

# North Forest Independent School District

2009-2014 Strategic Plan



## Our Mission

To meet the urgent need for students to learn in a high-performance educational setting. We support their growth into capable and skilled world citizens who can succeed in their career, family, and personal lives as highly valued contributors of the 21st century.



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## From the Superintendent



This strategic plan represents an essential ingredient for the continued viability of North Forest ISD. The plan reflects a rigorous and bold attempt to break out of a mindset that has impeded the brilliance of the people who work in the District, the children that attend our

schools, and the people who live in the North Forest community. This plan is unique, because North Forest is unique. While we examined best practices around the country, it was important to develop strategies that push conventional thinking in a way that suits the people of North Forest. I recognize that change takes time; yet, to advance this strategic plan requires a vision that galvanizes the people of North Forest, as well as our supporters outside the District.

Our vision is bold and ambitious, to be sure. However, the strategies and approach to implementation make this achievable. By focusing on the right priorities, in the right way at the right time and evaluating our results frequently, we can see benefits sooner rather than later. Change is difficult, but it *is* doable. This plan will require unwavering support from parents, teachers, public agencies, legislators, businesses, and our students to realize our vision over the next five years.

I am pleased and excited about this strategic plan. The breadth of involvement has included contributions from North Forest community

members, higher education partners, City of Houston, District employees, and the Board of Managers. It is my promise to keep you apprised of our progress and I look forward to your support and contributions in the months ahead.

Superintendent, Dr. Adrain Johnson

The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence; it is to act with yesterday's logic.

*Peter Drucker*

# District Snapshot

About Our District	Our Students and Testing		Our Staff and Teachers			
<p>The North Forest Independent School District is located in a well-situated section of northeast Harris County that is only a few miles north of downtown Houston and just south of Bush Intercontinental Airport. The District covers about 33 square miles and serves approximately 7,500 students in Pre-K through 12th grade.</p>	<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>8,369</b>	<b>Total Staff FTE</b>	<b>1,285</b>	% Regular Education	75
<p>A majority minority school system, the ethnic makeup of the district is 70 percent African American; 29 percent Hispanic; and 1 percent white. North Forest ISD operates an early childhood center, five elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, a career and technology program, and a disciplinary alternative education program for students unable to function well in the traditional educational setting.</p>	African-American	70%	Total Teacher FTE	583	% Special Education	10
<p>Other functions in the district are the transportation, food services, maintenance, and District police departments. The NFISD administrative office is located at 6010 Little York. The Jones-Cowart Stadium, located on the North Forest High School campus, is used for district athletic events as well as other activities.</p>	Hispanic -American	29%	Central Administrative	1%	% Compensatory Education	4
	White-Americans	1%	School Administrative	4%	% Bilingual/ESL Education	3
	Other	0%	Professional Support Staff	9%	% Career & Technical Education	5
	Economically Disadvantaged	99.5%	Teachers	45%	% Other Education (Includes G & T)	2
	Special Education	9%	Educational Aides	41%		
	Bilingual/ESL Education	11%	Auxiliary Staff	36%		
	Career & Technical Education	25%	<b>% With 5 or Fewer Years of Experience</b>	<b>43.9</b>		
	Gifted & Talented Education	3%	Average Years of Experience	13.1		
	Graduation Rate	65%	% With Advanced Degrees	33.8		
	<b>All Tests Taken</b>	<b>50%</b>	Teacher Turnover Rate	17.5		
	Reading/ELA	76%	% African American	83		
	Writing	87%	% Hispanic	4		
	Mathematics	60%	% White	5		
	Science	58%	% Other	9		
	Social Studies	80%				
	African American	47%				
	Hispanic	57%				
	White	53%				
	Economically Disadvantaged	50%				
	Source: TEA Snapshot 2008, North Forest ISD					

## Our Vision 2014

North Forest ISD will be the most innovative urban learning environment that serves as a beacon for teacher innovation, community collaboration and student self-discovery.

### Vision Defined

North Forest ISD has a great deal with which to work, indeed. There is a collective belief with many family members and key stakeholders in private industry as well as public officials at local, state, and federal levels that North Forest can be great--if it wants to be. To do so, requires a collective will and individual accountability. In other words, every parent or guardian, teacher, public agency, business and community member must have the courage to participate in this process when asked to help. Academic achievement cannot be the responsibility of the school district alone. Academic achievement requires an entire ecosystem of resources and people who care and want to try new approaches to education and learning.

Unique and innovative academic programs and well compensated, superb teaching staff combined with the technology tools to empower

learners in a safe environment creates an opportunity to help each child uncover their unique gifts to the world; this is one half of the equation. The other half rests with the use of family and community resources to help reduce and eliminate barriers that confront many students in the District each day.

The objective for this strategic plan is to provide a roadmap that supports a learning environment that ensures North Forest graduates are relevant in the marketplace and ready to participate in the global economy.



It is moments like these that force us to try harder, to dig deeper, to discover gifts we never knew we had--to find the greatness that lies within each of us."

*Barack Obama*

## Community Stakeholders and Staff Participants

Alan Beverly  
Albert Coleman  
Alicia Hicks  
Allen Provost  
Amanda Owens  
Annie Scott  
Antoinette Sheppard  
Antonia Davila  
Araceli Azva  
Arnold Larkin's  
Austin Hayward  
Avis Thornton  
Barbara Malone  
Barbara Perkins  
Betty Conerly  
Carl Williams  
Celsa Pina  
Cheryl D. Graves  
Chris Webb  
Gloria Witherspoon

Danny McDonald  
Darrick Givens  
Dessie Harris  
Domingo Rodriguez  
Dr. Adrain Johnson  
Dr. Betty Carter  
Dr. Patricia Pickles  
Edna Forte  
Elaine Malloy  
Ethel Bell  
Evola Derousselle  
Felicitas Hernandez  
Frank Williams III  
Glenda Gims  
Gregory Murray  
Griselda Azva  
Gwenette Ferguson  
Halbert Miller  
Helen Sheppard  
Holland Jones  
Illa Atkins  
Isabel Pena  
J.C. Hines  
Jackie Hopkins  
Jane McNair  
Jennifer Ball

Johnny R. O'Connor  
Jo Cooper  
Jose Jimenez  
Juanita Webber  
Kevin H. Gradney  
Kimberly Martin  
Lafayette Howell, Consultant  
Execution Architects Inc.  
Lee Skinner  
Leona Thomas  
Linda Arceneaux  
Linda Clarke, City of Houston  
Luna Alejandra  
Marcelina Ramirez  
Margaret Ford Fisher,  
President, HCC – NE Campus  
Margarit Mondragon  
Maria Castelan  
Maria Cruz Munoz  
Maria Dela Rosa  
Maria Gpe. Montalvo  
Maria Jimenez  
Maria Macias  
Maribel Romero  
Mario Garza  
Marisol Velasco  
Martha Lathon

Marvin Hamilton  
Mary McWhorter  
Mary Wagoner  
Maxine Seals  
Melechiah Miles  
Micheal Hardiman  
Norris Rhines  
Olga Garza  
Opera Lewis  
Paula Settles  
Rev. Q.L. Jackson  
Rev. Theophilus O. Berry  
Robin Comeaux  
Rodney Louis  
Rosa Jimenez  
Rosa McCoy  
Roy Grant  
Ruby Braden  
Ruby Gilbert  
Sharon Washington  
Sukari Stredit-Thomas  
Travis Weatherspoon  
Veronica C. Sharp  
Victor Nash  
Virginia Cones

## How Will the District Achieve the Vision?

The Strategy: Tightly focused strategic priorities driven by collaborative projects and external partnerships that create an academic environment of sustained excellence and learning for administrators and teachers.

To create an attractive and desirable setting for academic achievement will require a complete change in how people think and behave to influence the negative perception many people have of North Forest ISD. The District has been plagued with adverse press in prior years, lapses in judgment and ethical issues that are contributing factors to the District's current state of affairs. To achieve the stated vision the District must start with a new and different mindset.

This strategic plan will force all interested stakeholders to apply their collective imaginations in an organized and systematic way that

emphasizes the children of this District, first. Thus, the outcome for this strategic plan is to provide clear direction and focus, while taking into account the unique attributes of North Forest ISD and its rich history.

### Core of our Strategy

- **Tightly focused strategic priorities** will guide the District's efforts for the next five years. These priorities are the result of community input, external input, and District administrators, synthesized into five strategic priorities.
- **Broad collaboration with public/private resources and new partnerships** carefully coordinated to implement new approaches to unlock individual gifts and talents of North Forest students.
- **District-wide accountability** from administrators, staff members, school leaders and teachers with a focus on achieving targeted and meaningful outcomes that are relevant to strengthening the District and not on reporting activities or completing a task.



# Strategic Priorities for North Forest ISD

Five core priorities provide the framework for the recommended strategies as defined. These strategic priorities should evolve and be vigorously tested annually. However, it is our recommendation that these priorities remain consistent for the next three school years (at a minimum) to see the payoff of this focus.

## Quality Workforce and Compensation

**By 2014**, NFISD will have a workforce that represents increased diversity supported by developmental opportunities and compensation practices to support continuous improvement in how the District, attracts, retains, and develops talent.

## Financial Stability and Governance

**By 2014**, NFISD will have a District-wide view of capital stewardship, resource allocation, and budgeting that is managed professionally. The District will require broader and deeper integration of business processes, budgeting and reporting practices that offer transparency and financial integrity.

## Safety and Community Involvement

**By 2014**, NFISD will be a vital community resource for citizens that serves as an information clearing house to facilitate how people improve their quality of life. The District will rely heavily on security

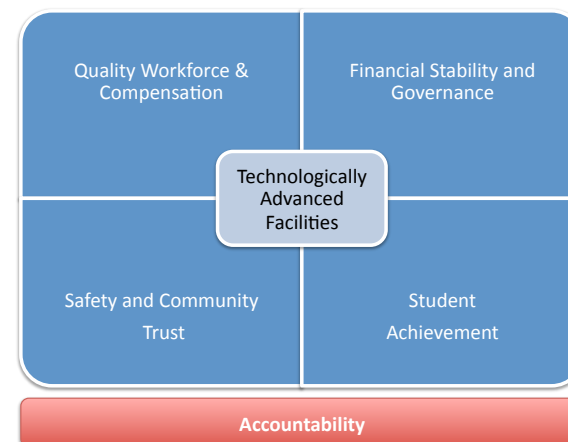
and safety, and coordination of resources with religious organizations and public agencies to realize a safe atmosphere in which children can learn with fewer distractions.

## Student Achievement

**By 2014**, NFISD students will participate in teaching and curriculum innovations geared towards increasing the academic performance as measured by State and federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) standards and promote career readiness of urban students.

## Technologically Advanced Facilities

**By 2014**, NFISD will offer technologically advanced facilities and infrastructure that prepares students and provide teachers with relevant technology support and the ability to apply technology for high-paying jobs of the future.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> The strategic priorities reflect input that includes over 188 individual ideas from community members, 20 individual interviews with District administrators as well as external stakeholders, and the Chair of the Board of Managers and eight focus groups.

# The Current Situation at North Forest ISD

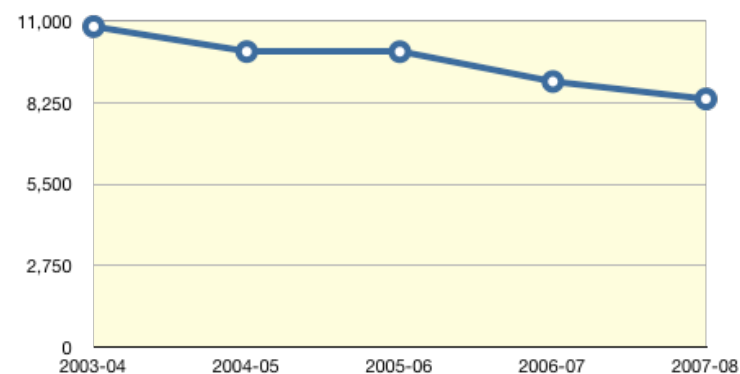
We have set forth the mission, vision, and strategic priorities that will drive the collective behavior over the next five years. It is our hope that the stability desired by the District and the eventual transformation will provide an example of what an urban school district can be. However, it is important that we outline the challenges that face the District and interested stakeholders.

1. Declining Student Enrollment
2. Unfavorable Financial Position
3. Teacher Pay Disparity and Apathy
4. Inconsistent and Weak Parent/Guardian Involvement
5. Poor Student Behavior and Conduct
6. Outdated and Unattractive High School Campus
7. Inordinately High Leadership Turnover
8. Poor Organizational Alignment, and Collaboration Between Campus Leadership and Central Administration
9. Minimal Policies or Operating Procedures in Force<sup>2</sup>
10. Lack of Innovative Educational Programs

<sup>2</sup> Conclusions are derived from community input, individual, review of Campus Improvement Plans and SWOT Analysis with eight (8) focus groups.

These ten variables provide a summary view of what faces the District currently. With what we have laid out, if the District were a for-profit enterprise, it would likely cease to exist and be forced to close its doors. This is, indeed the current situation facing North Forest ISD.

## Declining Student Enrollment

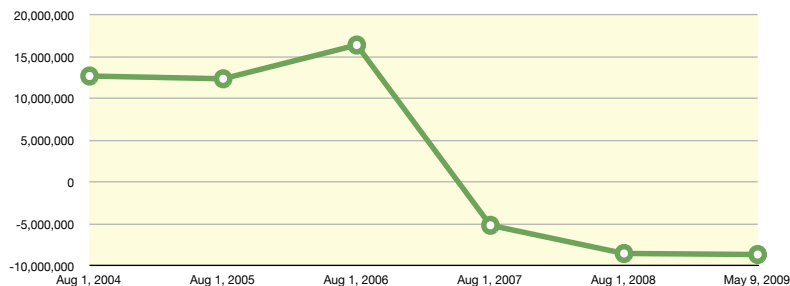


The graphic shows a 22.5 percent decrease in enrollment of 10,811 from 2003-04 to 8,369 for 2007-08 year. If the trend continues at a similar pace, the District would have approximately 6,500 students in 2014. For those parents and families that can afford to move or send their children to other schools they are doing so, and the trend is continuing. In addition, the socio-economic composition of the District tends to drive a higher than normal transient population in which people move in and out of the District for a variety of reasons. In addition, the core population is aging and thus, there are simply

fewer children attending school in the District. The flood plane also creates an area that is prone to flooding and drainage impacts can influence decision-making to moving into the North Forest community.

## Unfavorable Financial Position

The District continues to face a challenging financial situation. The fund balance for a school district is analogous to a family having to make a choice between food, school clothes, or paying the rent--there is simply not enough money to do even the basics, results in the need to make difficult choices. The prior Board made the tough decision to close some schools and consolidate buildings and reduction in staff. The administration is taking further steps to cut back or reduce the scope of programs in light of the deteriorating economics in the District. The administration is also taking further decisive steps to improve the economic situation with full support from the Board of Managers.



In 2006, there was a reported fund balance of **\$16.4 million**. Today, the fund balance is in a negative position at **-\$8.6 million**.

Furthermore, tax collection is difficult at best for North Forest ISD. The tax collection rate is 87 percent<sup>3</sup> for North Forest. In comparison, the average tax collection rate for neighboring Districts is 96 percent<sup>4</sup>. In addition, declining home values exacerbate the difficult financial situation.

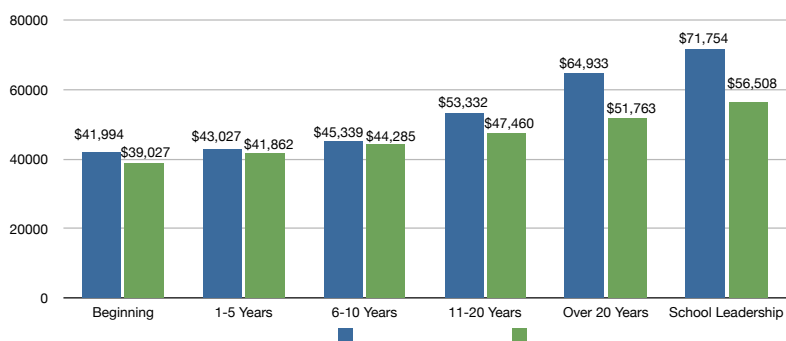


<sup>3</sup> Data provided and substantiated by Null Lairson, PC, June 2009

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

## Teacher Pay Disparity and Apathy

The pay disparity for teachers in North Forest ISD is not keeping pace with similar districts. For example, we compared teacher salaries between North Forest and neighboring Aldine ISD for the District<sup>5</sup>. Beginning teachers experience a 7 percent pay gap on average and over 20 percent for teachers with over 20 years experience. Low pay for Texas teachers is driving all too many of our best educators from the profession. For school leadership, the gap widens even more to just over 21 percent. According to national studies, a shortage of good teachers in key areas is hurting student performance and that, in turn, causes too many students to leave school before graduation<sup>6</sup>.



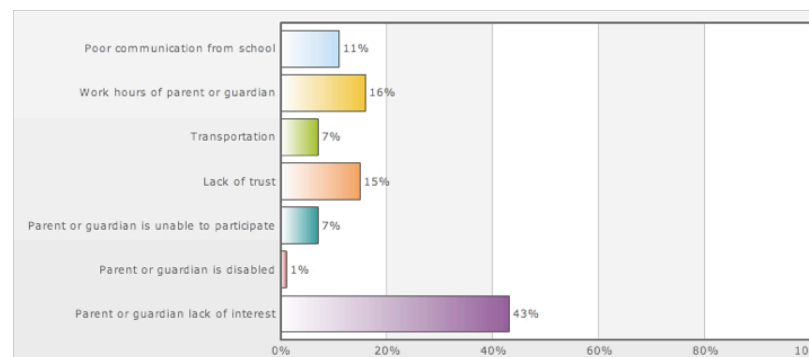
Contributing factors also include a reduction in State funding; the District has taken steps to “right-staff” the number of teachers to support the average daily attendance, which has declined.

<sup>5</sup> Source: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/aeis/2008/district.srch.html> It should be noted that individual campus figures vary and these numbers are the average for the entire District.

<sup>6</sup> The Cost of Underpaying Texas Teachers, Texas Comptroller, December 2004 at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/teachersalary04/>

## Inconsistent and Weak Parent/Guardian Involvement

Research shows a strong correlation between student and direct parental involvement, and especially so, in the early years of a child’s development. A North Forest poll<sup>7</sup> was conducted, which asked the following question: *What is the greatest barrier to increasing parental involvement and participation at all grade levels?*



43 percent of respondent’s selected “**parent or guardian lack of interest**” as the greatest barrier to parental involvement. Parental involvement during the elementary years is vital in helping children attain academic success. Parent involvement tends to peak while the children are in the elementary school. Research shows that the earlier parental involvement begins in a child’s educational process, the more

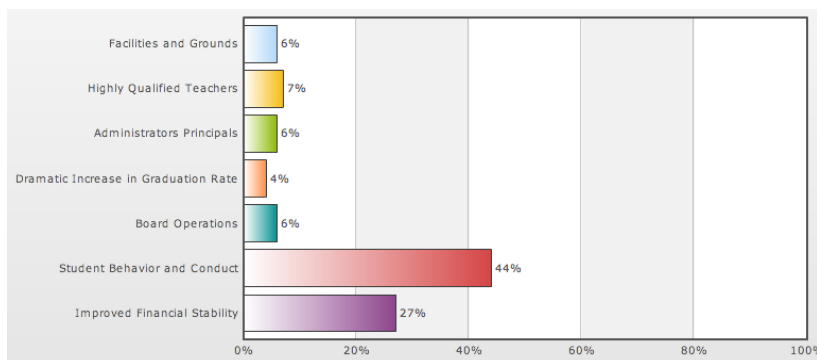
<sup>7</sup> Online poll conducted April 23 thru April 29, 2009.

powerful the effect will be<sup>8</sup>.

## Poor Student Behavior and Conduct

Another North Forest poll was conducted, which asked the following question: *Which area should be the focus to change current perceptions and image of North Forest ISD over the next 12 months?*

44 percent of respondents indicated “**student behavior and conduct**” as the primary focus to change the perceptions and image of the District. This data is important because it reflects an “internal look” and not one imposed by external sources.



## Outdated and Unattractive High School Campus

North Forest ISD now has one high school down from two, just two years ago. The performance of a high school for the great majority of school districts tends to be the centerpiece for how stakeholders view the quality of the District. The high school building experiences pervasive HVAC and draining problems<sup>9</sup> that create unbearable conditions for students and teachers. The cafeteria equipment currently in use is over 30 years old and continues to require costly repairs. The career and technology buildings, which are located across the street from the main high school, reflect an outdated facility that offers an environment that is not conducive to learning. These facilities require a complete overhaul and actually represent a great opportunity to transform existing facilities to support jobs of the future. The emergence of new, “green jobs” that include alternative energy production and efficiency; green building construction and retrofitting agriculture and natural resource conservation represent a gateway to high-paying jobs that could start in the North Forest community.

<sup>8</sup> Nicole Fredricks, The importance of parental involvement in improving a child's literacy, <http://www.helium.com/items/889403-the-importance-of-parental-involvement-in-improving-a-childs-literacy>

<sup>9</sup> The District is addressing these problems aggressively to ready the high school campus for the start of the 2009-10 school year.

## Inordinately High Leadership Turnover with Superintendent Position

To chart a favorable course for a school district requires stable and trustworthy leadership in the superintendent position. The superintendent sets the tone for the District by working with the Board, external political bodies, and internally with administrators, school principals, and teaching staffs. North Forest has had four (4) interim or full superintendents in the last 6 years; this means a new face roughly every 18 months<sup>10</sup>. Driving these frequent changes is the result of behavior of previous boards, which includes poor decision-making processes, and micro-management in day-to-day decision making of personnel matters; often Board meetings would last till after midnight<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> In reverse chronological order: October 2008 to present, Dr. Adrain Johnson; William Jones (interim superintendent) March 2007 to October 2008; Dr. James Simpson, Superintendent; August 2004 to February 2007; Dr. Elaine Berry (interim superintendent) June 2003 to July 2004.

<sup>11</sup> As part of North Forest Independent School District (NFISD) performance review, a public forum was held at Shadydale Elementary School on March 19 and 21, 2002. Members of the public were invited to record comments they have regarding the NFISD education system. Community members and school staff who participated in the public forums gave their comments about the 12 areas under review. Full comments at can be found at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/tspr/northforest/appa1.htm>



## Poor Organizational Alignment, and Collaboration Between Campus Leadership and Central Administration

Cross-department collaboration, coordination, and communication enable the flow of information that enables sound decision-making to achieve desired outcomes. Despite the small size of the District's administrative team, basic cross-functional processes are performed in a less than optimal way. For example, in the financial management and purchasing area, there is poor internal follow-through with purchasing processes and no accountability or consequence for going around or not following purchasing processes.

In addition, under prior Board leadership, external forces would override or not adhere to suggested decisions to terminate in personnel matters<sup>12</sup>. Another example is failing to disclose fully the status of projects and reports.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, regarding technology, there is minimal to virtually no planning with the IT group regarding technology purchases. The site-based decision model at school campuses should not exclude departments with appropriate expertise, rather campuses should leverage internal resources to assist with making sound purchasing decisions at the school level.

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<sup>12</sup> Stakeholder comments from eight (8) distinct functional areas during focus group SWOT analysis. These areas include: Financial Management and Purchasing, Technology, Facilities and Risk Management, Human Resource Management, Educational Service Delivery, District Organization and Management, Transportation, Food Service & Security and Community Involvement.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.



## Minimal Policies or Operating Procedures in Force

Sound business practices that are documented and accessible contribute to clarity of roles that helps individuals and departments to handle situations in an effective way. While conducting SWOT analysis, all focus groups expressed deep concerns about the absence of written policies; they expressed that not having clear and documented policies hampers the ability of employees to make consistent and higher quality decisions.

To illustrate, in the facilities and maintenance area, which oversees the upkeep of all school properties and facilities, there are non-certified staff performing HVAC, electrical and plumbing without the necessary certifications. What was learned was that there is a lack of willingness and desire to obtain certifications; the result is the need to hire outside contractors to perform duties. Policies do not exist to substantiate personnel decisions to terminate low performing staff in these situations.

During focus groups it was learned that the police unit does not have clearly defined policies and procedures in place to respond to investigations; the response from North Forest police is to call the Houston Police Department (HPD) and allow HPD to write and file written reports about an incident. In another illustration, there are reports of children using counterfeit money and staff does not know how to handle these situations properly.





## Lack of Innovative Educational Programs

Innovative educational programs that facilitate different results and outcomes for students are essential to closing the achievement gap. The Obama Stimulus Plan calls for \$100 billion to go toward revitalizing the nation's school districts, and other aspects of education, which includes daycare, and higher education institutions. K-12 stands to get a "fresh start" with this injection of capital. Of this figure roughly \$13 billion is Title I funds that will go to aid schools with a high number of low-income students to help fund extra programs.

However, it is vital to spend this money effectively to achieve targeted outcomes that matter. For North Forest ISD, stimulus funds will be linked to the strategic priorities as set forth in this strategic plan. Today, programs at North Forest focus on what is referred to as a "traditional track" for students. Technology academies, magnet campuses, and experiences that push innovation are not the norm for the District. High quality, innovative academic programs that provide value for students to pursue their unique interests and help with life after college is what draws students as well as parents to a school district. By offering innovative curriculum, global learning exchanges, application of technology and teachers committed to excellence are essential ingredients to attract new students to the District.

This is the moment of truth for North Forest ISD as the potential recipient of Stimulus Funds. Thus, the value in this strategic plan will

help insure, that the money is spent on the right priorities, at the right time and executed in the right way, as implementation and change management will be crucial. The District cannot afford to spend without accountability and impunity, because it would be irresponsible and negligent to do so and thus violate the trust in the citizens of the North Forest community. The District's approach will emphasize developing an innovative portfolio of educational programs and practices.

A good example of innovation in practice is the [Harlem Children's Zone \(HCZ\)](#)<sup>14</sup> in New York. It is one of the most ambitious social experiments to alleviate poverty in an urban setting. The center of the HCZ is whether schools alone can close the achievement gap, or whether the issues children bring to school as a result of being reared in poverty are too much for even the best educators to overcome.<sup>15</sup> The HCZ program uses a web of community services created for children from birth to college graduation that are designed to ensure the social environment outside of school is positive and supportive<sup>16</sup>. For North Forest ISD this is an example of the type of creative thinking and collaborative partnerships can bring to the District to fulfill its vision, that is sorely missing today.

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<sup>14</sup> Full details of the Harlem Children's Zone at <http://www.hcz.org/>

<sup>15</sup> Are High-Quality Schools Enough to Close the Achievement Gap? Evidence from a Bold Social Experiment in Harlem, Will Dobbie and Roland G. Fryer, Jr. Harvard University, April 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, page 2

# Strategic Recommendations

## Vision

North Forest ISD will be the most innovative urban learning environment that serves as a beacon for teacher innovation, community collaboration and student self-discovery.

The **Strategic Recommendations** outlined below provide the energy within each of the **Strategic Priorities (SP)** and ensure that the District’s focus remains steady. In addition, the Campus Improvement Plans (CIP) would align with and factor the strategic priorities and strategic recommendation that help achieve the vision. This means that the tactical actions and projects on which school principals budget and report, must take into account the strategic plan in their prioritization, decision-making and funding.



## SP - Student Achievement<sup>17</sup>

### **Strategic Recommendations**

1. Identify and correct adverse practices or policies that widen the achievement gap to support higher levels of academic performance in all subject areas as measured by State and federal performance standards.
2. Establish repeatable innovation processes that align curriculum and instruction with testing methods, allowing for the sharing of best practices and reuse amongst teachers and administrators.
3. Identify and leverage experts to address student achievement gaps in math and science for secondary schools.
4. Create “Careers of The Future” program with higher education partners to train and ready students through in-class, online learning and site visits for hands-on learning and application of knowledge.
5. Establish new technology partnerships with higher education, K-12 School Districts, and vendors that supports global learning opportunities as an advanced technology center of excellence.

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<sup>17</sup> By 2014, NFISD students will participate in teaching and curriculum innovations geared towards increasing the academic performance and career readiness of urban students.

## SP – Quality Workforce & Compensation<sup>18</sup>

### ***Strategic Recommendations***

6. Identify and retain high-performing teaching staff with mandatory professional development and career support to achieve superior results for all students.
7. Institute comprehensive skills and job alignment to achieve best job matches and remove low performers when required.
8. Establish incentive compensation plan to close school administrator and teacher pay gap.

## SP – Financial Stability & Governance<sup>19</sup>

### ***Strategic Recommendations***

9. Develop capital stewardship and management discipline to improve resource allocation, and decision-making for higher

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<sup>18</sup> By 2014, NFISD will have a workforce that represents increased diversity supported by developmental opportunities and compensation practices to support continuous improvement in how the District, attracts, retains, and develops talent.

<sup>19</sup> By 2014, NFISD will have a District-wide view of capital stewardship, resource allocation, and budgeting that is professionally managed. The District will require broader and deeper integration of business processes, budgeting and reporting practices that offer transparency and financial integrity.

quality outcomes and to obtain better value for District expenditures.

10. Execute school consolidation to provide most efficient use of available capital for near-term financial relief.
11. Implement performance reporting and accountability reviews for school principals and District administrators to evaluate progress.
12. Develop new partnership and revenue opportunities to increase enrollment and bring in alternative sources of revenue (e.g. vehicle advertising foundation development)

## SP – Technology Advanced Facilities<sup>20</sup>

### ***Strategic Recommendations***

13. Implement the use of technology to support learning anytime and access from anywhere at North Forest campuses and facilities.
14. Incorporate modern technologies to improve safety, minimize thefts, and reduce vandalism at school properties.

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<sup>20</sup> By 2014, NFISD will offer technologically advanced facilities and infrastructure that prepares students and provide teachers with relevant technology support and the ability to apply technology for high-paying jobs of the future

15. Launch high school cafeteria modernization by transforming into “Cafeteria Dining Experience of the Future”

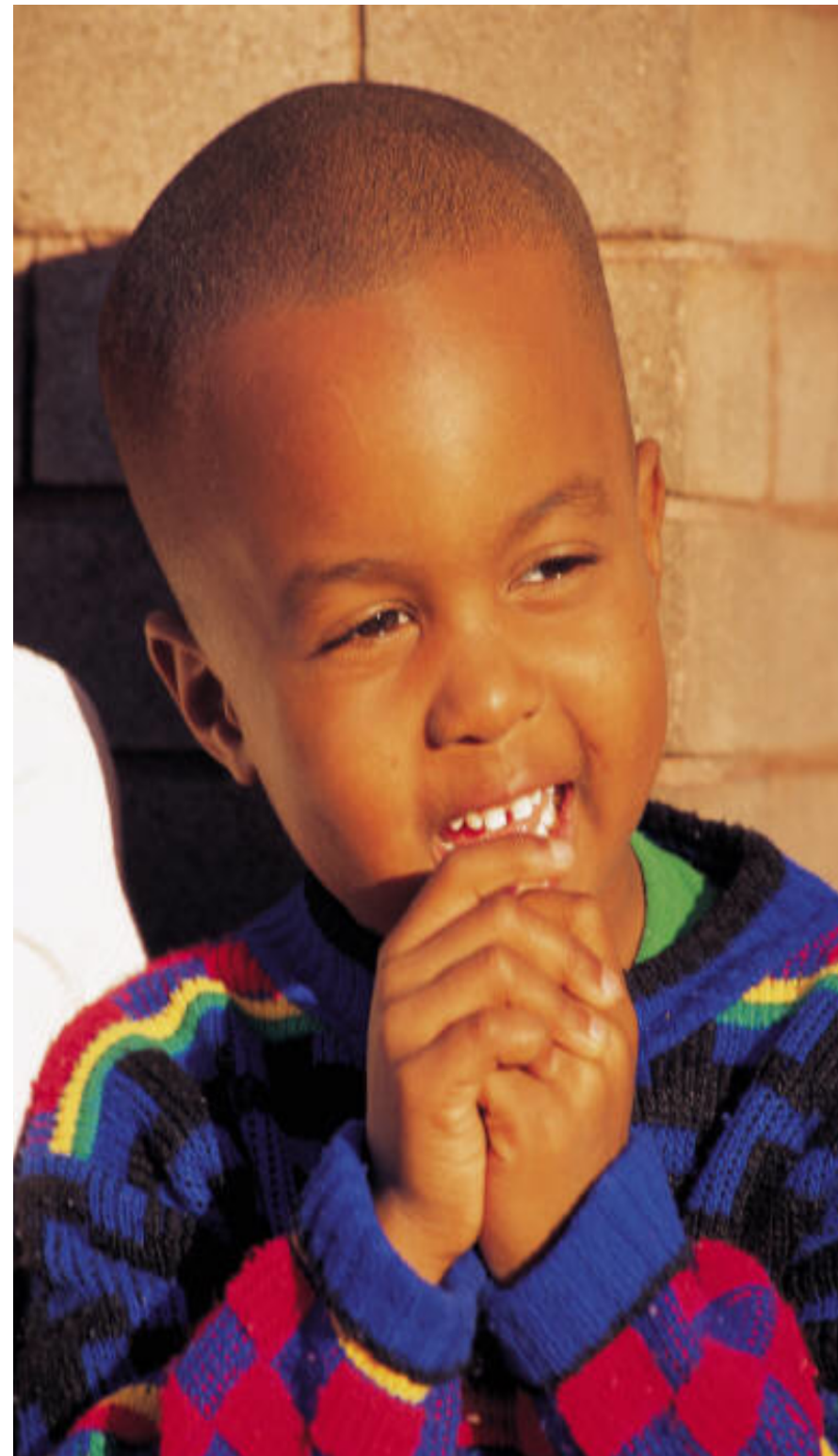
## SP – Safety and Community Involvement<sup>21</sup>

### ***Strategic Recommendations***

16. Outline entire catalog of services that people across the District consume to create an information-clearing house and access point as a catalyst for higher living standards for elderly, young adults and children.
17. Devise “Family Involvement” campaign to transform relationships with community members and families that support deeper levels of interest about student achievement and extracurricular activities.

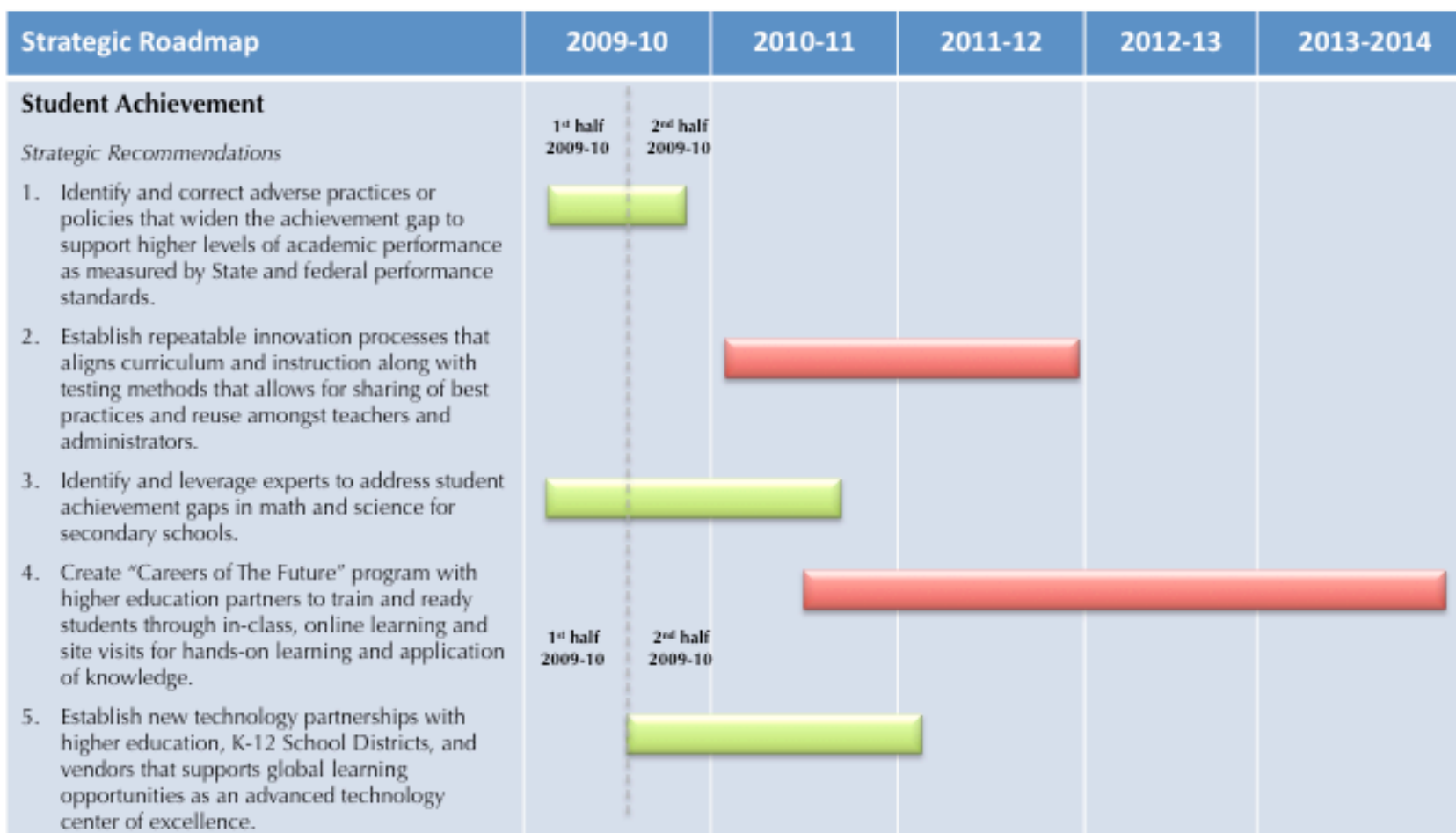
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<sup>21</sup> By 2014, NFISD will be a vital community resource for citizens that serve as an information-clearing house to facilitate how people improve their quality of life. The District will rely heavily on security and safety, and coordination of resources with religious organization and public agencies to realize a safe atmosphere in which children can learn with fewer distractions.



# Strategic Roadmap 2009-2014

The Strategic Roadmap for North Forest ISD serves as a guide to follow to achieve the vision for the District. The execution approach for how to implement the strategic plan is divided into two parts. First, we layout a broad timeline of the high-level plan; second, we set forth the implementation steps and explanation for each strategic recommendation. In summary, we provide you with the where the District is going, why the District is going there, how to achieve the vision, and the relative timing for when certain actions should happen.








# Strategic Roadmap 2009-2014 (continued)

Strategic Roadmap	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-2014
<p><b>Quality Workforce and Compensation</b></p> <p><i>Strategic Recommendation</i></p> <p>6. Identify and retain high-performing teaching staff with mandatory professional development and career support to achieve superior results for all students.</p> <p>7. Institute comprehensive skills and job alignment to achieve best job matches and removing low performers when required.</p> <p>8. Establish incentive compensation plan to close school administrator and teacher pay gap.</p>	<p>1<sup>st</sup> half 2009-10</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> half 2009-10</p>				
<p><b>Financial Stability &amp; Governance</b></p> <p><i>Strategic Recommendation</i></p> <p>9. Develop capital stewardship and management discipline to improve resource allocation, and decision-making for higher quality outcomes and to obtain better value for District expenditures.</p> <p>10. Execute school consolidation to provide most efficient use of available capital for near-term financial relief.</p> <p>11. Implement performance reporting and accountability reviews for school principals and District administrators to evaluate progress.</p> <p>12. Develop new partnerships to increase enrollment and alternative sources of revenue (e.g. vehicle advertising foundation development)</p>	<p>1<sup>st</sup> half 2009-10</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> half 2009-10</p>				

# Strategic Roadmap 2009-2014 (continued)

**NOTE:** Specific educational programs, financial and business-driven projects, technology, building improvement projects and other community-based initiatives and partnerships that are in progress or planned, will be evaluated closely to show direct outcomes that support implementation of the strategic plan and to monitor allocation of resources authorized by the federal government due to potential Stimulus funding.

Strategic Roadmap	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-2014
<b>Technology Advanced Facilities</b>					
<i>Strategic Recommendation</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> half 2009-10	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 2009-10			
13. Implement the use of technology to support learning anytime and access from anywhere at North Forest campuses and facilities.					
14. Incorporate modern technologies to improve safety, minimize thefts, and reduce vandalism at school properties.					
15. Launch high school cafeteria modernization by transforming into "Cafeteria Dining Experience of the Future"					
<b>Safety and Community Involvement</b>					
<i>Strategic Recommendation</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> half 2009-10	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 2009-10			
16. Outline entire catalog of services that people across the District consume that serve as an information-clearing house and access point that serves as a catalyst for higher living standards for elderly, young adults and children.					
17. Devise "Family Involvement" campaign to transform relationships with community members and families that support deeper levels of interest about student achievement and extracurricular activities.					

# Strategic Plan Implementation Steps

To advance towards the vision, we provide an overview to jumpstart what needs to actually happen to mobilize and start delivering on the strategic plan. The objective for the implementation steps is to explain and clarify with the goal of obtaining full understanding and to create a sense of urgency. These action steps are intended to serve as a high-level guide and not intended to be detailed work plans; these are best suited to assign accountability and supporting projects are authorized, funded and resources assigned. While these recommendations are vital and necessary, funding and approval by the Board of Managers may be required to advance some of the recommendations.

Strategic Recommendations	Purpose	Initial Implementation Steps	Timing
<p><b>Student Achievement</b></p> <p><b>SR1:</b> Identify and correct adverse practices or policies that widen the achievement gap to support higher levels of academic performance in all subject areas as measured by State and federal performance standards.</p>	<p>To reduce the frequency of placements that promotes low student achievement and does not take advantage fully of approaches and practices for children to participate in normal classroom settings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communicate revised expectations to instructional staff, teachers and principals</li> <li>▪ Identify adverse practices or policies that do not promote more advanced behavior and thinking</li> <li>▪ Develop and/or upgrade methods of assessment and placement of students in special education or disciplinary programs that address the symptom and not root causes of behavior or impede success. (e.g. smart student with high potential with reserved demeanor and occasional behavioral outbursts placed in DAEP program when counseling services would be more appropriate and helpful to the long-term success of the student)</li> <li>▪ Implement evaluation/monitoring mechanisms that adhere to state and federal guidelines to determine academic progress, and other evaluative factors.</li> </ul>	<p>2009-10</p>



<p><b>Student Achievement</b></p> <p><b>SR2:</b> Establish repeatable innovation processes that align curriculum and instruction with testing methods, allowing for the sharing of best practices and reuse amongst teachers and administrators.</p>	<p>To provide a knowledge base and repeatable establish repeatable process for innovation in teaching and use of technology. Repeatable innovation processes in teaching can close the achievement gap and position students college readiness or career readiness for students through identifying innovative practices that focus on the unique attributes of each student.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create District Innovation Committee (DIC) to develop charter, and drive implementation, enforcement, and monitoring of innovation practices across the District.</li> <li>▪ Develop “dashboard” of college readiness or work force readiness indicators: cognitive strategies, content knowledge, academic behaviors, contextual skills<sup>22</sup></li> <li>▪ Collaborate with human resources and outside agencies to identify leadership and human capital tools to determine the roles, skills and behaviors to effectively implement college readiness or work force readiness</li> <li>▪ Compile comprehensive data on innovative teaching practices or curriculum in force or desired to use in the District</li> <li>▪ Develop innovation partnership with local and regional universities to facilitate funding of academic pilots and experiential activities</li> </ul>	<p>2010-11</p>
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<sup>22</sup> College Readiness Learning System, [Stupski Foundation](#), 2008

Strategic Recommendations	Purpose	Initial Implementation Steps	Timing
<p><b>Student Achievement (continued)</b></p> <p><b>SR3:</b> Identify and leverage experts to address student achievement gaps in math and science for secondary schools.</p>	<p>To support focused and targeted assistance in high need (math and science) academic areas to drive both academic and standardized testing performance that improves TAKS results for students. Doing so, promotes an increase for admission to four-year schools and the attainment of an official high school diploma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify experts who can work comfortably and have experience motivating students in the District</li> <li>▪ Create “Test Prep” lab to facilitate online, afterschool and weekend learning experiences</li> <li>▪ Evaluate technology architecture to facilitate online tutoring, test taking and facilitate virtual study groups with students from other Districts across the country</li> </ul>	<p>2009-11</p>
<p><b>SR4:</b> Create “Careers of The Future” program with higher education partners to train and ready students through in-class, online learning and site visits for hands-on learning and application of knowledge.</p>	<p>To facilitate on the job learning experiences for jobs that may be suitable to students who are not college bound by providing early exposure to viable “new green jobs” as an alternative as well as high-tech jobs in the regional economy of Houston.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish linkage with higher education partners (e.g. HCC)</li> <li>▪ Develop career path options consistent with offerings to reflect options</li> <li>▪ Design and institute standards for requirement into Careers of the Future program</li> <li>▪ Launch pilot program to support alignment with high paying careers and mentoring program to develop appropriate skills, experience and education</li> <li>▪ Obtain authorization and approval by Board of Managers</li> </ul>	<p>2010-14</p>
<p><b>SR5:</b> Establish new technology partnerships with higher education, K-12 School Districts, and vendors that supports global learning opportunities as an advanced technology center of excellence.</p>	<p>To reduce total cost of ownership and reduce implementation issues associated with new technology by working with more experienced partners. The District benefits by fostering new ways to leverage human capital from other outside experts as “education partners” with deep experience in applications in which the District does not possess the same level of understanding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determine Stimulus funding guidelines for new technology and pursue education-technology grants</li> <li>▪ Create technology architecture design to meet student and community needs in 2014</li> <li>▪ Establish vendor guidelines and communicate to assist North Forest by providing innovative ideas and options to consider</li> <li>▪ Implement technology pilots to test feasibility of solutions for the District (e.g. new offsite storage and backup, applications, cloud computing, etc)</li> </ul>	<p>2010-11</p>

Strategic Recommendations	Purpose	Initial Implementation Steps	Timing
<p><b>Quality Workforce &amp; Compensation</b></p> <p><b>SR6:</b> Identify and retain high-performing teaching staff with mandatory professional development and career support to achieve superior results for all students.</p>	<p>To reduce staff turnover and increase job satisfaction for sustainable academic impacts with students. The benefit is more devoted and higher-performing teachers who possess the right mix of skill, experience, and personal desire to improve academic performance with students across the District.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop and communicate new professional development program</li> <li>▪ Institute annual “skills and relevance” checkup to ascertain the level of staff skill and understanding of new methods and technologies</li> <li>▪ Review best practice models across industries for professional development</li> <li>▪ Develop partnerships with outside organizations to leverage tools and reduce licensing costs of assessment instruments and knowledge base</li> <li>▪ Determine level of funding required to implement professional development and skills upgrades</li> </ul>	<p>2009-10</p>
<p><b>SR7:</b> Institute comprehensive skills and job alignment to achieve best job matches and remove low performers when required.</p>	<p>To identify and place the best staff who are best suited with the relevant skills to help the District achieve near-term objectives and the longer-term vision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify critical skill needs for each department and job family</li> <li>▪ Conduct gap analysis to determine what skills are needed compared to what skills are available</li> <li>▪ Update position descriptions for all positions at all levels to reflect current skills</li> </ul>	<p>2009-11</p>
<p><b>SR8:</b> Establish incentive compensation plan to close school administrator and teacher pay gap.</p>	<p>To improve the ability to recruit and retain a stable teaching corps. The District benefits by having teacher continuity, which promotes deeper relationships between teachers and students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop financial model to determine economic feasibility and its impact to the District</li> <li>▪ Consult with compensation consulting firms for options on how to implement</li> <li>▪ Create incentive program based on teaching innovation and increases in student achievement and other factors</li> <li>▪ Obtain approval from Board of Managers</li> </ul>	<p>2010-12</p>

Strategic Recommendations	Purpose	Initial Implementation Steps	Timing
<p><b>Financial Stability and Governance</b></p> <p><b>SR9:</b> Develop capital stewardship and management discipline to improve resource allocation, and decision-making for higher quality outcomes and to obtain better value for District expenditures.</p>	<p>To address material deficiencies in financial reporting, and overall management discrepancies as reported by TEA<sup>23</sup>. The district benefits through improved decision-making, greater transparency, and outcomes that support both state and federal guidelines of NCLB and financial management practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduce fund balance 2009–10 budget and align program spending to reflect performance achievements desired by the Strategic Plan</li> <li>▪ Develop “capital stewardship and responsibility council”</li> <li>▪ Develop and implement facilities revitalization plan for high school and vocational and technology facility</li> <li>▪ Align 2009-10 Campus Improvement Plans (CIP) with Strategic Plan 2014</li> <li>▪ Streamline financial reporting capability for 2009-10 to report performance that aligns with direction of the strategic plan</li> </ul>	<p>Implement Immediately</p>
<p><b>SR10:</b> Execute school consolidation to provide most efficient use of available capital for near-term financial relief.</p>	<p>To alleviate financial stress of maintaining facilities that are underutilized that is the result of declining student enrollment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete implementation of current plans and continually evaluate financial performance</li> <li>▪ Phase out and/or reduce maintenance contracts with vendors</li> <li>▪ Obtain authorization and approval by Board of Managers</li> </ul>	<p>In Progress</p>

<sup>23</sup> Source: TEA Final Report letter, June 13, 2008. Based on on-site observations and information gathered from records and interviews, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) concluded that the District had material, systemic and pervasive weakness in its financial, accounting, and data reporting system and in its systems of complying with federal and state program requirements, reflecting a lack of proper internal controls to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the District. These weaknesses resulted in serious and persistent deficiencies in both the academic and financial performance of the District.

Strategic Recommendations	Purpose	Initial Implementation Steps	Timing
<p><b>Financial Stability and Governance (continued)</b></p> <p><b>SR11:</b> Implement performance reporting and accountability reviews for school principals and District administrators to evaluate progress.</p>	<p>To facilitate accountability and ownership for results and outcomes relevant to closing the student achievement gap, financial and operational performance of the District. The benefit to the District is the ability to improve execution and to foster communications that are more direct across the District and to external stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Orient principals to new expectations for performance reporting, and accountability to fulfill the strategic vision for each strategic priority</li> <li>▪ Develop common performance measurements across K-12 schools that demonstrate linkage between tactics, behaviors, and results</li> <li>▪ Align operating departments, staff employees and campus principals to ensure that each department and campus has in place projects and tactics that support the strategic vision for the District</li> <li>▪ Develop and implement facilities revitalization plan for high school and vocational and technology facility</li> </ul>	<p>2010-13</p>
<p><b>SR12:</b> Develop new partnerships and revenue opportunities to increase enrollment and bring in alternative sources of revenue (e.g. vehicle advertising, foundation development)</p>	<p>To stimulate new ways to generate capital that promotes long-term financial stability and strengthen specialty programs that make the District unique.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop new and unusual strategic connections to facilitate new partnerships for support with larger companies that serve the community (e.g. Western Union, AutoZone, Waste Management)</li> <li>▪ Establish idea generation group within the schools to uncover new opportunities that increase revenue for the District potentially</li> <li>▪ Identify external resource (consultant) to design education foundation and most effective ways to launch, implement and manage long-term</li> <li>▪ Develop idea review process to ascertain feasibility and likelihood of implementing new revenue generating ideas</li> </ul>	<p>2010-12</p>

Strategic Recommendations	Purpose	Initial Implementation Steps	Timing
<p><b>Technology Advanced Facilities</b></p> <p><b>SR13:</b> Implement the use of technology to support learning anytime and access from anywhere at North Forest campuses and facilities.</p>	<p>To capture the full value of technology in an environment that fosters collaborative work groups internally and with external business partners. The benefit to the District is a lower total cost of ownership and simplified maintenance of technology tools and support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue with upgrade of infrastructure to increase bandwidth and reliability of Internet access</li> <li>▪ Perform review of campus best practices at K-12, and higher education to implement reliable and consistent wireless architecture</li> <li>▪ Build support and understanding with campus Principals</li> <li>▪ Develop core requirements for computing at each campus (e.g. type of applications, frequency, video, communications, testing)</li> <li>▪ Revamp hardware and configurations to be consistent from campus to campus</li> </ul>	<p>2009-10</p>
<p><b>SR14:</b> Incorporate modern technologies to improve safety, minimize thefts, and reduce vandalism at school properties.</p>	<p>To protect and promote physical safety of students and employees, reduce theft of hard equipment assets and reduce criminal activity on school properties. The District benefits through a more responsive police force and the ability to work more collaboratively with external police to address criminal and non-criminal (e.g. vandalism, graffiti) activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create "Safety and Security Portfolio" of needs for all District facilities to determine priorities, feasibility and cost</li> <li>▪ Design security approach for building security, and other District facilities</li> <li>▪ Establish creative partnerships and grants to reduce cost of implementation through pilots</li> <li>▪ Examine feasibility of location-based services (LBS) to track and monitor location of staff</li> </ul>	<p>2010-14</p>

Strategic Recommendations	Purpose	Initial Implementation Steps	Timing
<p><b>Technology Advanced Facilities (continued)</b></p> <p><b>SR15:</b> Launch high school cafeteria modernization by transforming into “Cafeteria Dining Experience of the Future”</p>	<p>To create an atmosphere that facilitates improved student behavior, more pleasant interactions by providing a modern dining experience for students. The benefit is a positive gathering place for students to congregate, exchange ideas, study and promote healthy peer-to-peer behaviors and reduce incidents of violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Design next generation dining experience that incorporates latest technology for food management, inventory control, payment and financial reconciliation</li> <li>▪ Establish design committee consisting of students, teachers and administrators</li> <li>▪ Implement Wi-Fi zone that serves as “public square” for school related interaction, after school programs and public meetings for community</li> <li>▪ Continue consultation services with architects as early stage analysis</li> <li>▪ Develop more detailed budget and offset with available federal monies to determine actual cost to the District</li> </ul>	<p>2010-11</p>
<p><b>Safety and Community Involvement (continued)</b></p> <p><b>SR16:</b> Outline entire catalog of services that people across the District consume to create an information-clearing house and access point as a catalyst for higher living standards for elderly, young adults and children.</p>	<p>To develop a District-driven model to facilitate the appropriate type of support to meet the needs of students outside the school environment. By establishing a web of connected services and identifying who are various stakeholders that include public agencies, citizens groups and private sector organizations, appropriate services can be accessed that benefit students and the families of students. The benefit to students is necessary interventions, and support that allows them to focus on academic achievement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify and organize a comprehensive list of all agencies and organizations with which the District has an “existing” relationship and “prior” relationships that are no longer active</li> <li>▪ Determine the types of services that represent the greatest need for students</li> <li>▪ Conduct lessons learned review of existing practices that work well, and programs that did not work well</li> <li>▪ Develop marketing and communications campaigns of available services</li> <li>▪ Identify technology related services that promote more efficient and timely contact with community members (e.g. emergency mobile service for elderly)</li> <li>▪ Develop tight web of partnerships with City, County and State services to promote child</li> </ul>	<p>2010-13</p>

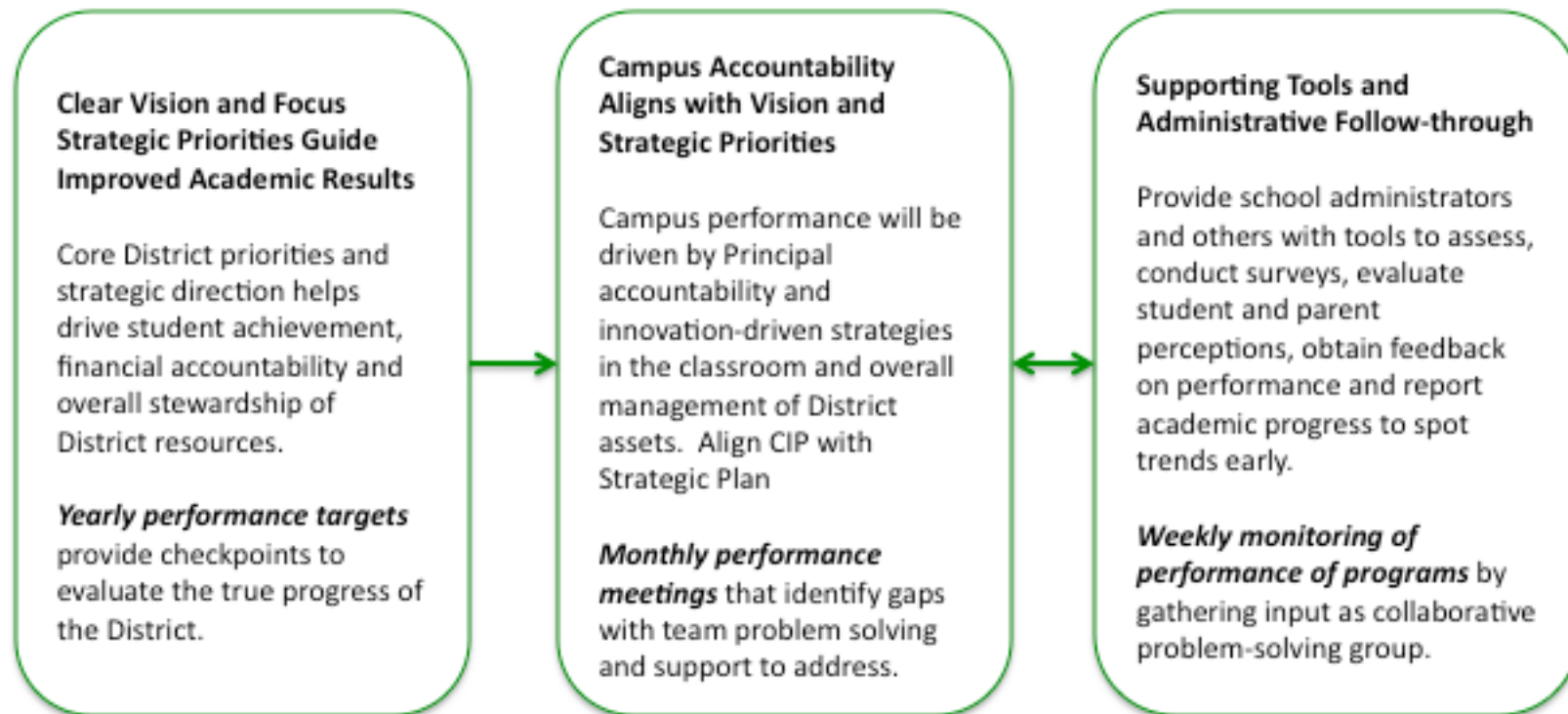
<p><b>Safety and Community Involvement (continued)</b></p> <p><b>SR16:</b> Outline entire catalog of services that people across the District consume to create an information-clearing house and access point as a catalyst for higher living standards for elderly, young adults and children.</p>		<p>advocacy (e.g. health, living conditions, serving as primary care giver for adult, etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish Community Liaison Office to oversee and build bridges with external partners in systematic way that is monitored and progress reported</li> </ul>	
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Strategic Recommendations	Purpose	Initial Implementation Steps	Timing
<p><b>SR17:</b> Devise “Family Involvement” campaign to transform relationships with community members and families that support deeper levels of interest about student achievement and extracurricular activities.</p>	<p>To increase student self-esteem and interest in school that leads to improved academic performance and success through <i>active</i> parent or guardian involvement. Through “Family Involvement” the circle of influence is expanded to include all people that know, care about and contribute to the success of a student.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Devise “Family Involvement” Committee comprised of North Forest community members</li> <li>▪ Establish “Family Involvement” resource portal for information and tools to increase active involvement from family members</li> <li>▪ Develop Committee charter and protocols for identifying, managing and reporting issues and managing performance</li> <li>▪ Conduct research to identify best practices in parental involvement</li> <li>▪ Devise communications approach for Family Involvement campaign across all schools</li> <li>▪ Create communication links with parents, guardians and interested family through text, email, phone, direct mail and face to face meetings</li> </ul>	<p>2009-14</p>



# Monitoring Performance to Pursue Vision

North Forest ISD will develop a performance management system to evaluate progress against the Strategic Plan’s 2014 vision, strategies, and tactical steps to implement the plan. Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) will serve as the “local blue print” for individual campuses; these CIPs must align with and drive towards delivering on the 2014 Vision of the Strategic Plan. Monthly reviews of performance will be held to identify and capture issues that focus on holding individuals accountable for resolving and reporting progress, not simply tasks. These attributes are paramount to implementing change.



## Thank You!

### Board of Managers

George McShan, Chair of the Board of Managers

Carolyn Bullard-Williams, Board of Managers Member

Willie Jones, Board of Managers Member

Kathy Hill, Board Secretary

Dr. Adrain Johnson, Superintendent

### District Leadership

Edna Forte, Director Federal Programs

Glenda Gims, Director Human Resources

Nakisha Myles, Communications Coordinator

Rodney Louis, Director

Dr. Veronica Sharp, Director of Secondary Education

Antoinette Sheppard, Director of Career and Technical Education

Rubye Gilbert, Principal Kirby Middle

Jacquelyn Hopkins, Principal Oak Village Middle

Gwenette Ferguson, Principal B.C. Elmore Middle

Edith R. Mahone, Principal Fonwood Elementary

Victor Nash, Principal A.G. Hilliard Elementary

Tatyanna Williams, Principal W.E. Rogers Elementary

Angelanet Allen, Principal Shadydale Elementary

Sharon Ratliff, Principal Thurgood Marshall Elementary

Dr. Patricia Pickles, Instructional Assistance Consultant

Dr. Johnny O'Connor, Director, Special Education

Greg Murray, IT Manager

Dr. Sharon Washington, Urban Teacher Transition Program Consultant

Travis Weatherspoon, Assistant Superintendent of Operations

Frank Williams III, Webmaster

Charles Yapple, Null Lairson, P.C. (District Auditor)

For additional information, please visit our website at [www.nfisd.org](http://www.nfisd.org) and click on **Strategic Plan 2014** for web version available soon.

# **North Forest Independent School District**

2009-2014 Strategic Plan



In partnership with Execution Architects Inc.

