

Comprehensive Plan 2026-29

Presentation for Education Programs and Services
February 11, 2026

Co-Chairs: Dr. Michael Donnelly and Rich Heffernan

Steering Committee: Gary Adams (administration), Tom Bold (teacher), Julia Byers (student), Mark Chilton (teacher), Lily Clifford (student), Scott Davis (administration), Michael Hsu (community), Mikayla Irvine (student), Brandon Kook-Whitley (support staff), Susan Kozluskys (teacher), Cora Landis (board), Sylvia LeBlanc (board), Donna Holmes (community), Bob Musantry (community), Jared Nyce (support staff), Melony Oestreich (parent), Dr. Bridget O'Connell (superintendent), Dr. Karl Scheibenhofers (administration), Diana Santoro (support staff), Cheryl Stevens (parent), Amy Stump (parent), Jessica Tarby (parent), Kaylee Vinciguerra (student), Linda Wenhold (board), Jill Williams (parent), and Pam Young (support staff)



93% of our Community
feel **INFORMED**

83.6% of employee
respondents have a
**SENSE OF
BELONGING**

91% of students
feel **SAFE and
SUPPORTED**

**What are
we
hearing?**



The community
identified top values
as: **ACADEMIC
PROGRAMMING,
SUPPORTIVE
STAFF and FISCAL
RESPONSIBILITY**

The surveys reveal a **strong,
mission-aligned foundation**
built on highly valued
relationships between staff
and students

Focus Areas

(Similar to Previous Plan)

Academic Achievement

Engagement

Operations

Mission *and* Vision

Action Plans

Academic Excellence: Technology

Chairpersons: Gary Adams, Marie Collie, Dr. Michael Donnelly

Action Planning Team: **Dave Pratt (community), Lynda Ivory (community), Mark Chilton (staff), Brian Wilson (parent), Cora Landis (community), Linda Wenhold (community), Jill Williams (parent), Rachelle Quinter (parent), Christine Uttard (community), Amy Kapp (parent), Kim Barbaro (parent), Lisa Weikel (community)**

Goal/Need *or* Challenges Addressed:

GOAL/OBJECTIVE:

Preparing students, staff, parents and the community for the practical application and understanding of technology and AI related to academic achievement with an emphasis on real world technology based skills.

NEED OR CHALLENGES ADDRESSED BY THIS GOAL:

Safety, data privacy, and guardrails. Educational and social balance. Digital citizenship. Digital Literacy. Evaluating source credibility. Academic integrity. Creating a positive technology culture.

Strategies *and* Action Steps:

- **Strategy #1: Preparing students for the practical application and understanding of technology and AI related to their academic achievement with an emphasis on real world technology based skills.**
 - Instruct all students the responsible, appropriate, and ethical use of technology to participate in society (digital citizenship)
 - Instruct all students on the ability to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information using digital technology effectively (digital literacy)
 - Set parameters and standards for the age level appropriate use/interest of AI following the District's AI Policy and the ISTE and ASCD readiness guidelines
 - Procuring the services of local business leaders to provide input on technology skills needed in the workforce
- **Strategy #2: Preparing staff for the practical application and understanding of technology and AI related to their students' academic achievement with an emphasis on real world technology based skills.**
 - Training staff on digital citizenship, cyber security, and the ethical use of technology
 - Training staff on digital literacy and the innovative use of AI to support their profession

Strategies *and* Action Steps:

- **Strategy #3: Preparing parents and the community for the practical application and understanding of technology and AI and how it's being used with students to promote academic success.**
 - Provide in person and remote technology training sessions (ie. AI, digital citizenship, digital literacy, Social Media, Canvas, PowerSchool)

Academic Excellence: Courses / Programs

Chairpersons: Gary Adams, Marie Collie, Dr. Michael Donnelly

Action Planning Team: **Dave Pratt (community), Lynda Ivory (community), Mark Chilton (staff), Brian Wilson (parent), Cora Landis (community), Linda Wenhold (community), Jill Williams (parent), Rachelle Quinter (parent), Christine Uttard (community), Amy Kapp (parent), Kim Barbaro (parent), Lisa Weikel (community)**

Goal/Need *or* Challenges Addressed:

GOAL/OBJECTIVE:

Support students by evaluating and implementing change in the way we offer instruction, opportunities and interventions for students as they prepare for their secondary path of choice: the workforce, college, or military.

NEED OR CHALLENGES ADDRESSED BY THIS GOAL:

Evaluate current offerings/methods of instruction and support district wide to expand opportunities for growth and support of all students.

Strategies *and* Action Steps:

- **Strategy #1:** Expand student opportunities for course work and programming offerings based on interest, needs, ability, and possible post-secondary goals.
 - Evaluate current programs and course offerings. Choose focus areas based on interest, needs, ability, and possible post-secondary goals. (e.g. interventions, enrichment, college preparedness, university partnerships, career preparedness). Develop specific action plans for each focus area.
- **Strategy #2:** Support students by staffing intervention and enrichment programs as they progress K-12.
 - Identify areas of student needs (interventions, enrichment, etc.) and utilizing current staff as well as additional staff to meet those needs. Consideration should be made for individuals such as counselors that can match students with available opportunities.
- **Strategy #3:** Further develop curriculum where meaningful and engaging opportunities could be implemented, as well as opportunities for cross-curricular development, and career based skills.
 - Provide a framework and time for teachers to collaborate and develop strategies to increase engagement, create cross-curricular content, and support career based skills.

Academic Excellence: Student Opportunities / Choice

Chairpersons: Gary Adams, Marie Collie, Dr. Michael Donnelly

Action Planning Team: **Dave Pratt (community), Lynda Ivory (community), Mark Chilton (staff), Brian Wilson (parent), Cora Landis (community), Linda Wenhold (community), Jill Williams (parent), Rachelle Quinter (parent), Christine Uttard (community), Amy Kapp (parent), Kim Barbaro (parent), Lisa Weikel (community)**

Goal/Need *or* Challenges Addressed:

GOAL/OBJECTIVE:

To create curriculum that is flexible and responsive enough to offer opportunities and choices that address and respond to a rapidly changing world without compromising the fundamentals necessary for critical thinking and learning.

NEED OR CHALLENGES ADDRESSED BY THIS GOAL:

- Identify evolving (societal) needs and challenges that students will face upon graduation, including student interests;
- Explore our ability to work with other (cohort) districts that offer courses and/or opportunities that we don't;
- Develop a threshold number of students required in order to offer a particular course.

Strategies *and* Action Steps:

- **Strategy #1: Explore project based learning opportunities for students K - 12**
 - Investigate what grades levels currently have a capstone or project based learning opportunities.
 - Allow teachers the opportunity to explore which subjects lend themselves best to projects relative to their grade level content
 - Establish which grades would lend themselves best to incorporating a capstone type of project (ie: 5th grade, 8th grade)
- **Strategy #2: Continue with the survey of students regarding elective opportunities in an effort to determine emerging interests of students. Explore opportunities for students seeking courses not currently offered.**
 - Establish grade levels to be surveyed including time of year and frequency (every other year)
(For example: 5th grade Career options; Grades 7 - 11 Course options)
 - Utilize survey data to guide course offerings including student course threshold, online feasibility and collaborative opportunities with neighboring school districts.
 - Design course proposals relative to student survey

Strategies *and* Action Steps:

- **Strategy #3: Contact recent graduates so that they may share their experiences in transitioning from high school to college and college to the work force. Graduates may be able to provide feedback in new course development.**
 - Develop a survey to send to recent graduates (Consider up to four years post graduation from college or tech school/include in the Palisades Patch)
 - Contact graduates who indicate willingness or interest from both college/tech school

Engagement:

Chairpersons: Amber Schlosser and Dr. Rich Spering

Action Planning Team: Joanne Allen (community), Nicole Grasso (parent), Jessica Kressler (staff), Leslie Matey (parent), Maria Radus (parent), Bill Ryker (community), Diana Santoro (staff), Charlie Traber (staff), Becky Young (parent)

Goal/Need *or* Challenges Addressed:

GOAL/OBJECTIVE:

Palisades School District is dedicated to increasing meaningful engagement for all stakeholders - students, families, and staff - by addressing diverse needs, improving communication, and providing targeted opportunities for involvement.

NEED OR CHALLENGES ADDRESSED BY THIS GOAL:

- All community members have unique engagement needs
- Students benefit from expanded extracurricular opportunities
- Need for consistent, timely, accessible communication
- Student motivation and sense of belonging influence attendance and engagement
- Targeted strategies are required to identify and support disengaged students
- Staff engagement significantly impacts school culture and student outcomes

Strategies *and* Action Steps:

- **Strategy #1:** Strengthen Engagement Opportunities for Students
 - Conduct a Student Climate Survey (including PAYS)
 - Inventory extracurricular and during / after school programs. Analyze student participation and who may be underrepresented.
 - Review and Strengthen the MTSS Program / Implement a Districtwide MTSS Team: Establish a districtwide MTSS team to review current MTSS practices, monitor program fidelity, and coordinate academic and behavioral supports across schools.
- **Strategy #2:** Improve Communication with Families and Community Members
 - Improve communication efficacy/streamline platforms to foster a positive and supportive environment
 - Develop/purchase Smartphone App for school information and calendar of events to maintain and better inform the public.
 - Welcome Packet with consistent and centralized language (including Code-of-Conduct, student handbooks) to increase connections and sense of belonging to the school community.
 - Conduct an Annual Family/Community Engagement Survey

Strategies *and* Action Steps:

- **Strategy #3:** Enhance Staff Engagement and School Culture
 - Principal Liaison Feedback: Principal liaisons will provide regular feedback on meetings with building principals.
 - 360° Staff Feedback: Provide an anonymous feedback system for teachers and staff to give constructive input to building and district administration.
 - Departmental and Grade-Level PLCs: Provide structured opportunities for teachers, specialists, and administrators to collaborate across departments and grade levels, share instructional best practices, and leverage specialist expertise.
 - Optimize meetings to increase teacher planning and collaboration time by streamlining, consolidating, or eliminating unnecessary meetings and improving communication.

Operations:

Chairpersons: Al Crouthamel, Lou deFonteny, and Dr. Karl Scheibenhofer

Action Planning Team: Nancy Overton (Community Member), Catherine Palumbo (Parent), Tiffany Dollar (Community Member), Donna Holmes (Community Member), Lauren Goodwin (Parent), Dennis Gluck (Teacher), Bridget Snively (Teacher), Ellen Cicak (Community Member), Jennifer Hittle (Parent), Blake Timochenko (Parent), Alyssa Spier (Parent), Maximus Weikel (Community Member)

Goal/Need *or* Challenges Addressed:

GOAL/OBJECTIVE:

Provide an environment conducive to high student engagement and achievement through effective district operations by addressing facility needs, increasing efficiency of administrative demands, implementing best practices to optimize student and staff ratios, strengthening fiscal transparency, and fostering community trust through clear, consistent communication.

NEED OR CHALLENGES ADDRESSED BY THIS GOAL:

- Cost/benefit analysis for each strategy
- Communication between stakeholders
- Physical Space: welcoming, accessible, engaging, clean, safe
- Efficiency of services ie., busing, staffing, communicating budgetary decisions
- Aging infrastructure of buildings
- Best practices in setting up the physical plant (classroom, school environment) to foster staff and student relationships

Strategies *and* Action Steps:

- **Strategy #1:** Improve the efficiency of staff (administrative, teacher, paraeducator) workload through a process of evaluation of best practices relative to staff to student ratios and relationships, scheduling, and non-instructional duties.
 - **Create a focus group to review and discuss qualitative and quantitative data relative to class size, staff needs, and the needs of students.**
 - **Identify and evaluate teacher non-instructional duties for the purpose of determining need and/or assignment of such duties.**
 - **Develop a systematic review of student/staff needs relative to positive relationship building and provide professional development to support the need.**
- **Strategy #2:** Develop a cost effective plan with action steps to ensure proper cleaning, maintenance, physical comfort, and safety of our buildings for students, staff, and the public.
 - **Create a plan to improve building climate control throughout the district. Update and improve current outdated systems to ensure student, staff and public comfort.**
 - **Ensure proper cleaning and disinfection of our buildings by addressing the lack of substitute custodial coverage.**
 - **Enhance the building environment for staff and students by implementing:**
 - **Enforce the use of the maintenance/ IT ticket systems**
 - **Upgrade cafeteria setups**
 - **Upgrade staff common areas**
 - **Install privacy partitions in bathrooms and eliminate sight lines for privacy as needed**

Strategies *and* Action Steps:

- **Strategy #3:** Build community understanding of how financial decisions align with short- and long-term goals through clear, consistent communication.
 - **Maintain a dedicated section of the district website with easy-to-locate financial documents, FAQs, and summaries for public view.**
 - **Seek community feedback to assess the clarity and effectiveness of communication regarding major financial decisions utilizing various methods of communication such as emails, public notices, and mailings to ensure stakeholders have access to the survey.**
- **Strategy #4:** Implement a targeted plan focused on optimizing bus pickup and dropoff times, duration, refining routes, in order to improve overall efficiency of transportation services.
 - **Review current bus schedules and optimize route design to improve consistency in pick-up and drop-off times and enhance overall transportation effectiveness.**
 - **Hold two meetings during the course of the year to review performance data and stakeholder feedback in an effort to support continuous improvements throughout the year.**

Anticipated Costs *by* Focus Area 2026-2029:

Focus Area:	Expenditure:
Academic Achievement*	\$35,000
Engagement	\$27,000
Operations**	\$86,000

*A review of staffing may result in recommended additions, which would add to the budget

**HVAC improvements will be presented through Capital funds over the next three - five years

**Total Anticipated
Costs for 2026-2027=
\$88,500**

**Funding goes
through budget
process annually**

**Grant funding
possible**

Mission *and* Vision Statements

Our Mission:

Was: Inspired to Lead. Prepared to Succeed.

Recommended: Palisades School District inspires passion, shapes purpose, and champions potential in every learner.

Our Vision:

Was: Palisades School District is a community of learners where students' optimism, aspirations, and ambitions are fostered and nurtured. We are committed to working collaboratively to provide a safe, enriching, and supportive educational environment in which all students, upon graduation, are prepared for success for their future.

Recommended: The Palisades School District will awaken passion and purpose for learning, and nurture a perspective that serves others in the pursuit of excellence ensuring all students are prepared for success.

Core Competencies Upon Graduation *for* Students:

In addition to developing foundational academic and technical skills, our students will be afforded opportunities to strengthen core competencies in these areas:

2023 - 2026:

1. Collaboration
2. Communication
3. Curiosity and creativity
4. Leadership
5. Independent problem solving and perseverance
6. Cultural understanding
7. Self-awareness, self-care, and self-evaluation
8. Respect for self and others
9. Appreciation of diversity
10. Civic and global engagement
11. Responsible citizenship to support a safe community
12. Passion and ambition
13. Flexibility and resilience
14. Community-minded and service-oriented

2026-2029:

- Effective communication
- Advocacy for self and others
- Curiosity and creativity
- Appreciation of diversity and cultural understanding
- Innovative and ethical leadership
- Civic and global engagement
- Independent problem solving and perseverance
- Responsible citizenship and community service oriented
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Passion, ambition, and flexibility
- Technological competency
- Collaboration

Thank you to all who participated!

