

STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2023

Priorities 2020-2021





WHO WE ARE

At East Syracuse Minoa Central School District, our purpose and aim are clear:

Our Vision

The East Syracuse Minoa Central School District will be an exemplary 21st Century learning community whose graduates are prepared to excel in a complex, interconnected, changing world.

Our Mission

The East Syracuse Minoa Central School District will prepare students for the 21st Century by engaging all learners in meaningful learning experiences that meet the highest educational and ethical standards in a caring, collaborative learning community supported through partnerships with parents and families, businesses, civic organizations, and higher education.

Our Beliefs

We believe that:

- ◆ Each individual has dignity and worth.
- ◆ The capacity to learn for each individual is boundless.
- ◆ Curiosity and exploration stimulate innovation and learning.
- ◆ High expectations and challenging curriculum lead to greater achievement.
- ◆ Effort and perseverance are essential to achieve one's personal best.
- ◆ Positive relationships are fundamental to success and growth.
- ◆ Collaboration within and among school, families and community partners is essential to meet the needs of each student.
- ◆ Acceptance and mutual respect encourages students to take the risks necessary for academic and personal growth.
- ◆ Education prepares students to become productive and responsible citizens who contribute to their communities.
- ◆ Students need to develop their strengths, confidence and resilience to meet the challenges they will face throughout life.

OUR COMMUNITY

We are a suburban school district in Onondaga County, minutes from the downtown amenities in the City of Syracuse. Our district includes 72 square miles and is a blend of urban, suburban and rural with a wide range of socio-economic groups. We are part of a region that boasts of more than 44 universities and colleges offering professional and cultural opportunities, including Syracuse University, SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry, Le Moyne College and Onondaga Community College.

A strong, supportive business presence with Bristol Myers-Squibb, CORE Federal Credit Union, King & King Architects, Siemens and others provides numerous career opportunities, as well as opportunities for partnerships to maximize student learning. There are many opportunities for cultural experiences at the nationally renowned Everson Museum of Art, the Museum of Science and Technology (MOST) with its IMAX theater, the historic Landmark Theatre, the Lakeview Amphitheater, and others.

OUR FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS: TURNING GOOD INTENTIONS INTO STRONG RESULTS

Our ESM Strategic Plan is our framework for success. Success does not happen by chance. Consistent focus on a number of critical factors builds a common vision and sustains trust and commitment with our community, including the deep implementation of Stephen R. Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (Covey, 2004) and The 8th Habit (Covey, 2005). These habits provide structure for putting our beliefs into actions.

Habit 1: Be Proactive

- ◆ Involving our students, staff and community in the planning, implementation and monitoring of our priorities in the ESM Strategic Plan
- ◆ Staying focused on our "Circle of Influence," which are those things that we can influence
- ◆ Modeling and teaching positive behavior

Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind

- ◆ Having an unrelenting focus on what is best for our students - now and in their future
- ◆ Consistently communicating, building and maintaining our ESM vision, mission and beliefs
- ◆ Continually reflecting on and evaluating existing programs, our team and individual actions, and next steps for improvement based upon our ESM vision, mission, beliefs, and priorities within the ESM Strategic Plan

Habit 3: Put First Things First

- ◆ Aligning school and department improvement plans and personal growth plans to the ESM Strategic Plan
- ◆ Aligning all of our decisions and actions with our mission, vision and beliefs
- ◆ Aligning the budget to the ESM Strategic Plan
- ◆ Intentional focus on learning, creative thinking and relationship building

Habit 4: Think Win-Win

- ◆ Seeking mutually beneficial relationships by valuing and respecting others' ideas
- ◆ Approaching all partnerships with students, parents, families, staff and our community with mutual respect to meet common goals

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, then to be Understood

- ◆ Communicating with each other to align decisions and actions with mission, vision and beliefs
- ◆ Developing and sustaining collaborative partnerships with families and community-based partners
- ◆ Expanding and strengthening collaborative partnerships with higher education institutions and employers to extend learning opportunities for our students and build capacity for our employees

Habit 6: Synergize

- ◆ Through combining strengths of our students, staff and community, positive teamwork and collaboration, greater results are achieved than we could have achieved independently
- ◆ Deep and consistent implementation of Professional Learning Communities helps us achieve more than any of us can do individually.

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw

- ◆ Celebrating our successes, balancing and renewing our resources, and focusing on service

Habit 8: Find your Voice and Inspire Others to Find Theirs

- ◆ Emphasizing students' voices, aspirations, and ideas in continually shaping our ESM Strategic Plan and guiding reflections
- ◆ Empowering parents/caregivers and family members to embrace partnership and continuous learning as a priority



At ESM, we recognize the critically important connection of building the internal thinking habits of our students and staff with skill development that empowers all for success today and tomorrow.

Dispositions are our attributes or voluntary habits of thinking, which are reflected in our actions. Our positive dispositions yield strong internal motivation. While education typically focuses on building our students' knowledge, research reflects the power of teaching and reinforcing students' positive dispositions, which then align with students' skills and consequently their actions and choices. The research and work of Art Costa and Bena Kallick in *Habits of Mind* explains that these habits of thinking help us know how to behave intelligently when we don't know the answer.

Identifying dispositions as critically important for our students comes from our long-term alignment with Stephen Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Stephen Covey's work connects our dispositions with the way we see our world, which then impacts what we do, which in turn shapes our results.

We focus on building the positive dispositions of our students and staff through multiple practices at ESM, including the teaching of *7 Habits of Happy Kids*, the *7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, and the *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Our curriculum at ESM includes targeted *Habits of Mind* in our instructional units that are framed with the *Thoughtful Classroom* instructional framework. Our instructional and leadership staff all use Harvey Silver's *Thoughtful Classroom* framework and resources. Through the *Positivity Project*, *Responsive Classroom*, *PBIS*, and *Richard and Becky DuFour's Professional Learning Communities*, we prioritize our teaching, reinforcing and celebrating of positive dispositions in our students and staff.

DISPOSITIONS – THE INTERNAL MOTIVATION TO:

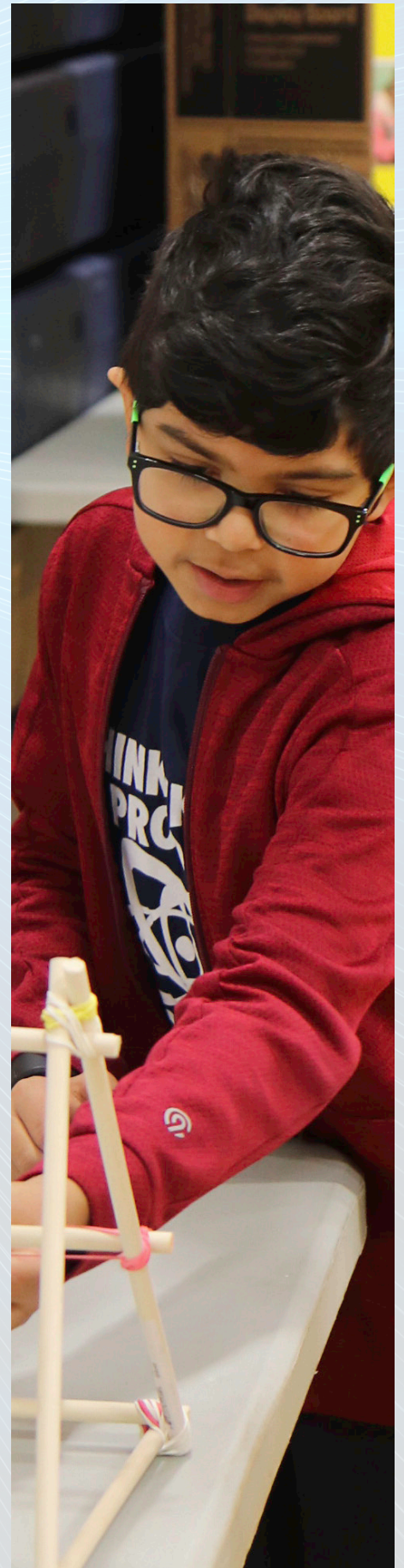
- ◆ Be open-minded and flexible in thinking
- ◆ Listen with understanding and empathy
- ◆ Desire continual learning
- ◆ Persist and persevere
- ◆ Manage choices and impulsivity
- ◆ Understand and manage personal relationships
- ◆ Think about thinking
- ◆ Be brave and take responsible risks
- ◆ Think independently with clear communication
- ◆ Create, innovate, imagine
- ◆ Be curious and question
- ◆ Find humor
- ◆ Be grateful and respond with wonderment and appreciation
- ◆ Desire integrity and honesty



Skills for success in school and careers are viewed as essential for our students and staff to be successful in this rapidly changing world. The skills our students need for their futures is changing as our world experiences rapid change with advanced robotics, artificial intelligence, biotechnology and more.

High paying jobs used to be based on a person's level of knowledge, but leaders such as the World Economic Forum, the International Center for Leadership in Education, and numerous employer groups have revised this trend based on world changes. These groups currently identify the top skills needed by our students as the following:

- ◆ Complex problem solving skills: acquires and analyzes necessary critical information with accuracy, translates into manageable tasks, works with others to apply to new situations
- ◆ Critical thinking: use logic and variety of reasoning strategies
- ◆ Creativity: creating original thoughts
- ◆ People Leadership and Management: inspire and motivate others toward common vision, develop skills of others, self-management
- ◆ Coordinating with others: collaborate, adjust in relation to others and be sensitive to needs of others
- ◆ Emotional Intelligence: being aware of others' reactions and needs; and aware of consequences of personal choices on others
- ◆ Judgment and Decision Making: Use data to make intelligence decisions; knowing how to get acceptance and commitment from others; provide feedback and recommendations to others
- ◆ Service Orientation: responsible citizen, actively seeking ways to help others, our community and our world
- ◆ Negotiation: resolving differences between you and others without argument
- ◆ Cognitive flexibility: involves thinking flexibly, logically and with sensitivity to adapt how you communicate based on who you're talking to or your audience



FOCUS AREA 1 TEACHING AND LEARNING



We will improve academic outcomes for all students and ensure student engagement and achievement by strengthening our documented Tier 1 curriculum, implementing evidence-based instructional strategies at all tiers, and aligning assessment and grading practices to essential learning standards and skills. Our goal is to ensure all students reach our ESM vision through instruction shaped by our guaranteed and viable curriculum that is vertically and horizontally aligned. This enables teachers to provide consistent rigorous learning goals for all students and enables students to set, monitor and reflect on personal learning goals aligned with priorities. We strive to improve our system so all instructional staff implement highly effective teaching practices to maximize student learning. Student learning is measured in multiple ways, and students are provided meaningful feedback to improve their learning, dispositions, skills and content knowledge. Through the work of Professional Learning Communities, collaborative teams work collectively to ensure high levels of learning for all students through a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), that focuses on high levels of academic and social-emotional learning.

GOAL

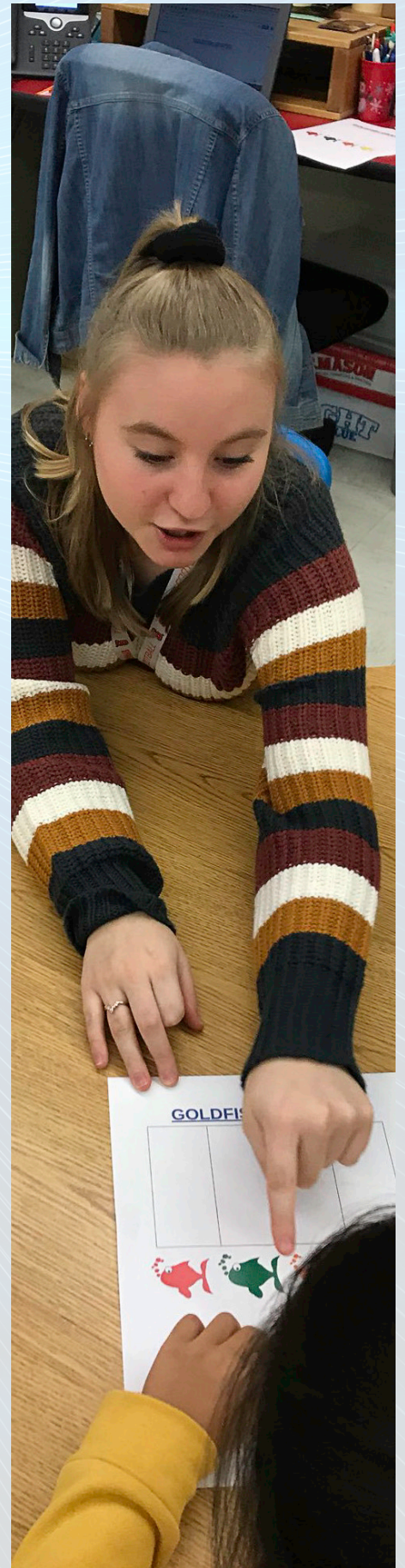
Support all ESM students through a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) that focuses on high levels of academic and social emotional learning

PRIORITIES

- ◆ Focus on standards-aligned curriculum to support academic goals through:
 - Prioritized essential learning standards, student friendly learning targets, standards-aligned common assessments and standards-aligned grading practices.
 - Instruction and intervention will be aligned to evidence-based best practices that support and engage all learners.
- ◆ Systematic implementation of MTSS (Multi-tiered System of Supports) K-12
- ◆ Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) of teacher teams that work collectively to analyze and identify student needs and support all levels of student learning.
- ◆ Strengthening our understanding of the SEL framework and implementation of differentiated supports, resources and interventions.

ACTION STEPS FOR 2020-2021

- ◆ Further develop a culture of collective responsibility, in which educators assume the responsibility to ensure high levels of learning for all students.
- ◆ Operationalize PLCs through implementation of Teacher Team Tier 1+2 Essential Actions
- ◆ Gather baseline information on students academic and social emotional needs in order to prioritize learning and identify student needs
- ◆ Identify and teach essential social behaviors
- ◆ Continue to document and revise curriculum in Atlas
- ◆ Prioritize essential learning standards PK-12
- ◆ Implement student friendly learning targets
- ◆ Further develop standards-aligned common assessments and grading practices
- ◆ Align instruction and interventions to evidence-based best practices that support and engage learners



FOCUS AREA 2 TECHNOLOGY FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

We will improve academic outcomes for all students and increase student engagement and achievement by implementing the ESM student technology standards into innovative learning models across all content areas. Integrating technology for teaching and learning allows us to infuse classrooms with digital learning tools, such as computers and handheld devices; expands our course offerings, experiences, and learning materials and supports learning 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Through using the SAMR model (substitution, augmentation, modification and redefinition, by Dr. Ruben Puentedura), instruction is designed to increase student engagement and motivation and accelerate learning. Teaching is transformed in a new model of connected teaching in ways that can only be achieved through integrating technology.

GOAL

Improve academic outcomes for all students and increase student engagement and achievement by implementing the ESM student technology standards into innovative learning models across all content areas

PRIORITIES

- ◆ Build capacity around the technology standards with a continued focus on the SAMR (Substitution - Augmentation - Modification - Redefinition) model
- ◆ Ensure accessibility to technology for all students and staff
- ◆ Provide professional learning for all staff
- ◆ Integrate internet safety

ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Enhance units and lessons through increased use of and alignment to the District technology standards
- ◆ Develop capacity for distance/remote learning (tools and pedagogy) for both students and staff
- ◆ Continue to build capacity around and elaborate upon the levels of the SAMR model, as it applies to teaching and learning, through integration into all subject areas
- ◆ Review and continue to deploy accessible materials on teacher websites
- ◆ Embed professional learning and support for teachers with the implementation of the SAMR model and the student technology standards
- ◆ Integrate internet safety lessons with all students as elaborated in the student technology standards.



FOCUS AREA 3

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We will improve academic outcomes for all students and ensure student engagement and achievement by enhancing communication with families related to curriculum, learning and safety. Thoughtful, intentional communication with families is critically important so that they may understand what their children are learning and be able to further support them. Regular family engagement and communication between home and school improves student achievement and outcomes. Additionally, we will seek out new partnerships and enhance current ones with community members, businesses and organizations. These ongoing partnerships strengthen student learning and offer opportunities for real world experiences.

GOAL

Continue to improve the quality and consistency of communication with families

PRIORITIES

- ◆ Strengthen relationships and develop partnerships with families through enhanced communication related to learning
- ◆ Continually expand community partnerships to support student learning

ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Communicate essential learning priorities and share regularly with families
- ◆ Regularly communicate about individual student progress
- ◆ Identify opportunities to support children at home
- ◆ Expand opportunities to engage families more regularly at school events
- ◆ Utilize technology communication tools for students, families, and staff.
- ◆ Provide necessary professional learning to use the communication tools
- ◆ Build, maintain, and utilize partnerships





FOCUS AREA 4

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional learning for all staff is central to overall school and district improvements. Through continued professional learning and opportunities for staff to learn with and from one another, teachers and staff grow in their practices. All instructional staff participate in research-based professional development, aligned with our Strategic Plan priorities, and receive support to effectively implement these practices. This prioritized professional learning increases our collective capacity, content knowledge and our effective use of current instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of all students. In addition, we will improve our academic system by ensuring all non-instructional staff participate in professional development to continually improve our practices that support our learning system for our students.

GOAL

Improve academic outcomes for all students and ensure student engagement and achievement by building the capacities of our faculty and staff in the instructional and non-instructional areas of the district

PRIORITIES

Ensure all instructional and non-instructional staff participate in research-based professional development aligned with Strategic Plan priorities and receive support to effectively implement these practices, especially in the areas of:

- ◆ Social Emotional Learning
- ◆ Diversity
- ◆ Social Justice (including bias, discrimination, etc.)
- ◆ Technology (considering necessary learning options during virtual learning scenarios)
- ◆ Literacy evidence-based practices

ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Focus on strengthening understanding and the implementation of Professional Learning Communities to ensure coherence and alignment, with a focus on student learning
- ◆ Operationalize a comprehensive Professional Learning Plan for all staff to improve our academic system
- ◆ Coordinate training and professional development opportunities for all staff
- ◆ Align professional learning to the Strategic Plan
- ◆ Continue to build capacity within HR functions (ie. Technology integration, processes, policy, procedures, communication)

FOCUS AREA 5

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

We will improve academic outcomes for all students and ensure student engagement and achievement by providing a safe, welcoming environment that helps our students and families feel safe, valued and included in a fiscally sound district with efficient systems. Our systems and processes that support our learning environment must be coherent and aligned to our vision, mission and beliefs. Our aim is to integrate all components and processes within our district so that those engaged anywhere in the system experience an alignment of vision, communication and practice to meet our expectations for student learning.

GOAL

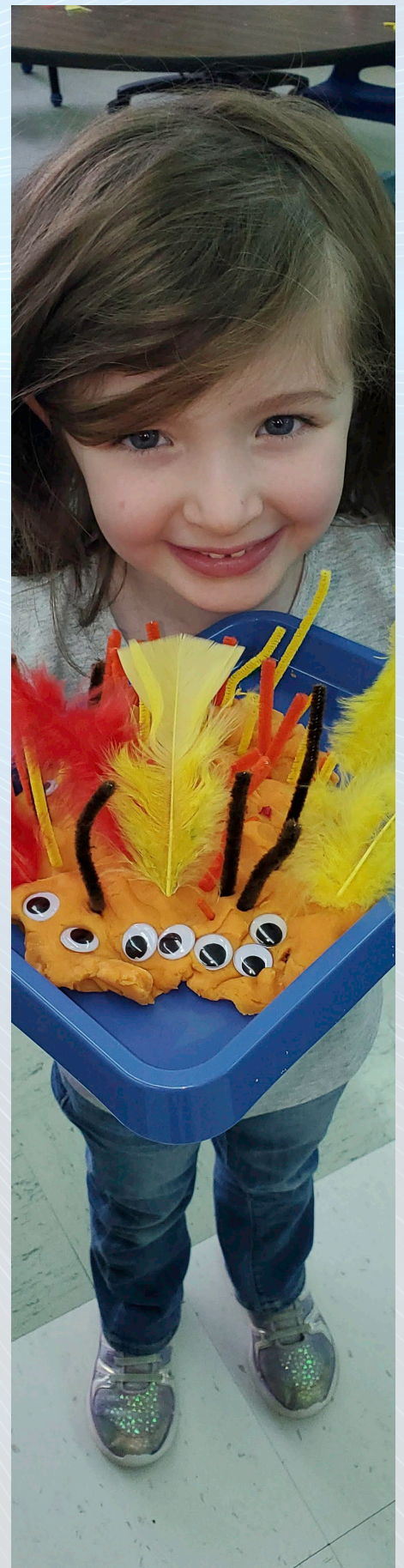
Enhance communication that will provide ongoing updates for the Elementary Objective

PRIORITIES

- ◆ Create and implement a vision for optimal indoor and outdoor learning spaces to be integrated into the design plan

ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Design and develop open houses and orientations for swing spaces, within the parameters and guidance of the governor
- ◆ Continue to develop operations plans for arrival/dismissal/parent pick-up and drop off/safety plans, etc.
- ◆ Continue design of phase 2 buildings - prepare for submission to NYSED
- ◆ Communicate updates/progress with stakeholders
- ◆ Establish plans for safe and welcoming environments for learning during the pandemic phase at all levels



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