

SCOTTSBLUFF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Strategic Plan Update

26 September 2005

Updated February 6, 2006

MISSION STATEMENT

Scottsbluff Public Schools, in partnership with family and community, will provide equal opportunities through standards-based and individualized curriculum where all students become productive citizens and life-long learners in a globally diverse society.

LITERACY GOAL

Scottsbluff Public Schools will provide effective literacy programs to ensure all students develop the essential skills needed to be literate adults.

Objective #1: *The District will implement a comprehensive and consistent reading/language arts program Pre-K-12 as soon as possible.*

Strategy #1: *All K-8 students receive reading/language arts instruction.*

- Beginning with the 2005-06 school year, both 6th and 7th grade students will have reading instruction every day. In addition to these reading classes, students in grades 6, 7, and 8 who read below grade level are also scheduled into reading Focus Groups each day.

Strategy #2: *All 9-12 students take a minimum of four years of language arts.*

- This is currently in place at the high school.
- A reading class has been implemented at SHS for Freshmen who read between 4th and 6th grade level.

Strategy #3: *Reading and writing is integrated in all K-12 language arts/curricular areas.*

- A Curriculum Toolkit has been created for teacher use. The Toolkit includes resources for writing across the curriculum, for implementing good writing practices, and for planning a writing strategy (graphic organizers). It also contains a wealth of reading strategies and reading resources.

Strategy #4: *6-Trait Writing and the Big Six Research Model are integrated throughout all curricular areas.*

- The District is in the process (Fall 2005) of re-training staff in the 6-Trait Writing process which is the writing assessment used by the state to evaluate the proficiency of students.
- Teachers met by grade level (Fall 2006) to become current on 6-Trait training, to identify anchor papers for each proficiency level, to develop scoring consistency, and to develop grade level appropriate rubrics. We have created a draft copy of a Scottsbluff 6-Traits of Writing (K-12) handbook, which is currently available to all teachers. Teachers and administrators have access to the Curriculum Toolkit, which is a tremendous resource for writing.

Strategy #5: *Speaking and listening skills are practiced in a variety of contexts.*

Strategy #6: *Early intervention is provided for all students.*

Strategy #7: *Research-based data drives the selection of instructional strategies and provides increased accountability.*

- We created a data tool for teachers to manipulate data from Measures of Academic Progress (MAPs) tests. This tool is available to all teachers and administrators and data mines by all sub-categories/groups.
- Teachers regularly meet by grade level/content area (Toolbox) to discuss instructional strategies, curricular alignment, best practices, and goals. They also meet every fourth early release day in K-12 groups (Toolbelts) to ensure curriculum articulation.

Objective #2: *The District develops comprehensive and consistent programs that incorporate mathematical literacy.*

Strategy #1: *A comprehensive Pre-K – 12 math literacy curriculum is in place.*

- The District's work in Curriculum Mapping (Spring 2005) which tracks the content (what students should know) and skills (what students should be able to do) in each academic course along with the scope and sequence work (Spring 2005) in the middle school and high school will move the District in a direction which will provide a comprehensive math literacy curriculum along with comprehensive curriculums in the other core academic areas of Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies.
- All grade level/content area teachers have created core curriculum maps. Essential questions identify the over-arching purpose for teaching the unit and content. Teachers are embedding assessments into the curriculum, which will assess student learning and indicate areas where further instruction might be necessary.
- A three-semester Algebra I course has been added at the high school for students who have limited abilities in math. A fourth semester in this series will begin in the spring 2007 semester. Standards Math will focus on the S.T.A.R.

standards, which are the math standards on which students are assessed other than Algebra.

Strategy #2: *Early intervention will be provided for all students.*

- In addition to being enrolled in the regular math courses offered at the middle school, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students who need additional help in math are scheduled in a second math course or Focus Group. This intervention was implemented for the 2005-06 school year.

Strategy #3: *Research-based data drives the selection of instructional strategies and provides increased accountability.*

- Teachers and administration have immediate access to current data through the use of a district created data tool. Teachers are able to manipulate the data to determine what instructional strategies are appropriate and/or necessary.

COMMUNICATION GOAL

To institute effective communications among all elements of the community regarding our children and their education.

Objective #1: *Public is made aware of major issues the Scottsbluff School Board is considering and provide an opportunity for input into the discussion surrounding those issues.*

Strategy #1: *Establish a communication network that reaches target audiences and serves as a channel for those audiences to provide input to the Board.*

- Currently (Fall 2005), the Communications Specialist has 46 groups of patrons on lists who will receive information as appropriate.
- The District is looking into a web-based program which allows the schools to communicate with all district patrons and/or parents through home, work, and cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses. This web-based program has the capability to communicate quickly with all parents or patrons, or specialized groups of parents or community people.
- The high school student body is represented at board of education meeting by a student representative who sits at the board table and reports not only on student issues but provides input on board agenda topics.
- The newly established (Fall 2005) School Site Councils provide valuable parent and patron input into the schools and report monthly at board of education meetings.

Strategy #2: *Effectively communicate Board agendas, minutes, and discussion to the public.*

- During the summer of 2005, the district Communications Specialist began providing the local media with summaries of board of education meetings and also puts the summaries on the newly updated district website. Each week articles have been provided to the local media sources regarding school news/initiatives and have been broadcast to the public. The local education channel, Channel 11, also has been running more district information and news.

Objective #2: *Communicate the desirable qualities of Scottsbluff Public Schools in order to recruit students into the system.*

- Changes at both the middle school and high school began with the 2005-06 school year with regard to new/updated curricular offerings, new discipline policies, updated activity eligibility policies, along with a change in the climate or atmosphere at the schools have been recognized by the public as indicated by the many positive comments received from parents and patrons.

Strategy #1: *Commit to excellence in every area to make Scottsbluff schools the desired location.*

- Obviously, the intent of the District is to improve in all areas. Changing attitudes, behaviors, and performance does not occur overnight, but the District is committed to continuous improvement.

Strategy #2: *Communicate areas of excellence.*

- With the help and direction of the district Communications Specialist, the 2005-06 school year began with the District providing the local media with information regarding the schools and the changes which are being instituted to improve student academic achievement. An updated district web-site includes more information and links to related areas for additional school information.
- Beginning the 2005-06 school year, the board of education will publicly recognize students, staff, and community volunteers for outstanding achievement and/or performance. Recognition will be at a board of education meeting.
- New for the 2005-06 athletic season, the District will be recognizing student achievements, announcing upcoming events, and putting out information regarding school activities during the football and basketball games via the game announcer.

Objective #3: *Communicate the desirable qualities of Scottsbluff Public Schools in order to recruit quality teachers, administrators, and staff into the system.*

Strategy #1: *Professional growth component.*

- Teacher/administrator-led training is offered periodically throughout the year. The District has identified and created a district curriculum room, which is consistently used for professional development opportunities.

Strategy #2: *Broaden the posting base for new openings.*

- The District began expanding the colleges and newspapers contacted in order to recruit new certified staff in May 2005. We now send openings to 33 colleges and three newspapers and are able to do this online at many locations which reduce the posting time significantly.
- District administrators who attend Job Fairs in Laramie, Greeley, Denver, and Kearney have handouts which highlight the desirable qualities of the Scottsbluff Public School system.
- The District is now online with other Greater Nebraska Schools (GNS), which is a group of the largest 19 school districts in Nebraska, in advertising for teacher openings, as referenced in the *Omaha World Herald*. The GNS group uses one (1) common application form with the openings for all participating GNS schools listed at the online web address.

FACILITIES GOAL

Provide safe, state of the art facilities, which promote the optimal environment for academic, social, and family growth for all students.

Objective #1: *By the Fall of 2008 provide state of the art facilities for grades K-8.*

- To be addressed by the District Bond Facility Committee.
- During the week of September 19, 2005, the board of education sent letters to the Strategic Plan Facilities and School Structure Sub-committee members inviting them to serve on the District Bond Facility Committee. Additional community patrons will be asked to serve along with the board of education members and staff members. The first meeting will be held on November 7, 2005.
- The committee, which is comprised of 52 individuals, has also met on December 15, 2005, January 9, and January 23, 2006. The next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2006. Summaries of the meetings can be found on the district web-site.

Strategy #1: *Provide (new construction or remodel) two new state of the art K-8 buildings.*

- Board commission a committee to study the K-8 concept to determine feasibility.
- Information has been gathered in the K-8 concept. Based on a decision to move to two (2) elementary schools, the K-8 concept would require elementary schools of 900 students each. It was felt the range of ages from kindergarten through 8th grade was too wide and that having 900 students in the building for those age groups would not be as beneficial as other grade configurations.
- To be addressed by the District Facilities Bond Committee.

Strategy #2: *Provide two state of the art K-5 grade-level attendance centers along with a new state of the art middle school, on its current site.*

- To be addressed by the District Facilities Bond Committee.

Objective #2: *Include comprehensive state of the art indoor sports facilities with any district remodeling or new construction to accommodate school district needs.*

- To be addressed by the District Facilities Bond Committee.

Strategy #1: *Build a district sports complex.*

- To be addressed by the District Facilities Bond Committee.

Objective #3: *Include state of the art vocational programs/buildings on the main high school campus.*

- To be addressed by the District Bond Facility Committee.

Objective #4: *Develop annual facilities review process.*

- As part of the development of a comprehensive facilities plan for the District, a review of all district facilities will be scheduled for December 2005 and conducted by district administrators, maintenance employees, board of education members, and the District Bond Facility Committee.

District Bond Proposal for May 15, 2007 Election Date

- Build new middle school at current middle school location
- Remodel all four city elementary schools addressing heating, ventilation, air conditioning, upgrade electrical, lighting, and plumbing systems, address technology infrastructure, elevators, and paint/carpet/tile as relates to specific buildings, compliance will American with Disabilities Act, and applicable Fire, Life, Safety and other building codes.
- Cost of the bond referendum is \$19,638,500 which will be paid over 20 years at approximately \$157 annually on a \$100,000 piece of property.

SCHOOL STRUCTURE GOAL

Develop the optimum framework for the delivery of instruction within the Scottsbluff Public Schools System to achieve maximum performance and provide equitable learning opportunities for all children.

Objective #1: *By August 2005, facilitate a forum to have the Scottsbluff and Gering School Boards meet to discuss sharing educational services.*

- The initial meeting was held on July 25, 2005 with the second meeting scheduled for November 21 at the Gering Central Office.
- A standing committee consisting of both school district presidents, vice-presidents, and superintendents has been formed to continue discussion of issues of mutual concern.

Strategy #1: *Identify possible areas of collaborative efforts between districts.*

- At the July 25 joint board of education meeting the following issues were discussed and are being pursued through joint committee work between Gering and Scottsbluff:
 - feasibility of sharing competitive athletic fields and district facilities.
 - review and discuss drug and alcohol policies and practices. At a later date involve boards of education, school administrators, community members, law enforcement, county attorney's office, county judges, etc.
 - direct high school principals from Gering and Scottsbluff to meet to determine academic courses which could be shared between the two districts.
- Middle school and high school administrators met on November 8, 2005 to discuss drug/alcohol policies and attendance policies. A report of this discussion was given to the school boards on November 21, 2005.
- The November 21, 2005 joint meeting focused on possible joint use of athletic facilities, sharing of academic courses and/or staff members, and a report from the middle school and high school administrators regarding drug/alcohol policies and attendance policies.
- The joint school district standing committee met on December 16, 2005 to continue discussion on types of block schedules, a common calendar for both district attendance policies, sharing teachers and academic courses, and drug/alcohol policies.
- Common school calendar for 2006-2007 is being considered by the Scottsbluff Board of Education on February 6, 2006. The Gering School Board will consider the common calendar on February 13, 2006.

- Scottsbluff and Gering High Schools are following the same school calendars and 8-Block schedules. This allows the two school districts to share a German teacher. It also played a part in being able to co-host a Health Fair with the Nebraska Panhandle AHEC.

Objective #2: *Equalize learning opportunities available to students in each grade level within the district.*

- Core maps have been developed for each grade level or content area. This will ensure consistent curriculum opportunities across the district.

Strategy #1: *Deliver consistent standardized academic content and skills for each grade level through curriculum mapping.*

- The curricular mapping process, which began during the 2004-05 school year, continues in all district buildings and addresses the need for consistent standardized academic content and skills for each grade level and subject area by mapping or listing the content and skills of what students should know and be able to do. For example, math content and skills in all 3rd grade classrooms should be the same while the instructional techniques, materials and activities may be different. The curricular mapping process is the focus for the District and work on it is scheduled for the Wednesday early release dates. This provides time for staff to collaborate and develop maps. Curricular maps also include the course materials, activities, teaching strategies, and assessments necessary for learning.
- Core maps have been developed for each grade level or content area. This will ensure consistent curriculum opportunities across the District. Teachers have created essential questions and are embedding common classroom assessments.
- In the Fall of 2006, the District added the technology software (TechPaths) to the curriculum mapping process. This web-based program allows the staff to evaluate K-12 practices more easily, as well as view maps from across the world.

Strategy #2: *Provide an early intervention program in cooperation with community resources, so that all children have access to preschool.*

- The board of education has taken action to implement an early childhood program for the 2006-07 school year. Elementary building administrators along with central office administrators are reviewing early childhood programs, arranging for visits to exemplary programs, and organizing the inclusion of Head Start and private providers into the discussion of Scottsbluff Public Schools developing a comprehensive early childhood program.

Strategy #3: *Organize elementary schools to facilitate integration of students and more equal learning opportunities.*

- This strategy will be addressed by the District Bond Facilities Committee as part of their work in facility planning. The strategic plan sub-committee on School

Structure initially addressed the organization of elementary schools to facilitate integration of students and more equal learning opportunities and this sub-committee has been invited to part of the larger District Bond Facilities Committee.

Objective #3: Provide a quality education for all students at the high school level.

- The high school is working to provide more academic opportunities for students who will be moving to the world of work, college, or vocational/technical school upon graduation. Beginning the 2005-06 school year, Scottsbluff High School increased the number of vocational course offering which provide dual high school and college credit by working with the WNCC vocational teachers to become certified by the Nebraska State Department of Education. The high school is also increasing the number and variety of Advanced Placement (AP) courses available to students which also provide college credit. Working with WNCC to access the new Harms Technology Training Center will provide workplace skills for students moving into the work of work upon graduation.
- SHS staff is working with Dr. Shirley, with the WNCC staff, to build seamless transition opportunities between high school and college. Part of the collaboration is to remove barriers to dual high school and college credit for courses.

Strategy #1: Teach most core classes in a 5-day-a-week setting and through creative scheduling accommodate any classes that may be determined by teachers and supported by research to be better taught in a longer class period that meets less frequently.

- The high school is considering all forms of a ‘block schedule’ which will best serve our students with implementation set for the 2006-07 school year. The high school site council, composed of parents and school staff, has begun discussion of block schedule issues. High school teachers and students will also be included in the process.
- The high school will be moving to an A/B block schedule for the 2006-07 school year. Four classes, out of eight, will be taught each day with the courses alternating every other day. In a two-week period, each class will meet five times for 95 minutes.

Strategy #2: Increase number of college courses available to students either as concurrent enrollment or distance learning classes.

- For the 2005-06 school year, the high school offers Advanced Placement (AP) Literature, AP U.S. History, and AP Statistics. Advanced Placement courses provide students with opportunities to receive both high school and college credit. College credit is received if the student scores at a certain level on the final AP exam. Additional AP courses scheduled for the 2006-07 school year will include AP Biology, AP Calculus, and AP World History. The high school also offers College Composition I through WNCC. Expanding more offerings through WNCC is constrained by the lack of certification through the Nebraska Department of

Education by the WNCN instructors and the last of Masters Degrees in subject areas by the Scottsbluff High School staff.

- In the Fall of 2006, AP Calculus and AP Chemistry were added to the course offering list. A second section of AP US History was also added.
- College courses in Criminal Justice and Psychology have been added to the Distance Learning opportunities at SHS.
- Principles of the Human Body was introduced in the Fall of 2006. This course is designed to serve as a non-college bound course offering. Students who struggle with learning and especially with reading will experience success in this class; then take physical science and biology which are two classes necessary to score well on the state S.T.A.R.S. assessment.

Strategy #3: Increase availability of remedial classes in core subject areas.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS GOAL

The Scottsbluff Schools shall foster diverse instructional programs that meet individual needs and enable students to attain their greatest potential.

Objective #1: *To better prepare students to be ready to learn on entering the K-12 programs of Scottsbluff Public Schools.*

Strategy #1: *By 2006-07, Scottsbluff Public Schools will implement a pre-kindergarten.*

- The Scottsbluff Board of Education has taken action to implement a Pre-School or Early Childhood program for the 2006-07 school year. District administrators have begun reviewing the best programs available and will include the local Head Start people and private early childcare providers in the discussion of the development of this public school program.

Objective #2: *To provide diverse instructional programs which meet the individual needs of the students enrolled in the Scottsbluff Public Schools.*

Strategy #1: *Establish programs at each level which effectively prepares students to move to the next level of their education or to enter the work force.*

- During the 2004-05 school year, the high school administrators and teachers began working on the scope and sequence of courses offered in various academic departments. This process now includes the middle school and, when completed, will provide a path for students to follow which is specific in course content and skills and sequential in nature.
- The curricular mapping process, particularly at the elementary level, will enable teachers and administrators to coordinate their efforts in providing all students with the same content and skill (what we would like students to know and be able to do) for each subject area at each grade level. For example, while the materials, activities, and teaching techniques may be different, the content and skills for 3rd grade math must be the same in all 3rd grade classrooms.

Objective #3: *To ensure school initiatives are supported and implemented by all staff*