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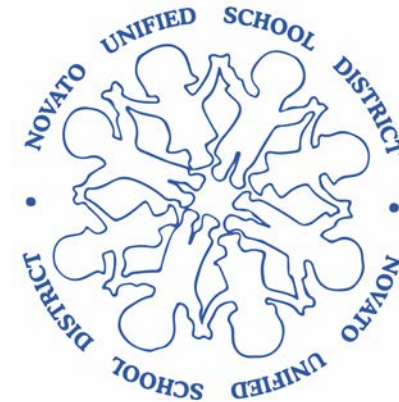
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Commitment to Excellence

“Achievement for all...Our call to action”



Novato Unified School District

Strategic Plan

2014-2017

Dear Community,

The Novato Unified School District (NUSD) has a long-standing history of high student achievement, successful educational program opportunities, and a rigorous and challenging curriculum. This is an exciting time in education with the new Common Core State Standards, Smarter-Balanced Assessment, Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), and the new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). These changes in education prompted us to begin the process of updating our Strategic Plan. This new Strategic Plan will serve as a roadmap, setting forth specific initiatives that will guide our decision making to ensure that our students experience the advantage of an outstanding education.

This past year our Board of Education engaged a wide range of stakeholders that included parents, students, community members, business and civic leaders and staff to develop a new district strategic plan that will shape the future of our school district for the next three years.

This Strategic Plan establishes four overarching goals that call for the entire NUSD organization to deliver on our commitment to educational excellence and ensure that our students graduate prepared for college, careers, and life as citizens in a global society.

Our students' achievement comes first. Teaching and learning is at the heart of every goal, every initiative and strategy in this plan. Every endeavor to achieve these goals is rooted in this fundamental belief. These goals call for high quality, rigorous teaching in safe, productive learning environments to inspire learning and increase academic achievement for every student, in every classroom, every day.

Equitable access increases learning opportunities and support for those students who need more to accelerate and reach their academic goals. Highly effective, innovative teaching requires a vital, inventive professional learning environment for staff.

To meet this commitment, our strategic plan supports and fosters a systemic culture of high expectations, integrity, responsibility, respect and collaboration. An organization rich in current data and information, frequent progress monitoring and accountability is part and parcel for continuous improvement. The work of this plan is the responsibility of the entire school system, our families and community. We all share in our students' success!

*NUSD Board of Trustees
June 2014*

*Shalee Cunningham, Ph.D.
Superintendent*



About NUSD

There are approximately 800 staff members in the Novato Unified School District who, along with the larger school community, are responsible for the education of 8,000 students.



There are seven elementary schools and one K-8 school. Class Size Reduction has been implemented in Grades K-3 at all elementary schools at 22:1. There is also one K-8 charter school operating under NUSD.

Along with two middle schools and two comprehensive high schools, NUSD also has an Education Center housing a continuation high school (Marin Oaks), an independent study program (NOVA) serving grades K-12, and a community day school (NEXUS) currently serving 7th and 8th grade students. All schools within the Novato Unified School District offer special education services, along with Gifted and Talented Education (GATE). Special assistance is provided for all English learner students.

NUSD also offers Adult Education classes including a Diploma Class, English as a Second Language (ESL), and a Technology Training Class. These programs serve adults who have not yet completed their high school education as well as those wanting to continue their education.

Volunteers are welcome and numerous throughout the district. Parent groups, including School Fuel, NUSD's educational foundation, augment the athletic and fine arts programs.

Priorities of the Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan outlines high-leverage initiatives to achieve our goals. The strategic planning process for identifying the goals and roadmap to achieve them was timely. Some of the initiatives in this plan are already underway and can be improved; others reflect new priorities based on current data, evidenced-based best practices, and input of the Strategic Plan Task Force. The actions and strategies associated with each goal and initiative can be found on the NUSD website www.nusd.org.

It is pertinent to note that this strategic plan was developed with a brand new lens. The implementation of Common Core State Standards and the enactment of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) establish new requirements for high-level prioritization of these district initiatives and realignment of designated resources.



Community Engagement

This Strategic Plan reflects the voice and vision of NUSD stakeholders. Over two months, the Strategic Plan Task Force, made up of district teachers, classified staff, administrators, the Board of Trustees, parents, and representatives from business, governmental and community-based organizations, conducted strategic analysis of the current status of district strengths and needs and recommended new priorities and operational strategies as a roadmap for moving forward. The entire school district and broader community were encouraged to provide input through an online survey. The final Strategic Plan document incorporated all information elicited from the Task Force, community, and the Board.

Who We Are and What We Believe

Our Mission

The Novato Unified School District is an innovative and effective education system that provides diverse academic experiences to meet individual student needs, and challenges students to realize their educational potential.

Our Vision

The Novato Unified School District is committed to providing an educational experience that will:

- ensure students possess academic and technical knowledge to enter successful careers and post-secondary experiences.*
- prepare all students to be successful, responsible, and productive citizens and leaders in a diverse and global society*
- encourage students to embrace a variety of learning opportunities throughout their lifetime*
- provide students with tools to unlock their full potential*

The Novato Unified School District will exemplify excellence in education by ensuring high quality, innovative instruction and equitable access to learning opportunities that inspire and prepare students to reach their utmost success.



Our Core Beliefs

- ◆ **Excellence**
- ◆ **Innovation**
- ◆ **Integrity**
- ◆ **Respect**
- ◆ **Collaboration**

We believe...

Our students come first

We believe all students can achieve at high academic levels. Equity ensures that every student has access to high quality teaching and learning and that those students who are less successful need more opportunity and support to accelerate achievement.

We believe...

High quality teaching and learning are the keys to student success

We believe in creating inspiring, innovative learning environments that foster highly engaged, challenged and enthusiastic learners. Inspired learners apply learning in new ways to make new learning.

We believe in the pursuit of excellence in all academic and organizational endeavors by holding high expectations for all students and staff in a culture of respect, integrity, inclusion, and collaboration.

We believe the core of our work is providing a rigorous and relevant curriculum aligned to standards with continuous, data-driven improvement outcomes to measure success.

We believe high quality performance requires effective leadership at all levels, accountability, and efficient organizational systems.

We believe...

Engaged families and community partners are fundamental and integral to achieving our vision for student success

We believe our community and schools are committed to providing safe, healthy, caring learning environments.



NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Strategic Plan 2014-2017

Goals and Initiatives



Goal 1: Provide a safe, equitable and rigorous learning experience for all students.



Goal 2: Create a learning focused organization to support academic outcomes and meet students' needs.

Initiatives

- * To challenge and support each student by providing rigorous curriculum and innovative instruction aligned to the Common Core State Standards.
- * To enhance the integration of technology to support teaching and optimize learning.
- * To improve student performance including all subgroups on academic indicators.
- * To advance the commitment to early learning education to close the achievement gap.
- * To expand college and career readiness programs to close the opportunity gap and increase access to higher education.
- * To ensure school cultures promote safety, integrity, respect, inclusiveness, collaboration, and student resiliency.

Initiatives

- * To elevate professional practices system-wide to provide high-quality, innovative instruction aligned to the Common Core State Standards in safe, productive learning environments.
- * To foster a professional learning environment for staff by strengthening human resources structures and systems.



Goal 3: Engage our families and community to support student success.

Initiatives

- * To increase parent awareness of opportunities in the district that prepares students for college and careers.
- * To enlist parents and community members to serve in leadership positions and participate in learning.
- * To provide information-rich communication systems with our families and the broader Novato community.
- * To mobilize the community to be informed and take action to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of students at school and in the community.



Goal 4: Adopt a sustainable annual budget aligned with District goals in a manner that ensures an equitable distribution of resources that prioritizes the needs of students.

Initiatives

- * To implement the Local Control Funding Formula and the Local Control and Accountability Plan to assure a balanced budget with highest and best use of our assets.

21st Century Skills

Growth Mindset and Perseverance: A belief that intelligence and ability can be increased with effort and in one's capabilities and capacity to learn. A growth mindset is foundational to perseverance; persisting in a task through to completion; and looking for ways to reach one's goal in the face of obstacles.

Creative and Critical Thinking: To create new and useful ideas; innovations, and products; and to elaborate, refine, analyze and evaluate one's own and others' ideas.

Communication Skills: The ability to articulate thoughts and emotions effectively using oral, written, and nonverbal skills; listen effectively; inform, instruct, motivate, persuade, negotiate, and give and receive feedback.

Collaboration Skills: To demonstrate ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams: involves flexibility, sharing, responsibility, and being open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives.

Definitions

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are adopted by the state of California and replace the previous state standards. CCSS and the Next Generation Science Standards are designed to be rigorous, robust, and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our students need for success in college and career readiness. This will place our students in a position in which they can compete in a global economy.

Cultural Competence is the ability to understand and respect values, attitudes, beliefs, and traditions that differ across cultures, and to consider and respond appropriately and effectively to those differences in planning

Definitions (continued)

Disproportionality in education is the irregular representation of racial and ethnic student groups in suspensions and expulsions, special education, advanced learning programs and related educational services overall, which is the result of inappropriate identification.

Educational Equity fosters a barrier-free environment where all students, regardless of their race, class or other personal characteristics such as creed, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, including gender expression or identity, pregnancy status, marital status, physical appearance, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability, have the opportunity to benefit equally.

Local Control Funding Formula significantly changes California's funding system for K-12 schools. Under AB 97, legislation is currently being implemented in every California school district. It will affect every school in the state, including charter schools.

Local Control and Accountability Plan holds each district accountable for how it will spend state funds. By July 2, 2014, each school board must adopt a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) that sets out its goals and priorities, with special attention to high-needs students bringing additional funds to the district as a result of the law. The district must adopt a three-year plan and update it annually. The law requires that spending be aligned with eight priority areas, which include test scores, graduation rates, the Common Core State Standards, measures of career and college readiness, parent involvement, school climate, and student engagement.

Opportunity Gaps are disparities in access to present and future educational, career and life opportunities among specific student populations. Unless students have equitable access to educational opportunities in school and receive the supports they need to succeed, they will fall behind and will face limited access to opportunities in the future.