

Finance Goal

Goal: Continue to build the community trust that Kenston Local Schools are dedicated to educating all the students in the district and are good financial stewards of public funds.

Initiatives:

1. Educate the community about the fiscal needs and stewardship of Kenston Schools.
2. Reach out to local, regional, national, and international businesses to seek funding for present and future initiatives.
3. Explore legislative initiatives to allow less restriction on school district investments and to restructure the state funding formula.
4. Empower community partners, parents, and residents to be vocal supporters of the district by providing them with facts about school initiatives, programming, and funding.

Facilities and Technology Goal

Goal: Over the next ten years Kenston Schools will develop, implement, and maintain safe facilities, and improve technology to enhance quality instruction for all students based on the needs of the community today and tomorrow.

Initiatives:

1. Develop, implement, and maintain a facilities plan for elementary, middle, and high school to provide consistent and safe educational environments that meet and anticipate the needs of the community.
2. Communicate and train students, parents, teachers, and staff on safety and security protocols of the district, and continue to nurture ongoing relationships with public safety officials in Geauga County.
3. Develop, implement, and maintain a technology plan that provides up-to-date tools and balances online and traditional educational methods.
4. As we plan and assess, Kenston Schools will communicate these plans to our community.

Community Partnerships Goal

Goal: To continually address the needs of all children in Kenston Local Schools through community partnerships to help them thrive as students and citizens.

Initiatives:

1. Develop strong families by working continued work with our non-profits and our communities to enhance and protect the mental, physical, emotional, and social health of all children.
2. Build a shared responsibility between non-profits, service groups, and the school district to be involved and willing to teach children about civic responsibility, to provide volunteer opportunities, and to recognize their role in developing the next generation of leaders.
3. Expose students to career exploration at an earlier age (9th grade) and offer ongoing education to prepare them for life after high school. By partnering with businesses for job shadowing and internships, and a transit partner to help ensure students can take advantage of those opportunities, students will be able to make more informed career choices.
4. Identify and secure business partners to enhance all aspects of Kenston Schools. (Kenston INC)
5. Working closely with College Credit Plus, develop curriculum that is transferrable and increase the awareness of access to college courses while students are still in high school.
6. Explore opportunities within our townships and communities to share resources.



KENSTON
S C H O O L S

Strategic Thinking 2017

Strategic Thinking is the ability to recognize the relationships, complexities and implications of a situation; anticipate possibilities; and plan what to do.

Process and Methods

Strategic Thinking is the ability to recognize the relationships, complexities and implications of a situation: anticipate possibilities; and plan what to do. A cross representational group of approximately fifty Kenston employees, community members, parents and students partnered with The Schlechty Center is a private, non-profit organization in “Taking Stock” sessions to gather important feedback from our stakeholders. These key leaders in the district and community, provided valuable insight in the strategic thinking process to transform our classrooms and schools into an engagement-focused organization.

Our efforts were supported by a Martha Holden Jennings Foundation grant, one of only five Northeastern Ohio schools.

Global Trends and Community Changes

The goal is to ensure that Kenston Schools are equipped and ready to handle global trends such as the increased demand for college and career readiness, and to keep emphasizing the impact of access to technology and information, not just educationally but socially.

The importance of students knowing and understanding their role as global citizens; including cultural and diversity awareness is critical but also knowing how and why to “give back” to their worldwide community.

Responding to community changes, looking at Kenston’s population and enrollment projections, as well as the senior population and families who choose to stay and enjoy the community.

Skills Gaps

Employers have identified significant skills that they notice are either missing or diminishing among younger would-be employees. Most of these skills gaps center on soft skills, such as time management, study skills, self-motivation, emotional maturity, communicating well, and working with others.

In addition, these leaders mention a growing lack of practical or “life-ready” skills; for example knowing how to be financially responsible, balance a budget, plan for the future, realize consequences of risky behavior, arrange for transportation, and manage a home or apartment.

There are concerns that students may not have enough access to information that will help them educate themselves with a specific career path in mind. Students may be entering college, or certificate/training programs without knowing if there will be an actual job for them at graduation; and if they do gain employment in their chosen field, they may not understand the true earning potential relative to the investment made in obtaining that specialized training or degree.

Resource Needs

Our schools must be equipped to provide the education necessary to keep up with global and community changes to provide students with the skills necessary to thrive. The following are resource needs, separated by category.

Curriculum and Instruction – The framework for instruction is designed to address the critical skills for 21st century learning: creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking.

Classroom instruction will be designed using learning standards and activities that promote deep and rich learning. Assessment practices will provide information about student growth and learning and will also guide lesson planning and differentiation strategies. Teachers will work as part of vertical and horizontal collaborative teams to ensure consistency to generate data for teaching and curricular adjustments.

The district must be positioned so teachers, counselors and students are aware of career fields and trends and the related educational requirements so students and parents can make informed decisions about the immediate future.

Special attention must also be paid to students for whom college is not an option or preferred path, such as career and technical training, apprenticeships and early intervention for students at risk of not graduating on time or at all.

The curricular culture of the district will be supported by foundational values and initiatives of a respectful and peaceful environment for learning; an emphasis on the connection between health and wellness on student success and the responsibility of our students and faculty to be informed and active stewards of the environment.

Finance – We need to be able to provide a consistent revenue stream for the schools due to the inconsistency of state funding. The district will continue fiscal responsibility in terms of financial constraints while seeking new sources such as grants from businesses or nonprofits for highly specific programs or resources. Models of local levy support are a necessity for both operating and capital improvements to ensure long-term stability.

Facilities and Technology – It is clearly the goal of the schools to continue to be innovative and forward thinking while remaining practical and relevant. Needs must be centered on finding the appropriate balance of technology and traditional teaching methods and ensuring funding for both.

When it relates to facilities, there is a need to regularly maintain and improve facilities to prevent crises. Buildings should provide aesthetically inspiring classrooms with the infrastructure necessary to support instructional technology.

Community Partnerships – Undoubtedly, the ability to deliver resources and reach new goals will depend on new and expanded partnerships with local organizations. Establishing strong business relationships that provide meaningful mentoring, internships and/or senior projects so students are more job-ready will be very important.

More emphasis is placed on being a good global citizen. We suggest that partnerships with nonprofits be established for students and staff to perform community service.

Perhaps the most critical partnership is the one between parents and the schools. It is imperative that a student’s education is appropriately supported in their home. Parents are partners in their children’s education and must be engaged but also informed as how to best prepare students to become lifelong learners and eventually, earners.

Following are the goals and initiatives identified by the Administrators and discussions with staff, students and community leaders.

Curriculum and Instruction Goal

Goal: Kenston Schools will provide students with the content and skills necessary to become global, independent, productive, and successful citizens.

Initiatives:

1. Strategically create a sustainable framework for course of study; reflecting learning standards and components of best educational practices for instruction.
2. Provide continuing professional development for teachers in instructional design and strategies, including authentic technology integration, to engage our students in the learning process. Collaboration meetings for teacher teams to review student progress, instruction and course development will be imbedded into building practices.
3. Continue with district-wide programs to ensure vertical alignment and continuity for the expense of the K-12 Kenston experience. Provide educational and social experience to promote the levels of our PEAK program; implement goals established for “green” awareness; and monitor the decision-making that reinforces our Health and Wellness Plan and Play Blue.
4. Develop partnerships using the Kenston, Inc. with higher education, other districts, businesses and organizations to create authentic career and college readiness experiences for our students.