

**Oak Park and River Forest High School
District 200**



**Strategic Plan
2014-2019**

Approved by the Board of Education
January 23, 2014

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Values

1. We believe **all students are capable of high levels of academic and social success.**
2. We embrace our diversity and believe **race, income, gender, and learning differences should not predict success.**
3. We believe trusting, collaborative relationships and strong communication **establish a safe and respectful school community.**
4. We believe an excellent educational environment cultivates **curiosity, imagination, character, leadership, critical thinking, and communication skills.**
5. We believe in allocating resources in **equitable, transparent, and purposeful** ways.
6. We believe in **adult learning and leadership** that supports **equity and excellence for all students.**
7. We believe in providing **academic and social supports** for all students.

Vision

Oak Park and River Forest High School will become an ever-improving model of equity and excellence that will enable all students to achieve their full potential.

Mission

Oak Park and River Forest High School provides a dynamic, supportive learning environment that cultivates knowledge, skills, and character and strives for equity and excellence for all students.

Goal 1: Holistic Community Education

OPRFHS will collaborate with other educational institutions and social service organizations to create a high-quality continuum of learning and seamless transitions for students. Students and adults will build partnerships across our communities that will help our youth grow into engaged, socially responsible citizens.

Actions
1. Promote, support, and participate in a continuum of integrated high-quality educational programs from birth to post-secondary education, fostering students' social-emotional development, intellectual growth, and civic engagement.
2. Improve transitions from middle school to high school and from high school to post-secondary experiences.
3. Foster effective communication and trusting relationships between and among the staff and families, as well as other stakeholders of the schools and communities.

Goal 2: Equity

OPRFHS will continuously strive to create an environment where the academic achievement and social and emotional growth of students will no longer be predictable by race, socioeconomic status, or other social factors.

Actions
1. Expand access to rigorous teaching and learning to eliminate race as a predictor of a student's academic pathway or performance.
2. Create a school community where all students feel welcome and experience a sense of belonging.
3. Provide support for all personnel to develop an ever-increasing awareness of the impact of race, socioeconomic status, and other social factors on students' experiences.

Goal 3: Supportive Learning Environment

OPRFHS will create learning environments that support the unique strengths and needs of each individual and will provide a system of supports to meet the evolving needs of all students.

Actions
1. Promote a learning environment where every student feels known and supported by at least one adult in the school community.
2. Create a high-trust school culture characterized by shared ownership and high expectations.
3. Build the capacities and support the efforts of students and adults in their social-emotional and academic learning.
4. Establish fair and just processes and practices that set clear, meaningful expectations to create a safe environment while recognizing the humanity of all students and adults.

Goal 4: Transformational Teaching and Learning

OPRFHS will create consistently rich and engaging learning opportunities that set high expectations for all students and foster collaboration, problem solving, reflection, critical thinking, and independent learning.

Actions
1. Provide social-emotional and academic supports so that each student experiences academic challenge and success.
2. Ensure student-centered teaching and learning at all levels.
3. Leverage technology for more effective teaching and learning.
4. Establish clear and explicit knowledge and skill targets for all courses, increasing academic challenge, consistency, and rigor in all classrooms and at all levels.

Goal 5: Transformational Leadership

OPRFHS will hold all leaders to high expectations in responsibilities, policies, practices, and professional development and will create opportunities that affirm and support effective teaching, learning, and leadership.

Actions
1. Identify and allocate resources to transform teaching and learning and optimize conditions to benefit students in all classrooms.
2. Support professional development to address strategic plan implementation for continuous school improvement.
3. Ensure an engaged, collaborative, trusting adult community characterized by shared leadership and open communication.

Goal 6: Facilities and Finances

OPRFHS will make fiscally responsible, student-centered decisions regarding facilities and finances and will allocate resources to ensure excellence and equity.

Actions
1. Allocate resources to support the implementation of the strategic plan.
2. Develop and begin to implement a long-term facility plan to accommodate future needs.
3. Create, sustain, and promote responsible and transparent financial planning and decision-making, continuously communicating with and soliciting input from school and community stakeholders.

Acknowledgments

Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200 gratefully acknowledges the efforts of more than 2,000 community members, parents, students, faculty, and staff members who provided input into the Strategic Plan via surveys and focus groups. In addition, we offer our deepest thanks to the Steering Committee and Task Force members (see page 8), who worked diligently and enthusiastically over many months to create a plan that truly reflects the values of the Oak Park and River Forest community.

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Background

Mission

Oak Park and River Forest High School provides a dynamic, supportive learning environment that cultivates knowledge, skills, and character and strives for equity and excellence for all students.

Oak Park and River Forest High School is widely considered an outstanding high school, known for its high level of student achievement; excellent instruction; exceptional performing arts, athletics, clubs, and activities; and innovative academic programs. But even the strength of our programs and the top awards our students and staff consistently earn are not enough to satisfy the central mission of the school: to provide the knowledge, skills, and character necessary for success and leadership in a global society. We must see achievement rise for *all* students, not only those who struggle in our classrooms but also those already achieving at high levels. We also must narrow disparities that appear in teaching and learning outcomes when we disaggregate our data by race. Both goals—excellence and equity—are at the center of this plan. Achieving these goals requires that we be deliberate in the priorities we set and the choices we make over the next few years.

Challenges

District 200 last created a strategic plan nearly two decades ago. Since then a great deal has changed. Federal and state mandates have increased the demands made on teachers and administrators. College admissions have become increasingly competitive as record numbers of students compete for limited openings. College and career pathways require more intensive and ever-changing technical skills. The high school facility, a vintage building dating back to 1907, requires upkeep and upgrading for the emerging technologies that allow individuals to succeed in the worldwide workplace. Finally, rapid economic change has affected area residents, who provide essential financial and logistical support for local schools, and we must find a responsible way to manage the needs of the community and the resources of the school.

One concern that has not changed is that race continues to have a significant impact on students' experiences at OPRFHS. A critical element for the future success of the high school is to fulfill the promise and challenge set forth in the 1990s, to eliminate the predictability of race as an indicator of school or student outcomes. Identified by the last four superintendents as a central issue in the progress of the school, excellence for all students is a main theme of our work. The work of the high school will move all students forward, maintain the academic excellence of the school, and address the need for equity and access to that excellence for our entire community.

Our Plan

Creating a strategic plan establishes how we will respond to circumstances that are always changing and challenging us as a school and as a District. Articulating an overarching vision for the future of Oak Park and River Forest High School ensures that the entire school community is working toward a common purpose and participating in the effort to maintain the academic excellence of the school, provide equity and excellence for all students, and respond

responsibly to the needs of our community. In essence, a strategic plan is a road map of priorities for what to do and how to move forward.

This strategic plan includes action steps in six critical areas of focus: Holistic Community Education; Equity; Supportive Learning Environment; Transformational Teaching and Learning; Transformational Leadership; and Facilities and Finances. Delineating these areas with discrete action steps is a way to break down the work into manageable pieces. But the ideas that develop for various areas may overlap or run parallel to one another. This is a reminder that our work should not be addressed in silos but instead must stress collaboration.

Each of these high-level action steps will be further divided by implementation teams into substeps that contain benchmarks, providing data-oriented measures for each step. We recognize the long-term nature of the implementation of this plan. We have set forth steps we believe are both ambitious yet attainable. We recognize that in five years our work will not be complete, but will be in need of review and, if necessary, redirection.

Strategic Planning Process

Phase 1: Process Development (June — September 2012)

The Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200 Board of Education launched strategic planning in June 2012, when it began reviewing proposals for leading the process. In July, the Board approved hiring Dr. Allan Alson as its strategic planning consultant. Dr. Alson, Board members, and the District Leadership Team (DLT) mapped out the process and timeline, identified stakeholder groups, invited stakeholders to join the steering committee, and developed a communications plan.

Phase 2: Data Collection and Synthesis (October 2012—January 2013)

The 60-member steering committee began meeting twice monthly to examine data in a variety of areas, including student achievement, school climate, and District finances. Dr. Alson and his associate Patricia Maunsell led 21 focus groups, drawing participation from just under 200 students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community members. In addition, more than 2,100 stakeholders participated in a strategic planning survey.

An analysis of this wealth of data found that the values of the community could be organized around five main themes:

1. Holistic Community Education
2. Equity
3. Supportive Learning Environment
4. Transformational Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
5. Facilities and Finance

Phase 3: Values, Vision, Mission, and Goals (January—March 2013)

Working collaboratively, the steering committee, as well as a writing subcommittee, developed and refined value, vision, mission, and goal statements. The **value statements** encompass the core beliefs and principles of the District and inform our actions. The **vision statement** answers the question, “What will OPRFHS look like after we carry out the plan?” The **mission statement** describes how we will carry the plan forward. The **goals** provide broad starting points for action steps created by task forces.

Phase 4: Task Force Work (March—May 2013)

Task forces were formed around the five main themes: Holistic Community Education; Equity; Supportive Learning Environment; Transformational Teaching, Learning, and Leadership; and Facilities and Finance. Task forces comprised steering committee members who wished to continue their involvement plus new stakeholders with interest and expertise in the five areas. The task forces were charged with creating broad action steps to support the overarching goal(s) for each area of focus. Eventually, the fourth theme was split into two, in order to narrow the focus of each area: Transformational Teaching and Learning, and Transformational Leadership.

Phase 5: Plan Adoption (January 2014)

Following a series of retreats for the Board of Education to vet the plan during fall 2013, the Board of Education formally approved the strategic plan at its Jan. 23, 2014, regular Board meeting. The plan will be shared with community members, parents, staff, and students through various print and electronic formats.

Phase 6: Implementation, Reporting, Refinement (2014—2019)

Following approval of the plan, implementation committees will be formed to develop and execute the action steps. Using the groundwork laid by the task forces as a foundation, implementation committees will create detailed plans to achieve the action steps, setting and meeting more granular benchmarks for each step. The work of implementation will be transparent, coordinated, and collaborative, with regular updates provided to the Board of Education and the community to ensure that progress on the plan is being monitored and that benchmarks are being met. This plan is not set in stone but instead is a living document, and mid-course corrections may be needed as the work unfolds.