



ROCKWOOD MISSION: WE DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO ENSURE ALL STUDENTS REALIZE THEIR POTENTIAL.



Rockwood School District Strategic Plan: 2020–2025  
**COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The heart of any strategic plan is the community it serves. Rockwood is grateful for the parents, staff and community members who took the time to share their thoughts and ideas that guided the direction of this strategic plan. Most of all, thank you to our students who provided insight and a fresh perspective on the ways we can improve our school district. We learn from you.

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## INTRODUCTION

We live in an ever-changing world that is full of possibilities.

It requires higher-level thinking, creativity, content mastery and innovation. In Rockwood, it's our privilege, challenge and responsibility to ensure all students graduate ready to thrive in this world.

The Way Forward represents our commitment to every child, every family and every employee of the Rockwood School District. It is our strategic plan to improve our Rockwood schools and build upon our strength as a high achieving district. We want all students to realize they have unlimited potential and can achieve more than they think is possible.

The Way Forward will take us well into the next five years. While this is a long-term process, we are well aware that we don't have all the answers today for how to design every solution we will need over the next few years. We firmly believe that our strategic direction will not change over time, but the tactics may change as we learn, monitor and grow. Innovations will emerge from schools over time in response to their own unique improvement needs.

How well we educate our students today will determine the future of our community and our region. Public education affects each one of us. We are fortunate to serve a community that values education, is empowered to ask tough questions and expects and encourages improvement.

Join us on this journey as we work together to make Rockwood schools even better.





In Rockwood, we have a shared belief that education is not just about students or educators. Learning is human. It's about relationships and the experiences that bring us together every day.

At the beginning of this journey, we established three phases to launch the work: **imagine**, **innovate** and **inspire**. Each phase included important components that would provide a systematic review and involve our entire Rockwood school community. We looked at the planning process as a roadmap of how Rockwood will continue to improve in the years ahead.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

Community engagement was a vital component of the planning process. Three key areas included the following:

### 1. LAUNCHED ROCKWOOD THOUGHTEXCHANGE

Rockwood invited community members to participate in Thoughtexchange, an online social survey that allowed respondents to share the hopes, dreams and aspirations they hold for our Rockwood students. After they shared their ideas, respondents were offered the opportunity to rate the thoughts of others, which created the themes of the profile of a Rockwood learner. More than 1,300 participants suggested almost 800 thoughts that received a total of 21,853 stars. Participants could choose from District, Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle and High School exchanges.

### 2. SUPERINTENDENT MEETINGS: FALL 2018

The school district held a variety of personal meetings so key audiences could share their thoughts, participate in focus groups and engage in subcommittee work. Efforts included a State of the District, with an invitation extended to all Rockwood parents, staff and community members to learn the strengths and challenges of our school district. Our superintendent also offered open meetings with the following groups: High School Student Advisories, PTO Presidents' Forum, Religious Leaders, Private/Parochial Principals and our Rockwood teachers union.

### 3. FOCUS GROUPS OPTIONS

Members throughout the Rockwood school district community were invited to participate in small-group interviews. We asked people about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes about the future of the Rockwood School District.

## ROCKWOOD VOICES OF LEADERSHIP

Five Rockwood strategic planning subcommittees were developed with oversight by The Way Forward steering committee.

STUDENT SUCCESS	SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS	EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE
 <p data-bbox="142 695 483 787">DR. SHELLEY WILLOTT, Executive Director Learning and Support Services</p>	 <p data-bbox="597 695 841 787">DR. TERRY HARRIS, Executive Director Student Services</p>	 <p data-bbox="976 695 1291 787">DR. KATIE REBOULET, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources</p>
CUSTOMIZED SUPPORTS		LEADERSHIP
 <p data-bbox="386 1073 646 1165">PAUL NORTHINGTON, Chief Financial Officer</p>		 <p data-bbox="769 1073 1084 1165">DR. LISA COUNTS, Assistant Superintendent Supervision of Schools</p>

Subcommittees were tasked with the review of qualitative data, as offered by our Thoughtexchange, engagement opportunities and focus groups, combined with a variety of resources as noted below:

- Student Achievement Data and Analyses
- Documented Curriculum
- Facilities Plans
- Technology Plans
- School Safety Plans
- Budgets and Long-Term Financial Plans
- Previous Community Surveys: Data and Reports
- Program Evaluations
- Assessment Plan
- Enrollment Projections and Capacity Information
- Community Demographic Information

Members evaluated our already successful school district to see how we can continually improve. This extended beyond the measures of state testing to look at how our students are learning and growing — academically, physically, socially and emotionally. The efforts combined into the development of the Rockwood strategic plan.



## THE PLAN

At the core of The Way Forward is the fundamental belief that we all are unique and gifted with a wide variety of skills, interests and talents. We learn in different ways and need support and opportunities to grow, learn and reach our highest potential.

It is the responsibility of every member of the Rockwood family to ensure our Rockwood mission, vision and core values are reflected in our schools. We must work together with intention to deeply embed these values in our actions, deeds, decisions, priorities, conversations and celebrations – from the boardroom to the classroom, office, cafeteria, school bus, playing fields and hallways throughout the Rockwood School District.

**Mission:** We do whatever it takes to ensure all students realize their potential.

**Vision:** Every student loves life and finds success.

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### PROFILE OF A LEARNER

Through community engagement, we've developed a Rockwood Profile of a Learner as an important component of our strategic plan. It's a community-wide vision statement describing what our students should experience through their Rockwood education.

- **Every Student:** We put students at the heart of everything we do, and we are guided by the academic, social, emotional and physical needs of our students. Our work is to provide a meaningful, challenging education that connects all students to learning and honors their unique gifts.
- **Caring Schools:** We find joy in our work and believe in kindness and mutual respect for all. We are guided by strong character, ethics and integrity. Our schools are warm, welcoming places where children, staff and families thrive.
- **Collective Responsibility:** We share the responsibility for student learning, growth and safety. We honor differences as we provide equal access for all learners. In our community, we leverage our strengths to reach challenging goals for lifelong learning.
- **Optimize Resources:** We support our students with a strong foundation. This means creating, maintaining and sustaining operational and organizational systems that are thoughtfully aligned to the needs of our schools and students.

# the way FORWARD

**ROCKWOOD MISSION: WE DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO ENSURE ALL STUDENTS REALIZE THEIR POTENTIAL.**

As a school community, this profile of a Rockwood learner reflects the hopes, dreams and aspirations we hold for every child. Our vision is that every child loves life and finds success.



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## Goal Areas



### **Student Academic Learning**

Develop meaningful student learning experiences that encompass higher-level thinking, creativity and content mastery.



### **Universal Equity, Opportunity, Access**

Provide all students access to a broad range of high-quality educational opportunities from early childhood to graduation.



### **Character and Well-Being**

Establish a multi-tiered system of support that provides for the emotional, social, behavioral and physical needs of each student.



### **Community Networks**

Build community, business and university partnerships to expand innovative, experiential and real-world learning and mobilize community resources.



### **Efficiency and Effectiveness**

Cultivate an environment of efficient and effective business operations, school facilities management, programming and fiscal responsibility.



### **Staff, Teachers and Learners**

Recruit, attract, develop and retain outstanding staff to provide the best instruction and educational opportunities for all students.



### **Strong Leadership**

Advance the mission, vision, core values and goals that define, connect and guide the Rockwood School District.



# S U C C E S S

## STUDENT ACADEMIC LEARNING:

Develop meaningful student learning experiences that encompass higher-level thinking, creativity and content mastery.

**GOAL LEADER:** Dr. Shelley Willott – Assistant Superintendent Learning and Support Services

**OBJECTIVE: Create RELEVANT, THOUGHT-PROVOKING, AUTHENTIC learning experiences that engage all students.**

Create opportunities and support for teachers to connect curricula by designing interdisciplinary experiences and/or project-based learning at all grade levels.

Develop and implement a system that supports all students engaging in a senior capstone experience.

Foster student curiosity by ensuring that all curricular areas include design thinking, critical thinking, problem-solving and inquiry-based experiences.

Maintain a curriculum writing/revision process that ensures coursework is updated frequently enough to reflect skills that will prepare students for the future.

Create a personalized, competency-based system of learning and assessment for students grades 6-12.

Increase online and blended learning opportunities for students.

**OBJECTIVE: Engage all students to take OWNERSHIP OF THEIR LEARNING.**

Create systems for student goal-setting, self-assessment, and reflection in all coursework.

Develop and implement a preK-12 scope and sequence for community service and/or service learning that connects to the curriculum.

Develop a plan for every student to create a learner profile.

Support pedagogical shifts in instruction that promote student voice, choice and collaboration.

**OBJECTIVE: Equip all students with the FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY needed to be successful in an ever-changing world.**

Identify specific life skills to be explicitly taught to all students and embed them in the curriculum.

Identify key communications skills Rockwood graduates will possess and develop proficiency scales for each.

Ensure students possess the digital communication, digital literacy and digital citizenship skills necessary to engage effectively with others.

Provide students with challenging problems throughout the curricula that take perseverance and grit to solve.

Develop a media literacy plan that teaches students how to disseminate information and analyze information to determine bias.

Create opportunities for students to explore personal interests within the existing curricula.

Create courses and learning opportunities within existing curricula that reflect a global perspective.



## S U C C E S S

### **UNIVERSAL EQUITY, OPPORTUNITY, ACCESS:**

Provide all students access to a broad range of high-quality educational opportunities from early childhood to graduation.

**GOAL LEADER:** Dr. Terry Harris – Executive Director Student Services

**OBJECTIVE: Utilize a SYSTEMATIC APPROACH to increase student equity, access and opportunity.**

Adopt an educational equity statement for the district.

Develop a multi-tiered system of support that provides differentiated levels of resources based upon academic, behavioral, social emotional and physical needs.

Explore opportunities to support inclusive school environments for all students.

Form a subcommittee within Rockwood Learning Council to engage teacher leaders and administrators in the areas of access, opportunity, and equity.

Conduct an equity audit.

**OBJECTIVE: Provide a CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENT for all students.**

Develop a framework, common language, and supports for teachers, staff and students.

Provide employee training on culturally competent and responsive teaching strategies and equity for all identities.

**OBJECTIVE: Empower all students to design PERSONALIZED PATHWAYS for their future.**

Develop a comprehensive K-12 college and career readiness plan.

Increase enrollment of students from underrepresented populations in advanced coursework and expand supports for their success.

Create multiple pathways to a high school diploma, providing students with personalized educational programming.



## S U C C E S S

### **CHARACTER AND WELL-BEING:**

Establish a multi-tiered system of support that provides for the emotional, social, behavioral and physical needs of each student.

**GOAL LEADER:** Dr. Terry Harris – Executive Director Student Services

**OBJECTIVE: Develop and utilize a CONTINUUM OF SOCIAL EMOTIONAL CURRICULUM built upon a foundation of character education principles for all students.**

Provide professional learning opportunities in the area of restorative practices and relationship building at all levels.

Expand restorative practices and programs to all schools at all levels.

Partner with community organizations for mental health resources for adolescent depression and suicide awareness, which is inclusive of mental health, wellness and mindfulness.

Develop a student health and wellness survey and utilize the results to identify student needs.

**OBJECTIVE: Provide WARM, WELCOMING AND SAFE school environments.**

Provide opportunities for parents and guardians to learn about the intellectual and developmental needs of their children, at all ages, and participate constructively in their children's education.

Implement support structures that are rooted in empathy, fairness, and justice.

Expand the school district's anti-bullying program.

Collaborate with emergency management officials to ensure best practices are implemented for school safety.

Review and evaluate the district's comprehensive safety plan.

Provide professional learning on safety for staff at all levels.





## S U C C E S S

### COMMUNITY NETWORKS:

Build community, business and university partnerships to expand innovative, experiential and real-world learning and mobilize community resources.

**GOAL LEADER:** Dr. Shelley Willott – Assistant Superintendent Learning and Support Services

**OBJECTIVE: Collaborate to develop a SHARED VISION AND SYSTEMATIC APPROACH for increasing community partnerships.**

Establish a process to engage businesses and universities in preparing students for life after high school.

Form an advisory council that includes stakeholders who meet regularly to review and evaluate needs, discuss trends, and make adjustments accordingly.

**OBJECTIVE: SUSTAIN AND EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS that meet the needs of students, staff and families.**

Develop community and business partnerships that support mentorships and learning opportunities.

Foster the development of leadership through community service and partnerships.

Collaborate with local agencies and external partners to provide social and emotional learning support to our school community.





## S U C C E S S

### **EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS:**

Cultivate an environment of efficient and effective business operations, school facilities management, programming and fiscal responsibility.

**GOAL LEADER:** Mr. Paul Northington – Rockwood Chief Financial Officer

**OBJECTIVE: Maintain a comprehensive FACILITIES PLAN that is reviewed annually to support student learning.**

Monitor future enrollment growth and building capacity in schools.

Address storage capacity needs within our child nutrition services, learning support and curriculum, technology and warehouse.

Conduct a needs assessment to adapt innovative spaces in our school buildings and allow flexibility for traditional and modern learning environments.

**OBJECTIVE: Maintain fiscal responsibility by supporting a BALANCED BUDGET.**

Maintain fund balance reserves as defined by board policy.

Communicate and educate our community on debt service levy transition plan.

Continue to communicate with transparency our financial data.

Develop a long-term plan for efficient management of school buses.

Explore opportunities for new revenue sources.

**OBJECTIVE: Maintain a comprehensive TECHNOLOGY PLAN that is reviewed annually to support student learning.**

Establish processes to evaluate digital tools and sunset those no longer needed.

Fund technology staffing and professional learning to support skilled network administration, database administration and cyber security.

Transition hardware purchases from bond issue to operating/capital via debt service transition plan.

Separate funding of the district's cycle maintenance and refresh from innovative projects.



## S U C C E S S

### **STAFF, TEACHERS AND LEARNERS:**

Recruit, attract, develop and retain outstanding staff to provide the best instruction and educational opportunities for all students.

**GOAL LEADER:** Dr. Katie Reboulet – Assistant Superintendent Human Resources

**OBJECTIVE: Develop a system to RECRUIT AND RETAIN top talent.**

Ensure our workforce represents the diversity of the students and community we serve.

Host a quarterly meeting for substitutes or volunteers where we provide information on university and teaching certification programs.

Utilize technology to develop innovative application and recruitment strategies.

Expand relationships with post-secondary institutions to support recruitment of quality teachers.

Expand new teacher/staff mentorship.

Provide internships for high school and college students (one year-long).

Create an Individual Development Plan for every employee for professional development, which will help train employees for other positions and to fill positions in the future.

Develop incentives for hard-to-fill jobs, such as school bus drivers.

**OBJECTIVE: Provide TEACHER and PRINCIPAL EVALUATION systems that align with the district strategic plan.**

Conduct audits of the Teacher Evaluation Instrument (TEI) and Principal Evaluation Instrument (PEI) to analyze alignment with strategic plan.

Implement a plan to incorporate the findings of the TEI/PEI audit.

# S U C C E S S

## **STRONG LEADERSHIP:**

Advance the mission, vision, core values and goals that define, connect and guide the Rockwood School District.

**GOAL LEADER:** Dr. Lisa Counts – Assistant Superintendent Supervision of Schools

**OBJECTIVE: Grow district LEADERSHIP CAPACITY.**

Develop a district profile of a leader.

Continue to provide shadow and field experience for potential administrators.

Provide professional learning for district leaders aligned to strategic plan.

**OBJECTIVE: The Board of Education GOVERNS the Rockwood School District in an efficient, effective, and fiscally responsible manner.**

Provide a meaningful superintendent evaluation process that is focused on student achievement and school improvement.

Facilitate the implementation of the Rockwood strategic plan.

Develop visualizations to monitor implementation of the strategic plan.

Represent the school community with a unified voice to benefit the students, staff and patrons of the district.

Seek feedback from all members of the school community to build trust and guide decision-making.

Ensure the local board of education, leadership and staff communicate with all stakeholders.

## **CONCLUSION: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Each objective will be reviewed annually from 2020-2025 to ensure accountability toward the strategic plan. As we move forward, the action steps and strategies may be refined and updated. Rockwood will identify multiple measures of evidence of learning and growth as we meet the future needs of our students and school community.

This plan is not intended to be the definitive statement on the Rockwood School District's mission, vision and direction. Rather, it is the first step of a journey that we take with our students.

This does not mean that we will launch into a number of educational leaps; instead, we will take calculated risks, embracing new, creative, and evidence-based models of learning that will inform our steps.

The Way Forward was developed after hundreds of hours of community listening and conversation. It was founded on research and borne out of the love for our students. Let's be courageous as we make our way forward to benefit Rockwood students.

the way  
**FORWARD** 

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