



End of Year Goal Summary

2020-21

The following highlights the key accomplishments of District 99 during the 2020-21 school year and future opportunities for growth. The summary is organized by the five domains the District is following to support our mission:

"In cooperation with parents and the community, provide a caring and challenging environment where all students develop as lifelong learners to become contributing, responsible members of a changing world."

At this point in time, we have exhausted the ways to say this year was like no other. As a District we have been faced with a school year of impossible decisions for all of those involved. Students, families, teachers, staff, administrators, and the Board have all had to make the best possible decisions they could with what they knew at the time. Many of us were unhappy with the choices offered to us at each of these times; but we still needed to make a decision and move forward. I know that at each of these decision points we all did the best we could with what we were presented at the time. The Administration and the Board were left to make decisions with guidance that was often unclear and out of our realm of expertise. Many times the information we were receiving was conflicting and convoluted. This led to us many times making the best worst choice and families were left with similar decisions as a result. In the end, we all survived a pandemic together and look forward to the next school year where we hope to return to a pre-pandemic world.

Although this year was extremely challenging, it was not lost. Students continued to learn and many were able to connect with school through extracurricular activities. The work the District did over many years to lead the country in connecting students and school through technology put us in a unique position of being prepared for a remote learning environment when it was thrust upon us. While other schools spent the opening months of the pandemic getting connected we were able to leverage our tools to begin figuring out how to keep learning moving forward. Over the past year some students have struggled while others have thrived. Ultimately, we made it through, and students continued learning and were cared for with academic, social emotional, and food supports.

The remainder of the End of Year Goal Summary that follows captures more of the specific details of accomplishments and opportunities for growth in our five District goal areas.

Domain 1: Student Experience

Evaluate, refine, and develop academic and social emotional programs to ensure high school and postsecondary success for all students.

Key Accomplishments and Opportunities for Growth:

- **Create a safe and supportive learning environment during the time of a pandemic**
As outlined above, this year was full of challenges and struggles. Ultimately, we were able to offer all students the opportunity to return at the same time. A great amount of effort was put into each change as a result of the shifting guidelines provided to us along the way. Each time the staff worked to develop plans that would encourage the highest number of students to return for in-person instruction, as we believe that is the most effective way for students to learn. Many of the guidelines we needed to operate under prevented us from offering learning opportunities in formats we would have preferred. However, we continued to find ways to offer students more access and provide additional supports for learning. Through the year student safety was prioritized and we were able to maintain a safe learning environment as a result. The Team was asked to take on tasks like developing health related safety protocols, contact tracing, saliva screening, and vaccination clinics that are well beyond what is typically expected of schools. In each case, they stepped up to meet the needs of our students, staff, and the community. Next year we look forward to a more normal learning environment. However, we recognize that the transition back will be difficult for many - especially those students who were fully remote all year. Preparing for the return will be a major focus over the summer and supporting everyone in the return will be an essential task to start the year.
- **Expand Ready 4 College Partnerships - streamlined college admissions process into credit bearing courses and Continue to Advance Dual Credit Opportunities**
Gina and our English chairs are working on adding a transition English course with the College of DuPage; we also added a dual credit interior design course this year in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) department. We changed our process for course approvals through the new teacher's contract and have started to have more teachers become enrolled in pathways that will allow us to expand more dual credit offerings. Over the next few years this will be a major focus as we begin to blend more dual credit and Advanced Placement opportunities. We are also building pathway programs where students can have a post-secondary program created as part of their high school experience and earn college credit in that pathway while with us. This is all a long term focus in which we continue to move forward.
- **Begin and Grow the Internship Programs**
In this challenging year, we were able to place students in internships, although many were a virtual experience. We began using an online tool this year that has an interactive job board and a database of industry contacts and guest speakers. We started a successful first year by getting all students placed during the pandemic. We will continue to leverage the relationships and experiences built through these programs to continue growing workplace experiences for all of our students. Some students have been asked to stay on as paid employees in the summer, including our new kindergarten program. As we move forward, we hope to grow our education internship and other existing programs while expanding other offerings.
- **Rely on the Work of the Common Experience**
This work has been built to ensure equity across our schools and more specifically within our departments and courses. It is specifically targeted to bring consistent standards,

grading, grading practices, and assessments across a Course Team. This year introduces the elimination of the “killer zero” and sets a floor on the lowest possible grade of 40%. Due to the pandemic and new learning environments, many course teams had to switch their focus from long-term common experience work to short-term curriculum work. During the second semester, departments and course teams returned to their work on the Common Experience and we reestablished a timeline for all changes to be completed. As we return to more of a standard year next year, we will reestablish the grading expectations already determined in previous years of this work as we return in the fall.

- Continuing the Equity Work for Students and Staff

All-staff sessions have continued this year with students leading some sessions. An update was provided to the Board in November on this work. This year, the Equity & Inclusion Council reviewed the equity audit performed last year and this work will be integrated into the district-wide strategic planning, which will take place during the 2021-22 school year. This year, all District 99 staff participated in several morning sessions focused on Equity & Inclusion. Coming off our unusual format of work this year, we will need to revisit what our staff needs are around equity moving forward. A major focus of this will be linking our equity, social emotional, and Common Experience work together. Equity is obviously a topic that society is working on and we are trying to help lead in DuPage County. Heading into next year we intend to continue this work and help the community better understand what our work entails and that our focus is on teaching and leading in such a way that more of our students, across more of their differences, achieve at a higher level and engage at a deeper level more of the time without giving up who they are.

- Continuing to Use 5-Labs Data Analytics

Scott continued to develop the use of this tool throughout the year. We used it several times throughout the pandemic to gather real-time information on attendance and grades. We have developed and shared partner data with our five elementary school districts. This provides essential student data back to the specific partner school district on academic and attendance data to help support elementary programming. This data includes PSAT data that directly makes a comparison to how one elementary school is performing compared to the collective average. We are meeting quarterly with the elementary school district teams to review and improve the data that is shared. District 99 participated in a 5Labs National Conference highlighting our collaboration and effort in supporting our elementary districts. We continue to refine our data for consistency this year and have built various dashboards to support our systems of support structure. One example of this is the addition of student note types to allow us to track our interventions. We also added the educational environment, which will allow us to analyze data on special education supports as ISBE identified our Educational Environment as an area for D99 to explore. We also continue to add essential data pieces to 5Labs to support our Multi Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model. One area that has been a District goal is to review our Read 180 course and overall reading interventions and supports. Data is being added this year to 5Labs with the focus being on our ability to design a dashboard to review student achievement in reading comprehension. This will include Read 180, STAR Reading, and PSAT data which will help drive the analysis through 5Labs. As this tool becomes more robust and integrates more data it will become a critical part of decision making moving forward.

- Monitoring Improvements in our IEP and 504 Processes

Heading into this year, Special Services had completed the redesign of its evaluation process. This involved creating Domain meetings that bring together families and school teams to engage in the evaluation process that occurs every three years for students receiving special education services. Of course, this team had to redesign the process to occur virtually this year and we worked to ensure IEP meetings were still held with fidelity. It is likely that much of what we learned will continue to be used in the future, as many parents prefer the flexibility of remote IEP meetings. Our Counseling and Student Support Systems (CSSS) Department Chairs also began coordinating all 504 plans and a direct result of their work has increased our involvement and engagement with our elementary districts in the 504 process as students transition to D99. We will continue to look for ways to improve these processes for students, families, and staff.

- Beginning the PATH Program to address ongoing Discipline Issues and Disproportionate Discipline

This year, after several years of investigation related to our discipline data, we began to implement the PATH (Pause, Ask, Think, & Heal) Program. It is designed to empower students to develop emotional and social learning skills that can help reduce risk factors that have resulted in inappropriate and/or disruptive conduct. The PATH program employs restorative practices, helping students to repair harm done by their actions. The social-emotional learning skills learned in the PATH Program will encourage accountability and enable students to modify their behavior and demonstrate ability to control conduct within norms of pro-social behavior. Although the pandemic changed how we envisioned this working this year, we used the resources to support students. Our PATH coordinators worked with students who have struggled with school engagement during remote learning. When we return to a pre-pandemic model next year, we will monitor PATH closely to determine if it is helping us to lower the incidents of negative discipline data, especially in reducing recidivism and out-of-school suspensions. Next year could be a difficult year for discipline incidents as students will need to acclimate to being around each other as they were in the past. Using this program, and the associated resources effectively while also informing teachers about what is being done in that program and how they too could use some of the strategies within the classroom when it comes to dealing with student behaviors, will be essential in the coming year.

- Appropriately Staffing Student Activities and Athletic Programs

We redesigned the process of assigning stipends last year as part of the new teacher contract. This dynamic process has helped tremendously with identifying staff who had capacity within their stipend to help with COVID-related supervision, etc. Going forward, this system will enable us to be more flexible and responsive to student interests and needs. We will be monitoring this process for the next several years and will modify as necessary.

- Introduce the New Bell Schedule for the 21-22 School Year

At the end of the 2019-2020 school year we created and worked with the School Day Task Force to develop a plan for building a new bell schedule for 2021-2022. We put together a first draft of a presentation and [this video](#) to introduce the topic. We stopped work on this when we started planning for a very different schedule for the 2020-2021 school year. The Task Force felt it was going to confuse everyone as we started talking about the variety of schedules for this year. Since we were unable to fully process the new bell schedule, we have decided to wait until the 2022-2023 school year for full

implementation. The committee will meet next year to finalize the details of potential schedules and to survey and analyze stakeholders on potential changes.

Domain 2: Development and Evaluation of Staff

Enhance current practices, identify strengths and challenges, and create new processes that empower staff to create conditions for a positive and effective student experience.

Key Accomplishments and Opportunities for Growth:

- **Title IX Training**
Changes in the Summer of 2020 to Title IX resulted in significant new training requirements, policy changes, and new protocols for responding to both Title IX complaints and other complaints. The required Title IX training was completed. This included training all administration, the Board of Education, and providing information to staff. We also updated our Title IX District web page and continue to participate in various meetings to ensure that we are up-to-date with any and all Title IX changes. Over the course of the year we also updated many policies and protocols. With the Biden administration there may be changes to Title IX rules and regulations that result in changes in our policies and protocols as we head into next year.
- **Pausing, but not Forgetting, the Personalized Professional Learning Program**
The Personalized Professional Learning (PPL) program began last year after several years of planning. This program values continuous learning for every teacher and has been designed to give numerous opportunities for faculty to personalize their learning. All of the areas of focus in PPL are designed to enhance the Student Experience. This year we were focused on supporting any skills needed for Remote and Hybrid Learning and we will return to the PPL model next year. Significant planning will be needed to adapt PPL to the hybrid-block schedule on the horizon.
- **Representation at State and National Conferences**
Many of our staff members regularly present at national and state conferences and District 99 is viewed as a leader in many areas related to teaching, learning, and school administration. Many staff also have leadership roles in professional organizations at the local, state, and national level. Even throughout the pandemic we supported staff that wished to lead the greater profession and positively reflect the work done in District 99. As the year went on, more conferences moved to virtual formats and we continued to present and lead at these events, while leaders continued to serve in their roles. I would expect our leaders to continue serving in this way moving forward and conferences to return to an in-person format.
- **Revising and Adapting Teacher Evaluation**
In working with the Teacher Appraisal Committee, and as a result of the pandemic, we paused much of the formal evaluation process for tenured teachers, as recommended by many professional organizations. Instead we relied on the feedback surveys, informal observations, and data to track teacher progress. Our non-tenured teachers continued to be evaluated under more traditional models. The Teacher Appraisal Committee met to discuss the impact of the new appraisal system along with the Illinois portable and accelerated tenure. The Committee decided that recent changes to the non-tenured appraisal process (Excellent on Domains 2 & 3 to earn an overall Excellent) will ensure that our most highly skilled new teachers will have the portable and accelerated tenure pathways available to them. We will return to a standard appraisal process next year with these changes in place.

- Continuing the Staff Discipline Process
Over the past few years we have revised and trained all administrators on the staff discipline process. We continued to monitor the efficacy of this process and it continues to function the way it was designed. We will continue to use and monitor this process moving forward.
- Revising Support Staff Onboarding
The onboarding process for support staff has been implemented and will continue to be given further refinement as Rob and Jeff will be working to bring continuity and cohesiveness to how we onboard all staff groups and clearly have a way for all individuals who are involved in hiring to easily reference the process. This ongoing work will continue next year.
- Continuing our Equity Work
This item is detailed above as part of Domain 1.
- Negotiating Remote Learning Agreements and Memorandums of Agreement (MOA)
A variety of agreements were negotiated with both bargaining units providing guidance on working during a pandemic. These continued to be revisited and amended throughout the year. We have created end-of-year MOAs with both bargaining units to explain that no agreements this year due to the pandemic are precedent-setting. We will work with both bargaining units during the summer to establish new agreements, if needed, when we have a clearer picture of what next school year will look like.
- Negotiating a Support Staff Association Contract
In January the SSA and the BOE reached a financial extension to their current agreement. We will enter into full negotiations with the Support Staff Association during the 2021-22 school year. We have begun discussions with SSA leadership about entering into an interest based bargaining format next school year. Work on this will continue over the summer in preparation for next year.
- Create an Equity Strategic Plan
This item is detailed above as part of Domain 1
- Continue Developing Blended Learning
Planning is underway to capitalize on the Blended Learning practices teachers have used during the pandemic and how those practices can be built into the student experience in future years. We will continue to build training and teacher understanding to use Blended Learning practices as the new facilities become available. The Innovation Steering Committee is working on plans to allow some teachers to use the new spaces next year for Blended Learning. This pilot will provide insights into how to scale the Blended Learning program for more teachers in future years. Work on this will take place over the summer.

Domain 3: Sharing our Stories and Informing the Community

Ensure trust, confidence and support for our District through the use of comprehensive, transparent, and consistent communications methods.

Key Accomplishments and Opportunities for Growth:

- Continue to Expand our Offerings of Parent Events and Guest Speakers
Last year we expanded our learning opportunities for families through multiple events and guest speakers at both schools. This year we have been offering a variety of webinars to help support families through the changes in educational programming

related to the pandemic - including “Ask Me Anything” style presentations for staff, parents, and the community. Attendance has been high at many of our parent events this year, and we also have shared recordings of events with families. We expect to bring back more in-person events but continue to leverage virtual offerings as they were more highly attended.

- Continue the Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee

We had four meetings (October, November, January and March) and held our annual dinner dance. There was a guest speaker at two of our meetings who spoke about parenting strategies for promoting students' academic success during the pandemic. This Committee will continue next year.

- Supporting Parents through Technology Resources

Our librarians and technology teams are providing materials and resources for parents. We will continue to expand our resources as much as possible and provide more help and additional tutorials on school tools. This is an ongoing task; we will continue to provide support going forward.

- Continue Strong Communications with Families and the Community

We continued to offer high quality communications, publications, and social media posts including: Daily Announcements, Weekly D99 Docket, Weekly Facility Friday Newsletters, Monthly Principal Videos, Bi-Monthly Board of Education Highlights, Monthly District Newsletter and Monthly Lunchtime Live Superintendent events. We concluded the year by bringing back our [End of the Year Report](#) for the community. Next year we plan on implementing “Parent Square,” a robust communication platform that offers a host of tools that allows the District, school administrators, teachers, and coaches to more effectively communicate with families and students on a single platform. Transitioning to this new tool will be a key task for the next school year.

- Communications Related to the Pandemic

Throughout the pandemic, the staff and administration used effective and creative ways to meet with parents and students including virtual meetings, webinars, and town hall style virtual meetings. This included streaming all Board Meetings live, which we intend to continue moving forward. We also began streaming all school events so that parents and the community can stay connected during this time. This is also a practice that we will consider continuing in the future.

- Continued Communication Related to Master Facility Plan Progress

We continued to find creative ways throughout the year to share the progress and the finances of the Master Facility Plan (MFP), including our weekly Facility Friday publication and pictures and video - including 360-degree images. Virtual tour videos were created and shared with the community [[DGN](#) | [DGS](#) | [DISTRICT](#)]. These were professionally produced at a high level. The start of next year will include many opportunities for students, families, and the communities to see for themselves the changes resulting from the MFP.

- Supporting the District 99 Education Foundation

We continued to assist the Education Foundation with their mission to support our students and teachers. This includes providing staff member resources as a conduit between the Foundation and the District. This partnership has been strong and has served the District and our students well.

- Creating Stakeholder Surveys and a Feedback Committee

We formed a community and teacher committee to provide input on surveys of students, teachers, staff and families. Then we engaged with an outside research consultant,

Panorama, a leader in school survey research. The feedback has allowed us to recommend and make improvements in programming and services throughout the year. This has included our CSSS building teams reviewing Panorama's SEL Student Perception Survey initiative. The survey data was shared with the Board and the community throughout the year and guided our decision making in response to the pandemic.

Domain 4: Creating and Supporting a Valued Learning Environment

Efficiently manage fiscal resources and facilities to support an educational program that is designed to promote a valued student experience.

Key Accomplishments and Opportunities for Growth:

- **Continue to Work with Public Bodies on Pedestrian Safety**
We continued to work with the Village of Downers Grove on the comprehensive plan to improve safety for pedestrians in our school community. This included advocating for grant funding to finance the projects. The Village is awaiting a response on several grant applications and intends to continue to work to meet the recommendations in the study. Related projects included the completion of the light installation at Springside and 63rd and the Dunham dropoff at South High. This will remain an area of focus in the coming year.
- **Complete the Master Facility Plan and Develop a Long Range Plan for Classroom and Corridor Improvements**
Over the summer we will complete the remaining projects of the Master Facility Plan on time and on budget. We have developed an improvement plan for corridors and much of this work will be completed this summer. We have a draft of a long range improvement plan for classrooms not addressed through the MFP and will be bringing this to the Board in the next school year. This work will continue through the capital project process.
- **Continue Capital Projects**
We continue to improve our facilities through \$1M of annual capital improvement projects. Much of this work has been bid and will take place over the summer. This process will continue next year.
- **Improve Outdoor Practice Field Lighting**
Both schools have purchased portable lighting for our outdoor practice fields. Feedback from the athletic directors, coaches, parents, and students has been highly positive on this addition. This goal is fully completed and will not return in the future.
- **Continued Verification of Residency**
We will continue our residency verification process each summer of all students to better ensure our students live in the community. This was completed over last summer for this year and will occur again in the coming summer.
- **Advancing Information Technology**
A complete wireless infrastructure upgrade was completed during summer 2020 and the new wireless infrastructure is online and operating well. Proactively managing cybersecurity risk continues to be a primary focus of the Technology and Information Services team. Efforts toward implementing substantial data privacy requirements imposed by IL House Bill 3606 are well underway and the Board was apprised of this work in May of 2021. Risk assessment, internal vulnerability scan, and external

penetration tests were completed. Overall results were positive, and we are remediating any notable issues identified.

- **Maintaining Finances and Transparency**

Due to the pandemic, we will run a deficit this year; we have offset it with working cash bonds. However, we will end the year much better than expected at the start. We have been able to maintain and add to our services throughout the pandemic in response to changing needs. We are dedicated to continuing to be transparent in our financial reporting into the future.

Domain 5: Future Opportunities

Embark on a plan, leading to a process of identifying strategic goals committed to developing organizational readiness for future opportunities.

Key Accomplishments and Opportunities for Growth:

- **Beginning Long Range Strategic Planning**

This topic will move under Domain 3 next year as we embark on a formal long term strategic planning process. Recently a small core planning team met to discuss a process for strategic planning next year and we are working on a RFP to find a third party to assist in strategic planning. This will grow in focus and effort throughout the next school year. This seems to be coming at a perfect time - as planned after the Master Facility Plan - and unplanned following a pandemic that has caused many throughout the community to refocus on their thoughts around school, teaching, and learning.

- **Ongoing Planning for Healing**

The impact of the pandemic has been significant and will likely have long term effects on the entire organization and community. As a leadership team, we are discussing and planning for how we heal and move forward after this is all over. As part of our professional development in the fourth quarter, we have been working with our staff to develop more skills around trauma responsive practices in anticipation of increased student needs into next year. This will be a major focus of our return and will be a task that moves into Domain 1 next year.