



STAMFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# Challenging, Inspiring and Preparing Students for the Future



District  
Strategic  
Plan  
Overview



# Achieving Our Vision

## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS & STAMFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION

**D**uring the 2016–2017 school year, Stamford Public Schools (SPS) conducted a long-term visioning and strategic planning process. We brought together community members, including students, parents, teachers, administrators and business leaders, to identify strengths upon which to expand as well as areas that needed additional attention. These efforts resulted in the foundation of the 2017–2022 SPS Strategic Plan.

### WHY DO WE NEED A STRATEGIC PLAN?

Our four-year high school graduation rate has exceeded the Connecticut average for the past five years. In the majority of standardized tests, SPS students improve their academic skills at a pace that exceeds statewide measures. But quantitative data provides a limited perspective on which to rate success. While we will continue to work hard to improve the educational experience and proficiencies of all SPS students, the 2017–2022 SPS Strategic Plan marks a shift in approach. SPS will now expand our scope of focus beyond academics, with an objective of improving student learning in all dimensions of mind, body and heart.

### WHY NOW?

SPS is ready to build upon all the good work we have already accomplished. We are transforming into a Learning Organization capable of change and growth in which all students, teachers, parents—and the community—work collaboratively to ensure that every student is challenged, inspired

and prepared to reach his/her maximum potential. As we embark on the 2017–2022 SPS Strategic Plan, we seek to cultivate values that sustain a balanced and productive life for all. Our goal is to provide every student with an excellent education in a supportive and nurturing environment.

### WHERE WILL THE STRATEGIC PLAN TAKE US?

SPS envisions graduating caring, confident and successful young people: individual students who are not only academically prepared, but also are attuned to their humanity and empowered to interact with, appreciate and enrich the world around them. We envision classrooms that are student-centered and teacher-driven, where instruction is tailored to meet the learning needs of every student. We envision a community that fosters inquiry, collaborative problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, risk-taking, reflection and feedback as part of the individual and organizational learning process.

To achieve our vision we will align goals, objectives and initiatives from Central Office through each school building and into individual classrooms. We will continually monitor and measure outcomes, adapt to the changes around us and address the shifting needs of the students we serve. We look forward to working with our stakeholders to provide rich learning experiences for all of Stamford's young people and establishing SPS as a leader among Connecticut's educational systems.



Earl Kim  
Superintendent,  
Stamford Public Schools



David Mannis  
President, Stamford  
Board of Education





STAMFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# Challenging, Inspiring and Preparing Students for the Future

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Stamford Public Schools is to provide an education that cultivates productive habits of mind, body and heart in every student.

## VISION STATEMENT

The Stamford Public Schools will be a learning organization that continuously improves its effective, innovative and transformational teaching and learning. We will challenge, inspire and prepare all students to be productive contributing members of society.

## THEORY OF ACTION

### If we...

- Establish a learning community based on trust, where all feel connected, known and valued
- Provide every learner a relevant and rigorous education in a safe environment

- Foster a culture that encourages risk-taking, problem-solving and embracing change
- Partner with our community and engage our families to maximize opportunities
- Instill a sense of pride in all who are part of our school system



### Then we...

Ensure that SPS graduates become lifelong learners, creators and contributing members of our community.

# Strategic Goals

SPS is transforming into a more effective learning organization, where staff members come together to discuss what we are doing, how it impacts our work and how we can help one another be more effective. We are becoming a learning organization that facilitates the learning and continuous improvement of all who are involved. To get there, SPS will create a shared understanding and commitment to:

## Goal #1: Promote a Learning Organization<sup>1</sup> That Supports Productive Habits of Mind, Body & Heart

All members of the SPS community will promote a culture of continuous improvement and excellence.

### Goal #2: Foster Productive Habits of Mind



All students will acquire and effectively apply critical thinking, creative thinking and self-regulated thinking to be academically prepared for lifelong learning and the world of work. Curriculum and instruction will value flexible learning environments and student-centered and inquiry-based instruction that can accommodate individual learning differences.

### Goal #3: Foster Productive Habits of Body



All students will be prepared to lead an active lifestyle and to make healthy choices. SPS will provide health and wellness education and services that will teach, encourage and support healthy life choices.

### Goal #4: Foster Productive Habits of Heart



All students will acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitude and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

#### 1 Promote a Learning Organization

##### Personal Mastery

Continual learning, clarifying and deepening personal vision

##### Mental Models

Awareness of personal sets of assumptions, views and prejudices

##### Shared Vision

Common aspiration, purpose and commitment to create/ accomplish something

##### Team Learning

Suspend assumptions and enter into genuine thinking together

##### Systems Thinking

Connect the first four disciplines to see the patterns and the "whole picture"



# How Will We Get There?

Stamford Public Schools recognizes that student success requires more than just increasing standardized test scores. Working with the Cradle to Career<sup>1</sup> initiative and embracing the rich community resources that are unique to Stamford, we strive to provide personalized levels of support and programming to prepare every student for success in the real world.

## FOCUS ON

### Effective Leadership Strategies & Resource Allocation

SPS will organize and optimize resources to support our vision and mission. To ensure future growth and success, we conducted an internal review and evaluation of our structure and responsibilities in Central Office. A revised organizational chart, responsibility structure and communications protocol is being rolled out throughout spring 2018, which will result in increased support for staff and schools. The new structure aligns resources focused on:

- Individual School and Administrative Support & Development
- Intervention & Student Support
- Teaching & Learning

## FOCUS ON

### Personalized Learning

SPS appreciates the value of diversity in thought, perspective and learning style of our district. The SPS Strategic Plan places significant focus on expanding specialized programs that provide more choice and opportunities for deeper learning. Choice fosters increased levels of self-worth, engagement, purpose and motivation. The process will begin at Central Office, with a curriculum design methodology that guides the development of flexible learning environments.

- Provide tiered support for all learners through SRBI<sup>2</sup> and enrichment opportunities.<sup>3</sup>
- Develop a plan to provide tiered enrichment and co-curricular programming, K-12
- Provide workshops for parents to understand data, special services and community resources

At the middle school level, the district is already engaged in a redesign initiative centered on enhancing the student experience. Starting in 2018–2019, SPS will introduce flexible scheduling options, opportunities for deeper learning and increased opportunity for student voice through peer leadership.

#### 1 Cradle to Career (C2C)

C2C is an alliance between SPS, city legislators and over 100 business, community and nonprofit organizations. The objective of C2C is to align and improve support and enrichment services for Stamford's youth and ensure that all succeed in education, career and life.

#### 2 Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI)

The SRBI team is a multidisciplinary group of professionals who meet regularly to address teachers' concerns about students and to help design targeted intervention plans. SRBI provides a tiered framework of support:

- High-quality curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom
- Support and additional time to learn for students who are struggling
- Schoolwide comprehensive system of processes

#### 3 Enrichment Opportunities

Students are offered learning opportunities and experiences in a wide array of interests and areas of focus. In addition to district-wide opportunities, individual buildings offer enrichment programs based on resources and student interest, as well as faculty strengths and creativity. Enrichment programs encourage deeper thinking, active learning and student engagement.



# Core Strategies That Lead to Personalized Learning

SPS is bound by a shared vision, mission and goals. We recognize the value in developing programs and initiatives that maximize cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

We will continuously encourage the development of common goals and strategies across the district, school buildings, classrooms, homes and community-based organizations. Educators, community partners and families will align their assets and expertise to ensure maximum impact and outcomes within our personalized learning system.



## ENHANCE

### Learning, Teaching and Leadership Practice

Recognize that our students come to school with rich and diverse experiences—some ready and eager to learn and others growing toward this goal. Our new strategic plan will create a system that encourages learning activities that are accessible by every learner and that connect all students with their history, their community and their world. Central Office will publish a curriculum framework that includes essential questions, content standards, power standards, assessments and differentiated support for special populations. Teachers will prepare and deliver engaging lessons that involve students in meaningful and rigorous tasks that produce high levels of learning.

## STRENGTHEN

### Curriculum

Encourage risk-taking and creative problem-solving—SPS values transformational teaching—an awareness that occurs when knowledge changes the way we perceive ourselves, others and the world around us. We will develop curriculum, that includes co-curricular and enrichment activities that expose students to a broad range of learning and provide them with opportunities to develop their individual interests and talents. As a system, we will encourage innovative thinking, collaboration, leadership, personal confidence, reflection and feedback.

## EMBRACE

### Families and Community

Embrace the cultural richness of our dynamic city as a competitive advantage in our global society. We will partner with our community to ensure that every student is caring, confident and successful. SPS may be a large system, but we provide a personalized academic experience. We value one-on-one relationships between staff, students, family and community members, and the ability to enact positive change on one another. Through expanded community-based learning and enrichment offerings, SPS will increase opportunities to foster civic engagement, as well as workplace skills and knowledge.

## IMPROVE

### Systems Support

Maximize technology and innovation—Technology will be used to enhance the academic experience, as well as become a tool to connect the web of resources and relationships that support each student. SPS will regularly research, evaluate and implement emerging technologies that facilitate ongoing learning for all its members and continuously transform the system. At the building level, SPS will encourage and support communities of practice to identify and address common team, grade level, school or district goals and challenges.



# Measuring Our Impact

SPS will expand our measures of success beyond academic achievement to include real-life skills, including cultural awareness and a collaborative approach to problem-solving.

SPS will identify and partner with community-based organizations to align resources to positively impact students, including addressing social mobility concerns, expanding opportunities for student leadership, and increasing every student's sense of civic responsibility. At the highest level, we have aligned our indicators of success with the C2C Key Outcomes. On a quarterly basis, schools will monitor a portfolio of progress measures, outcomes and core indicators. This collaborative approach, with associated responsibility assignments, enables SPS to effectively identify and respond to challenge areas, while scaling and expanding successful initiatives.

## C2C KEY OUTCOMES

### Kindergarten Readiness

All Stamford children will have access to quality early learning through expanded Birth-3 and Pre-K programming.

### Early Grade Reading

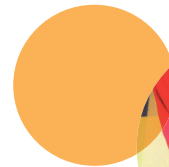
All Stamford children will be reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade.

### Transitions to Middle & High School

All Stamford children will effectively transition to the next academic level and succeed academically (performing at or above grade level in English language arts and math in both fifth and eighth grades). All Stamford students will graduate from high school.

### Transition from High School to Postsecondary, College and/or Career

All Stamford young adults will attain postsecondary degrees and/or obtain employment.






# Process Moving Forward

The 2017–2022 SPS Strategic Plan ensures the successful implementation of our strategic goals.

Under each goal there are multiple objectives that provide further focus and define target outcomes. Individual buildings and departments have identified specific initiatives and action steps to progress toward the goal while monitoring progress. District leadership will review goals, objectives, initiatives and action steps on an annual basis, assessing how successful strategies are in pursuit of a specific goal and adjusting as needed to ensure the greatest impact on student outcomes.

## STRATEGIES IN ACTION

Strategic Goals	District Objective	Schools-Based Initiative
 <b>Mind</b>	Implement curriculum that can accommodate individual learning differences and encourage flexible learning environments, including student-centered and inquiry-based instruction.	Integrate differentiated instruction and support systems for both struggling and accelerated learners, such as expanded enrichment options during and after school.
 <b>Body</b>	Provide health and wellness education and services that will teach, encourage and support healthy life choices.	Develop and expand programs that address food insecurity, such as a school breakfast program.
 <b>Heart</b>	Support development of Social-Emotional Learning: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and responsible decision-making and relationship skills.	Support, monitor and evaluate school climate and students' knowledge of self and relationship to others, such as Responsive Classroom.



**Stamford Public Schools**  
EXCELLENCE IS THE POINT.

For details on the plan, visit [stamfordpublicschools.org](http://stamfordpublicschools.org)

