K-12 Strategic Plan Comparison

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June 22, 2020

**K-12 Strategic Plan Comparison Matrix**

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| **Mission, Vison, Goals** | | |
| **Plan 1:**  **Greenville County School District** | **Plan 2:**  **The School District of Newberry** | **Plan 3:**  **Charleston County School District** |
| Mission: The mission of GCS is to “build college- and career-ready graduates by connecting students to engaging classes and meaningful experiences that cultivate world-class knowledge and skills, while developing character, leadership, and citizenship” (Greenville County School District, p. 24) | Mission: The mission of NCS is to “engage students at all levels in educational experiences that ensure success and life-long learning” (The School District of Newberry, p. 2). | The mission of CCSD is “to educate and support every child in achieving college, career, and citizenship readiness” (Charleston County School District, p. 4). |
| Vision: The vision of GCS is for “students inspired, supported, and prepared for their next opportunities in life, education, and employment” (Greenville County School District, p. 24. | Vision: The vision of Newberry is below:  “Our vision is of a culture where:  • All ideas are valued;  • A cooperative relationship exists between the school district and the community;  • Collaboration is expected; and  • People want to work and students want to learn” (The School District of Newberry, p. 2). | The vision of CCSD is  “CCSD is a premier school system in which • every child is supported in and out of school,  • every child succeeds academically,  • every child graduates from high school prepared for employment in the modern workforce or credential completion or postsecondary degree, and  • every student, teacher, principal, and staff member is valued and respected with the opportunity to learn every day” (Charleston County School District, p. 4). |
| There are five goals that are mentioned in the strategic plan for GCS which are:  “Goal 1: Student Success Deliver high-quality curriculum, instruction, and interventions that meet the needs of each student.  Goal 2: Premier Workforce Recruit, retain, and develop exemplary personnel in all positions.  Goal 3: Caring Culture and Environment Provide a safe and healthy environment that promotes learning and respectful relationships.  Goal 4: Resource Stewardship Ensure efficient use of resources through their effective management and development.  Goal 5: Community Engagement and Communications Generate support and system effectiveness through partnerships, communications, and recognitions” (Greenville County School District, p. 24). | There were many goals pointed out in the plan which are:   1. “The goal, for the School District of Newberry County, is to meet or exceed the goals as established by the federal and state accountability systems for elementary schools in each of the subgroups that have been identified for our district through 2018. 2. The goal, for the School District of Newberry County, is to meet or exceed the goals as established by the federal and state accountability systems for middle schools in each of the subgroups that have been identified for our district through 2018. 3. The goal, for the School District of Newberry County, is to meet or exceed the goals as established by the federal and state accountability systems for high schools in each of the subgroups that have been identified for our district through 2018. 4. The goal for the Newberry Adult Education program is to meet or exceed established goals approved by the State Department of Education through 2018. 5. Ensure that every administrative vacancy, in all school years 2013 - 2018, is filled by a competent and qualified administrator as measured by their certification and recommendations. 6. 100% of all core academic subject area teachers will be highly qualified according to ESEA standards in the appropriate content area every year through 2017-18. 7. A competitive wage will be paid for all district personnel through 2018. 8. Highly qualified teachers will be retained at a turnover rate of less than 10% each year through 2018. 9. By 2018, 100% of parents or guardians will participate in parent/teacher conferences. 10. 100% of staff will be provided comprehensive crisis preparedness instruction through a school based staff development measured by attendance logs. 11. The district wellness policy (ADF) will be implemented for 100% of students through 2018, in order to develop their problem-solving and decision-making life skills to become healthy members of society. 12. Provide and maintain modern, adequate, safe, comfortable, and attractive schools, as measured by program needs and state and international building code standards for PK – 12 educational facilities, adequate for projected ten-year growth” (The School District of Newberry. 2017). | There are eight goals for CCSD which are:  “Goal 1 Maximize academic achievement to ensure every student is career, college, and citizenship ready.  Goal 2 Provide learning opportunities that allow every student to develop and demonstrate talents, interests, and modern workplace skills.  Goal 3 Ensure a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for every student and adult in the system.  Goal 4 Implement a pipeline that recruits, supports, retains, and rewards talented teachers, principals, and staff for every school.  Goal 5 Align resources to address student needs.  Goal 6 Engage in continuous progress processes to create system effectiveness in meeting student needs.  Goal 7 Communicate student progress. Seek feedback and cultivate family and community partnerships to ensure success for every student.  Goal 8 Address local priorities to provide system wide equity” (Charleston County School District, p. 5). |

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| Internal and External Stakeholders | | |
| **Plan 1:**  **Greenville County School District** | **Plan 2:**  **The School District of Newberry** | **Plan 3:**  **Charleston County School District** |
| Internal Stakeholders:   * Superintendent * Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources * Elementary Principals * Middle School Principals * High School Principals * Counselors * District Testing Coordinator * Eight teachers * One Student * 9 Directors of various positions in the district * 3 PTA representatives | Internal Stakeholders:   * Superintendent * Assistant Superintendent * 1 Elementary Principal * 2 Middle School Principals * 1 High School Principals * 2 Counselors * District Testing Coordinator * five teachers * One Student | Internal Stakeholders:   * Superintendent * Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum * Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources * 2 Elementary Principal * 3 Middle School Principals * 3 High School Principals * 2 Counselors * District Testing Coordinator * six teachers * One Student |
| External Stakeholders:   * 28 community members * 9 parents | External Stakeholders:   * 8 community members * 4 parents | External Stakeholders:   * 17 community members * 5 parents |

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| **Facilities** | | |
| **Plan 1:**  **Greenville County School District** | **Plan 2:**  **The School District of Newberry** | **Plan 3:**  **Charleston County School District** |
| The facilities are not addressed individually for the district in the plan. It is pointed out that the district has an emergency plan and that the district monitors the facilities to ensure that they are meeting the needs for the students.  It does state the following in the plan about the facilities:  “The district’s Long-Range Facility Plan/Capital Improvement Program provides a comprehensive process and set of priorities for the maintenance, improvement, and addition of facilities to meet student needs. The plan is reviewed annually and revised as necessary (Greenville County School District, p. 22). | The facilities are not addressed individually for the district. However it is pointed out that a safe environment will be provided and it states the following”  “Provide and maintain modern, adequate, safe, comfortable, and attractive schools, as measured by program needs and state and international building code standards for PK – 12 educational facilities, adequate for projected ten-year growth” (The School District of Newberry, p. 48). | The facilities are not addressed individually for the district; however, it is pointed out that the district intends to align operations and facilities to address student needs.  It is pointed out under the facilities section that  “Successful sales tax referendum in November 2020 to ensure that providing and maintaining facilities to meet life safety, growth, and programmatic needs through capital construction, maintenance, and information technology Projects completed on time and within budget” (Charleston County School District, p. 35). |

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| **Professional Development** | | |
| **Plan 1:**  **Greenville County School District** | **Plan 2:**  **The School District of Newberry** | **Plan 3:**  **Charleston County School District** |
| GCS will provide professional development opportunities that are based on the needs of the faculty and staff of the district. The professional development meetings will be provided through “monthly principal and instructional coach meetings; cluster meetings for district and school leaders; the Assistant Principal Institute; new principal training; Summer Institute; workshops and seminars for teachers on the effective implementation of district instructional initiatives; school data teams; and professional conversations and activities at the school level, such as book studies, and Professional Learning Community dialogues” (Greenville County School District, p. 21). It was also pointed out that the school district tries to target professional development sessions to address curriculum standards and indicators which impact student learning (Greenville County School District, p. 21). The goal of the professional development within the county “is designed to promote collaboration among teachers and continuous improvement in professional practice (Greenville County School District, p. 21). | Professional development needs are identified based upon data analysis that is completed within the district.  The plan did not mention how the data would be gathered to determine professional development needs | The district pointed out that it intends to “Provide effective professional development, learning opportunities, and coaching for district staff, administrators, and teachers (Charleston County School District, p. 8).  It was pointed out that the professional development needs would be identified through observations, feedback from faculty and staff, and data that is collected. |

**K-12 Strategic Plan Comparison**

As a future education leader, it is important to understand strategic plans and how they compare to one another when looking at the different districts. By understanding different strategic plans can allow an educator to better understand what is required to successfully run a district. The purpose of this paper was to look at three different strategic plans of different school districts and how they compare to one another. The comparison of the three educational strategic plans concentrated on the mission, vision, and goals; Internal and External Stakeholders; facilities; and Professional Development. By looking at these areas it allows an educator to see how they are both similar and different from one another.

As an educator, it is important to understand what the purpose of a strategic plan is in order to be better prepared. A strategic plan is something that an organization creates that states the long term objectives, goals, and even actions that are planned to be carried out by the organization over a period of time (Balkaran, 2016). A strategic plan will typically include some important components that are the mission and vision statements, the goals of the organization, the current resources that are available, and the processes that are needed for the strategic analysis (Chukwumah, 2015). Each of the three plans that were analyzed had a mission and vision statements that were clear and each district strategic plan had their goals listed in the document. With that said the goals were different from one another but all of them focused on a different aspect of the educational process within the school districts. The Greenville County School District (2018) focused on goals that were student-centered and providing a safe learning environment that provided high-quality education for each student. The Newberry strategic plan had goals that were based upon meeting or exceeding the state and federal standards for the grades that were tested (The School District of Newberry, 2017). The Charleston County School District (2018) strategic plan was one that was geared towards providing an environment that was based upon high academic achievement and to make sure each student was prepared for some sort of career or college. The vision statements for the three were very similar in regards to all of them want to provide students with being supported, valued, and prepared for the next steps of the life after their high school education (Greenville County Schools, 2018; The School District of Newberry, 2017; Charleston County School District, 2018). The three plans had listed the stakeholders that were involved in the plan that was developed for each school district. One of the things that were very surprising by looking at the three plans was that none of them discussed in depth the facilities and the funding that would be needed for the facilities for improvements or operations. The plans did mention that the three school districts wanted to have safe facilities for the students to attend and learn. All three of the strategic plans included professional development and that the professional development would be based upon assessing the needs of the faculty and staff in some manner such as through data analysis, observing teachers, or by teacher feedback (Greenville County Schools, 2018; The School District of Newberry, 2017; Charleston County School District, 2018). All three of the districts pointed out the importance of professional development on the overall success of the school district as a whole (Greenville County Schools, 2018; The School District of Newberry, 2017; Charleston County School District, 2018). By having a basic understanding of the strategic plans one can then look at the internal and external stakeholders within the plans.

**Internal and External Stakeholders**

When looking at the three different strategic plans all of them referred to stakeholders and who was involved. The Greenville County School District and the Charleston County School District both had an individual list of who was included in the strategic plans that were developed. However, the Newberry strategic plan had the stakeholders listed but was not as clear as the other two districts' strategic plans. The Greenville County School District (2018) stakeholder list was the largest and included most people in the plans and included much district-level personnel. However, this school district is the largest in the state of South Carolina and as a result, more people are employed with this school district (Greenville County School District, 2018). The Greenville County and the Charleston County School District plans both had many parents and even a student involved in the strategic plans that were created. The School District of Newberry (2017) relied heavily on internal personnel and has the fewest external stakeholders of the three plans with there being only 4 parents involved. Whereas the other two had either 17 or more parents involved in the strategic plans. The three strategic plans that were analyzed included stakeholders by committees that were established. The Greenville and Charleston districts had the most committees that were based on internal stakeholders that included teachers, principals, and district-level personnel (Greenville County School District, 2018; Charleston County School District, 2018). There was mention of committees in the Newberry strategic plan but it did not identify the committees or how they were composted (School District of Newberry, 2017). It is important to note that none of the strategic plans pointed out clearly how the external stakeholders were involved, but they were listed as working on the strategic plans for the districts. The school board was mentioned for each school district in the strategic plans.

**Elements of Governance and Structure**

The strategic plans that were analyzed and compared all came from the state of South Carolina. As a result, each has very similar governance and structure that is required by South Carolina state law that consists of a local school board, a superintendent, district administrators, school administrators, and committees that are based throughout the school district (South Carolina Department of Education, 2020). In each of the strategic plans, it has it pointed out that the administrative structure for all three of the districts includes the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and then the campus principals or administrators (Greenville County Schools, 2018; The School District of Newberry, 2017; Charleston County School District, 2018). In the Greenville County Schools' strategic plans it points out the governance includes the district level personnel such as the many different directors within the district. In the strategic plans for each of the districts, it did point out who was responsible for keeping up and monitoring the plan and making sure that it was being achieved during the plan life. The governance and structure of the plans included timelines for each goal and when and how it would be assessed. The Newberry plan included achieving or exceeding the state and federal guidelines for the assessments that are required to be given as a way to assess the effectiveness of the plans (The School District of Newberry, 2017). Greenville County School District (2018) noted that benchmarks would be given to assess the effectiveness of the plan that was in place. Charleston County School District (2018) had assessments built into the plan but did not point out if these were for state assessments or federal assessments.

**Support for Continuous School Improvement and Sustainable Change**

When looking at school districts' strategic plans it must be based upon school improvement as well as sustainable change for the school districts. The way that school improvement and sustainable change takes place within the school districts is that professional development activities, the resource allocation, and by ensuring that safe facilities are in place (Greenville County School District, 2018; Charleston County School District, 2018). It is important to understand that professional development for teachers has been found to improve student achievement because it can help teachers learn better strategies to use in their classrooms, gain more content knowledge to use in their classrooms, and allow them to come up with better ways to teach the material in their classrooms (Jacob, Hill & Corey, 2017). Greenville County School District (2018) pointed out that professional development activities would be identified from feedback from teachers and administrators and then will be provided to the teachers. The School District of Newberry (2017) pointed out that the professional development needs of the faculty and staff would be identified by data analysis that is collected. Charleston County School District (2018) noted that professional development needs would be identified through observations, feedback from faculty and staff, and other methods of data that would be collected. In other words, all three districts had plans in place to determine the professional development needs of the faculty and staff and that it would be offered for the faculty and staff.

Another area that each of the school districts looked at for continuous school improvement and sustainable change was through the facilities of each district. It is important to understand that when students feel comfortable and feel like they are in a safe environment that it has a positive impact on their academic performance (Limon, 2016). One way that school districts can try to make school improvements is by having safe school facilities that provide an environment that promotes the academic performance of the students. All three of the school districts had pointed out that their facilities are maintained in a manner that provides a safe, comfortable, and modern environment for students (Greenville County Schools, 2018; The School District of Newberry, 2017; Charleston County School District, 2018). The Greenville County Schools (2018) pointed out that there were plans for a new high school and middle school to be completed by the start of the 2021-2022 school year to meet the needs of the students.

**Future Use of Knowledge Gathered From this Assignment**

Through the completion of this research and writing assignment, the author, as a future educational leader, now has a better understanding of the components that are required of a district strategic plan. By gaining this knowledge, the author will be able to better plan a strategic plan when allowed to lead a school. The author also has been able to find out the importance of the mission, vision, values, and even the goals of a district and will work towards learning each of these well to be better prepared and to help the district achieve the goals and mission that has been set. It is also important to point out that by learning about each of these three strategic plans that it can allow the author to work with the committees identified and make suggestions that can help a school district with strategic planning.

**Conclusion**

Strategic plans are extremely important for the success of school districts across the state of South Carolina. As an educator, one must have a good understanding of strategic planning. By looking at the strategic planning of a school district it can allow an educator to get a better understanding of the mission, vision, and even the goals that have been set. By having a better understanding of each of these can allow an educator to be better prepared to succeed within a school district. It is also important to have a good understanding of strategic plans to be able to point out if there are areas that could be improved to offer the best opportunities for every stakeholder involved.

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