

# Great Expectations

SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2017



# Great Expectations

## The Plan: Overview

### MISSION

To build, support, and sustain school communities that provide all students with a high-quality education that prepares them to graduate as responsible, active citizens ready for success in college and careers and prepared to compete in a global economy.

### VISION

To become the most improved urban school district in America.

### ULTIMATE GOAL

An educational community that graduates every student as a responsible, active citizen prepared for success in college, careers, and the global economy.

### GOALS

1. Provide all students with equitable access to rigorous curriculum with aligned instructional materials and assessments in all subjects and all grade levels
2. Recruit, develop, support, and retain effective teachers and school leaders
3. Develop infrastructure to support student success
4. Build a district culture based on high expectations, respect, and co-accountability for performance that recognizes and rewards excellence at all levels of the organization
5. Communicate effectively with all district stakeholders

# Letter to the Community

Dear Parents, Staff, and Community Members,

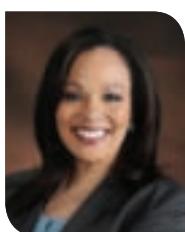
On behalf of the Syracuse City School District I am pleased to present to you a Strategic Plan that will inevitably transform our District. *Great Expectations 2012-2017* will serve as a roadmap that will guide education transformation in our schools.

We began the strategic planning process in January, and hundreds of individuals across our community contributed feedback, input, and support to the work of the Core Planning Team: twenty individuals who answered my call and made a collaborative commitment to create this Plan. (Please learn their names on our back credits page, and read the story of how the Plan came together on pages 5-7.) I offer my gratitude to them, and to each and every individual who dedicated time and effort to share insights that have proven invaluable to this process. We have heard your voices loud and clear, reflected in the new mission of the District. We must transform our schools to provide all students with a high-quality education that prepares them to graduate as responsible, active citizens ready for success in college and careers and prepared to compete in a global economy.

*Great Expectations 2012-2017* defines the important work that we will undertake over the next five years. Please examine the Overview page just opposite this letter, which defines the Plan's five reform-based goals. These goals, articulated in detail on pages 13-30, are the driving force behind our dedication to make our vision a reality: to become the most improved urban school district in America.

The world around us is becoming more complex and it is essential that we steer a course that will allow our students to be active and contributing members of this community, nation, and world. Transformation is needed now more than ever before. We have positioned ourselves for change. *Great Expectations 2012-2017* is the framework to ensure that we promote lasting transformation in our schools and communities. President John F. Kennedy once said, "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

Although ambitious and challenging, *Great Expectations 2012-2017* is our commitment to making a long-term, collective investment in our students and their future. The level of reform detailed in this plan requires new and innovative partnerships among parents, students, staff, and the community, that will improve the lives of generations of students and families. We look forward to your ongoing support and participation as we embark upon this journey.



In the Interest of All Children,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon L. Contreras".

Sharon L. Contreras  
Superintendent of Schools

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Provide all students with equitable access to rigorous curriculum with aligned instructional materials and assessments in all subjects and all grade levels

**GOAL 2:**

Recruit, develop, support, and retain effective teachers and school leaders

**GOAL 3:**

Develop infrastructure to support student success

**GOAL 4:**

Build a district culture based on high expectations, respect, and co-accountability for performance that recognizes and rewards excellence at all levels of the organization

**GOAL 5:**

Communicate effectively with all district stakeholders

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

# The Challenge

The City of Syracuse has changed dramatically over the last 20 years. Like many urban areas, shifting demographics and a changing economy have disrupted its business landscape and altered its needs. In the past, a large percentage of high school graduates could expect to find living-wage employment in low-skill manufacturing. Over time, most of those jobs have either moved overseas or been replaced by machines. Today, Syracuse students can expect to compete for new jobs in health sciences, high tech manufacturing, and education, all of which require higher levels of skills and knowledge than were needed in the past. Simply graduating from high school is no longer sufficient—now every Syracuse City School District (SCSD) student needs to be college and career ready.

The people of Syracuse have also changed since 1990; over 70 different languages are spoken in the SCSD schools. The percentage of students of color has grown from 47% to 72% and the percentage of low-income children has increased from 50% to 84%. Over the past ten years, more than 6,000 immigrants and refugees have made Syracuse their home, relocating from distant regions of the world including Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and various countries in Africa. Like the immigrants of the past, these families come with ambition and hope, but their children need support to make a successful transition to their new community. Too many of our newest residents are not getting the support they need to successfully make the transition.

If current performance continues, many students will be unprepared to compete in the global marketplace. In 2011 less than 30% of students in grades 3 through 8 met state proficiency standards. Only 13% of high school students scored an 85 or better on the English Regents exam, a good measure of college and workforce readiness. And perhaps of most concern, only 51% of students graduated from high school on time. Of those students who did graduate, none did so with an industry-based Career Technical Education certificate. Furthermore, Syracuse students trail behind



students in the four other urban districts of New York with which Syracuse competes for jobs and economic opportunities. Performance for all demographic groups—white, African American, Hispanic and Asian—is below the state averages.

If Syracuse  
is to thrive,  
we need to prepare *all* our  
students for success in a

21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY  
ECONOMY  
and for a life of

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP.

We must do better. We can do better. If Syracuse is to thrive, we need to prepare *all* our students for success in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy and for a life of active citizenship. That means that they need to be fully engaged in school and gain the skills and knowledge needed to continue to learn even after graduation. To achieve these ends, staff at all levels of the organization must hold high expectations for students, for themselves, and for the district.



## The Opportunity

Syracuse and SCSD have several unique strengths to build upon: powerful partnerships, a deeply caring and diverse community, and visionary new leadership that can leverage state and federal resources intended to accelerate improvement of urban schools.

The students of Syracuse are beneficiaries of a groundbreaking collaboration between the Say Yes to Education Foundation (SYTE) and other key partners including the City of Syracuse, Syracuse University, Onondaga County, the Syracuse Teachers Association, the Syracuse Association of Administrators and Supervisors, the American Institutes for Research, and a diverse group of Syracuse area corporate, non-profit, and philanthropic organizations. The Syracuse Citywide Program provides students with comprehensive academic, social/emotional, and health supports. It is the first district-wide initiative of SYTE, and demonstrates an unprecedented level of investment from an entire community in promoting lifelong success for its students.

Syracuse guarantees that all SCSD graduates who are accepted into college will receive financial support through the Say Yes Tuition Scholarship and Grant

program. Students who attend 10th, 11th and 12th grades and graduate from a Syracuse City School District high school are eligible for free college tuition at more than 100 Say Yes compact colleges in New York State. Since the fall of 2009, more than \$11 million in Say Yes scholarships has been granted to 2,000 Syracuse students attending two- and four-year colleges.

In collaboration with its Say Yes partners, the district has also expanded enrollment and successful completion of Advanced Placement courses, opened six school-based health centers and seven school-based legal clinics. It has expanded extended-day and extended-year programming, one-on-one tutoring, SAT prep, mentoring and advocacy services. It has also significantly reduced the student to social worker ratio in elementary and K-8 schools.

Here in Syracuse, great things are happening. Opportunities for our children are created every day as new research centers, commercial developments, and arts organizations revitalize our city. SCSD must keep the promise that each and every child will be prepared to participate in and contribute to this vibrant community.

New York State won a federal Race to the Top (RTTT) grant in 2010, which increased urgency and provided resources for meaningful education reforms, and

SCSD is well positioned to leverage the RTTT initiatives to address critical needs. This year, New York State adopted the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts and Mathematics. These new standards will raise the bar for student achievement in SCSD and require that teachers change their teaching to align with new, higher academic expectations.

New York State has also required implementation of a new system for evaluating teachers and school leaders. The new SCSD Teaching and Learning Framework, Leadership Framework, and evaluation systems provide a common language that clearly describe teacher and leader expectations and present the district with a chance to link educator performance with supports and rewards. These frameworks are aligned to the CCSS and provide the district the opportunity to target professional development to the specific skills where teachers and leaders need the most support. Across SCSD, expectations are high for students, teachers, leaders and central office staff.



## Developing the Plan

In July 2011, Superintendent Sharon L. Contreras assumed leadership of the Syracuse City School District. In her first month on the job, she issued a comprehensive Transformation Agenda that created diverse task forces to focus on priority areas. The Superintendent's Transformation Agenda also initiated broad and deep external diagnostic reviews of curriculum and instruction, talent management, finance and budget, information technology and special education. The results of those reviews were presented to the Board of Education Commissioners in December, 2011, and provided the starting point for this Plan. The reviews identified the following critical needs:

- Providing all students at all grade levels in all subjects with instruction based on coherent and aligned curricula, instructional materials, and assessments
- Improving educator effectiveness through focused and consistent training and professional development
- Building systems for recruiting, selecting, hiring, developing, and evaluating staff at all levels
- Developing systems to ensure that special education students benefit from inclusion and have access to quality instruction and needed supports
- Allocating financial and human resources consistent with the district's strategic priorities

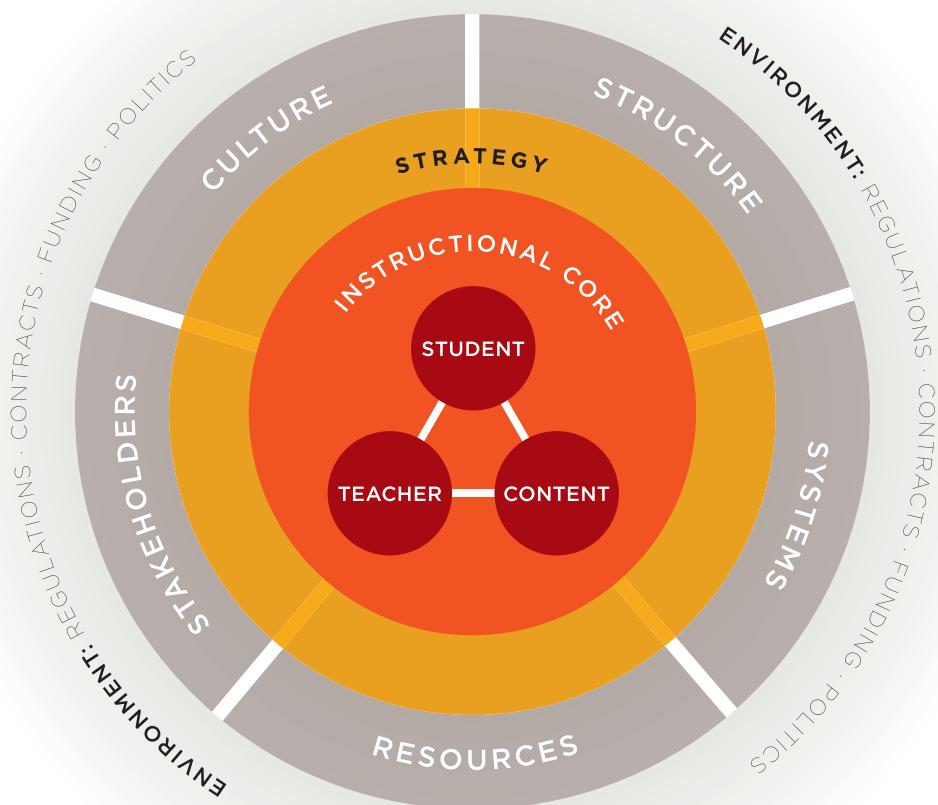
In March 2012, Superintendent Contreras invited representatives of multiple stakeholder groups to participate on a Core Planning Team (CPT) to develop recommendations for a five-year Strategic Plan. Members of the CPT included parents, representatives from higher education, teacher and administrator unions, the district central office, community-based organizations, and the religious, political and business communities.

# Coherence Framework

The CPT used the PELP Coherence Framework as the conceptual basis for the Plan. Consistent with the Framework's focus on the instructional core, the CPT worked from the understanding that student learning will improve only when there are changes to the rigor of the content, the capacity of teachers to engage students in the content, and the readiness of students to engage in learning. In order to impact student learning, any district improvement strategy needs to directly affect at least one element of the

instructional core. If changes are made to one element of the core, changes also need to be made in the other two. For example, if a district introduces more rigorous curricula, it also needs to ensure that the teachers understand the new content and that the students are prepared to struggle with more challenging work. Improvement strategies need to address district and school culture, systems, structures, resources, and stakeholders, while recognizing the external environment.

The CPT began the process by reviewing the findings and recommendations of the external reviews of central office departments, as well as updates from district staff and task force representatives regarding progress to date, to understand the current state of the district. During April and May, surveys were distributed and numerous focus groups and public forums were



held to engage community members about their concerns and get their input on plan priorities. In addition to events held in schools, churches, and community centers, central office staff and CPT members went door-to-door to speak directly with families in their homes.

Hundreds of people were engaged in the strategic planning process, with diverse community representation. Five themes emerged from the sessions and the surveys:

- District staff needs to expect more from all students; Syracuse students can be successful with rigorous curricula and great expectations.
- The district needs to communicate more effectively with its staff, students, parents, community residents and partners, and create avenues for real dialogue.
- The district needs to focus on doing a few things well; multiple initiatives driven by the availability of funds has led to incoherence and inconsistency from school to school, grade to grade, and classroom to classroom.
- Resources—human, financial and capital—need to be allocated equitably across the district.
- Everyone in the district—administrators, teachers, students, and other staff—needs to be held accountable for meeting ambitious, clear expectations, and supported with the resources and systems to be successful.

Informed by feedback from the community events and surveys and the findings and recommendations from the departmental reviews, the CPT identified five goals and a set of strategic initiatives to advance each goal. Working with district staff, the CPT also developed ambitious but achievable timelines for accomplishing each goal.



# Executing the Plan

The Plan is intended to be a roadmap that will guide the actions and decision-making of schools and the district over the next five years. The district believes it is important to have a strong, coherent Plan, but recognizes that consistent, quality execution is even more important. District resource allocation decisions, particularly those related to budget, will need to be aligned with Plan priorities and made through a transparent process. In some areas, district leadership will need to sequence and scale changes

over time, starting with pilots in a small number of schools, demonstrating success and then expanding. The district will also need to avoid taking a “one size fits all” approach, and recognize that different schools may require different strategies and resources. Finally, district leadership will continue to engage staff at all levels in planning and decision-making related to their work.

The Plan includes an ultimate goal for the district against which all progress should be measured:

*An educational community that graduates every student as a responsible, active citizen prepared for success in college, careers, and the global economy.*

## Pathway to Success

The Pathway to Success is a series of milestones from the beginning of a student’s education in the Syracuse City School District through enrollment in college or technical school. Monitoring these milestones will inform the district about how its students are doing at critical moments in their SCSD careers. This information will help the district identify at what points the students are having success and when a new approach or additional intervention may be necessary for improvement. Parents and family members can also use the Pathway as a tool to make sure their students are on track for academic success.



Reading to learn at the end of 3rd grade



Prepared for middle school at the end of 5th grade



Prepared for high school at the end of 8th grade

Based on the ultimate goal, the Plan identifies a set of core measures of progress toward the goal and sets five-year targets for each measure. The district will report annually on these student outcome measures, and over time, there should be substantial improvement on each measure as a result of effective Plan implementation.

The district will also report progress on a set of measures tied to key strategies. Improvement on these measures will indicate effective implementation; lack of improvement would indicate the need for better execution, refined processes, or a new strategy.

The district administration intends to develop and publish an annual report that includes a district scorecard that reports on both student outcomes and Plan implementation measures.

## Mission

To build, support, and sustain school communities that provide all students with a high-quality education that prepares them to graduate as responsible, active citizens ready for success in college and careers and prepared to compete in a global economy.

## Vision

To become the most improved urban school district in America.

## Ultimate goal

An educational community that graduates every student as a responsible, active citizen prepared for success in college, careers, and the global economy.



On track to graduate at the end of 9th grade

Ready for college and career success at the end of 11th grade

Graduating from high school in 4 years

College and technical school enrollment

# Targeted Outcomes

The district will hold itself accountable by tracking and reporting on the progress of students on the Pathway to Success using the measures described below. Every fall the district will report on student progress at each of the Pathway milestones. Over the next five years, the district intends to meet or exceed all of the targets.

## Milestone

*What are we aiming for?*

## Measure

*How will we measure it?*

<b>Reading to learn at the end of 3rd grade</b>	% of students proficient in both ELA and Mathematics on the annual state test
<b>Prepared for middle school at the end of 5th grade</b>	% of students proficient in both ELA and Mathematics on the annual state test
<b>Prepared for high school at the end of 8th grade</b>	% of students proficient in both ELA and Mathematics on the annual state test
<b>On track to graduate at the end of 9th grade</b>	% of 9th grade students who have both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Scored <math>\geq 80^1</math> on Integrated Algebra Regents Exam</li><li>Successfully completed <math>\geq 5.5</math> credits</li></ul>
<b>Ready for college and career success at the end of 11th grade</b>	% of 11th grade students who have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Scored <math>\geq 80</math> on the Integrated Algebra Regents exam<sup>2</sup>;</li><li>Scored <math>\geq 75</math> on the Comprehensive English Regents exam; and</li><li>Successfully completed <math>\geq 16.5</math> credits</li></ul>
<b>Graduating from high school in 4 years</b>	% of students in entering 9th grade cohort who graduated 4 years later (not including transfers to other districts)
<b>College or technical school enrollment</b>	% of graduates enrolling in a 2 or 4 year college or certified technical school within 6 months of graduation

## ASSUMPTIONS

► Although the state test for English/Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics will change with the introduction of Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) in 2014-15, the percentage of students meeting standards will continue to be an important measure.

- “Big 5” New York urban districts are the best comparisons for benchmarking Syracuse district performance.
- Closing the achievement gap for students of color on each of these measures is also a major target; district will annually report progress by demographic group and by gender on each measure.

- On some measures SCSD will need to work with both the New York State Education Department and the other Big 5 districts to collect the data necessary to make the comparisons described below.

### Current

*Where are we now?*

### SCSD Target for 2016-17

*Where do we want to be in five years?*

<b>SCSD 2010-11</b>	<b>Other Big 5 districts 2010-11</b>	Surpass the percentage of all students who score “Proficient” on state tests in the other Big 5 districts
• ELA: 25% • Math: 25%	• ELA: 47% • Math: 53%	
<b>SCSD 2010-11</b>	<b>Other Big 5 districts 2010-11</b>	Surpass the percentage of all students who score “Proficient” on state tests in the other Big 5 districts
• ELA: 22% • Math: 29%	• ELA: 47% • Math: 61%	
<b>SCSD 2010-11</b>	<b>Other Big 5 districts 2010-11</b>	Surpass the percentage of all students who score “Proficient” on state tests in the other Big 5 districts
• ELA: 20% • Math: 15%	• ELA: 34% • Math: 50%	
<b>SCSD Algebra 2010-11</b>	<b>Other Big 5 districts Algebra 2010-11</b>	Surpass the percentage of all students who are on track to graduate at the end of 9th grade in the other Big 5 districts
• % students scoring >85: 2% • % students scoring >65: 44%	• % students scoring >85: 9% • % students scoring >65: 61%	
<b>SCSD English 2010-11</b>	<b>Other Big 5 districts English 2010-11</b>	Surpass the percentage of all students who are ready for college and career success at the end of 11th grade in the other Big 5 districts
• % students scoring >85: 13% • % students scoring >65: 64%	• % students scoring >85: 22% • % students scoring >65: 75% <small>Note: Credit accumulation data is not currently available for either SCSD or Big 5 districts.</small>	
<b>SCSD August 2011</b>	<b>Other Big 5 August 2011 Graduation Rate</b>	Surpass the percentage of graduates in the other Big 5 districts
• 53%	• 65%	
To be developed	To be developed	Surpass the percentage of graduates enrolling in college or technical school in the other Big 5 districts

<sup>1</sup> In 2010-11 NY State Dept. of Education reported the percentage of students scoring >65 and >85. In the future it will report on the percentage of students scoring >80, the new state college readiness Algebra benchmark.

<sup>2</sup> Most students take the Integrated Algebra Regents exam in 9th grade; see above for 2010-11 SCSD and other Big 5 districts’ 9th grade Integrated Algebra Regents scores



# Goal

# 1

**Provide all students with equitable access to rigorous curriculum with aligned instructional materials and assessments in all subjects and all grade levels**

## Strategic Initiatives

### **1.1 - Develop or adopt new, aligned curricula and instructional materials**

Develop or adopt new district-wide curricula with aligned instructional materials for Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Career Technical Education, Fine Arts, World Languages, and Health/Physical Education. Align all the elements with CCSS and/or New York State Learning Standards to prepare students for college and careers. The new curriculum frameworks will clearly articulate effective practices and interventions for all students.

### **1.2 - Develop or acquire comprehensive assessment system**

Develop or acquire and implement assessments for all subjects. Provide training and support for teachers' use of assessment data to guide instruction. Assess schools' technology infrastructure to determine needs; develop a plan to use available resources to meet technical infrastructure needs including wiring, network capacity and hardware.

### **1.3 - Develop or adopt an instructional framework**

To drive instructional improvement and systems alignment, develop or adopt a district-wide instructional framework.

Professional development and evaluation activities, including classroom observations, will be aligned to the instructional framework to ensure consistency across the district.

### **1.4 - Build systemic capacity within schools and the central office to effectively implement the new curricula and CCSS and help teachers engage their students in learning**

Provide teachers with ongoing professional development experiences that empower them with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to use the new curriculum frameworks and instructional resources. The professional development should help teachers better understand the requirements of the CCSS, raising expectations for student learning at all grade levels so that graduating students will meet college and career readiness standards. It should also help teachers to effectively manage their classrooms, create a positive learning environment, and engage all students in rigorous learning.

### **1.5 - Abandon current instructional initiatives, programs, materials and other resources that do not directly support the new curricula and district goals**

As new curricula, materials, and professional development become available, explicitly end the use of other curricula, materials, assessments, programs, and professional development that conflict with, overlap, or distract from effective implementation.

### **1.6 - Promote instructional supports for emergent literacy and numeracy in the primary grades**

Because many SCSD students enter school without reading and numeracy skills, align instructional professional development and external partnerships with organizations focused on early learning/readiness to provide extra support to preK-3 students and their teachers. Ensure that primary students have the foundational skills and knowledge necessary to stay on track academically in later grades.

### **1.7 - Create a multi-year plan for providing strong Career Technical Education (CTE) and Science/Technology/Engineering/Mathematics (STEM) programs throughout the district**

Appoint a Blue Ribbon Committee of business, higher education, and STEM experts to work with district leadership to develop a multi-year CTE and STEM education plan. In addition to identifying curricula and links to career paths, the plan should address facility, equipment, and teaching expertise questions.

# Goal 1 Timeline

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## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1.1

1. Initial rollout of new Math and English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum frameworks
2. Ongoing refinement of Math and ELA curricula according to instructional needs identified in data
3. Develop or acquire Math and ELA materials
4. Develop or acquire new Social Studies, Science, and CTE curriculum frameworks
5. Rollout new Social Studies, Science, and CTE curriculum frameworks
6. Ongoing refinement of Social Studies, Science, and CTE curricula based on instructional needs identified in data
7. Develop or acquire Social Studies, Science, and CTE materials
8. Develop or acquire new Fine Arts, Health/Physical Education, World Languages, and high school electives curriculum frameworks and materials
9. Rollout of new Fine Arts, Health/Physical Education, World Languages, and high school electives curriculum frameworks and materials

2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
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2012-13

2013-14

2014-15

2015-16

2016-17



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1.2

10. Develop or acquire new Math and ELA assessments aligned to CCSS
11. Conduct infrastructure readiness audit for technology-based assessment rollout
12. Initial rollout for new Math and ELA assessments
13. Pilot of PARCC assessments
14. Initial rollout of mandated technology-based assessment
15. Develop new Social Studies, Science, and CTE assessments
16. Implement Social Studies, Science and CTE assessments
17. Develop new Fine Arts, Health and Physical Education, World Languages, and high school electives assessments



	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
<b>STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1.3</b>					
18. Develop or adopt instructional framework		→			
<b>STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1.4</b>					
19. Initial rollout of the SCSD Teaching and Learning Framework and build district's capacity to support it	→				
20. Targeted training on the SCSD Teaching and Learning Framework according to data trends indicating areas in greatest need of improvement		→			
21. Initial rollout of new Math and English Language Arts (ELA), and related professional development for teachers and school leaders at all grade levels	→				
22. Initial rollout of new Social Studies, Science and CTE professional development for teachers and school leaders at all grade levels			→		
23. Initial rollout of Fine Arts, Health and Physical Education, World Languages other than English and high school electives professional development for teachers and school leaders at all grade levels					→
<b>STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1.5</b>					
24. Assess current instructional programs, initiatives, and resources/materials; continually abandon those that do not directly support the new curricula and district goals		→			→
<b>STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1.6</b>					
25. Launch pre K-3 early literacy institutes	→				
<b>STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1.7</b>					
26. Develop a five-year CTE/STEM plan to create broader CTE/STEM opportunities with integration of the CCSS for all students		→			
27. Initiate new CTE program(s) at Fowler High School			→		
28. Expand CTE programs to one additional high school				→	
29. Expand CTE programs to all high schools					→



# Goal 2

**Recruit, develop, support, and retain effective teachers and school leaders**

## Strategic Initiatives

### **2.1 - Develop and implement a teacher and school leader recruitment and selection process that makes it possible for Syracuse to compete for educators most likely to be successful with SCSD students**

Work to identify, build, and continuously update a research-based profile of teachers and school leaders with the skills, knowledge, abilities, experiences, and attitudes necessary for success with an urban, high-poverty population of students of color and English Language Learners. Work with institutions of higher education, community organizations, and the City to build a pipeline of candidates who match the profile. Align position requirements and the selection process with the expectations described in the Teaching and Learning and Leadership Frameworks. Consistent with the Board's policy on Equal Employment Opportunity, build a recruiting and hiring process that ensures the timely hiring of an effective teacher and school leader workforce that more accurately reflects the demographics of the SCSD student population.

### **2.2 - Provide teachers and school leaders with individualized, high-quality professional development**

Concentrate professional development resources on supporting the expectations described in the SCSD Teaching and Learning Framework, including use of new curricula, materials, assessments, and the resulting data. Professional development topics will include effective instructional practices, including data-driven instruction and data analysis, classroom management skills, and cultural competence, and tools for helping families to support student learning. The new professional development system will address the individual needs of teachers and leaders based on evaluations and student performance data. Infuse all professional development with the commitment to have great expectations for every student.

### **2.3 - Implement new teacher and school leader evaluation systems**

Implement the new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) system in accordance with state law and district contracts. Use data from evaluations to inform fair hiring, assignment, tenure and retention decisions.

### **2.4 - Recognize teacher and school leader success and provide opportunities for advancement**

To encourage high performance, implement a performance-based, strategic compensation system aligned with the APPR system that meets the requirements of the state's Teacher Incentive Fund grant. This system will include the development and implementation of a career pathway plan for teachers and leaders which allows them to gain leadership experience and expertise while assisting other teachers and leaders within SCSD. The career pathway program will develop, reward, recognize, and retain highly effective educators.

### **2.5 - Strengthen and stabilize school leadership**

Develop and support school leaders consistent with the SCSD Leadership Framework, and make school assignments that match leadership strengths with school needs.

# Goal 2 Timeline

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## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2.1

1. Develop new teacher and school leadership recruitment and hiring system
2. Initial implementation of new teacher and school leadership recruitment and hiring system

2012-13

2013-14

2014-15

2015-16

2016-17



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2.2

3. Pilot new professional development curricula and delivery system
4. Fully implement professional development curriculum and development system



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2.3

5. Continue to develop and begin implementation of the APPR evaluation system K-12
6. Expand implementation of the APPR evaluation system to include vice principals
7. Fully implement the APPR evaluation system for all teachers, ancillary staff, and building leaders



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2.4

8. District-wide implementation and communication of the Teacher Incentive Fund, strategic compensation system and career pathway, and continuous improvement of the systems through teacher and leader feedback and input
9. Review Teacher Incentive Fund lessons learned, gather staff input, and begin second phase of strategic compensation system
10. Begin the multi-year implementation of Teachscape Advanced Human Capital Management system which connects evaluations, student performance data, and curriculum management



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2.5

11. Provide initial training and ongoing support for the SCSD Leadership Framework





“No issue has so profoundly weighed on the American mind as the quest for equal educational access and opportunities for all.

Every child deserves an excellent education.

I believe that *Great Expectations 2012-2017* represents this community’s collective commitment to helping every child reach his or her potential.”

**SHARON L. CONTRERAS, SUPERINTENDENT  
SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**



# Goal

# 3

Develop infrastructure to support student success

## Strategic Initiatives

### 3.1 - Build family/school partnerships to support student learning

Empower families by showing them how to partner with schools and teachers to support their children's learning. Provide teachers and school leaders with tools and skills to build and advance partnerships with families. Hold educators and schools responsible for successfully engaging families in the education of their children.

### 3.2 - Maximize the impact of the Say Yes to Education's (SYTE) framework for student and family success

Align district resources to support the SYTE framework.<sup>3</sup> Implement the SYTE Student Monitoring System to ensure all students are on track to thrive. Work with SYTE to help families understand and access the resources available to help their children succeed.

### 3.3 - Use special education resources and services to maximize inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms and increase their access to and progress in the general curriculum

Create systems to appropriately identify students with disabilities in accordance with New York State and federal guidelines. Provide students with disabilities

differentiated instruction and academic supports through research-based practices that are both responsive to individual needs and aligned with the district's instructional strategy for all students. Align all special education activities through a continuum of services to consistently deliver tiered academic and behavioral interventions. Improve the quality of overall Tier 1 instruction and classroom management generally so that struggling learners, particularly students of color or students presenting behavioral challenges, are not incorrectly identified as students with disabilities.

### 3.4 - Develop, implement and monitor a coherent, fair and equitable district-wide student discipline system

Conduct a thorough review of school-based disciplinary practices and develop a research-based, positive behavior management system. Create the infrastructure to consistently address student behavior, including the policies and tools necessary to support educators in the implementation of a coherent system. Monitor practices over time and modify the system as necessary.

### 3.5 - Increase support to improve academic progress of ELL students

Change the service-delivery model for English Language Learners to encourage successful transition to English in accord with the research on second language acquisition and in recognition of the academic and social benefits of bi-literacy.

### 3.6 - Build community/school partnerships that address local needs

Facilitate new local partnerships that build on community strengths and resources to address unmet student needs. Evaluate the effectiveness of existing community partnerships and discontinue partnerships that do not align with goals, meet student needs, and advance student achievement.

### 3.7 - Develop partnerships with the corporate and higher education communities to support the development and growth of Science/Technology/Engineering/Mathematics (STEM) and Career Technical Education (CTE) programs

Leverage the expertise of the corporate and higher education communities to improve the depth and rigor of CTE and STEM course offerings and programs in high schools.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on Say Yes to Education in Syracuse, including its theory of action and support services, please visit <http://www.sayyessyracuse.org/>.

# Goal 3 Timeline

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## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3.1

1. Develop materials to encourage family engagement in student learning and provide parents, teachers and school leaders with training on their use

2012-13    2013-14    2014-15    2015-16    2016-17



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3.2

2. Implement SYTE Student Monitoring System to ensure students are on track to thrive



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3.3

3. Initiate a multi-year process to restructure SPED service-delivery model, align SPED services to RTI model, and develop a streamlined identification process



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3.4

4. Review data on disciplinary practices
5. Develop a coherent district-wide strategy for discipline
6. Develop a plan to implement and monitor fair and equitable discipline practices



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3.5

7. Restructure ELL programs consistent with new state regulations



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3.6

8. Conduct audit of all current partnerships by school and function; assess for impact and alignment to goals
9. Appoint Partnership Coordinator to manage community partnerships including CTE/STEM partners (see 3.7)



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3.7

10. Cultivate lead and supporting partners for CTE and STEM intern- and extern-ships
11. Ongoing, intentional integration with all curricular/programmatic components of initiative 1.7





“This Strategic Plan will serve as a roadmap as we continue the work of transforming the Syracuse City School District into the most improved urban school district in the country.

It provides us with measurable and attainable goals while ensuring that each and every one of us is accountable to our students and families.

We can and must continue to improve at every level of the organization. *Great Expectations 2012-2017* provides us the framework to accomplish our goals.”

STEPHEN SWIFT, PRESIDENT  
SCSD BOARD OF EDUCATION



# Goal



**Build a district culture based on high expectations, respect, and co-accountability for performance that recognizes and rewards excellence at all levels of the organization**

## Strategic Initiatives

### **4.1 - Provide high-quality service to our students and their families**

Build a culture that recognizes students and their families as the district's key "customers." Define effective customer service for school and district offices, measure and report on the quality of service, and hold school staff responsible for the level of service provided. Infuse district staff with a sense of urgency and pride by making clear connections for all employees between their work and the district mission and vision.

### **4.2 - Improve data systems to enable data-driven decision-making at all levels**

Develop integrated information technology and management systems using nationally recognized data platforms to support efficient and mission-driven academic and business practices. Leverage research-based strategies whenever possible to make informed decisions

in the interest of students. Conduct an independent audit of technology capacity to support new assessments and upgrade technology infrastructure as needed to meet the requirements for the new assessments.

### **4.3 - Manage school and district performance**

Develop a district performance system that defines expectations at all levels of the district; monitors and reports on performance, including measures of outcomes and effective implementation; and provides consequences that balance accountability and empowerment. The system should address resource allocation, school choice, school closings, and the link between performance, accountability and autonomy. The system should create a continuum of support to improve low-performing schools and empower high-performing schools.

### **4.4 - Develop a turnaround strategy for the lowest-performing schools**

Leverage the flexibility provided by the Innovation Zone Schools Agreement with the Syracuse Teachers Association to pilot innovative systems and structures within a cluster of low-performing schools, then scale successful practices throughout SCSD. Pursue additional opportunities to partner with charter and other education management organizations to improve low-performing schools.

### **4.5 - Become an organization that values and develops talent at all levels**

Restructure the Human Resources function to support an integrated and aligned talent management system that recruits, hires, develops, and evaluates highly effective staff members and educators.

# Goal 4 Timeline

26

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 4.1

1. Begin surveying principals on central office customer service 
2. Begin surveying families and teachers 
3. Begin surveying community partners and students 
4. Initiate customer service training that addresses needs identified in surveys 

2012-13

2013-14

2014-15

2015-16

2016-17

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 4.2

5. Create a district Accountability function with responsibility for information systems, research, and accountability 
6. Initial implementation of Teachscape system 
7. Fully implement PeopleSoft human resources and financial systems 
8. Fully implement the E-School student information system 
9. Conduct readiness audit for administration of new student assessments 

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 4.3

10. Develop performance monitoring system 
11. Implement performance monitoring system 

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 4.4

12. Establish the Office of School Transformation and Innovation (OSTI) 
13. Transitional implementation of the Innovation Zone in 7 schools (Fowler quadrant) 
14. Appoint a Chief Transformation Officer 
15. Refine the OSTI functions and initiate full-scale implementation of Innovation Zone 
16. Determine process for bringing successful Innovation Zone changes to scale across the district 
17. Pursue opportunities to partner with charter and education management organizations to improve low-performing schools 

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 4.5

18. Restructure the Human Resources function; appoint an Executive Director of Performance Management 



"In today's educational accountability environment, the District desperately needed to engage in a strategic planning process.

As a member of the Core Planning Team, I can report that we engaged in a deliberative process that was truly inclusive of a cross-section of community representatives.

*Great Expectations 2012-2017 defines measurable goals and objectives, which will ensure that needed organizational changes occur as the District moves forward in preparing students to be college and career ready."*

**BRIAN NOLAN, PRESIDENT  
SYRACUSE ASSOCIATION OF ADMINISTRATORS  
AND SUPERVISORS**



# Goal

# 5

Communicate effectively with all district stakeholders

## Strategic Initiatives

### 5.1 - Build trust through dialogue and engagement with parents and families

Establish channels for dialogue and engagement between teachers, school leaders, school staff, and families. Provide principals with assistance, tools, and models for building inclusive school communities. While all SCSD employees share responsibility for making families feel welcome and supported, principals are accountable for ensuring that their school buildings are welcoming and responsive to parents and families.

### 5.2 - Improve internal communications within the district

Develop and implement an internal communications strategy that provides structures and processes for effective communication among central office departments, between schools and central office units, and among and within schools. Focus on consistent, clear, accurate two-way communication between school administrators, teachers, and other school staff and district administration. Provide communication training to district administrators and school principals.

### 5.3 - Improve communications with families and community members

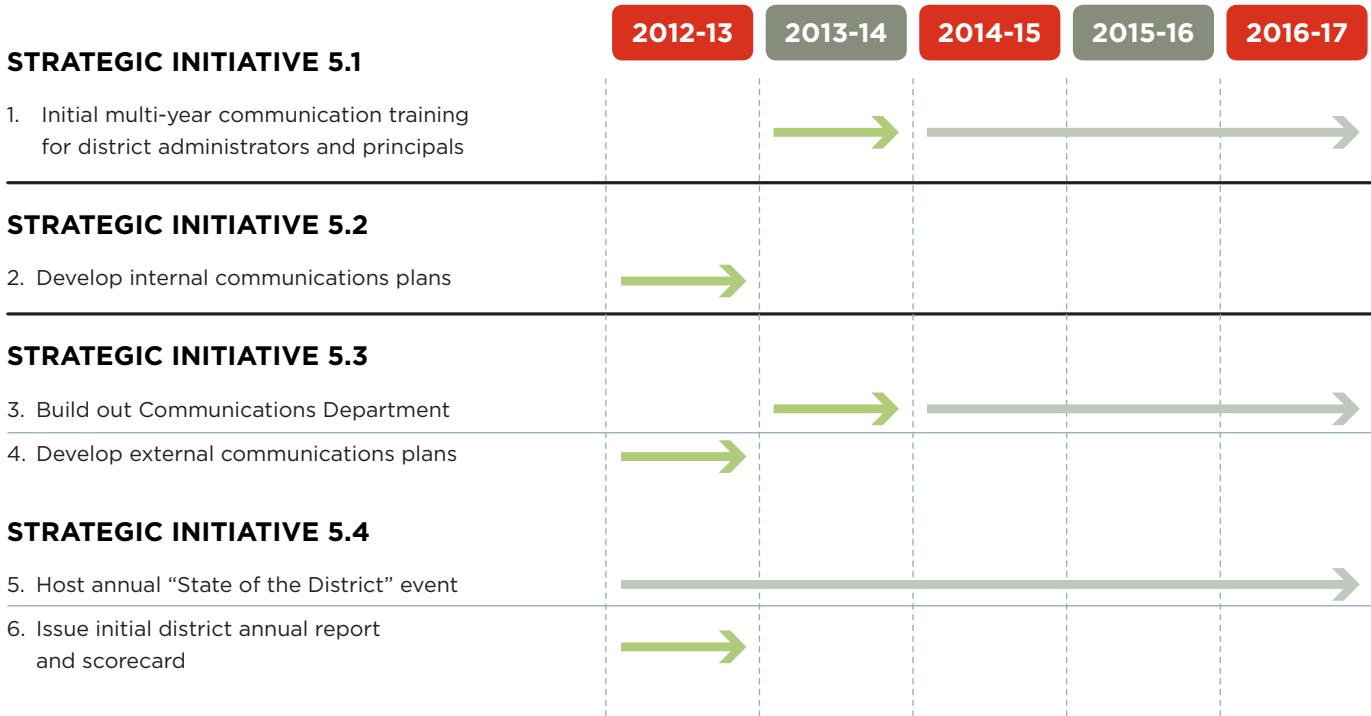
Develop and implement an external communications strategy that provides multiple channels for communicating with parents and community residents about district priorities and progress. Provide assistance to school-based staff to strengthen communication with parents and community members about school and district priorities and initiatives. Evaluate and assess how schools are communicating with and engaging parents and the community.

### 5.4 - Provide the community with regular reports on progress

The district will host an annual “State of the District” event that includes the release of a published report on district progress and a scorecard that reports trend and benchmark information on student outcomes and key implementation measures of the district improvement strategies.



# Goal 5 Timeline





"With Syracuse's unprecedented challenges also comes the meaningful opportunity for learning, growth, and, of course, change.

Through developing a comprehensive Strategic Plan going forward, the Syracuse City School District is taking a pragmatic step toward giving Syracuse the most improved urban school system in the United States.

By working with our partners, including Say Yes to Education, developing a framework of goals and benchmarks, and having a system to evaluate our results, Syracuse is taking the steps to ensure we have a school district our community can be proud of and our children deserve."

THE HONORABLE STEPHANIE MINER, MAYOR  
CITY OF SYRACUSE



Thank you to the hundreds of individuals who shared their feedback and input at focus groups and community forums, as well as to the staff of the following Syracuse community organizations which hosted strategic planning events:

Abundant Life Christian Center  
Dunbar Center  
Hillside Family of Agencies  
Hopps Memorial Christian Methodist Episcopal Church  
Islamic Society of Central New York  
Le Moyne College Upward Bound program  
Living Waters Church of God in Christ  
Onondaga Community College  
People's A.M.E. Zion Church  
Refugee Assistance Program  
Spanish Action League  
Syracuse Housing Authority  
Syracuse Teacher Center

### **Core Planning Team Members**

Rev. Kevin Agee, President, Inter-Denominational Ministerial Alliance

Kevin Ahern, President, Syracuse Teachers Association

Tania Anderson, Parent

Laurie Black, Administrator, Syracuse 20/20

Kim Bradley, Chief of Staff, SCSD

Sharon L. Contreras, Superintendent, SCSD

Pat Driscoll, Director of Operations,  
Syracuse Chapter, Say Yes to Education

Marcia Drumm, Director of Secondary School Outreach, Onondaga Community College

Julius Edwards, Executive Director, Dunbar Center

Bea Gonzalez, Dean, Syracuse University/  
University College

Talina Jones, Parent

Laura Kelley, Chief Academic Officer, SCSD

Barry Lentz, Parent of SCSD graduate

Melanie Littlejohn, Executive Director,  
National Grid Regional

Hon. Nader Maroun, Common Councilor,  
City of Syracuse

Brian Nolan, President, Syracuse Association  
of Administrators and Supervisors

Pamela Percival, Founding Member, Parents  
for Public Schools

Ann Sanzone, Assistant Director of  
Personnel, SCSD

Suzanne Slack, Chief Financial Officer, SCSD

### **Syracuse City School District**

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Commissioner Bill Bullen

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Commissioner Maxwell Ruckdeschel

Commissioner Richard Strong



Syracuse City



School District

Central Offices: 725 Harrison Street, Syracuse, NY 13210  
Mailing Address 1025 Erie Boulevard West Syracuse, NY 13204  
[www.syracusecityschools.com](http://www.syracusecityschools.com)