

“Our Children, Our Community, and Our Future”
Montgomery Public Schools
Strategic Plan
2008 - 2013

Forward

The title of Montgomery Public Schools strategic plan for 2008-2013, “*Our Children, Our Community, and Our Future*” captures the essence and spirit of how we envision the growth and success of our district. It speaks to the reason we exist which is to meet the educational needs of any child who comes to us, and to our focus to help prepare that child for life. It reflects that our community as a whole sees children as our most precious resource and is willing to partner with parents, teachers, staff, and administrators to do all that can be done to make our schools the best they can be. Finally, we all know that the future of our schools and our community are intertwined. Economic development and public education are simply different sides of the same coin. Over the next five years, we will focus on specific, constant and measurable steps to create a new model of community engagement in public education.

To our students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators, thank you for the input over the last two years that has helped mold our plan. Whether through meetings or in one-on-one conversation, I have heard your ideas and you will see many of them throughout the pages of this plan. Special appreciation must be extended to our elected city and county officials, the Education and Workforce Development Council of the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce, and our long-time community education partners who have contributed in many ways. Most importantly, without the support of a dedicated Board of Education, none of this could have come to pass. Finally, to members of the Superintendent’s Cabinet and Dan Joslyn of Joslyn Consulting who have helped facilitate the process, thank you.

When I first began work on this plan, I said it must not be my plan. It is not. It is “*Our*” Montgomery plan. As you explore our plans for the future outlined in these pages, remember it needs all our help to turn vision into reality. Your engagement over the next five years is paramount to all of our success. The children of Montgomery deserve no less.



John Dilworth
Superintendent Montgomery Public Schools, November 2008

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Our Children, Our Community and Our Future

Did You Know?

The Montgomery Public School District is a dynamic enterprise! The operational service area stretches over 157 square miles and serves approximately 32,000 students, 2,100 teachers, and 2,805 support staff. Working with 32,000 students and their parents and guardians you begin to gain an awareness of the sheer size of the undertaking. In this context it is by far the largest “business” in the metropolitan area!

In fact, if the MPS student enrollment alone were a “city” in Alabama, MPS would be the 12th largest in the state – larger than Prattville, Phenix City and Enterprise. In fact, MPS has more students than Alabama State University, Auburn University Montgomery, Troy University’s Montgomery campus, Huntington College, Faulkner University and Trenholm State... combined – in fact over twice as many!

A few additional facts:

- 57 active school campuses
- Consisting of 96 buildings
- 4.3 million square feet
- 13 central administration buildings ranging including storage, maintenance, transportation and office facilities – 228,000 square feet
- Buses: 257 buses
- Run 250 routes
- 11,500 miles per day
- Over 2 million miles per year
- 11,400 computers

The mission of the Montgomery Public School System is *“to ensure all schools will be safe and caring communities where teachers teach and all students learn at higher levels.* This is done in order to ensure that MPS realizes its vision: **“One focus ... preparing students for life.”**

Central to mission and vision is adherence to a set of ten (10) values that drive what it does every single day:

- All children, when challenged, can learn at a higher level
- High expectations produce high achievement
- Equity and excellence are necessary for success
- Schools must provide all students with challenging and engaging work.
- Schools must be safe and nurturing communities where students and staff show respect for each other
- Teachers who are well prepared and caring can guide students to success
- Every employee is a valued and respected member of the education team
- There is strength in diversity; working together we can address any challenge
- All resources received must be maximized to help students succeed
- Parents, community and business are critical partners in improving our school system

The values set the stage for day-to-day operations and performance as well as long-term vision. The plan that follows incorporates the mission, vision, and values of Montgomery Public Schools.

Studies, Assessments and Plans Regarding Montgomery Public Schools 2001-2007

In this section it is important to acknowledge work done over the last few years that enabled the development of this strategic plan. While not going into great detail, there are several precursors to the current plan that need to be touched upon.

Montgomery Public Schools has been directly or indirectly involved in a number of reviews, assessments, focus groups, SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) analyzes, and plan development over the last seven years. Groups have looked at individual schools, levels of educational achievement (K-12), geographic distribution of schools, the role and economic impact of MPS in the region, and the interrelationship between MPS and overall workforce education.

Beginning in 1999, a small group of people started *Envision 2020* – a community-driven strategic planning effort involving citizens and leaders in the Central Alabama counties of

Autauga, Elmore, Lowndes, Macon and Montgomery – now known as the River Region. Its purpose is to develop shared goals encompassing all aspects of the region's future and to see that those goals are implemented.

A region that emphasizes the importance of quality education, offers programs and opportunities for students of all ages and abilities, provides sufficient financial support, sets the highest curriculum standards and hires teachers and administrators who are trained, motivated and qualified in their subject. Its safe neighborhood schools have earned the trust and support of the community, teachers' performances and students' achievements are celebrated.

A region committed to creating a stable, equitable local and state tax structure, which will raise per pupil expenditures for K-12 public schools to the national average and ensure excellence in teaching and learning, and will provide for quality public services. This will be done by providing an appropriate tax structure, such as, but not limited to raising property taxes and decreasing sales taxes.

A region that creates neighborhood schools improves and modernizes existing schools and provides a safe and secure learning environment.

A region that encourages and provides consistent, dynamic, relevant and accountable mentoring and tutoring programs (with businesses in partnerships with schools) for an optimum lifelong learning and employment environment for all citizens.

In 2001, the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce developed a strategic plan envisioning what the future of the Montgomery area could become. That vision became even clearer during the 2007-2011 strategic plan: *Imagine a Greater Montgomery*. Central to the findings and subsequent action plans was that public education was woven into all aspects of community and business development and that its number one priority was to champion public education and workforce education.

The DeJong Facilities Study, presented in 2006, has had a major impact on strategic planning. As stated the vision is ... *to create a new generation of schools ... based on dynamic educational programs, safe environments and a new paradigm of facilities that will deliver a variety of new educational options*. This plan is well into implementation and has been folded into the MPS plan for 2013.

The Montgomery Public Schools Strategic Plan: 2002-2007 was compiled by a group of 32 community leaders with input from 160 people and approved by the Board of Education. This resulted in seven areas of change-concentration and 47 action items. In reviewing the action items, several of the expectations have been met, and others recaptured as SWOT points in the development of the plan for 2008-2013.

Considering what has been done and the new approaches to the expectations since Superintendent Dilworth's arrival at MPS, we find the following actions bridging to the new plan. Checks mean the action has been taken, and a square means it is addressed in the 2008-2013 plan:

- √ Develop and implement a system-wide comprehensive literacy initiative. *This is well underway with centralized reading efforts through a variety of community partners.*
- √ Expand existing school to career partnerships. *In 2008 there was a career fair that attracted 600 participants. This is expected to grow each year.*
- √ Implement a challenging career curriculum. *In 2008 career academies were introduced as part of comprehensive educational options for students.*
- √ Assess the current state of all facilities. This has been done as part of the DeJong Study and Phase I. *Phase II will be completed in the 2008-2013 strategic timeframe.*
- √ Determine the need for future growth due to population shifts. *This was also addressed in the DeJong Study and the schedule of implementation developed by Mr. Dilworth and approved by the Board is now underway.*
- √ Insure cleanliness of all facilities. *In 2008 the Prune, Paint and Plant program was initiated to do school makeovers. This will be expanded in 2008-2013.*
 - Establish for administrators a comprehensive staff development program. This is being looked at as major part of the 2013 plan.
 - Enhance (teacher) recruiting efforts. A teacher recruitment program is being reviewed for the 2013 plan.
 - Create and implement marketing and advertising campaign (and public relations). This is in place and with the establishment of the Education and Workforce Council within the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce in 2008 additional actions will be taken 2008-2013.
 - Ensure community friendly schools. While several things have happened this is being addressed in several areas in the 2008-2013 plan

Superintendent Dilworth made interacting with the community one of his highest priorities when he came to Montgomery Public Schools in 2007. During his first 18 months as superintendent, he met with over 60 different community organizations, numerous community leaders one on one, and in small groups, and met with hundreds of parents across

the district. He also noted that whether walking down a street or having lunch people are not hesitant to ask him questions and make observations about the school system.

This “immersion in hearing what people think,” led to some basic conclusions about what is needed to advance MPS to higher levels of student growth and success. In this effort, every decision concerning what should be included in the plan revolved around the question, “what difference will this make for our students?”

Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats and Driving Forces

Dan Joslyn, of Joslyn Consulting, conducted a series of reviews of the reports identified above in preparation for a series of interviews, workshops and assessments. The first review was developed and shared with the Superintendent, his Cabinet, and later with the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce’s Education and Workforce Development Council.

- *It is critical that MPS identifies clear success indicators, defines them in terms of progress as measured historically and against peer systems. This should include MPS strategy for direct work force education as part of the Superintendent’s vision.*
- *Organizing for success requires that every single strategic objective has a champion and the objectives are grouped in ways that a super-champion can oversee implementation.*
- *A new team member in the newly organized structure should be a position to lead all volunteer and external assistance efforts from businesses, colleges, and non-profit educational advocate agencies. This is a significant under-tapped service and financial force that must be aligned with MPS strategies not operating piecemeal. This person should work closely with the Superintendent, Chamber, and higher education advancement offices.*
- *All governing bodies should meet jointly/systematically to review challenges. The Schools are the responsibility of the Mayor, Council, Board, and Commissioners.*
- *Build a clear community awareness and engagement process around MPS – “Success Starts Here.” Find points of pride and demonstrate how the schools are meeting and exceeding expectations (success indicators). This should be ongoing and vibrant.*

- *Put excellence into family initiatives that include good staff connections, 1:1 Pre-K family engagement, enhance the reading effort, school choir, magnet and new initiative school projects. In addition, see if MPS can be of assistance to family members in completing high school/GED or community colleges and universities.*
- *Acknowledge the dynamic tension that exists in public schools around meeting the needs of all students while being open and responsive to needs. ALL students in MPS must be acknowledged for who they are and where they are capable of going, and their learning options developed accordingly*
- *Build common ground around MPS showing measurable progress in all areas across the system and community commitment to the long run of the best graduates possible.*
- *Assess and report progress often.*
- *Celebrate often and well!*

After this effort, a combination of assessments (SWOT) questions to gain insight into various constituents' perception of Montgomery Public Schools was undertaken.

The SWOT analysis is an extremely useful tool for understanding and decision-making for all sorts of situations in business and organizations. SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Information about the origins and inventors of SWOT analysis is below. The SWOT analysis headings provide a good framework for reviewing strategy, position and direction of a company or business proposition, or any other idea. On October 14, 2008 a summary of SWOT questions and interview responses was presented to the Montgomery County Board of Education:

AUDIENCE	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	THREATS	OPPORTUNITY
Parents Survey of 6,675 parents	<u>How has MPS done over the last two years?</u> Improved - 32.7% Stayed about the same - 38.8% Declined - 16.6% Not sure - 12%	<u>What do you think is the biggest problem facing Montgomery Public Schools?</u> Student achievement - 7.1% Parental involvement - 20.3% Safety and discipline - 20.5% Lack of funding or the economy - 24%	*Funding *Safety and Discipline *Qualified Teachers	* Room for Improvement

		Finding qualified teachers - 15%		
Teachers 23	*Dedicated teachers *Magnet programs	*Distribution of teachers *Parental involvement *Communicating with central office	*Funding *Coordination *Teacher retention	*Professional development *Bring in new teachers *Increase educational options
Staff/ Administrators 28	* Movement for better change in programs an facilities *Teachers and staff	*Parental involvement *Hiring replacements *Effective communication	*Tutoring *Coordination *Teacher retention	*Collaboration
Community 71	*Superintendent *Community involvement *Thematic and Magnet Schools	*Reputation of some schools *Negative perceptions *Parental involvement *Funding	*Having to make tough decisions *Recruiting and retaining teachers	*City, county, BOE, and partners working together *Business interest and economic development

Based on these assessments:

- There is significant community involvement
- There is an appreciation and belief in the Superintendent’s capability and vision
- There is a perception that NOW is the time to comprehensively improve the system taking advantage of so many leaders in the community willing to become even more engaged. To do this we:
 - MUST deal with community perception of conditions of facilities, safety and educational opportunities by increasing venues in which information is shared
 - MUST have even more interaction among MPS Board of Education, Mayor, City Council and County Commission
 - MUST reduce costs of duplication and functional ineffectiveness wherever found
 - MUST continue to look at funding options to support expenditures in professional development, information and educational technology
 - MUST focus and assess the impact of all community organizations that partner with various schools through different support programs
 - MUST provide educational options and measure educational progress, constantly looking to improve in every educational outcome area
 - MUST reorganize the central organizational structure to ensure that decisions are based on viable, timely and accurate information
 - MUST provide systematic and frequent accountability reports to the Board of Education and the Montgomery community at large

Based on Dan Joslyn’s 31 years of work in strategic planning, he also shared the following keys to effective planning and plan implementation after working on over 60 planning efforts:

- 1. Collective engagement- organizing to assure success**
- 2. Defining problems rather than rushing to solutions**
- 3. Openness to being wrong while correcting mistakes**
- 4. Commitment to improving the overall system/organization**
- 5. Communicating what, how, and when action will be taken**
- 6. Measuring results: continuous improvement**
- 7. Providing community progress reports and celebrating success**
- 8. Tying plans to budgets while reducing cost and finding new sources of income**
- 9. Modifying plans as variables may dictate**
- 10. Establishing and maintaining consistency of leadership and coordination¹**

On October 28, 2008 at the monthly meeting of the Education and Workforce Development Council, the group reviewed the presentation given to the Board two weeks earlier. The members were asked to look at each of the 10 points presented by Mr. Joslyn and to ask if these conditions have been or were being met. Note how the keys stress community engagement and the need for collective work to drive this plan.

Strategic Initiatives and Evolving Strategic Objectives

In order to address the various issues raised in interviews, focus groups and SWOT analyses (a strategic planning method used to evaluate the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats) it is important to understand what a strategic plan is and is not. A strategic plan is a projection of capability aligned with resources to achieve probable results. It is a scenario that has been put forth as a best effort to take an organization from a known level of performance to a new higher level of results over a specific period of time. It is not about

¹ “Generally the more numerous and conflicting the attributes that characterize a problem the more confusion there will exist in defining the problem and relating it to a solution...there is a tendency of multiple sets of participants to identify with sub-goals as they struggle to deal with the overall goal of finding a satisfactory solutions, p.103. “
“Without a process of coalition building that requires attention and nurturing over an extended period of time serious reform tends to fail, p.166.”

Building Civic Capacity: The Politics of Reforming Urban Schools
Pierannunzi, et al. 2001

prediction but about best effort and adjusting expectations as variables change. In short, strategic planning emphasizes constant “Strategic Thinking, Measuring, and Adjusting.”

Montgomery Public School teachers and staff do annual and mid-term planning, as related to state education mandates and annual yearly progress targets, well. Teachers do extensive course planning that includes performance expectations, timelines, and milestones to indicate whether course plans are being implemented and how well. On the administrative side, many functions also have standards or mandates that must be followed from technology acquisition to transportation safety.

What is lacking is an overarching picture of how things fit and collectively integrate in ways that move the entire system forward. That is, to ensure that broader initiatives become part of everyday actions! Strategic plans consist of merging interrelated tasks that enhance initiatives through accomplishing strategic objectives that are in turn driven by specific tasks that include clear milestones of progress. Here are the key components in planning and implementing. The first seven are being addressed in Phase I: Strategic Planning. Steps 8-14 comprise Phase II: Strategic Implementation and steps 15-18: Monitoring, Assessing and Adjusting of the Montgomery Public Schools’ Strategic Plan:

1. Vision
2. Mission
3. Needs
4. SWOT
5. Options
6. Strategic Thinking
7. Strategic Initiatives
8. Strategic Objectives
9. Responsibility
10. Resources
11. Milestones
12. Outcome Measures
13. Measuring Progress
14. Reporting
15. Vision Scenario for the year 2013
16. Monitoring
17. Evaluating
18. Adjusting

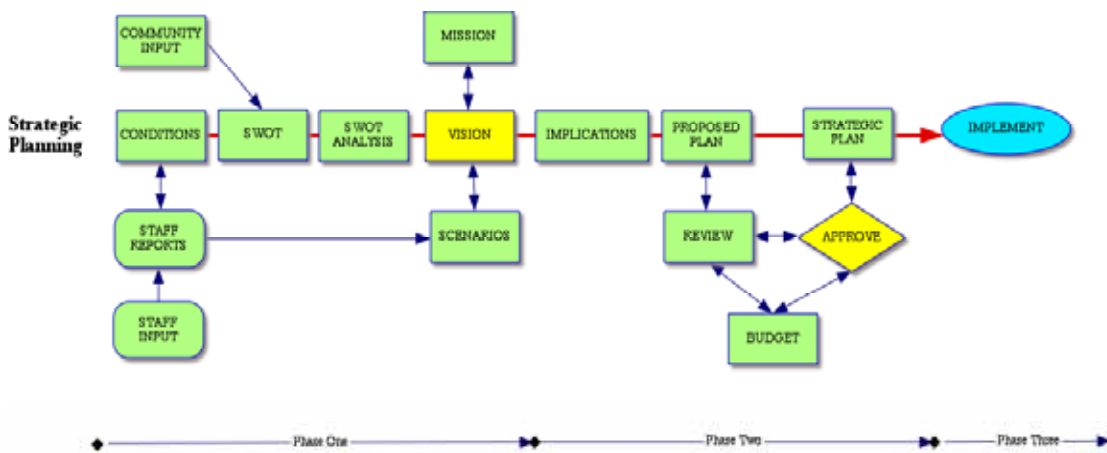
Beginning with the current mission and vision of Montgomery Public Schools, a clear focus emerges:

The Montgomery Public School System exists “to ensure all schools will be safe and caring communities where teachers teach and students learn at higher levels. This is done to enable MPS to reach its overarching vision: “One focus ... preparing students for life.”

Strategically this means several critical things:

- Each school is important
- Emphasis must be on quality teaching and accountable learning
- Each student is responsible for his/her actions
- Everyone’s safety at each school must be paramount
- Each student must have options for learning at higher levels and continuous academic progress is expected
- Each graduate must be assessed to see how MPS preparation helped him/ her along whatever path they elect, and
- Each member of the community has his or her role to play to make the system the very best public school system possible

As noted in the previous section of the plan, data have been collected from various segments of the community about strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities to Montgomery Public Schools. Based on the analysis of this information, plus the mandates from federal, state and local government, input from educational partners throughout the city, and further review by the teachers and staff of MPS and the Board of Education, key patterns have been identified. The parts of the strategic plan are:



As we begin addressing strategic issues and options it is important to categorize the effort in a simple manner to focus findings and expectations in ways that can be measured and monitored. Toward this end, we have determined that there are seven major clusters or initiatives that include each major strategic actions or objectives that should be completed. These “*Strategic Initiatives*” enable the Superintendent and Board of Education to see what is and is not happening within the plan. This accountability can then become a part of ongoing evaluation of programmatic outcomes and honed budget deliberation and decisions over the next five years of the plan.

The Montgomery Public Schools Strategic Initiatives for 2013 are as follows:

- 1.0 Expand Student Learning Options and Strengthen Educational Success**
- 2.0 Enhance Professional Learning, Attract and Retain Quality Teachers Staff, and Administrators**
- 3.0 Strengthen School and Student Safety and Security**
- 4.0 Increase Parental Engagement**
- 5.0 Expedite Building and Grounds Improvement, Renovation**
- 6.0 Improve Organization, Finance, and Information System Efficiencies and Effectiveness**
- 7.0 Strengthen Community Development, Partnering, and Communication**

Each school within MPS needs to maintain a database identifying all educational, operational, organizations, facilities, transportation, and parental involvement and community engagement activities. In education/teaching it would include type of school (by grade), course emphasis, (magnet, zone magnet, thematic, others), state report cards on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), safety issues, numbers of parental activities and participation, number of community partners and engagements, safety issues and events. This will allow constant monitoring of what is being provided to each school as an indicator of value to the community and how well the school in return is helping build stronger neighborhoods, zones and the entire district. Executive directors should use these data to assess comprehensive school development. The acquisition and implementation of TestTrax Data Warehousing System improves vertical articulation, alignment, consistency, and the design and delivery of the curriculum system-wide. Data warehousing and data-mining techniques make school-level and individual student data much more accessible to both teachers and principals.

The process of middle and high school reform has begun with the first step toward a series of academic academies at the four traditional high schools. The first academy will be in place at Jefferson Davis High School with the goal that each of the four traditional high schools will have two academies each by fall 2009.

The district was awarded the A+ College Ready Initiative – a grant to increase the number of Advanced Placement courses in the district. In addition, The U.S. Department of Education named Forest Avenue Elementary School a Blue Ribbon School. E.D. Nixon Elementary School was named a Torchbearer School by the Alabama Department of Education. These are examples of the progress made by MPS. Continued growth over the next few years will enable each student to find best-fit educational options through magnet schools, zone magnets, career academies, and refocused traditional offerings.

Looking ahead it is important to imagine what the year 2013 can become if all initiatives and objectives are accomplished. A vision statement in a strategic plan depicts what an organization will look like at the end of the plan's implementation. This construct is helpful in that year-by-year one can assess how close reality is to the projected vision. The vision for Montgomery Public Schools for the fall of 2013 is as follows:

By 2013 Montgomery Public Schools will be seen as a leader in academic reform and a model of community engagement in public education. Academic quality will be measured and each school and program held accountable for its delivery. Longitudinally and by peer comparisons, MPS will show steady improvement that demonstrates that the system has made gains based on the Alabama Department of Education's Annual Report Card and other comparable measures. These will include:

- 1. An improved graduation rate*
- 2. An enhanced reading score performance rate*
- 3. Adequate Yearly Performance (AYP) progress*
- 4. An increase in the number of Advanced Placement courses offered*
- 5. Increase percentage of students scoring a three or higher on all AP exams*
- 6. Advances in placement in career/technical fields and*

7. An increase in the number of highly qualified teachers

To accomplish these goals, some 57 action items have been identified to turn this vision into reality

Such a vision requires an enhanced emphasis on teaching. Having the right teacher in the right school is central to successful teaching and learning. As student needs are identified, so must the skills of teachers to meet those requirements. As our country's "Baby Boomers" retire from the teaching field, the demand for qualified teachers will increase. MPS must evolve a strategy of growing and attracting master teachers. The district must work to draw teachers in the same way communities attract new businesses. What packages can we build to attract the best and brightest? How can we assure promotion and compensation progress? How do we make the community at-large even more welcoming and supportive of the efforts of all teachers? One answer is to demonstrate increased measurable progress and communicate this to various publics. Overall, this means accountability through attention to establishing measures of teaching effectiveness and sharing this information broadly and systematically.

As MPS enters its five-year strategic plan 2008-2013, there is much to applaud:

Newsweek Magazine recognized Loveless Academic High School as one of the top 57 high schools in the nation. U.S. News and World Report also ranked Loveless in the top 100 high schools in America. Booker T. Washington and Brewbaker Technology High Schools were named two of the best high schools in America by U.S. News and World Report.

The central office of MPS has been reorganized to provide more supervision and support to schools.

Construction has begun on five of the eight projects in Phase I of the Montgomery Public Schools building program to bring a new generation of schools to our community.

A multi-million dollar Healthy Students and Safe Schools grant was awarded to the district. In part, the grant funds the new Helping Montgomery Families Initiative that is a partnership through the Montgomery District Attorney's Office, plus various public agencies and the school district.

The Montgomery Education Workforce Development Council was created as a partnership between business, non-profit and educational groups to focus the efforts of those groups to assist the district in meeting its goals.

A parent notification system was installed which allows the district to contact parents quickly in an emergency and to remind/notify them of important events at school.

Summer school programs for elementary schools now offer students the opportunity to recover credit allowing them to advance.

Montgomery Public Schools successfully conducted its first district job fair where approximately 600 contacts were made with job applicants, significantly affecting the hiring process for the 2008-2009 school year.

Since strategic initiatives are the major categories of the strategic plan, they must have measurable activities that ensure the accomplishment of each initiative. Strategic objectives are the driving forces of each strategic initiative. Building on the progress to date the overarching strategy for the 2008-2013 plan is based on continuous improvement. The baselines for improvement are the specifically identified benchmarks from the 2005-2006 SDE Report Card. The intent is identifying problems and opportunities and being deliberate in showing progress on each. Make no mistake, strategic planning requires that we execute strategic implementation! **This takes agreement, commitment, and the hard cooperative work of turning our vision for our students into their real future.**

This means detailing what must be done to ensure that each initiative is completed. In turn, the completion of each initiative ensures MPS' vision for 2013 becomes reality. Below are the evolving strategic objectives for each of the seven strategic initiatives. These objectives are based on direct feedback from staff, teachers, the school board, the education and workforce development council, and the community. In addition, some reflect analysis of documents, the SWOT process and interviews conducted by our strategic planning facilitator.

1.0 Expand Student Learning Options and Educational Success

- 1.1 Explore the need for pre-k/early childhood education across the system, determine costs and recommend what actions should be considered.
- 1.2 Decrease dropout rate by an average of 2% per year through 2013 based on the formula of the state Department of Education to be put into effect in 2009 (we may use the National Governors Association formula, retroactively and in the future so we can compare to others).
- 1.3 Fully develop the ACCESS Program (a state distance learning initiative) for students in accordance with the district's Technology Plan.
- 1.4 Adjust MPS curricula to put additional emphasis on international and global issues. This includes developing programs and positions to improve services to the district's English Language Learner/English as a Second Language student population.
- 1.5 Create "Academic Clubs" in elementary, middle, and high schools to explore new learning options for high achievers (for example: classes at colleges and universities, internships, etc.).
- 1.6 Introduce and assess the Positive Behavior Initiative program for possible expansion within the system.
- 1.7 Increase AP courses of study across all high schools with prerequisite pre-AP offerings in middle grades.
- 1.8 Strengthen effective mentoring options throughout the district for students and teachers.
- 1.9 Establish and maintain a career academy advisory council for each career academy.
- 1.10 Create smaller learning communities of students beginning with the middle grades.
- 1.11 Assess the Special Education Department to ensure accountability measures are in place to comply with all polices and laws and to ensure every special education student has an appropriate IEP that is being kept current and followed to meet the student's needs.

1.12 Assess the Counseling Department to ensure the role of the local school counselor is clearly defined, and that the primary function of the position is to assist students directly in planning for, and the success of, their education at MPS and beyond.

1.13 Assess programs for students with physical disabilities to ensure their special needs are being met and they are receiving appropriate services to meet their education requirements.

2.0 Enhance Professional Learning; Attract and Retain Quality Teachers, Staff and Administrators

2.1 Expand the Instructional Leadership Academy concept to include all administrative personnel at the central office and local school levels.

2.2 Continue to increase percentage of highly qualified teachers, particularly in low performing schools.

2.3 Ensure that an average of 95% of teacher absences are filled with qualified substitutes by 2013.

2.4 Develop an employee assistance program for the personal health and wellbeing of district employees.

2.5 Create a program to attract great new teachers to include community based incentive packages.

3.0 Strengthen School and Student Safety and Security

3.1 Compile a safety and security database for each school.

3.2 Have a comprehensive safety inspection for each school.

3.3 Establish a health and safety committee for each school in cooperation with the local PTA/PTO to monitor and offer suggestions on safety and health issues as mandated by the state Department of Education.

3.4 Increase security personnel presence.

3.5 Encourage an increase in neighborhood watch programs.

3.6 Establish a community health and safety advisory committee.

- 3.7 Maintain the Truancy Abatement Center.
- 3.8 Partner with local law enforcement to reduce truancy by investigating the status of school-aged children seen in public during school hours.
- 3.9 Strengthen policies and procedures to reduce bullying in each school.
- 3.10 Conduct a study and implement recommendations as necessary to make the journey to and from school safer for all students.
- 3.11 Create a centralized monitoring station for security for all schools.
- 3.12 Provide MPS security at designated extra-curricular activities.
- 3.13 Develop a common communication platform for emergencies.
- 3.14 Reorganize PALS to meet the goal of reducing truancy by an average of 2% per year through 2013.

4.0 Increase Parental Engagement

- 4.1 Increase the number of schools effectively using the parent notification system that allows the district to contact parents quickly in an emergency and to remind/notify them of important events at school.
- 4.2 Develop a MPS “Parent University” to enable parents to better assist students in the learning process, interact more effectively with teachers, motivate students to do well and move beyond high school; also assist parents with a variety of family issues ranging from planning a budget, dealing with discipline issues, and personal enrichment such as assistance in completing a GED, job interview counseling, resume writing, etc.
- 4.3 Ensure all student and employee contact data is accurate. This includes working with MPS Human Resources, MPS Computer Services and other system departments to ensure appropriate software and procedures are in place to accomplish this goal.
- 4.4 Reduce barriers that make it difficult for parents, teachers and administrators to interact including those affecting non-English speaking parents.

4.5 Place an emphasis on parent and community relations and customer service for each school by establishing training programs for teachers and staff and an awards program for schools and departments that demonstrate exceptional customer relations.

4.6 Explore the possibility of adding a staff member to work as a liaison between MPS and various community groups and volunteer organizations.

5.0 Facilitate Building and Grounds Enhancement, Renovation, and Construction

5.1 Expand the Plant, Prune, and Paint Programs to all schools and neighborhoods.

5.2 Complete Phase I of the MPS building program on time and within budget.

5.3 Develop a schedule of all renovation, construction and upgrades for schools and provide this information via the district's website.

5.4 Establish teams around each new school opening to address all issues for transitioning learning into that facility.

6.0 Improve Organization, Finance, and Information System Efficiencies and Effectiveness

6.1 Constantly review the organizational structure of MPS to ensure effective operations.

6.2 Establish success measures for organization operational effectiveness.

6.3 All divisions will present a semi-annual progress report to the Board of Education.

6.4 Process bond issue in Winter/Spring 2009 to secure funding to complete Phase I of the MPS Facilities Plan.

6.5 Secure additional funding sources to begin funding future phases of the MPS Facilities Plan.

6.6 Identify gaps between revenue and expenditures in MPS annual budgets, and pursue sources of revenue to offset potential shortfalls.

6.7 Develop an education and information technology plan through 2013 updating it as part of annual reviews and publish it via the district's website.

6.8 To ensure accountability, establish an educational research office to measure the effectiveness of district initiatives and programs.

7.0 Strengthen Community Development, Partnering, and Communication

7.1 Hold meetings of the school board, the Education and Workforce Council and other related educational partners in various schools around the district.

7.2 Establish a regular videotaped "community blog", including a message from the Superintendent, for broadcast on the new community cable channel.

7.3 Focus the Superintendent's interactions with targeted community groups (including Hispanic and Korean populations) to tell the MPS story regarding academic indicators of success and ways they can help the system become more successful.

7.4 Establish an annual Montgomery Public Schools education conference with the Board of Education, elected officials, business leaders, faith-based organizations, and the public to discuss progress and focus efforts to benefit the MPS system.

7.5 Establish an archive for MPS memorabilia and history.

7.6. Develop a "Lend Executive Program" where volunteers from business community groups work with senior leadership on various objectives in the strategic plan.

7.7 Establish "Fantastic Signage" (inside and out) at each school to identify community partners.

With the determination to act on these initiatives and objectives, MPS and its community partners can now begin the task of taking the plan (phase I) and turning it into action (phase II).

Implementing the Strategic Plan (Phase II)

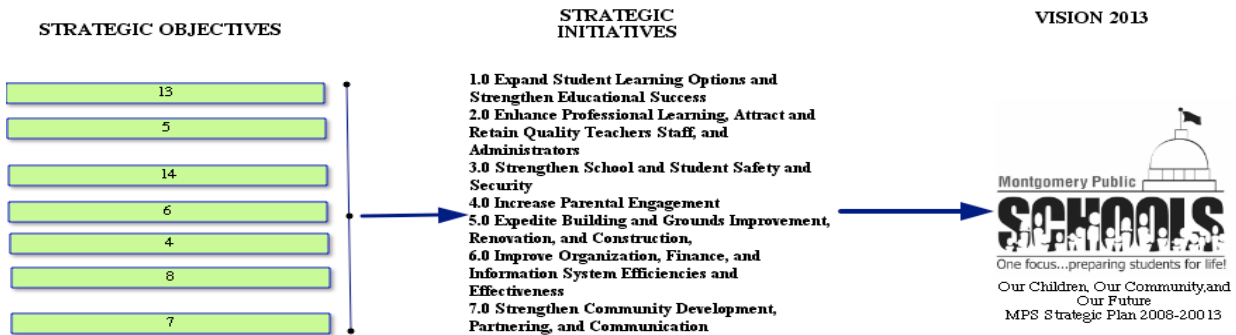
In phase II, MPS teachers, administrators and staff along with community partners will be identifying the steps required to implement each of the sixty-three (57) strategic objectives that in turn drive the seven (7) strategic initiatives of the five -year plan. This will be done in the following ways:

1. Identify the senior administrator responsible for each of the seven (7) strategic initiatives.
2. Identify the person who will be responsible for each strategic objective in each of the initiatives.
3. Each person leading a strategic objective will:
 - Identify others who will work as a team with the leader on the objective
 - Setting fall 2006 as the baseline year, identify the state of the objective at that time, did it exist, how effective was it, etc.
 - Determine milestones to accomplish the objective
 - Determine the expected target date to complete the objective
 - Identify how the Education and Work Force Development Council will partner on the objective
 - Determine measures of success for the objective (how we celebrate)
 - Establish an accountability log wherein the leader of the objective will continually enter action statements describing what is taking place in the work of the team on the objective
 - Identify resource implications for the objective
 - Review external funding options to offset costs and identify any cost savings incurred as a result of implementing the objective
4. Create an online database and project management system (probably SharePoint 3.0). This database will allow all of the strategic plan and its action items to be loaded and be accessible online for persons with the security clearance to enter the site. This will include members of the Board of Education who will be able to constantly monitor the plan's implementation.
5. Organize the Superintendent's Cabinet as the internal means for managing the overall plan.
6. Senior administrators will organize objective leaders and their teams in the strategic initiative(s) for which he/she has responsibilities.

7. Review the strategic plan monthly as an agenda item in the cabinet meeting.
8. Conduct a quarterly review adjusting objectives as necessary.
9. Tie strategic objectives to annual budgets while exploring external sources of assistance (grant development officer).
10. Prepare monthly updates for BOE meetings as part of the agenda.
11. Provide semi-annual written report on success to the Board.
12. Complete an annual assessment and make determinations as to any changes in objectives and identifying priorities for the coming year based on changing internal and external conditions.
13. Conduct an annual retreat to update the Board and elected officials on the status of the plan.
14. Prepare a “Superintendent’s Report Card” on the success of the plan at the end of each year of implementation while looking ahead to the next year’s effort.

Plans do not implement themselves! In fact, one of the most important points of this plan is that it recognizes that strategic implementation is what takes the plan from the dusty shelf and makes it alive. Montgomery Public Schools' strategic plan will be transparent with constant ability to see what is actually taking place. This means everyone is accountable and everyone can celebrate plan success. Implementation will feature the community engagement strategy that is central to the plan’s effectiveness. Phase II will take from November 2008- June 2009 for complete implementation.

PHASE II
Strategic Implementation: Turning Plans into Action



Strategic Monitoring (Phase III)

The strategic plan is like a budget. It must be monitored and assessed with an eye to the ongoing implications of the whole as well as the parts. That is why it is central to the long-term success that the plan, like a budget, becomes part of the day-to-day life of MPS. Phase III will begin in July, 2009 and continue through the end of the plan in fall, 2013.

The Board and Superintendent, through constant vigilance, will make this happen.

New teachers, staff and administrators must be oriented to the plan and trained on the use of SharePoint 3.0 and leadership-teams. Just as a new person would be given information on the budgeting system, so it must be with the plan.

The steps identified in Phase II allude to the need to have external as well as internal reviews of the plan. This will be especially true as new strategic objectives may be added while others delayed, accomplished or drop for various reasons during Phase III..

Montgomery Public Schools is poised to engage students, their families and all of us to build a better Montgomery through quality educational options – the future begins here.