



**Elk Rapids Schools
2019-2024
Strategic Plan Summary Document**

*The Mission of Elk Rapids Schools is
Developing Lifelong Learners to Excel in a
Diverse Global Community*





Letter from Board President and Superintendent

Elk Rapids Schools 2019-2024 Strategic Plan: Participants Help Shape the Vision and Goals for the Future of Elk Rapids Schools.

This document contains the 2019-2024 Elk Rapids Schools Strategic Plan. We're excited about this plan and the possibilities it provides for our students, parents/guardians and community to improve education at Elk Rapids Schools.

Two community, parent/guardian and staff forums and an electronic survey resulted in **890** people providing input for the planning process. A Strategic Planning Team of 37 community members, parents/guardians, staff and students participated in an all-day planning retreat on April 28, 2018.

Throughout the planning process the community expressed high expectations of Elk Rapids Schools becoming a world class school district and having all students graduate from high school. Even though some of the goals are extremely high, they reflect the strong desire that has been expressed to embrace significant change and dramatically improve the school system.

There were several clear and consistent themes that emerged from this process.

1. While much more work needs to be done; Elk Rapids Schools is headed in the right direction with positive momentum behind our new strategic plan.
2. The future of growth and success of Elk Rapids Schools must be a top community priority that requires support from all stakeholders (students, parents/guardians, taxpayers, businesses, non-profits, foundations, government agencies, etc.).
3. As a district, we must do a better job of positively engaging and aligning internal (students, parents/guardians, staff and the school board) and external (taxpayers, community organizations, businesses, non-profits, government agencies, elected officials) stakeholders around common goals and strategies to significantly improve all of our students' educational experiences.

Our Strategic Planning Team, comprised of a very broad and diverse group of 37 stakeholders, developed the goals. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with all sectors of our community to implement these goals and suggested strategies.

Carol Pressman, President of the Board

Tom Enslin, Superintendent





Introduction

Strategic Planning is the process of determining what an organization wants to be at some point in the future, and how it will get there. In the current environment where schools are challenged to do more with scarce resources, planning for the future is more important than ever. An effective strategic planning process results in stakeholders focusing on critical priorities that will meet the mission of a quality educational program for all students.

In November 2017, the Elk Rapids Schools Superintendent and the Board of Education made a commitment to create a three to five-year strategic plan. The School Board created a partnership with the Michigan Association of School Boards to serve as facilitators for this project. The district, under the leadership of the School Board President and Superintendent, completed a process that was data-driven, inclusive of district stakeholders and focused on the priorities that will help the district succeed.

There were several criteria relative to the strategic planning process established by the School Board and the leadership team:

- The process must be inclusive where all stakeholders have an opportunity to provide structured input.
- The School Board must be an integral part of the process—providing input, support and commitment.
- There must be clarity in the respective roles of the School Board, administrators, staff, parents/guardians and community.
- There is alignment between the strategic planning process and current strategic initiatives, and critical issues facing the district.
- Timelines, responsibilities and reporting schedules must be built into the planning processes.
- There must be ongoing communication about the planning process with all internal and external stakeholders.

This strategic plan is a living document. It will serve as a ‘road map’ to future planning, resource allocation, staff development and decision-making over the next several years.

As part of the planning process and based on qualitative and quantitative data a new vision, mission and belief statements; strategic goals and objectives were developed. Regular monitoring of progress and renewal is critical to the plan’s success.





The Strategic Plan Process

This overview describes the planning process, including the survey, data analysis, planning team roles and responsibilities, and timelines.

Stakeholder Input

Input from students, parents/guardians, community and staff were gathered through a comprehensive electronic survey as well as a series of community, student and staff forums. The community engagement process was conducted to:

- Identify and assess strengths
- Gauge values and perceptions of the community
- Provide an opportunity for input
- Identify areas for improvement
- Gather data to use as a decision making tool
- Develop communication plans and tools

The response rate of 890 indicates that the school community cares about the future of the district and desires to engage in the process of creating the future (see Attachment 1 for summary).





Local Area and School Demographic Data

An analysis of district demographics and quantitative data was completed. The analysis included demographic, enrollment, educational, financial and personnel trends over the previous five years, 2008-2016, as applicable, in comparison with districts selected by the Board and Administration and state averages, where available (see Attachment 2 for the data analysis summary). The reference districts used for Elk Rapids Schools were Blissfield Community Schools, Hanover-Horton School District, Kalkaska Public Schools, Kingsley Area Schools and Traverse City Area Public Schools.

Strategic Planning Team

A Strategic Planning Team was formed to take a primary role in developing the strategic plan. The team consisting of 37 parents/guardians, community members, board members, students and staff members, were selected with input from the Board of Education and key stakeholder groups. The team participated in a retreat workshop as well as additional committee meetings to develop a mission statement, vision, beliefs, and strategic goals. During the retreat the team reviewed and discussed relevant quantitative and qualitative data as essential elements in the formation of goals and objectives contained in this document (see team members on page 6).

Collaborating with the Elk Rapids Schools Board of Education, administration, staff and the entire community really illustrated their level of care for the school, the community, and most of all, the students.

—Debbie Stair, MASB Facilitator





Strategic Planning Team Members

Samantha Abeel

Sue Anderson

Darryl Antcliff

Bridget Bailey

Sue Bolde

Jennie Brown

Jen Coleman

Bill Donberg

Donna Eberle

Char Gretel

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Erin Johns

Andrea Krakow

Kerry LaLone

Joe Macaluso

Martha McGuire

Bryan McKenna

Janet McKenna-Beebe

Carol Pressman

Steve Prissel

Andrew Raymond

Terri Reisig

Conner Rieck

Jeff Scroggins

Holly Spencer

Darci Springborn

Jim Standerfer

Terry Starr

Sherry Steffen

Rob Stow

Mike Travis

Olivia Travis

Tom Vranich

Wendy Williamson

Victoria Wilson

Steve Yencich

Jessica Ziecina





Retreat Workshop

A retreat workshop was held on April 28, 2018. The workshop included:

- An overview of the strategic planning process and timelines
- Superintendent report of current and planned initiatives
- An analysis of demographic, quantitative and qualitative data
- A review and renewal of the vision, mission and belief statements
- The establishment of strategic goal areas and key objectives
- Assignment of planning team leaders to develop action plans for each goal and objective, including responsibilities, timelines and measurements

Elk Rapids Schools 2019-2024 Strategic Plan Vision Statement:

Describes what you want to happen in the long term. It's a statement about your hopes and expectations for the future. The vision statement below was validated during the Strategic Planning Team Retreat Workshop:

***The Vision of Elk Rapids Schools is
“World Class Education – Small Town Community”***





Mission Statement:

Establishes, in the broadest terms, the purpose of a school district. It should answer the question “What ultimate end will the district pursue and in the broadest sense, how?” The following mission statement was renewed during the Strategic Planning Team Retreat Workshop:

The mission of Elk Rapids Schools is “Developing Lifelong Learners to Excel in a Diverse Global Community”.

Beliefs: The basic beliefs/core values of the district—those things that we believe of utmost importance, providing guidance for how we behave and relate to others. The following beliefs were developed during the Strategic Planning Team Retreat Workshop:

We Believe:

- All students can become successful adults in a global community.
- All students achieve best in a supportive learning environment.
- Collaboration among community, parents, staff and students fosters student success.
- An effective school community is built on honest and open communication.
- Aligned curriculum and expectations support student success.
- Providing facilities that meet the growing needs of the school.
- District and community will support student success.





2019-2024 Strategic Goals

Strategic Goals: Areas of priority importance in which the district will focus their work (1-5 years). Strategic goals achieve the organization's vision, mission and beliefs. Objectives are SMART—**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**imely

The Strategic Planning Team, at the DATE retreat, developed goal statements and specific objectives. The goal areas are categorized below:

2019-2024 Goals

- Academics/Programs
- Culture/Learning Environment
- Personnel/Leadership
- Communications/Community Engagement
- Operations





Following the retreat, administrators were charged with developing specific objectives based on strategic goal areas identified by the team.

Goal Area 1: ACADEMICS/PROGRAMS

Strategic Goal Statement: Elk Rapids schools will provide comprehensive and sequential educational opportunities that meet student needs.

Priority Objectives:

- ✓ Investigation of current practices for K-12 in teaching and learning
- ✓ Increase opportunities for computer science, the arts and career training
- ✓ Establish consistent vertical transition planning





Goal Area 2: CULTURE/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Strategic Goal Statement: Elk Rapids schools will provide a relationship focused, safe, empowering and engaging environment with high standards and expectations for students.

Priority Objectives:

- ✓ Trauma training in CMS/ERHS
- ✓ Commitment to class size with definition
- ✓ Look at ratio of SE support staff: students





Goal Area 3: PERSONNEL/LEADERSHIP

Strategic Goal Statement: Elk Rapids schools will be transparent, consistent and trustworthy.

Priority Objectives:

- ✓ Draft K-12 roles, expectations and responsibilities
- ✓ Continue principal meetings with a focus on transparent/consistent decision making
- ✓ Align resources with best practices and goals





Goal Area 4: COMMUNICATIONS/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Strategic Goal Statement: Elk Rapids schools will develop and implement a comprehensive communication and marketing plan to increase community (stakeholder) engagement.

Priority Objectives:

- ✓ Identify and engage key communicators
- ✓ Hire a communications specialist to heighten community awareness
- ✓ Superintendent will engage and inform community groups and individuals





Goal Area 5: OPERATIONS

Strategic Goal Statement: Elk Rapids schools will identify and evaluate current and new resources to expand and improve operational capacity.

Priority Objectives:

- ✓ Successful bond campaign!
- ✓ Communicate OAK (facilities assessment) to public
- ✓ Renew commitment to financial stability





Strategic Plan Implementation

The implementation plan will be developed collaboratively by the superintendent and key staff members. Alignment with current school improvement plans will be an integral part of the implementation plan. The district priority goals/objectives identified during the strategic planning retreat will be translated into action plans with measurements, timelines, responsibilities and a board monitoring calendar.

Recommendations for keeping the momentum of the process are the following:

1. Finalize Goals/Objectives/Action plan
 - Measurements
 - Timeline
 - Responsibility
 - Resources
2. Develop reporting/board monitoring calendar
3. Develop communication plan
 - Community
 - Staff
4. Schedule Mid-year progress report
5. Schedule Annual Plan update





STRENGTHS

ACADEMICS/PROGRAMS

- Academic performance – high test scores
- Strong curriculum, extra-curricular options, IB, TKdgn, Robotics
- Dedicated staff at all levels

COMMUNICATIONS/ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Strong community support
- Parental involvement in the schools
- Community Pride

CULTURE/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Small, close knit community
- Positive, caring and welcoming culture
- High standards and expectations for staff and students

PERSONNEL/LEADERSHIP

- Positive, engaged staff
- Staff relationships with students
- Strong school reputation throughout the area

OPERATIONS

- Technology 1 to 1
- Safe environment
- Outdoor facilities





OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

ACADEMICS/PROGRAMS

- More electives, including CTE course offerings on site, business partnerships
- Increased support for at-risk population
- Increase focus on career/college prep for students

COMMUNICATIONS/ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Communication to Parents, Senior citizens
- Build relationships with non-parent community members
- Improved website

CULTURE/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Increased staffing, smaller class sizes
- Increased support for the Arts
- Curriculum review and alignment

PERSONNEL/LEADERSHIP

- Administration building trust with the community
- Narrowed focus on educational initiatives
- Increase support for a bond election

OPERATIONS

- Building infrastructure and classroom upgrades
- Sunrise Academy support
- New gymnasium





BARRIERS

ACADEMICS/PROGRAMS

- IB program - cost/benefit, lacks High School participation
- State mandates
- Over reliance on technology

COMMUNICATIONS/ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Resistance to change
- Increased student needs, hinder relationship building by staff
- Schools of Choice enrollment

CULTURE/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Resistance to change
- Increased student needs, hinder relationship building by staff
- Schools of Choice enrollment

PERSONNEL/LEADERSHIP

- Budgeting – lack of transparency
- Funding for increased staff – counselors, social workers, media specialists
- Lack of trust

OPERATIONS

- Funding
- Community support for a bond
- Classroom space





VISION

ACADEMICS/PROGRAMS

- Maintain high academic achievement and standards
- Focus on all student needs - CTE
- Reduce amount of constant change in programs - focus

COMMUNICATIONS/ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Build a culture based on relationships
- Increased business partnerships
- Build trust with all stakeholders in the community

CULTURE/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Lifelong, productive citizens
- Reduced class size reflecting uniqueness of district
- Focus on the values of Elk Rapids community

PERSONNEL/LEADERSHIP

- All staff invested in student achievement
- Student growth, become a destination school
- Staff development on technology integration

OPERATIONS

- Community Pride in renovated facilities
- New gym
- Support staff feeling valued, including pay





Data Driven Strategic Planning: Elk Rapids Schools

Based on analysis of data in this report, the following points are highlighted concerning Elk Rapids Schools:

In general, the data revealed that when compared to state averages and the reference districts selected for this report, Elk Rapids Schools emerges as a district maintaining reasonable academic performance while facing fiscal challenges.

Demographics

- Approximately 30.6% of residents attended some college or earned an Associate's Degree. In addition, 41.4% of Elk Rapids citizens have an Bachelor's degree or higher. (B-1)
- The percentage of pre-school aged children attending public pre-school ranked second among the reference districts at 81.9%, it is 14% above the state average. The percentage of district-resident children enrolled in Elk Rapids Schools K-12 ranked first among the referenced districts, and exceeded the state average by 2.3% . (B-3)
- The district's 2016 average household income of \$91,165 is the highest of the reference districts, and is \$22,237 above state average. (B-4)
- Enrollment at Elk Rapids Schools has decreased over the past five years moving from 1,420 students in 2013 to 1,323 students in 2017; a net loss of 97 students. (B-5, B-6)
- Elk Rapids Schools has 85 students who choose to attend either other districts or charter schools. Traverse City (56), Elk Rapids PSA (13), Elk Rapids ISD (8) and Traverse Bay ISD (8) enroll the greatest number of resident Elk Rapids students. There are 304 Schools of Choice students enrolled in Elk Rapids Schools. Kalkaska (141), Traverse City (103) and Bellaire and Mancelona (18 each) have the greatest number of students enrolled in Elk Rapids Schools. (B-7-B-8)
- Over the last five years, the number of students enrolling through Schools of Choice has remained steady (294 student avg per year) while the loss of students to Schools of Choice has also remained steady (86 student avg per year). (B-9)
- The percentage of the Elk Rapids students eligible for lunch assistance in 2017 ranked fifth among the reference districts and significantly below the statewide average. Free and reduced student lunch eligibility decreased in 2016, increased slightly in 2017 and resulted in 32.3% of 2015 Elk Rapids students qualifying for lunch assistance. An overall decrease of 3.8% over the five year period. (B-10, B-11)



**Demographics (Cont'd)**

- The district's 2016 cohort graduation rate of 92.39% was above the statewide average by 12.74% points. However, it ranked second among the reference districts selected. (B-12)
- While the state's average graduation rate has increased by 3.41% over the past four years, Elk Rapids average graduation rate has increased by 3.77%. (B-13)
- For the class of 2011, Elk Rapids enrollment in college rate was 70.19%. However, after a five year period only 34.61% earned a qualifying certificate or degree. (B-14, B-15)
- The demographics of the district's student population has seen little change in the past 5 years. The 2017 demographic data is as follows: 88% White, 6.5% Hispanic, 1.1% Multiracial, .7% Asian, 3.0% American Indian, .6% African American, and .1% Native Hawaiian. (B-16 – B-17)
- In 2017, Elk Rapids Schools students' chronic absenteeism rate ranked second among the reference districts, and has seen a large decrease in student's overall chronic absenteeism over the five year period. (B-18 – B-19)

Academic Performance

- Elk Rapids students exceeded state averages 2015-2017 MSTEP in reading at all assessed grade levels. In addition, reading scores have been above the state averages for the past five years. (C-1,C-3, C-4, C-6, C-8, C-10, C-12, C-14, C-16, C-18, C-20, C-22, C-24, C-28, C-32, C-34)
- Elk Rapids students exceeded state averages on the 2015-2017 MSTEP in all subjects at the elementary and middle school levels for this three year period. (C-7, C-8, C-11, C-12, C-15, C-16, C-19, C-20, C-23, C-24, C-25,C-26)
- Elk Rapids 11th grade students exceeded state averages on the 2015 -2017 MTEP/MME(SAT) in college readiness, evidence-based reading & writing, math, science and social studies. (C-29, C-30, C-31, C-32, C-33, C-34, C-35)
- At 21.7, Elk Rapids ACT Composite scores exceeded the state average of 19.8, and Elk Rapids students outperformed the state average in all ACT subjects in the five years from 2010-2014. (C-37, C-38)
- Advanced Placement enrollment numbers saw a significant increase in Elk Rapids over the past five years. The percentage of Elk Rapids AP students with scores of 3 or higher on the assessment vary greatly between 20% and 90%. (C-39, C-40)
- With the exception of 2014, dual enrollment participation increased over the past five years. (C-41)



**Finance and Personnel**

- Even though Elk Rapids has increased its instructional spending three of the last four years, at \$5626 per student it ranks last among the reference districts and is also below the state average by \$480. (D-1, D-2)
- Only two of the reference districts spend less on instructional support than Elk Rapids. The district's spending is also below the state average by \$563 per student. (D-3, D-4)
- Business and administration spending has increased over the five year period and is above the state average by \$331. Elk Rapids ranks highest among the reference districts. (D-5, D-6)
- General fund expenditures at \$8774 per student rank fifth among the reference districts, and below the state average of \$9996. (D-7, D-8)
- Elk Rapids Fund Balance has remained steady since 2013 and is currently at 8.9%. (D-9, D-10)
- The potential revenue per millage of property tax levied in the Elk Rapids Schools District in 2016 was the highest of the reference districts for homestead and non-homestead properties. Both of the district's homestead and non-homestead properties surpassed the state average. (D-11)
- Over the five year period, general fund expenditures exceeded revenues only in 2014. (D-12, D-13)
- Elk Rapids 2017 Foundation Allowance of \$7511 is equal to all of its reference districts. The district has received small increases over the last five years. (D-14, D-15)
- Elk Rapids cumulative student loss of 92 students since 2013 has resulted in a loss of revenue in the amount of \$647,792. (D-16)
- Only one of the comparative districts has a lower student-teacher ratio than Elk Rapids. The district's student-teacher ratio is slightly below the state average and has improved over the past five years. (E-1, E-2)
- At \$55,933, Elk Rapids 2016 average teacher salary decreased as compared to salaries from 2012 to 2015. The average teacher salary ranks fifth among the reference districts, and is below the 2016 state average salary by \$5,942 (E-3, E-4)





Finance and Personnel (Cont'd)

- 58% of Elk Rapids teachers have a Master's degree or higher. (E-5)
- 67% of Elk Rapids teachers have been with the district longer than ten years. (E-6)

Submitted: Denny Patzer

Date: April 20, 2018





The Wave | In the arena of education, what are incoming and outgoing trends, ideas, practices, paradigms, etc.?

EMERGING

Mindfulness
 Increased testing
 Pressured control
 Dual enrollment onsite
 Independent Study
 Workplace skills
 Attention to High achievers

Nationalized educational system
 Trauma informed schools
 Coding
 STEM/ROBOTICS
 Politicians vs MDE
 Self-paced learning

Student Learning Objectives
 Schools as parents
 Career Ed vs University
 Community partners
 Increased environmental pressure

ON THE HORIZON

Implications of technology
 Early intervention diversity
 Year-round schools
 More policies
 Non-college pathways

PreK – 14 w/associate degree
 Grade level promotion criteria
 Mindfulness
 Advanced technology

Individual student learning plans for all
 Trauma informed schools
 A.C.E.S. Adverse Childhood Experiences Study





ESTABLISHED

Wide range of AP courses
STEM
Unfunded mandates
Academic centric
Security

Importance of reading
Student interventions
1:1 computing
Standardized testing
Teacher accountability
Strong staff

Synergy between staff and admin
IB @ CMS, Lakeland, Mill Creek
Range of opportunities for students

DISAPPEARING

Arts, P.E., Vocational
Humanities
Field trips
Hands on learning
Life skills training

Open-ended creativity
Rote learning
Local control
Funding for
Industrial Arts

Time for personal connections
Cursive handwriting
Knowledge based teaching/learning
Appropriate class size
Skilled trades @ ERCSD





Academic Performance

Elementary Grades 3

- Overall science needs improvement
- 3rd grade overall peer group ranks lower than 4th and 5th grades
- 5th grade ELA underperformed
- District-wide student performance is high (top 3 among peers)

Middle School Academics (MEAP & M-STEP Grades 6–8)

- ELA proficiencies are well above the state avg. at all grade levels (6-8)
- Math proficiencies (6-8) are not where we want them to be relative to peer districts
- In 8th grade across referenced years (2015-2017), social studies had the lowest levels of proficiency
- In 7th grade across referenced years (2015-2017), science has the lowest levels of proficiency

High School

- Attention is needed on informational reading/writing in social studies and science
- There is a wide variance in AP scores of 3 and higher – range is between 20% -90%
- AP Calculus – lower enrollment/access compared to peer group with lower % of passing scores
- *11th grade students exceeding state averages on MSTEP/SAT





Enrollment and Demographics

- The percentage of preschool aged children attending public preschool ranked 2nd among referenced districts at 81.9%, it is 14% above the state average.
- The percentage of district resident children enrolled in Elk Rapids schools K-12, ranked 1st among referenced districts and exceeded the state average by 2.3% (92.4 to 90.1%)
- Enrollment at Elk Rapids schools has decreased over the past 5-years declining from 1,420 students in 2013 to 1,323 students in 2017. A net loss of 97 students.
- Elk Rapids schools has 85 students who choose to attend either other districts or charter schools. Travers City (56), ER PSA (13), ER ISD (8) and TBISD (8) enroll the greatest number of resident Elk Rapids students.
- Kalkaska (141), Traverse City (103), Bellaire (18) and Mancelona (18) have the greatest number of students enrolled in Elk Rapids Schools.
- For the class of 2011, Elk Rapids students enrolling in college was 70.19%. However, after a 5-year period, only 34.61% earned a qualifying certificate or degree.





Personnel and Finance

- High tax base
- Low fund balance
- Experiencing declining enrollment
- General fund expenditures rank 5th compared to peer group and is below the state average





The retreat team brainstormed ideas in each of the goal areas to provide their ideas to assist the leadership team in their identification of potential initiatives.

Academics/Programs

- Coding Computer science (7)
- The Arts (8)
- Resource allocation (1)
- STEM implementation (2)
- Elementary curriculum alignment
- Incoming family communication plan
- Professional development for teachers (4)
- Sustainability study for IB (12)
- Resources for electives at Secondary level (4)
- Improve AP results (1)
- Increase career tech curriculum onsite (4)
- Increase higher level academic opportunities

Culture/Learning Environment

- Create & implement daily opportunities for personal connections with students (5)
- District-wide – increase staff time for collaboration (2)
- Horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment (2)
- Increase focus on social/emotional health of all students (15)
- CMS/HS – social and emotional professional & curriculum (3)
- Smaller class size initiatives (17)
- K-12 vertical meetings for curriculum (1)





The retreat team brainstormed ideas in each of the goal areas to provide their ideas to assist the leadership team in their identification of potential initiatives.

Communications/Community Engagement

- Community listening sessions (townhalls) (1)
- Social media engagement
- Identify communication guidelines
- Create communication focus groups (to determine needs) (3)
- Publish Point of Pride more broadly
- Publish district calendar electronically
- Overhaul and maintain the district website (5)
- Manage expectations (implementation & timing)
- Re-establish marketing, PR, website, social media, fundraising position (23)
- Create more opportunities for community feedback (3)
- Online district-wide newsletter (1)
- Monthly or Quarterly “State of the District” to local media (1)
- Quarterly communication of bond expenditures

Personnel/Leadership

- Build bridges between buildings to improve consistency (11)
- Interact with community on their turf (11)

Operations

- Develop and implement a long-term facilities plan (13)
- Create facilities needs assessment – prioritize needs vs wants (10)

