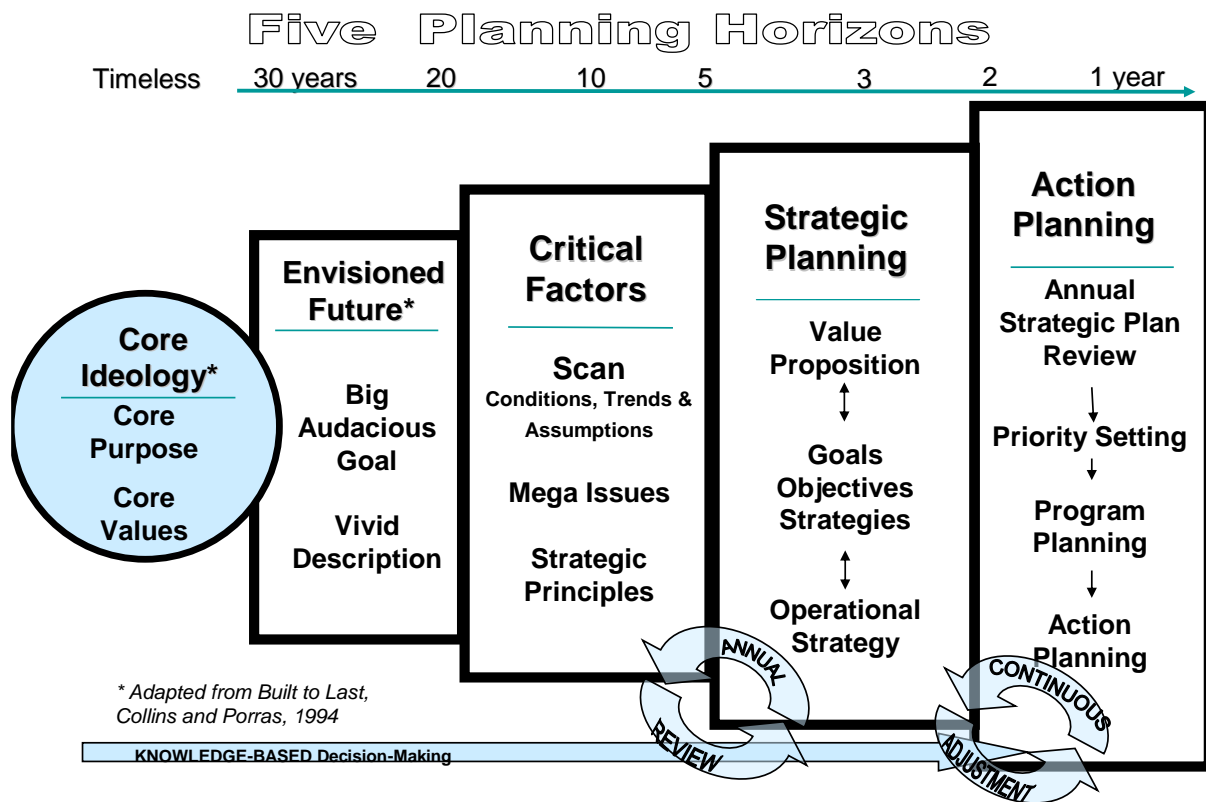
Ronan Public Schools' Board and Staff Leadership Team view the process of strategic planning as an ongoing process within the school system. This is not a "strategic planning project" that is completed. Nor is it intended as the end of a conversation, but rather as the beginning of one – a conversation regarding how Ronan Public Schools can best serve the community and maximize the focus and impact of its resources on its Core Purpose. The School Board of Ronan Public Schools intends this plan to become the means by which the Ronan Community's values, needs and priorities can be regularly discussed, clarified, documented, prioritized and pursued by our school system over time.

Adoption of a plan is an affirmation of the initial general intent and direction articulated by the Core Ideology, Envisioned Future and Goals and Strategic Objectives. It is understood that the strategies identified in this document will change over time as we begin to implement the plan and gain a deeper understanding of what does and does not work. The incorporation of our constituents' feedback will ensure that the plan remains relevant and contemporary over time.

Progress toward achieving identified strategic objectives will be assessed at least annually, and the plan will be updated based on achievement and changes in the needs of the students served by Ronan Public Schools.

Strategic Planning Framework

The framework used by the Ronan Public Schools for its strategic planning process was adapted from a model developed by Jim Collins, author of “Built to Last” and “Good to Great.” The Board focused on five different planning horizons, starting with the long term issues first to provide focus on shorter term efforts.



Core Ideology of the Ronan Public Schools:

Core ideology describes a school district's consistent identity that transcends all changes related to its relevant environment. It consists of two elements - **core purpose** - the school district's reason for being - and **core values** - essential and enduring principles that guide a school district. **Envisioned future** conveys a concrete yet unrealized vision for the school district. It consists of a **big audacious goal** - a clear and compelling catalyst that serves as a focal point for effort - and a **vivid description** - vibrant and engaging descriptions of what it will be like to achieve the big audacious goal.

Core Purpose of the Ronan Public Schools:

The Core Purpose of the Ronan Public Schools is to provide an educational system rich in academic rigor which values diversity and our multicultural heritage and provides an equitable learning opportunity in a safe environment for all students. The District families, community, and staff join as partners to educate and empower students for present and future individual achievement and contribution to their community, while remaining competitive in an ever changing global society.

Core Values of the Ronan Public Schools:

The Core Values of Ronan Public Schools are:

Respect, Responsibility and Pride – Ronan Public Schools value self-respect and respect for others at all times and on all levels, including the community, parents, the Board of Trustees, staff and students. We believe that we are all individually responsible for our own actions. Our young people learn through the examples we set, and if we instill a sense of pride in everything we do, our students will, in turn, have pride in themselves and others.

Well-educated, well-rounded staff – Ronan Public Schools believe that hiring and retaining highly qualified, innovative and caring staff is essential to the success of our students, our District and our community. We provide staff with professional development opportunities to help them succeed in their respective positions and to ensure that our students learn in an environment that emphasizes academic rigor, student safety, and the integration of pride in every aspect of our programs and offerings.

Integrity and Perseverance – Honesty, honor, openness, devotion and dedication are entrenched in everything we do. We have compassion for what we do and have high expectations for all, as we believe that students can achieve at high levels if provided a healthy, safe and nurturing environment.

Relationships – Ronan Public Schools value the relationships our District has with our community, parents of students attending our school, and relationships within our school system. We believe that building strong relationships benefits everyone. We value the diversity in our community and believe that we can all learn from one another's' unique backgrounds, qualities, and skills. We believe that we are all accountable to each other to ensure that our students are provided with the best opportunities possible that would not otherwise exist without the collective efforts of all stakeholders.

20 Year Planning Horizon

Envisioned Future of the Ronan Public Schools

Big Audacious Goal:

Ronan Public Schools is THE Flagship, Full-Service Public School. Our academic programs are rich and rigorous. We have the necessary support systems in place to ensure that our students have every opportunity to succeed in life. We have successfully capitalized on what we do best, including but not limited to, providing top-notch programs for our students in science, technology, fine arts, advanced placement courses, and in developing a culture where our students, staff and community work collaboratively, with a clear understanding that our diversities are what make us unique and successful as a community. Our students and community understand the necessity of public service. We have successfully developed an academic and social environment where students are provided the necessary tools to become problem-solvers and leaders and where self-recognition is valued and celebrated. We have the funding necessary to support all of our programs and services that support student achievement. When students are ready to leave our system they are prepared to be successful in all walks of life, whether they are college-bound, interested in pursuing a trade, or pursuing opportunities through the Job Corps or Military.

A Vivid Description of the Desired Future:

- 100% graduation rate;
- 100% of our students leave our system with the skills necessary to be successful;
- Our facilities are “blue ribbon” and meet the needs of our students and our community;
- We have developed state-of-the art technology curriculum and have staff trained to effectively bring it to classrooms in modernized buildings that are adequately equipped with advanced technology;
- We have state-of-the art vocational programs that provide students the necessary skills to obtain meaningful employment upon graduation;
- Our educational programs support our students obtaining college credit while in our system;
- At the Pre-school level, we have successfully implemented programs with a focus on
 - Attendance
 - Life Skills
 - Readiness
- At the K-4 grade level, we have successfully implemented programs with a focus on
 - Goal setting
 - Life skills
 - Grade-level Proficiency
 - Preparation for and transition to middle school

- At the 5-8 grade level, we have successfully implemented programs with a focus on
 - Life skills
 - Credit understanding
 - Ability grouping
 - Interest grouping
 - Health education (including sex education)
 - Credits, preparation for and transition to high school
- At the high school level, we have successfully implemented programs with a focus on
 - Vocational and Trade programs
 - Health education (including sex education)
 - Running start
 - Inspiring teachers
- We have a K-12 core curriculum in the areas of science, math and English specific to the needs of our students and community;
- We have successfully implemented a Drug Prevention Program with remarkable results and the data to demonstrate its effectiveness in the lives of our students and community members;
- We have a dorm available for students who need additional support structures;
- We have a closed district to ensure that we are providing the necessary services to the students who reside throughout our community;
- We offer parenting classes to educate parents about the necessary support systems essential for students to be successful;
- We have a recruitment and retention program that attracts the best and brightest staff.

5-10 Year Planning Horizon

Assumptions Regarding the Relevant Future for the Ronan Public Schools

In order to make progress toward the 20 year Envisioned Future, Ronan Public Schools must constantly anticipate the strategic factors likely to affect its ability to succeed, and to assess the implications of those factors. This process of building foresight about the future will help Ronan Public Schools to constantly recalibrate its view of the relevant future, a basis upon which to update the strategic plan on an annual basis. As the outcome-oriented goals that will form the basis of the long-range strategic plan will be based on this foresight, annual review of these statements will be an appropriate method of determining and ensuring the ongoing relevance of the strategic plan.

Creating the Assumptions - during the Strategic Planning Process, the Ronan School Board, Staff Leadership Team, and community members made many assumptions about the future. While many different assumptions were made, what follows are those assumptions that are likely to have the greatest influence on the development of Ronan Public Schools' Strategic Plan.

Assumptions about the future

Demographics

- We will continue to have increased poverty.
- We will continue to see more and more students with special needs.
- We will continue to see an increase in student discipline.
- We will continue to see a lack of parental involvement.
- Students will continue to be exposed to negative social issues/influences.

Business/Economic Climate

- The work force will look different. For example, people will continue to work later in life and more people will be working from their homes.
- Local control of schools will continue to be denigrated as a result of increased governmental control.
- More learning opportunities will be available online.
- Changes will be influenced by technology, inflation, energy, governmental policies, etc.
- Adequate funding of schools will continue to be an issue.
- We will have growth in our local business industry.

Legislation/Regulation

- We will continue to see an increase in accountability for public schools.
- We will have to continue providing programs and services with less funding from the state and federal government and local taxpayers.
- We will be competing with charter schools.
- We will continue to see a denigration of local control and the possible lack of confidence by the general public in local boards.
- It will be a challenge to stay ahead of mandates.

Technology/Science

- Technology has and will continue to change learning opportunities for students, staff and our community.
- We will continue to apply and use grant money to support on-line learning opportunities for students.
- We will need to ensure that we can keep up with technological advancements (staff, equipment, software, student accessibility, etc.).
- We will need to ensure that our math and science programs keep up with technological advancements.

Politics and Social Values

- We will continue to see an increase in our transient population.
- We will continue to see an increased demand on our schools and staff to address social issues.
- Face-to-face communications will decrease in all aspects of our lives with the advancements in technology.
- We will continue to deal with lack of social skills on the part of students.
- We will continue to see deterioration of the typical nuclear family structure.

5-10 Year Planning Horizon

Mega Issues facing the Ronan Public Schools

Mega issues are issues of strategic importance, which represent choices the school district will need to make in defining the ultimate direction of its long-range plan. These issues represent potential impediments to achievement of the Envisioned Future, and form a basis for dialogue about the choices facing the school district. These questions can serve as an ongoing "menu" of strategic issues that, using a knowledge-based approach in gathering insights relative to Ronan Public Schools' strategic position and directional choices for each of the issues, can be used by the Board to create regular opportunities for strategic dialogue about the future issues facing the school district.

Note: The mega-issue questions are not necessarily arranged in priority order.

Mega-Issue Questions for consideration by the District:

- What can we do to help students overcome the negative influences that have a detrimental effect on their potential and success?
- How do we ensure that we have adequate funding to continue providing a quality education for the students in our community?
- How can we keep up with technological advances to ensure that our students have the opportunities, programs and services they need to prepare them for life beyond Ronan Public Schools?
- How do we implement processes and programs to ensure that we exceed minimum required standards established by the state and at the federal level?
- How do we get parents and the community involved in the education, programming and services provided to our students?

Knowledge-Based Decision Making Questions

The Board should prioritize the above-referenced mega issues and decide which of these issues require immediate attention on the part of the Board. Once the identified mega-issues are

prioritized, the Board will set aside time at scheduled meetings to analyze a particular mega issue. At such meetings, the Board's primary focus will be on the mega-issue at hand. All other business (routine or otherwise) will be conducted at the end of the meeting once the dialogue and deliberation on the mega-issue has been concluded for that meeting. When analyzing mega issues, the Board will utilize a knowledge-based decision making process. This will keep the focus of the Board on relevant factors to consider as it develops strategies to overcome particular impediments/barriers that may impact the Board's strategic direction. The Board will analyze mega-issues by answering the following questions:

1. What do we know about the wants, needs, and preferences of our constituents that are relevant to this decision?
2. What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics facing our constituents/community that is relevant to this decision?
3. What do we know about the capacity/strategic position of our school district that is relevant to this decision?
4. What are the ethical implications of our choices?

Five Year Planning Horizon

Outcome-Oriented Goals and Strategic Objectives

The following thinking represents goals for the next five years. They are areas in which Ronan Public Schools will explicitly state the conditions or attributes it wants to achieve. These outcome statements will define, "what will constitute future success." The achievement of each goal will move the school district toward realization of its Envisioned Future.

Strategic Objectives provide direction and actions on how the school district will accomplish its articulated goals. All strategies included in the strategic plan should be considered accomplishable at some point in the future. Strategic Objectives are reviewed annually by the Ronan School Board, Staff Leadership Team, and faculty.

Goals of the Ronan Public School District

Goal Area 1: School/Community Relations and Communication

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five years: Ronan Public Schools has effectively engaged parents, business leaders, and the community and as a result of our efforts, the overall perception of Ronan Public Schools has vastly improved. People understand our overall vision, goals, and objectives, and we have a greater level of involvement of parents, business leaders, and the community.

Strategic Objectives – Two Year Plan:

- We will provide education to staff, parents and the community on school funding and the budgeting process.
- We will obtain all e-mail/ mailing addresses and develop a plan for on-going effective communications with parents, business leaders and the community at large. In turn, we will ask the community and business owners/managers to assist us with sharing targeted information about our school district.
- We will host community forums for the purpose of engaging the community and for the purpose of sharing information.
- We will obtain iPads for the Board to increase the effectiveness of the work of the board and in our communications with the public.
- We will implement specific techniques to ensure that we are effectively reaching out and communicating with parents.
- We will develop surveys as a method of gathering input and valuable information from staff, students, and the community in order to continue to improve as a school district.

Goal Area 2: Technology

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: Ronan Public Schools has stayed current with technology to ensure that we are effectively using technology to enhance learning opportunities for our students and to improve the delivery of our educational programming.

Strategic Objectives – Two Year Plan:

- We will develop and regularly update and refine a comprehensive technology plan that addresses:
 - professional development of staff in advanced technology techniques to increase student learning;
 - a method of replacing outdated technology with updated available technology;
 - technology tools, equipment, etc. to enhance our opportunities for students.
- We will continue to apply for grants/research additional grants to further our technological advancements.

Goal Area 3: Staff

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: Ronan Public Schools has staff that serve as role models for our students, that have effectively incorporated technology into our educational programming, and who are effective instructional leaders inspiring our students to do their best.

Strategic Objectives – Two Year Plan:

- We will seek information from staff using staff surveys.
- We will provide professional development for staff that assists all staff in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. Professional development will include effective methods of integrating technology into the classroom.
- We will develop procedures to ensure consistency and easy transitions across grades.
- We will develop procedures to ensure consistency and relevance within content areas.
- We will continue to use and enhance our use of curriculum maps to enhance student achievement.

Goal Area 4: Enhanced Student Programming

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: Ronan Public Schools has enhanced the educational opportunities and other programs and services to promote high student achievement, enforce positive social interactions and choices by students and prepare students for their futures.

Strategic Objectives – Two Year Plan:

- We will stress the importance of regular attendance to students and to parents/guardians.
- We will continually provide greater assistance and enforcements to students who are at-risk at the elementary and middle school levels.
- We will continually increase our graduation rates by providing students who are at-risk for dropping out of school greater assistance and enforcements.
- We will take measures to eliminate the achievement gap at all levels.
- We will research and explore a multi-tiered diploma program to improve graduation and student success.
- We will provide students with a variety of opportunities to build on their skills and desired futures through enhanced:
 - vocational classes;
 - up-to-date technology;
 - life/social skills courses;
 - college prep courses;
 - health education courses.
- We will continue to monitor and improve student performance.
- We will reduce class sizes to ensure a lower adult/student ratio.

Goal Area 5: Facilities

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: Ronan Public Schools takes great pride in the appearance and functionality of our school facilities. Our facilities are clean and inviting, and support our programs, services and our continued technological advancements.

Strategic Objectives – Two Year Plan:

- We will expand the number of classrooms at our elementary schools.
- We will complete the entrance at our Events Center.
- We will enhance our vocational opportunities at the high school.
- We will make improvements to the locker rooms and storage areas.
- We will create a designated technology/computer lab.