

# STRATEGIC DIRECTION



2023-2024

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# ABOUT US



We are a relatively small district, consisting of six schools, nestled between several larger districts. Our boundaries are within Pierce and King Counties and the communities of Fife, Milton, and Edgewood.

*A few facts about us:*

- Our 233 teachers average 14.6 years experience, 61% hold a Master's Degree or higher, and 33 are National Board Certified.
- We serve 3,900 students who represent a wide variety of race/ethnicity groups. Over 16% of them are multilingual, 52% are low-income, and 12% learn with a disability.
- Our families/caregivers speak over 37 languages and are partners with us in the education of their children.
- In the school year 2022-23, 94% of our high school seniors graduated.



Fife Public Schools is home to over 3,700 students from a wide variety of demographic backgrounds and whose families/caregivers speak over 37 languages.



# VISION

The vision of Fife Public Schools is to be an inclusive and affirming learning organization that inspires achievement and personal growth in **all** students and prepares them to succeed in college, careers, community, and life.

# MISSION

The mission of Fife Public Schools is to be equity-focused and committed to success for **all**, including dismantling barriers for historically marginalized groups. Recognizing, celebrating, and embracing the diversity in our students and staff, we will...

- Engage our students in rigorous, culturally responsive experiences that link learning to college, careers, community, and life.
- Foster staff collaboration.
- Provide a safe and supportive environment for all.
- Cultivate collaborative, long-lasting relationships with families/caregivers and strong partnerships with community.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In March 2020, Fife Public Schools started the process of updating our strategic plan that was created in 2015. The plan was “sunsetting” at the end of the 2019-2020 school, and an update of the plan was needed. Unforeseen to the world, March 2020 also brought a new scenario that was certainly bigger than any work on strategic planning. The global pandemic that consumed our capacity to operate also meant we needed to halt our long-term planning and deal with our current situation.

Fast forward to May 2021, the district renewed its discussion around strategic thinking, deciding to use a different framework to guide the process. Between March 2020 and May 2021, Fife Public Schools partnered with the Schlechty Center of Louisville, KY and agreed to use their Strategic Change Agenda framework. The document that follows this summary is the result of that process.

The Schlechty Center’s approach to creating a “strategic direction” is not a prescribed process like most “strategic planning” processes are. Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, this process is custom-tailored to fit the local context of Fife Public Schools.

An important distinction exists between “strategic direction” and “strategic planning” at the Schlechty Center and in Fife Public Schools. While most strategic plans are concerned with assessing performance, this strategic direction is more concerned about assessing the capacity of our organization to perform and meet the needs of our students, staff, and families/caregivers. To that end, each school building will create an annual direction report aligned with the Fife Public Schools Strategic Direction, while still giving each school the autonomy to create an action plan consistent with their individual context.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In May 2021, a “discovery team” was assembled and met for a two-day work session. The discovery team was made up of the superintendent, two school board members, members of the central office staff, school principals, school counselors, classroom teachers, and Fife Education Association leadership. Organized into mixed-role groups, the discovery team was asked to share their opinions and perceptions that relate to the capacity of our organization to successfully move in our desired direction. This team was not a decision-making group but rather a group who assumed the role of “consultants” to the district. This discovery process resulted in the identification of patterns, trends, and issues where consensus was clear and areas where more information and exploration was needed. A few other frameworks provided by the Schlechty Center, including the Images of School, Defining Moments, and the ten System Capacity Standards, were used throughout the discovery process.

Stakeholder groups were created in June 2021 consisting of school leadership teams, principals, assistant principals, central office staff, students, and families/caregivers. Several of these groups participated in “focus conversations,” which continued into September and October 2021.

When all 13 focus conversations were completed, the data from those conversations were compiled and sorted to once again look for themes, patterns, and trends. We looked for areas in which the district was doing well and areas in which the district could improve.

In March 2022, Fife building administrators participated in an activity to once again look for trends and patterns.

The final step, and the most detailed work in the process, was to identify goal areas. A small team representing the Office of the Superintendent, members of the Teaching, Learning and Innovation Department, and the Department of Equity and Inclusion gathered on several occasions to refine the goal areas and generate the pictures of success for students, staff, and families/caregivers presented in this document.

In June 2023, this Strategic Direction underwent an annual review to ensure goals and pictures of success remained in alignment with educational equity best practices and the needs of our students, staff, families/caregivers, and community.

# Goal Area 1:



Engage our students in rigorous, culturally responsive experiences that link learning to college, careers, community, and life.

*Picture of Success*  
**STUDENTS**

Students see themselves in the classroom and school community.

Students are engaged in the curriculum and are active participants in their learning.

Students see the link between their learning and college, careers, community, and life.

*Picture of Success*  
**STAFF**

Curriculum and instructional practices reflect the diversity of our district.

Staff know how to design experiences to meet the diverse needs of students.

Staff have a deep understanding of all content standards.

Collaborative relationships exist between students, staff, and principals.

*Picture of Success*  
**FAMILIES/CAREGIVERS**

Families/caregivers are recognized as students' first teachers and partners in learning.

Communication in multiple languages is used to support students in collaboration with families/caregivers.

Families/caregivers understand priority areas of learning for their students.

# Goal Area 2:



## Foster staff collaboration.

*Picture of Success*

**STUDENTS**

Students are seen as a shared responsibility across grade level/content teams.

Students consistently experience high expectations & high support across teachers, content areas, and school buildings.

*Picture of Success*

**STAFF**

Staff demonstrate strong collective efficacy with a lens for supporting all learners.

Staff function as teams rather than groups of individuals.

Leadership is the shared responsibility of all staff.

*Picture of Success*

**FAMILIES/CAREGIVERS**

Families/caregivers see the results of staff collaboration in consistent communication, expectations, and experiences.

Families/caregivers are true partners in their students' success.



# Goal Area 3:



## Provide a safe and supportive environment for all.

*Picture of Success*  
**STUDENTS**

Students are able to be their authentic selves.

Students have a strong sense of belonging and pride in being a member of the school and district community.

Students experience positive relationships with staff members and each other.

Students feel safe to take academic risks and engage in new school opportunities.

*Picture of Success*  
**STAFF**

Staff are able to be their authentic selves.

Using an equity lens, clear written procedures, systems, and practices are established and shared with staff.

An induction system exists for all staff.

Consistent mentor support is available for staff.

Staff review, disaggregate, and use student data to effectively differentiate practice.

*Picture of Success*  
**FAMILIES/CAREGIVERS**

Families/caregivers are able to be their authentic selves.

A welcoming environment is cultivated in all spaces for families/caregivers so they feel recognized, honored, and supported.

# Goal Area 4:



## Cultivate collaborative, long-lasting relationships with families and strong partnerships with community.

### *Picture of Success*

#### **STUDENTS**

Opportunities are facilitated for students to connect with the community beyond the school/district walls.

Students are provided with opportunities to engage with both their teacher & family/caregiver during the learning process.

Partnerships with local service groups are student centered and collaborative with our community.

### *Picture of Success*

#### **STAFF**

Communication is provided to families/caregivers and the community at large in multiple ways.

Collaborative relationships with culturally relevant community organizations/services are expanded

Equity & inclusion considerations for all stakeholders (students, families/caregivers, community members) are regularly reviewed.

Staff use translation and interpretation resources to connect with families/caregivers.

### *Picture of Success*

#### **FAMILIES/CAREGIVERS**

Families/caregivers are able to be their authentic selves.

Two-way channels of communication with families/caregivers are established and consistently utilized.

Barriers to family/caregiver involvement are eliminated.

Families/caregivers are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in student learning & decision making.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



We are grateful to the various stakeholders who contributed to the development of this strategic direction!

- FIFE PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISCOVERY TEAM
- BUILDING LEARNING IMPROVEMENT TEAMS
- STUDENT FOCUSED CONVERSATION PARTICIPANTS
- FAMILY FOCUSED CONVERSATION PARTICIPANTS

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#### Non-Discrimination

Fife School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.