



CSD: Cultivating Students of Distinction

Disciplined People • Disciplined Thought • Disciplined Action

Christina School District Strategic Plan 2007-2010



Our Vision

Christina School District is a system of education where research-based teaching and learning cultivate students of distinction at high levels, and where the entire community works together to put children first.

Our Mission

To educate each student to succeed through:

- **Expectations of Excellence;**
- **Safe Working and Learning Environments;**
- **Respect for Diversity; and**
- **Caring and Knowledgeable Staff Members**

Our Plan for Success

Guiding Principle 1: Academic Achievement

Accelerate achievement for all students and minimize the disparities among all groups of students

Goal One: Provide effective academic supports for the full range of students

Strategies:

- Implement new and improve existing support programs for both reading and mathematics across all grades
 - Content is age appropriate with reading level matching student abilities
 - Provide professional development to ensure knowledge level is adequate for successful implementation
 - Refine school-wide enrichment model to better support academic growth of high achieving students
- Use assessment data consistently to target students for sustained reading or mathematics instruction
 - Total instruction time increases significantly the further away a student is from proficiency
- Enhance teacher abilities to provide reading instruction at secondary levels across all content areas
- Establish teacher collaboration framework to ensure efforts are aligned to meet student needs

Measures:

- Students in Kindergarten and first grade who perform on grade level or above in early literacy skills
- Students in grades 2-10 will perform at a level 3 or higher as measured by DSTP
- The percent of students in grades 2-10 who perform at a level 4 or 5
- The percent of students in grades 3-10 who perform at level 1
- Students in high school who graduate in 4 years

Guiding Principle 1: Academic Achievement (continued)

Goal Two: Cultivate leaders to create a culture of high performance

Strategies:

- Provide training and support for leaders and staff in leadership skills
 - Implement a succession planning process to identify and grow leaders
- Establish a district accountability system that aligns with the Administrator Performance Reviews
- Establish a system of performance measures which includes:
 - Alignment with the strategic plan, and routine operational issues
 - Periodic Board and Superintendent review
 - Communication with constituents

Measures:

- Students in grades 2-10 who perform at level 3 or higher in reading, writing, and mathematics
- Students in middle and high school who participate in higher level courses
- The percent of high school students taking the SAT
- Average SAT scores
- Parents, students, and school staff who view the principal as an effective school leader
- Parents, students, and school staff who like their school

Goal Three: Support the success of students who need special education services

Strategies:

- Integrate inclusive practices into the overall process for meeting state standards for all students
 - Use student needs to drive student and staff assignments and student supports
- Realign the current special education process to improve services for all students
- Establish system to monitor and adapt implementation based on results

Measures:

- Students with disabilities in grades 2-10 will perform at level 3 or higher as measured by the DSTP

Guiding Principle 2: Community Collaboration

Establish and leverage community partnerships to promote accelerated achievement in welcoming school environments

Goal One: Develop strong school and family partnerships to support positive school environments

Strategies:

- Establish clear district ownership of school and family partnerships
- Adopt model of involvement and implement associated activities focusing first on positive school environments
 - Parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, collaborating with the community
- Improve communication vehicles to allow timely dialog about student, school, district, and community issues
- Provide Christina staff training in cultural and socioeconomic diversity

Measures:

- Establish effective two-way communication between the school and the home
- Family support of learning in the home

Guiding Principle 3: Safe and Orderly Environment

Create and maintain safe learning environments that promote excellent academic achievement

Goal One: Improve school climates and student/staff relationships

Strategies:

- Improve communication and implementation of the student code of conduct
- Develop an intensive support system for students who exhibit severe behavioral issues
- Provide time and training for staff to understand and develop strong connections with students
 - Continued implementation Positive Behavior Support system
 - Continued focus on adult behaviors to de-escalate issues
- Improve lesson designs and instructional practices to make instruction more meaningful and interesting

Measures:

- Amount of instruction time students miss due to out of school suspension
- Perceptions of the quality of the school environments
- Student interest and engagement by classroom instruction

Guiding Principle 3: Safe and Orderly Environment (Continued)

Goal Two: Utilize facilities efficiently to improve academics and access

Strategies:

- Educate students close to home in grades K-5
- Establish space in Elementary schools for Full Day Kindergarten
- Create space in middle schools to allow grade configuration and feeder pattern changes
 - K-5, 6-8, 9-12
- Complete school renovations in progress
- Consider options for underutilized buildings

Measures:

- School buildings that operate at appropriate capacity of students
- Elementary school buildings that have sufficient space for full day Kindergarten for all students
- School buildings that maintain a student population large enough to qualify for a principal unit
- School buildings that receive a rating of "good" on a formal facilities assessment
- Students in transition grades (5, 6, and 7) who perform at level 3 or higher as measured by DSTP
- Parents on annual survey who indicate they feel welcome in our schools



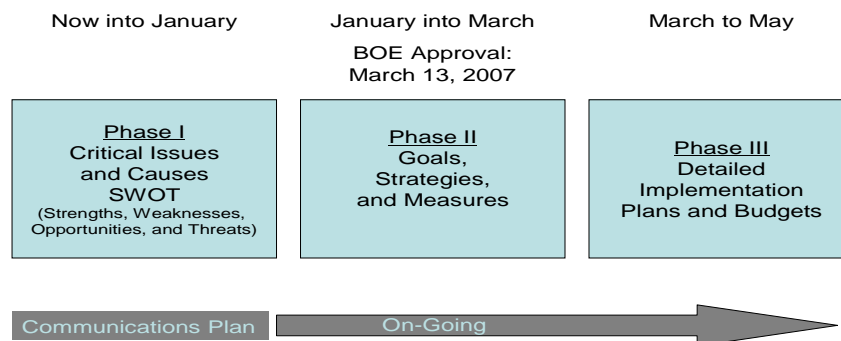
Our Process

The Christina School District undertook a comprehensive strategic planning process beginning in September, 2006 that defines the District's future goals, strategies, and measures. The strategic planning process included more than 20 meetings with key groups planned between December and March, as well as multiple vehicles for staff, students, and the public to share their advice and wisdom (these are reflected in the Strategic Planning Timetable below). The overall goal of the Strategic Planning Process was to develop a 3-year Strategic Plan for Christina that reflects the priorities of our families and our community, and serves as a true plan of action and not just a static document. The plan holds the district accountable for meeting specific goals through defined measures and annual targets reflected in a "Balance Scorecard" which is reviewed and published periodically.

The Strategic Planning process was intended to meet the following objectives:

- To develop a thoughtful and comprehensive Strategic Plan
- To engage a wide range of community stakeholders
- To create opportunities for District staff to share ideas and feedback
- To create opportunities for the public to share ideas and feedback
- To meet a deadline of March 13, 2007 to present a finalized plan to the Board for approval

Process and Timeline



A community-based Stakeholder Committee was formed and met three times during the Strategic Planning process. This group included representatives of the business community, elected officials, Region III PTA Council, Special Needs PTA, Vision 2015, community organizations, and employee unions. Many of those on the Stakeholder Committee are also Christina parents, taxpayers, and employees. The Stakeholder Committee provided a variety of perspectives in developing the Strategic Plan. Their input was invaluable to the process.

Strategic Planning Stakeholder Committee Members

- **Steven Amick**, Delaware State Senator, District 10
- **Kathy Armstrong**, PTA member and parent
- **Raye Avery**, Christina Cultural Arts Center
- **Claudia Bock**, President, Christina Education Association
- **Nancy Brickhouse**, University of Delaware
- **Catherine Buckminster**, PTA member and parent
- **Edie Corbin**, Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League
- **Mindy Cox**, Region II PTA Council
- **Randall Green**, CSD Local 218
- **Ed Hockersmith**, MLS, Christina School District Library Media Specialist
- **Dori Jacobson**, Rodell Foundation/Vision 2015
- **Tyrone Jones**, Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League
- **John Kowalko**, State Representative - 25th District
- **Lane McBride**, Vision 2015
- **Frank McIntosh**, Junior Achievement/CSD Financial Review Committee
- **Bonnie Mucha**, Region III PTA Council
- **Joe Pika**, University of Delaware
- **Barbara Prodggers**, Christina Paraprofessionals Association
- **Missy Ross**, Christina Secretaries Association
- **Steve Saffer**, Special Needs PTA
- **Hanifa Shabazz**, Wilmington City Council
- **Fiona Tressolini**, Newark Morning Rotary Club
- **Caren Turner**, Title I PAC
- **Jim Wilson**, Christina resident
- **Pete Ziegler**, Christina resident

Other District Representatives

- **Lillian Lowery**, Superintendent
- **Freeman Williams**, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services
- **Ed Bosso**, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
- **Patrick O'Rourke**, Director of Budget and Finance
- **William Rawles**, Manager of Technology
- **Linda Ochenrider**, Principal, Leasure Elementary School

Strategic Planning Support Team

- **Helen Spacht, Co-Chair**, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction
- **Eleanor Ludwigsen, Co-Chair**, Supervisor, Elementary and Secondary
- **Pamela Stazesky**, Supervisor of Accountability and Assessment
- **Deborah Doordan**, Supervisor of Professional Development
- **Andrew Hegedus**, Supervisor of Grants
- **Kelli Racca**, Supervisor of Facilities Management
- **Marilyn Dollard**, Principal, Smith Elementary School
- **Daniel Shelton**, Principal, Maclary Elementary School
- **Amy Levitz**, Principal, Gauger-Cobbs Middle School
- **Emmanuel Caulk**, Principal, Newark High School
- **Wendy Lapham**, Public Information Officer
- **Dana Crumlish**, Manager, Education Options

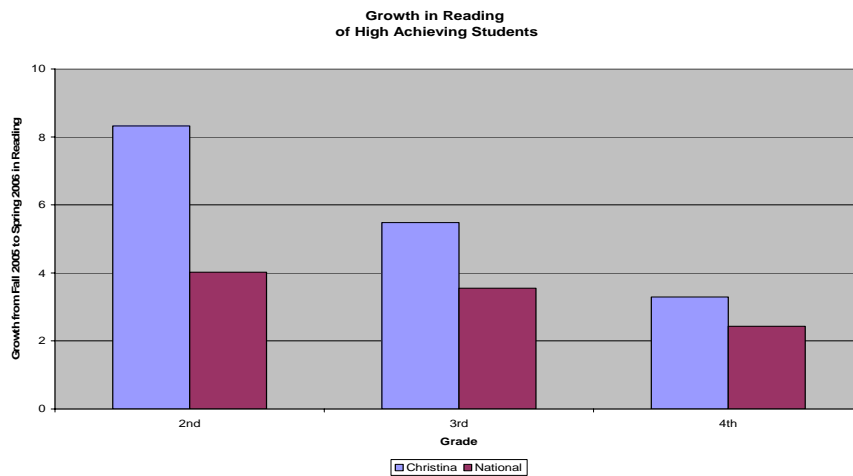
Strategic Planning Timetable						
Group	October	November	December	January	February	March
Stakeholder Committee Members		Stakeholder Committee meeting November 29	Stakeholder Committee meeting December 13	Stakeholder Committee meeting January 30		Provide feedback on final plan
Principals, Assistant Principals and Department Managers	School leaders briefed October 25	Overview of process shared November 14; discussion November 15	Presentation and input from school and department leaders December 20	Discussion and input from school and department leaders January 17	Discussion and input from school and department leaders February 17	Feedback shared is used in developing final plan
All CSD Employees Students		Overview of process shared with employees November 14	Ongoing updates and communication	Faculty/Staff presentations January 2-12; Employee Forum January 3; staff questionnaires January 10-18	Faculty and department communication February 1-13; Student questionnaire February 19-23; Staff questionnaires February 28 - March 8	Feedback shared is used in developing final plan
All Community Members		Overview of process shared with community November 14	Ongoing updates and communication	Community Forums January 4 and January 10; community questionnaires January 10-18	Concurrent Community Forums February 10	Community questionnaires March 6-8; Feedback shared is used in developing final plan
Christina Board of Education	Board briefed on October 10	Overview of process shared with Board November 14	Status update at Board meeting December 12	Status update at Board meeting January 9	Status update at Board meeting February 13	Present final plan for approval to Board March 13

Strengths and Weaknesses – Let’s be honest

A huge amount of data was gathered and analyzed as part of this process to determine Christina’s real strengths and weaknesses. Once vetted by Christina staff directly supporting this process, the entire staff, stakeholder committee, and community were asked for their opinions as discussed below. Based on this feedback, a number of proposed Strengths were classified as Emerging Strengths, new Emerging Strengths were added, and other Weaknesses were identified. Causes of these were then determined, and the Key strategies were formed to address the real causes, not band-aid the symptom. Examples of the analyses performed include:

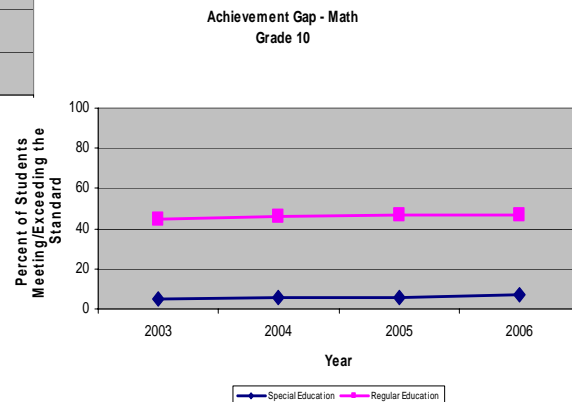
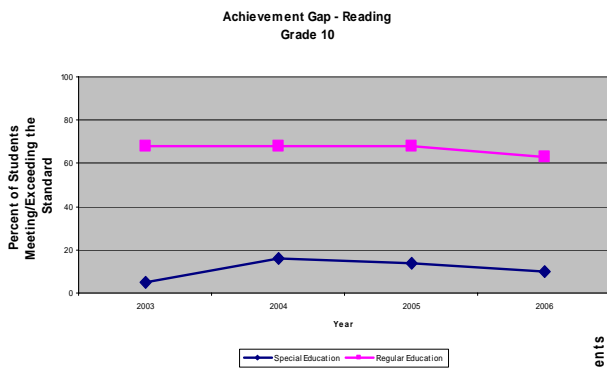
Strength:

- Overall Elementary School Performance
 - In 2nd through 4th grade, our high achieving students grow more each year than high achieving students nationally (High Achieving is defined as performing at or above the 90th percentile nationally in a Fall assessment)



Weakness:

- High School Special Education performance needs critical attention



Listening and Gathering Advice - We heard you

During this process, a number of opportunities and vehicles were used to listen to our staff and community. Since we recognize that it is difficult for large numbers of stakeholders to attend meetings and forums regardless of time of day or location (eight were held), both online and phone based questionnaires were also utilized to gather advice. Over **770** questionnaires about Christina's strengths and weaknesses, and the proposed key strategies were completed. The thoughts and ideas provided were invaluable. Changes were made because of what you said!!!

For the first questionnaire on Strengths and Weaknesses, a total of **253** employees responded:

- 190 were teachers
- 109 have worked for Christina for more than 10 years
- 149 indicated "elementary" was their main affiliation

A total of **200** non-employees also completed the questionnaire. Some of these people have school age children and some do not; some live in within Christina boundaries, and some do not. Many have lived in Delaware more than 10 years, and some have lived here less than three.

Some highlights of the input include:

- The majority of respondents (42%) indicated that Elementary Growth and Achievement is our biggest strength (based on data that shows in 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade, CSD students learn more in one year than the national average and by the end of the school year are at or above the national average in both reading and math – these data also includes growth of students at or above the 90th percentile when compared to their peers nationally)
- The majority of respondents (46%) indicated that Secondary Reading is our greatest area of weakness (based on data that shows an unacceptable number of students in 7-12 grade reading at or below a 5th grade reading level)
- There were a total of 12 pages of written comments on Strengths and Importance of Strengths, and 18 pages of written comments on Weaknesses and Causes of Weaknesses. These comments were wide-ranging and thought-provoking. The most frequent comments addressed the desire to keep children closer to home and the need to challenge high achieving students. The questionnaire data and feedback are available on the Christina School District website at the following link:
<http://www.christina.k12.de.us/StrategicPlanningProcess/QuestionnaireResults.htm>

Over **320** of employees and community members also responded to questions about proposed Goals and Key Strategies. Some highlights of this input include:

- Over 90% believe these goals, when met, will have some or great impact on student achievement
- When asked about the impact of the various elements of the plan involving the use of facilities to improve academics and access, each element individually was supported by 88% or more of the respondents as having either some or great impact.
- Again there were many pages of thoughts and advice about each goal in the plan. This advice is also available on the Christina School District website at the link above.

Facilities Use 2007- 2010 - The Plan Within a Plan

In response to the overwhelming advice and concern expressed by parents and the greater community, a District staff committee prepared the **Facilities Use Plan for Christina School District 2007-2010** as an integral part of the Strategic Planning process. The Facilities Use Plan proposals were developed to address:

- Declining enrollment and loss of students due to charter schools in both Wilmington and Newark
- The District's current grade configuration – K-4 with limited 5th grade in some schools, grades K-6 and 4-6 in city schools, grades 7-8 in middle schools, grades 9-12 in high schools.
- The parent and community desire to keep students closer to home for as long as possible
- Underutilized buildings -- such as Eden Center and 83 East Main St.
- Incomplete construction projects – such as the new elementary school at Porter Road and Route 40 and the new middle school at the former Astro Power building on Route 896
- Space requirements to support implementation of Full-day Kindergarten– the state mandates Full-day K by 2008

The plan proposes the following options:

- Redraw all feeder patterns to balance school populations and implement grade reconfiguration district-wide: K-5, 6-8, 9-12, including Full-day Kindergarten.
- Combine all remaining funds from several existing construction projects and other available state dollars and use those combined funds to complete a K – 8 school at the former Astro Power site.
- Construct and run a Capital Referendum to support all of the above.
- Explore excess, sale, lease, or partnership options for schools impacted by grade reconfiguration and loss of enrollment.
- Consolidate administrators and staff into the Drew Educational Support Services building
- Consider location options for NETworks, Alternative Education, and Adult Education programs.
- Investigate excess or sale of 83 East Main Street and Eden Center.

Presentations of the Facilities Use proposals were made to the Christina Board of Education, school principals and program leaders, the leaders of the district's collective bargaining units, the Strategic Planning Stakeholder Committee, Christina State Representatives and State Senators, Wilmington city officials, and the broader community. Detailed information about the Facilities Use Plan and proposals may be accessed on the District website at the following link: http://www.christina.k12.de.us/StrategicPlanningProcess/Reports_Presentations.htm

Measuring and Reporting our Progress - Balanced Scorecard

The Christina School District has worked for the past year with the Delaware Department of Education in an executive leadership program funded by the Wallace Foundation. A key component of this work was the development of a "Balanced Scorecard". This balanced scorecard is the tool we will use for measuring and communicating our progress in meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan. The measures included in this plan relate directly to the Strengths and Weaknesses, and the associated causes, identified early in this process. Updates to the Balanced Scorecard are periodically presented to the Board of Education, and communicated to the public. Through the use of a Balanced Scorecard people can see if we have done what we said we would do.

Financial Accountability - Disciplined People, Disciplined Thought, Disciplined Action

The final element of the District's Strategic Plan will be the development of a financial component that supports the goals and strategies of the plan, while continuing the District's commitment to fiscal discipline and accountability. Once the Strategic Plan has been approved, detailed action plans and associated budgets will be created with input from the District's finance staff, the Financial Review Committee, and others. These plans and budgets will inform the annual application that is developed and submitted by Christina, and reviewed and approved by the Delaware Department of Education, to allow Federal and State Restricted Funds to be provided to support the students we serve. The financial component of the Strategic Plan will be prepared and presented to the Board of Education in June 2007 as a subset of the entire Christina budget.