

ELKHART COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022: The Elkhart Promise

Updated May 2019

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROVIDE THE BEST
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ELKHART STUDENTS



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ELKHART
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Board of School Trustees Welcome

To the Elkhart Community:

The Board of School Trustees is pleased to present an updated 2017-2022 Strategic Plan: The Elkhart Promise to the greater Elkhart community. It is a plan built to meet the challenges of today, while preparing our students and our community for a better tomorrow.

Highly effective schools, businesses, and not-for-profits regularly identify a direction or a plan, they take action, track results, and stand ready to make adjustments if conditions change. The Board has established a promise for the school district which will guide our schools through 2022. The Board will make every effort to provide the resources needed to accomplish the plan's goals. A main component of the plan is the regular reporting to the community on the progress of meeting the plan's goals.

The plan is made with an understanding of the challenges currently facing the school district, while also anticipating future opportunities. Schools across Indiana face pressures related to economic inequality, uncertainty of state assessment and accountability systems, a teacher shortage, loss of local school board control, and reduced state investment in public education. Locally we face the financial pressures of open enrollment laws, coupled with the understanding the City of Elkhart is experiencing little to no population growth in key demographic areas. We acknowledge the impact of homeownership and mobility. We understand the need for fostering and promoting community, business, not-for-profit and intergovernmental partnerships, particularly as the downtown area revitalizes itself.

To meet the needs of our students and to allocate limited resources, the Board is not reacting, but is *proactively planning for the future*. In this way, the district can make decisions which are sustainable, while meeting the needs of all students. Regardless of these obstacles, Elkhart Community Schools has a responsibility and commitment to contribute to the well-being of Elkhart through teaching, providing unprecedented opportunities for students, and demonstrating a commitment to service leadership. Developing appropriate solutions to these challenges will determine the quality of education students will receive and the sustainability of the district over time.

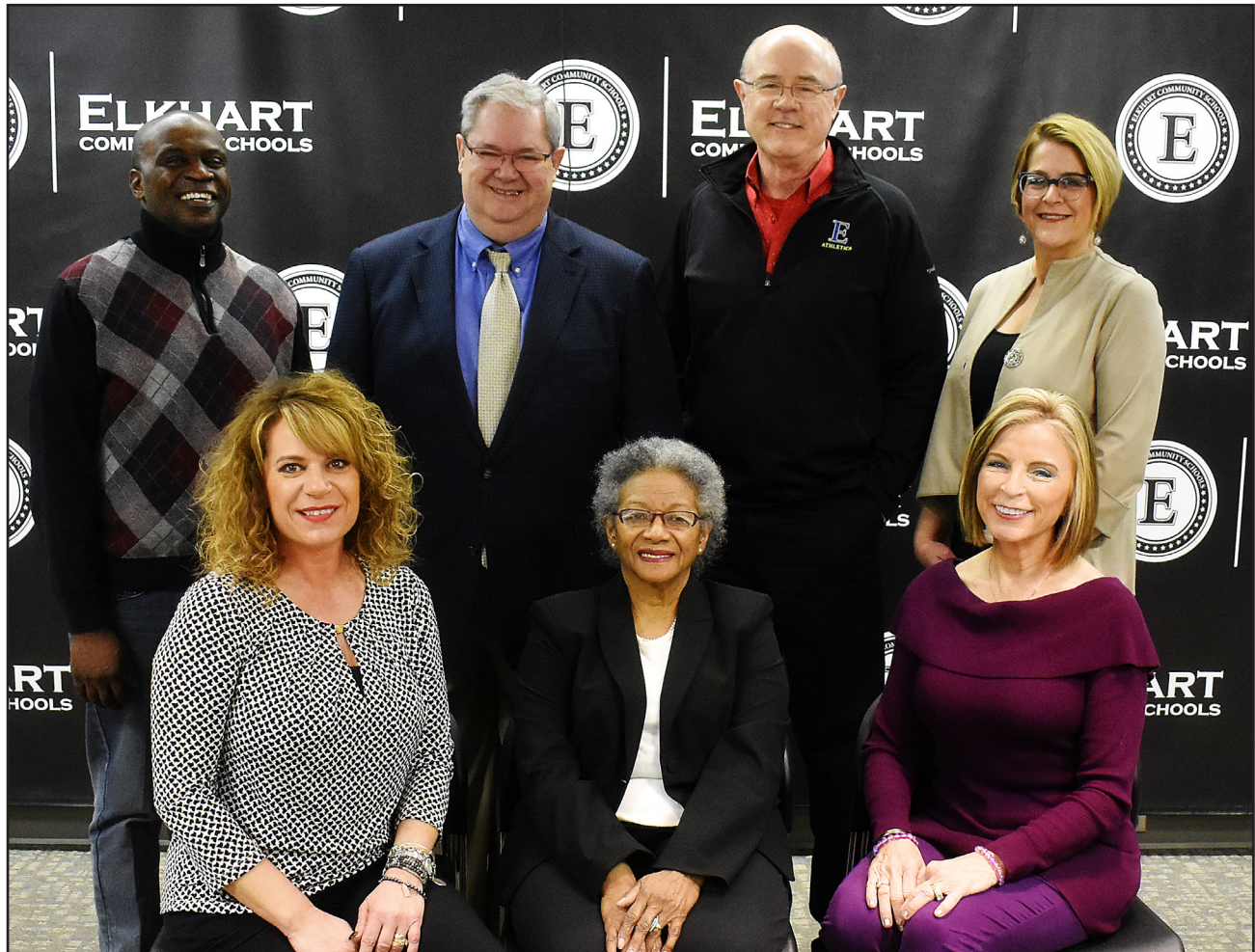
The Board believes this plan represents the promise of what can be accomplished. This plan sets high expectations in order to ensure the success of all of our students and the greater Elkhart community. The Board invites you to partner with us as we strive to achieve this transformative plan for a better tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Board of School Trustees
Elkhart Community Schools

Elkhart Community Schools Leadership

ECS Board of School Trustees



Back, from left: Rodney J. Dale, Roscoe L. Enfield, Jr., Douglas K. Weaver, Susan C. Daiber
Front, from left: Kellie L. Mullins, Carolyn R. Morris, Babette S. Boling

For additional information about the Elkhart Community Schools Board of School Trustees, please visit:
<http://elkhart.k12.in.us/home/administration/board-of-school-trustees/>.

If you wish to contact any member of the Board of School Trustees, please contact the board secretary at 574-262-5506.

The Elkhart Promise



OUR PROMISE

Every student is known by name, challenged and supported by highly effective staff, and in partnership with the community, will graduate career/college ready and life ready.

YESTERDAY

Elkhart Community Schools has a rich history of educating students who have become leaders in the Elkhart community and beyond. We have successfully worked alongside the community with changes in the economy, population, and educational needs of our students.

TODAY

The climate of education has changed public schools in many ways, including funding and state-required assessments. Although ECS has demonstrated continued growth on state standardized assessments, they are only one indicator of the success of our students, staff, and schools. The rapidly changing educational field and state leadership require schools to quickly react to changes that directly impact our students, staff, and schools.

TOMORROW

As ECS looks to the future, we understand the continued need to excel on state standardized testing, but we also recognize that our primary goal of successfully educating and preparing students for the future **will never waver**. Through looking to the future and setting high goals for ourselves and our students, we are dedicated to ensuring every student graduates career ready, college ready, and life ready with a superior education.



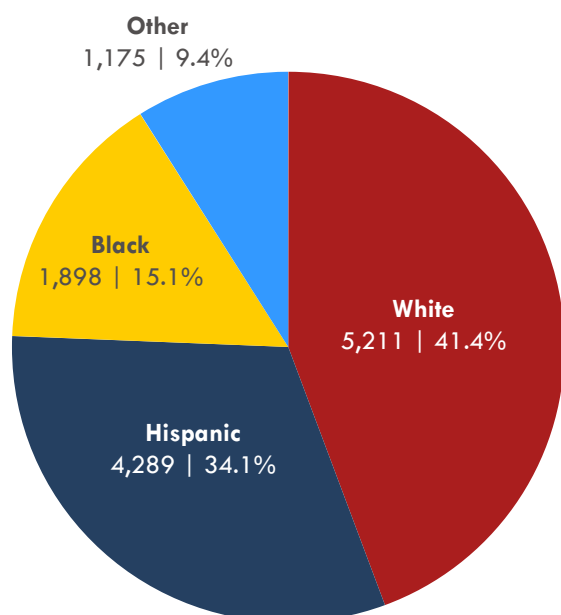
Elkhart Community Schools Data

12,573
STUDENTS

21
SCHOOLS

1
FAMILY

STUDENT ENROLLMENT 2018-2019



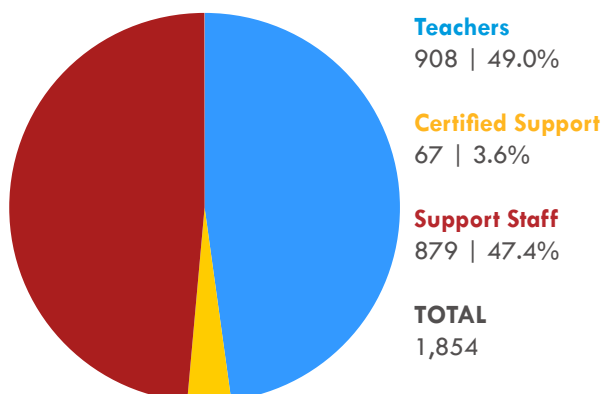
Limited English Proficiency: 1,956 | 15.6%
Economically Disadvantaged: 8,050 | 64.0%
Special Education: 2,018 | 16.1%

CAMPUSES



*Includes Elkhart Area Career Center and Elkhart Academy at Tipton Street

EMPLOYEES



BUDGET

Education
(includes all aspects related to classroom education of students, such as Teachers, Building Administrators, Instructional Supplies)
\$78,691,809 | 61.3%

Operations
(includes all support functions, such as Transportation, Technology, District Administration)
\$31,386,814 | 24.5%

Debt
(includes Debt Service, Pension Debt, 2014 Referendum Debt for Safety/Security/Capital Projects)
\$13,655,622 | 10.6%

2014 Operating Referendum
(Transportation)
\$4,608,750 | 3.6%

TOTAL
\$128,342,995

Strategic Plan Development

In the fall of 2015, Elkhart Community Schools embarked on the development of a strategic plan. The objectives inherent in the process were to formulate goals which would provide a future focus for Elkhart Community Schools and to guide the decision-making of the Board of School Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff. The proposals established goals and strategies aimed at achieving significant progress toward ECS's aspiration of becoming an educational destination location, preeminent in offering unprecedented opportunities for students, leading in community service, and demonstrating excellent teaching and engagement.

- The process began with a review of the 2012 Action Plan and results, which included the 2014 referendum.
- The next steps involved community meetings and surveys led by Ball State University.
 - Chief among these findings was the need to develop marketing and communication plans and the need to build unique partnerships with businesses, non-profits, and other local entities in order for the entire community to achieve greater success.
 - Ball State University's School of Education also began examining several aspects of ECS and comparing Elkhart Community Schools to other districts across the state.
 - One key finding was many students living in the Elkhart Community Schools district were choosing other public school options to attend. Ball State University reached out to 187 households to determine why families had chosen a different public school option. Comments received during the telephone interviews reflect parent concerns: (a) a limited focus on middle and higher-level students, (b) the length of summer vacation, (c) inadequate programming for students with learning difficulties and (d) less than optimal middle school experiences.
 - ECS and Ball State also surveyed community and staff regarding programming, familiarity with the district, perceived performance, and the selection of schools.
- During the months of November and December 2015, a focus group comprised of representatives from the community, including parents, staff members, and Elkhart community members, was established to determine the next steps. The focus group members heard presentations and conducted conversations on budget and finance, open enrollment, free and reduced lunch status, early childhood education, international programming, technology, transportation, school calendar, school start times, schools of choice, survey results, and grade configuration. The focus group made several recommendations for the board to consider. Over the next several months the board met to consider the recommendations of the focus group and to establish the framework of a strategic plan.
- The final step was to receive public input through a series of staff meetings (May 2016) and widely-publicized community meetings in June/July. Specifically the board wanted input on school start times, school calendar, and building configurations.

Following the community meetings, the board met to produce a first draft of the plan and present it to the community for comment. The Board voted on the plan's adoption in October 2016.

The 2017-2022 Strategic Plan consists of four parts:

1. Strategic Plan Goals
2. Strategic Plan Action Plan
3. Strategic Plan Quality Indicators
4. Annual Cycle Review

Upon hiring a new superintendent in January 2019, the board conducted a strategic plan review during a retreat in February. Goals were modified by the board given the economic realities of the district and the concentration of resources on the Freshman Division and High Schools of Study. Focus was brought to valuing all learners within the school community, while reviewing the continuum of services for diverse student needs and instituting greater responsiveness in the areas of trauma-informed and restorative practices. With an emphasis on the people in the district, leadership practices and professional development have been directed to improving processes and centering efforts on all learners within the school community.

Building a Bold Plan

These outcomes are the result of three strategic plan goals:
Goal 1: Create Vibrant Relationships to Ensure Successful Students, Schools, and Community
Goal 2: Nurture, Educate, Retain, and Attract Students
Goal 3: Ensure a Highly Effective Staff

Together with parents and the community, Elkhart Community Schools sees great potential for our students. By building a bold plan and setting high strategic plan goals, we are determined to provide unmatched academic opportunities for our students. The following outlines the goals for our students, staff, and community.

Staff	Elementary School	Middle School	Freshman Division	High School
<p>All staff will express that they feel valued and are proud to be employees of Elkhart Community Schools.</p> <p>A professional learning community culture will nurture collaboration and collective action for student achievement.</p> <p>ECS will improve internal and external communication.</p> <p>Staff will be supported through meaningful, ongoing professional development in a variety of areas necessary to meet student needs.</p> <p>ECS will update staff salary schedules to be regionally competitive, offer transparency, and reflect career earning potential.</p> <p>ECS will survey staff regarding satisfaction and seek input from staff on avenues for improvement.</p>	<p>All students will demonstrate growth on state and local assessments while having their dignity honored and social & emotional needs met.</p> <p>Students will learn strategies for self-regulation as part of school staff meeting the needs of the whole child.</p> <p>Educators will align curriculum district-wide and ensure student learning is evaluated by appropriate grade-level assessments.</p> <p>Staff will receive professional development on curriculum, instructional strategies for diverse learners, and social & emotional learning.</p> <p>Schools will seek to incorporate PreK offerings through public/private partnerships and expanded Head Start or district classrooms.</p> <p>Classroom instruction will balance the personal direction of caring teachers and support staff with appropriate technology integration.</p>	<p>All students in grades 6-8 will demonstrate growth on state and local assessments while developing greater awareness about themselves and their future plans.</p> <p>Students will complete a college/career capstone project indicating their proposed high school pathway by the end of grade 8.</p> <p>Students will learn prioritization and further develop self-regulation skills while engaging in relationships with caring adults.</p> <p>Educators will create processes that ensure successful transition from middle school to high school.</p> <p>When appropriate, students will be encouraged to take high school level offerings.</p> <p>Classroom instruction will be led by caring teachers who guide students toward autonomous learning experiences aided by technology.</p>	<p>All students completing grade 9 will successfully attain 10 credits and identify direction for their high school study.</p> <p>With the assistance of educators, students will research strengths, interests, and goals.</p> <p>Grade 9 courses will strive to expose students to a variety of topics and learning experiences.</p> <p>By the end of grade 9, students will revise their 4-year plan to identify their initial grade 10-12 school of study.</p> <p>Students will be offered and encouraged to participate in a rich menu of extra- and co-curricular options.</p>	<p>All students will graduate with a superior education that prepares them for success in college/career and life.</p> <p>ECS will offer students in grades 10-12 a campus incorporating schools of study, an Early College program, and a full career technical education program.</p> <p>ECS will partner with organizations and employ quality staff in order to provide unmatched opportunities for college credit and/or workforce certifications.</p> <p>ECS will expand school-to-career opportunities, including work study, internships, and apprenticeships.</p> <p>Students will demonstrate leadership through career-related experiences and extra- and co-curricular options.</p>

Community

The Elkhart community will be engaged in the success of ECS students and schools. ECS students and schools will be committed to the success of the community.

Strong family involvement
Service learning projects

Strong partnerships with non-profit organizations
Alignment with businesses for student opportunities

Greater connection between our educational programs and community needs
Dedication of our district to the success of a vibrant community

Goal One: Create Vibrant Relationships to Ensure Successful Students, Schools, and Community

Elkhart Community Schools will enter into relationships and partnerships essential for student, school, and community success.		
FOCUS	ACTION STEPS	DATA SOURCES
Strengthen family involvement.	Create a culture that welcomes families and encourages involvement	
	Establish active parent organizations in each building	
	Provide parents with an opportunity to volunteer	
	Provide parents with the opportunity to meet with the superintendent and other building/district administrators in a face-to-face, casual setting	
	Communicate academic performance expectations to parents and students at the beginning of each school year	
	Conduct meaningful and ongoing professional development for staff, regarding customer service and effective communication	
	Effectively communicate with families and the community	
	Encourage schools to continue hosting family activity events	
	Communicate community-wide programs (Boys and Girls Club, Lifeline, Triple P classes, Five Star, etc) with parents and encourage attendance	
	Survey parents annually, regarding school experience	
Strengthen school and community partnership.	Establish annual meetings with Elkhart City/County departments, civic groups, non-profit organizations, local real estate agencies and local religious groups	
	Establish robust community center and adult education program, located at Pierre Moran	
	Work collaboratively with community partners to secure funding for a post-secondary feasibility study	
	Work collaboratively with youth-based organizations to secure funding to improve afterschool offerings for students	
	Continue to provide support for the development of the Elkhart Education Foundation	
Promote, support, and strengthen strong relationships with students, staff, and the community.	Create awareness in the business community about ECS' school to work, internships, and volunteer programs	
	Seek various ways to outsource ECS resources and services to other educational institutions and community groups	
	Implement marketing strategies to promote ECS students, staff, and programs, as well as the greater Elkhart community, including establishing an annual Quality Profile and strengthening existing relationships with media outlets	

Note: "HOLD" denotes action items undergoing study or further considerations as of May 2019

Goal Two: Nurture, Educate, Retain, and Attract Students

All students will experience a world-class education which will allow them to graduate career/college and life ready, as measured by data driven results.		
FOCUS	ACTION STEPS	DATA SOURCES
Set and communicate high, clear expectations.	Establish a process and cycle for reviewing curriculum and expectations for students PreK-12	
	Identify and establish individual instruction plans for students who need instruction in a non-traditional classroom setting, including high ability and special education	
	Identify and adopt literacy and math standards for PreK-12 with subsequent rollout of other essential standards in other content areas	
	Communicate academic performance expectations to parents and students at the beginning of each school year	
	Achieve district-wide accreditation from a nationally-recognized source	
	Achieve state and national recognition for student achievement	
Create an environment where all students feel challenged, supported, and accepted.	Employ highly-effective staff	
	Provide meaningful, ongoing professional development for staff that enables them to meet the needs of diverse learners	
	Offer a wide-range of co- and extra-curricular activities for students, starting at the elementary level	
	Pursue a plan to operate grade 6-7-8 middle schools at North Side, West Side and current Elkhart Central, based on boundaries	
	Pursue a plan to open and operate a 6-7-8 middle school at Pierre Moran, as a magnet option	
	Open and operate a vibrant Freshman Division	
	Open and operate a top-tier stand alone grade 10-11-12 High School	
	Survey students annually, regarding school environment	
Create unique, engaging, and motivating programs.	Employ highly effective staff and coaches	
	Create a culture that welcomes mentors	
	Develop a policy which creates a career success certification and service learning graduate requirement (capstone)	
	Explore flex-credit opportunities for students	
	Create regional, national, and international programming and travel opportunities for ECS students	
	Create school of choice opportunities within the district	
	Conduct ongoing research and development of 21st Century career and college opportunities	
	Create a secondary book study program and a leadership speaker series for students	

Goal Two: Nurture, Educate, Retain, and Attract Students

All students will experience a world-class education which will allow them to graduate career/college and life ready, as measured by data driven results.		
FOCUS	ACTION STEPS	DATA SOURCES
Align resources and infrastructure to achieve student learning expectation.	Establish a process and cycle for reviewing curriculum and expectations for students K-12	
	Implement the Strategic Plan annual review cycle	
	Implement a 10-year facilities plan	
	Seek grants and other outside funding sources	
Provide environments that are welcoming, clean, safe, and conducive to learning.	Review and upgrade operational plans for Food Service, Transportation, Safety and Security, and Building Maintenance	
	Establish an ongoing priority on technology to create a relevant and personal education with technological integration	
	Survey parents on calendar and start times for Fall 2021	
	Implement a 10-year facilities plan	



Goal Three: Ensure a Highly Effective Staff

ECS will create and maintain a climate and a culture which attracts and retains highly effective staff members.		
FOCUS	ACTION STEPS	DATA SOURCES
Institute measures that improve workplace climate and culture.	Develop a culture of professional learning communities which supports innovative practices and collaborative decision making	
	Improve internal communication	
	Research feasibility of an employee childcare center	
	Secure/develop a headquarters that represents the standards of our district	
	Provide employees with opportunities to support students, innovative teaching, extracurriculars, and the community through a variety of established non-profit organizations	
	Commit to retain all existing teachers on staff throughout implementation of the strategic plan	
	Survey staff annually, regarding job satisfaction	
Strengthen recruitment and retention of staff.	Establish and maintain a regionally competitive salary schedule	
	Develop a recruitment strategy which demonstrates a commitment to excellence and inclusion	
	Institute an employee program which reflects career earning potential	
	Research feasibility of a policy which allows staff living in Michigan to pay a reduced rate of tuition for their students to attend ECS	
Strengthen professional development and evaluation.	Create an evaluation system designed to improve staff performance	
	Research and implement effective teaching strategies, efficient curriculum formats, and digital content applications for all subjects	
	Institute a professional development program for all certified and classified staff including a leadership component	



Quality Indicators: Measures of Success

Results

Elkhart Community Schools has the responsibility to our community to meet and exceed our goals, as we continue to grow and develop the opportunities in our district. We have developed the following criteria to help us measure our progress. Updates on our progress will be communicated through our annual Quality Profile.

Goal One: Create Vibrant Relationships to Ensure Successful Students, Schools and Community

INDICATOR	BASELINE 2016	2017	GOAL 2018	GOAL 2019	GOAL 2020	GOAL 2021
1. Number of active parent teacher organizations	19	19				
2. % of parents attending parent-teacher conferences	61.4%	62.5%				
3. Develop and administer school experience survey	TBD	1/09/2018				
4. Number of parents participating in the school experience survey	TBD	598				
5. % of parents/guardians who feel welcomed and engaged by ECS	TBD	57%				
6. Number of community members participating in the school experience survey	TBD	829				
7. Number of mentors registered with CARES	490	510				
8. % of students impacted by "Youth Service" providers	TBD	2,426				
9. Development of a marketing plan for increased enrollment and community awareness	TBD	8/8/17				



Quality Indicators: Measures of Success

Goal Two: Nurture, Educate, Retain, and Attract Students

INDICATOR	BASELINE 2016	2017	GOAL 2018	GOAL 2019	GOAL 2020	GOAL 2021
10. Report Card	C	C				
11. IREAD-3	76%	78%				
12. AMAO	23.7%	.08%****				
13. Indiana Standardized Test, ESSA Compliance	See Below	See Below				
13a. (Grades 3-8; ELA and Math combined)	37.8%	35.9%				
13b. (Grade 10 only; ELA and Math combined)	25.9%	26.9%				
13c. (Grades 3-8, 10; ELA and Math combined)	36.4%	34.7%				
14. High School Graduation Rate	88.7%	91.7%				
15. ACT/SAT - % of students taking a college entrance exam	35.4%	47.4%				
16. Average ACT/SAT Score	See Below	See Below				
16a. (Average ACT Score)	19.6	19.9				
16b. (Average SAT Score)	1,028	1,041				
17. Advanced Placement - % of students taking/passing AP exam	51%	52%				
18. Attendance	94.5%	94.3%				
19. Number of 4-Star Schools	0	0				
20. Enrollment	13,147	12,993				
21. Number of PreK classrooms	15	15				
22. % of students demonstrating growth on NWEA	42%	51%				
23. Number of high school credits earned at the middle school level	2,988	4,149				
24. Number of Advanced Placement courses offered	19	23				
25. % of graduates who pass one AP class	34.2%	36.1%				
26. % of graduates who are AP scholars (3 or more AP classes)	15.8%	17%				
27. Total AP credits earned	1,604	1,774				
28. Average AP credits earned per student	2.9	3.0				
29. Number of Dual Credit courses offered	23	29				
30. Number of students enrolled in Dual Credit courses	707	1,204				
31. Number of students enrolled in a CTE course	388	1,142				
32. Ratio of students to electronic educational devices	1.75 : 1	1.17:1				
33. Number of students participating in extra-curricular and co-curricular offerings	TBD	TBD				
34. Number of service learning hours performed by students	TBD	TBD				

Quality Indicators: Measures of Success

Goal Two: Educate, Retain and Attract Students

INDICATOR	BASELINE 2016	2017	GOAL 2018	GOAL 2019	GOAL 2020	GOAL 2021
35. Number of students enrolled in regional, national, and international programming	TBD	TBD				
36. Number of students participating in internships or work study programs	95	164				
37. Number of students earning a career/habit of excellence certification	0	0				
38. Number of college/certification credits earned	See Below	See Below				
38a. (Number of certifications earned)	616	663				
38b. (Number of college credits earned)	9,974	14,273				
39. Number of graduating seniors enrolling in a post-secondary institution	TBD**	611				
40. % of graduates who go on to a 2-year college	TBD**	24.4%				
41. % of graduates who go on to a 4-year college	TBD**	45.4%				
42. % of graduates who complete 2-year degree	TBD***	TBD***				
43. % of graduates who complete 4-year degree	TBD***	TBD***				
44. Total scholarship dollars earned	\$3,177,040	\$3,664,556				
45. Average scholarship dollars earned per student	TBD	\$12,653				
46. AdvancEd accreditation	TBD	2				

** Will begin collecting data with 2017 graduates. *** Will begin collecting data with 2016 graduates. ****WIDA Assessment changed

Goal Three: Ensure a Highly Effective Staff

INDICATOR	BASELINE 2016	2017	GOAL 2018	GOAL 2019	GOAL 2020	GOAL 2021
47. % of highly qualified teachers	99%	99.8%				
48. Number of Nationally Board Certified teachers	TBD	TBD				
49. % of staff who feel they are valued	56.7%	50%				
50. % of staff who feel they make a difference	96.6%	94.1%				
51. % of staff who feel empowered to try innovative practices	67.6%	67.6%				
52. % of staff who feel involved in collaborative decision making processes	45.7%	45.8%				
53. Number of staff who are evaluated as highly effective	329 (Cert); TBD (Class)	436 (Cert); TBD (Class)				
54. Number of staff who participate in professional development	798	588				
55. % of staff with a tenure of five or more years	69% (Cert); 45.5% (Class)	68% (Cert); 47.3% (Class)				
56. % of staff turnover (for reasons other than termination, retirement, or death)	7.3% (Cert); 16.4% (Class)	8.6% (Cert); 14.3% (Class)				

Annual Cycle: 2017-2022 Strategic Plan

Timeframe	Annual Cycle: 2017-2022 Strategic Plan
January	State of the Schools Address Quality Profile: review, publish, and distribute to the community
February	Board Retreat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board reviews Strategic Plan • Makes the recommendation to affirm or revise • Superintendent formally revises if needed
March	Programming & Operations Budget review and workshop
April	Programming & Operations Budget recommendations
May	Programming & Operations Budget recommendation embedded into the budget process
June	Local Property Tax Funds and Budgets reviewed with the Board of School Trustees
July	General Fund and budget reviewed with the Board of School Trustees School Improvement Plans Developed at the building level Informal Contract negotiations
August	Beginning of School Year Issue Contracts Contract negotiations begin
September	Community Hearings and Board Approval of Budget Conclude Contract Negotiation and Approve Contract
October	Insurance Committee recommendation School Improvement Plans Submitted to the State
December	Budget Approval from the State of Indiana and revised budget established





ELKHART COMMUNITY SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROVIDE THE BEST
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ELKHART STUDENTS

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