

Horseheads Central School District Certified Strategic Plan Executive Summary

PLC ASSOCIATES, INC.

Building People and Organizations

Advisory Solutions
New York State School Boards Association



Horseheads Central School District

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Community Presentation: 12.03.09

Horseheads Central School District

Strategic Plan Executive Summary

Background

As a result of the Board of Education decision to develop a district-wide Strategic Plan, Horseheads began an 18-month process in summer, 2008. PLC Associates, Inc., an affiliate of the New York State School Boards Association, operated as the project leader with Penny Ciaburri and Dr. Diane Reed, facilitating various strategy sessions and activities. Judy Christiansen, Director of Human Resources, served as the Internal Coordinator. The Board of Education specifically outlined essential elements of the process and deliverables. According to Board direction, in concert with the PLC Model for Strategic Planning, the protocol was purposefully designed to assure the following:

- A comprehensive data based approach
- High levels of participation across a variety of stakeholder groups
- Ongoing discussions with thorough critical analysis of key issues
- A continual, open sharing of information with true transparency
- Establishment of a strong community presence and opportunities for input

Design

A Core Team of 60 was set up. This group was composed of a diverse collection of stakeholders representing teachers, parents, community members, students, administrators, support staff, and various community organizations. The Core Team areas of responsibility included: Vision, Mission, Beliefs, Parameters, and identifying the Strategic Intents (goals) which would create a powerful, positive 'blue print' for the organization. The Team was instructed to deliver a Strategic Plan which would guide Horseheads over the next ten years.

As a result of the Core Team conducting an analysis of the data base, along with district needs and interests, six Task Forces were identified. These included Character Education and Wellness, Student Achievement, Professional Development and District Culture, Buildings and Facilities, Financial Planning and Development, and Community Relations and Partnerships. Each Task Force identified Facilitators who were members of the Core Team in order to assure integration. Task Forces were charged with detailing the Key Initiatives (multi-year strategies) and Action Plans (specific projects/activities) which would be implemented by the by the district across the six areas, and predictably lead to achieving the measureable Strategic Intents. As well, each Task Force was asked to offer recommendations for the sequence of implementation and provide costing information, where required.

The Board of Education engaged in regular, scheduled status checks with the Facilitator Penny Ciaburri in order to review progress and view the work in process. Task Force Facilitators met on a regular basis to assure integration and coordination of work across the six areas. Several strategy sessions/retreats were held with district administrators, department chairs, teacher leaders, and site based teams in order to further support communication and feedback.

The work process centered on a complete, open sharing of information/work in process throughout. This was continually emphasized and identified as a key to gaining the support which would be essential for rigorous implementation. Additionally, this allowed the district to maximize and benefit from the expertise and input of the larger community. In order to secure quality of work, a comprehensive approach and ‘on time’ deliverables, the Task Forces followed a methodical 15 step process. This originated with an understanding of their Charge, review of Critical Issues (key questions) and a complete analysis of their area through the SWOT technique (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). Correspondingly, the Core Team followed a sequential process, facilitated by Penny Ciaburri, Judy Christiansen and Diane Reed.

The Data

An expansive data base was created and made available. This included:

- District wide Student Achievement Data Base, including NYS Reports
- Demographic Study (Dr. Paul Seversky)
- Facilities Study (Dr. Paul Seversky)
- The District Performance Scan (Measure of district culture and practices. 643 responses.)
- The Community Engagement Survey (Gathers input from residents. 920 responses.)

Both the Core Team and Task Forces had open access to this data base. Additional information and research was provided, as requested, in other areas such as criteria for Blue Ribbon Schools, educational best practices, components of Professional Learning Communities and information from the Search Institutes Developmental Assets Survey.

The Work Process

The Core Team and Task Forces received initial training and briefing on the process. An “All Task Force Night” served as the kick off for Task Forces on April 7, 2009. The Core Team had 9 Sessions from December 8, 2008 to November 10, 2009. Task Forces met on a regular basis through November 2009. The Community Presentation of the entire Certified Strategic Plan occurred on December 3, 2009.

Results: The Certified Strategic Plan

The final Strategic Plan includes 21 Strategic Intents and 97 Key Initiatives. These are further supported by highly detailed Action Plans. In implementation, the district will be able to select designated Key Initiatives and Action Plans based upon time, resources, and staffing. This is an important component as the organization will be able to be in full control over the workload and budgetary elements.

There are several elements around the nature of the Strategic Plan that are very impressive:

- Many/most strategies may be implemented with a realignment of existing resources.
- The district Strategic Intents cover six key areas, creating both the results that are important for student success, along with the components that will build the internal (within district) and external (community wide) culture.

- The Strategic Plan covers both the global perspective (Vision, Mission, and Strategic Intents) and more specific, detailed strategies (Key Initiatives and Action Plans) which are necessary for sustaining focus over the long term.

Summary: The Strategic Intents

- **Character Education and Wellness: 3 Intents.** Address students' development of character traits, student involvement in an integrated wellness program and establishing a community wide wellness program.
- **Student Achievement: 3 Intents.** The first addresses student success in key assessments including the percentage of students who achieve an Advanced Regents Diploma, and Horseheads named within the top 10% of New York State districts. Other Intents measure student development of 21st Century Learning competencies and district schools achieving Blue Ribbon Status.
- **Community Relations and Partnerships: 5 Intents.** Address district communication, involvement in the schools, establishing partnerships, and benefiting from a connected alumni network.
- **Buildings and Facilities: 4 Intents.** Address developing adequate space to accommodate all educational, programmatic and administrative needs, assuring adequate resources, to provide a safe, secure environment and efficiently operating from a 'green' perspective.
- **Financial Planning and Development: 4 Intents.** Address guidelines for a fiscally responsible budget, establishing funds for updating facilities, building community support for approved budgets and delivering value in education.
- **Professional Development and District Culture: 2 Intents.** Address all staff receiving the training needed to support achievement and safety needs along with staff, students, and community agreeing that we have a positive culture.

Next Steps

The Board of Education took formal action on December 3 and unanimously approved the Strategic Intents. The district now has the protocol in place for guiding the next ten years. The Strategic Plan will be updated annually. The Strategic Plan Implementation Team (currently in design) will monitor results and report on a regular basis to the community. Data dashboards will be created to support the reporting of information. In closing, Horseheads is well-positioned to rigorously implement and benefit from an ambitious, comprehensive, well-designed Strategic Plan.

Respectfully Submitted:
Penny L. Ciaburri; Facilitator
12.06.09