

Superior-Greenstone District School Board

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND COMMITMENTS

September 2012



**OUR
MISSION**
*“Inspiring
our students
to succeed
and make
a difference”*

**OUR
VISION**
*“We are leaders
in providing
quality
learning
experiences
in our small
school
communities”*

**OUR
VALUES**
*“Caring, Fairness,
Empathy, Honesty
Responsibility,
Resiliency, Respect,
Perseverance
Innovation”*

**OUR
MOTTO**
*“Small
schools
make a
difference”*



Student Achievement and Well Being

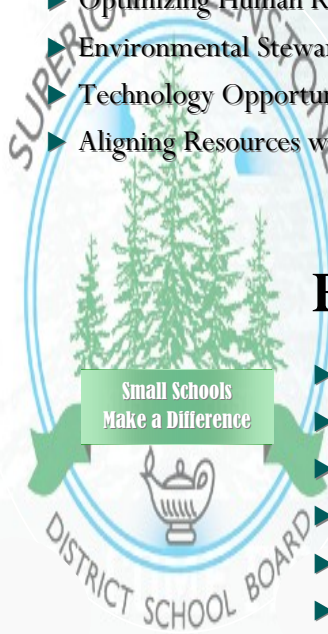
- ▶ Quality Instruction
- ▶ Student Engagement
- ▶ Authentic, Relevant and Meaningful Learning Experiences
- ▶ Equity and Inclusive Education
- ▶ Student Voice
- ▶ Raising Parental Expectations
- ▶ Character Education
- ▶ Global Citizenship
- ▶ Student Supports

Responsible Stewardship of Resources

- ▶ Maximizing Investment in Academic Resources
- ▶ Utilization of Space, Facilities and Services
- ▶ Consolidating Resources
- ▶ Optimizing Human Resources
- ▶ Environmental Stewardship
- ▶ Technology Opportunities for All
- ▶ Aligning Resources with Our Priorities

Building Relationships

- ▶ Creating a Culture of Trust
- ▶ Fostering a Climate of Respect and Transparency
- ▶ Celebrating Successes
- ▶ Modeling a Joy of Learning
- ▶ Strengthening Our Understanding of the Communities We Serve
- ▶ Strengthening Partnerships (Parents, Community, Agencies)
- ▶ Developing Leaders



Putting Our Beliefs Into Action

It is too easy to say that an idea is good.

- ▶ Global citizenship
- ▶ Diversity
- ▶ Leadership in a new world
- ▶ Quality Education

We believe in these things!

But, this is not a document about beliefs; it is a document about putting beliefs into action.

And that is why, in the coming pages, you will see so many sentences that begin with the expression “we will”—not because we are not currently making these things happen, but because we must constantly remind ourselves to continue doing so.

A commitment, after all, is so much more than a belief. It is a promise to act on that belief.

In this booklet, you will find the commitments we as an institution of learning have vowed to make a reality. We outline how we are currently fulfilling them and how we can do so much more to bring them to life in the coming years.

We ask our students to exceed their own expectations daily. Why should we expect anything less of ourselves?

Stand Behind Our Promise to Students

We will guarantee the quality of Superior-Greystone District School Board’s programs and service delivery to ensure an outstanding and rewarding experience for our students.

We are much more likely to produce original, quality individuals by holding ourselves accountable to those words. And so we strive to offer an exceptional, quality experience to those who walk through our doors.

We believe that all students can achieve high standards given sufficient time and support and that all teachers will teach to high standards given the right conditions and assistance.

For example, we will rigorously apply quality standards in all program areas by:

- ▶ Planning strategically for our students to succeed and to reach our long term goal of a 90% graduation rate;

Stand Behind Our Promise to Students

- ▶ Supporting our staff with training, professional development and technical expertise that will continue to improve program delivery and build our reputation for excellence;
- ▶ Honouring both the College of Teachers' Standards of Practice for the teaching profession and the Ethics of Practice for the teaching profession;
- ▶ Operating within a culture that believes all students can learn, progress and achieve.

The joy of learning - a major goal of schooling is to promote an openness to experience, a willingness to invest in learning, and intellectual engagement.

We will promote:

- ▶ Resiliency
- ▶ Inquiry
- ▶ Perseverance- view challenges as opportunities to learn
- ▶ Student self reflection
- ▶ Self regulation and independence

And we will continue to invest in learning excellence by:

- ▶ Providing staff with opportunities to continually improve their pedagogy through professional development, co-teaching, collaboration and classroom visits;
- ▶ Using advanced teaching methodology, media and formats, including digital learning;
- ▶ Fostering student responsibility for learning, ensuring that all students and teachers share a common understanding of the learning goals and success criteria for learning, and providing descriptive feedback that leads to improvement; encouraging students to set their own learning goals within the context of the curriculum and/or the Individual Education Plan.

We will strengthen students' experience by:

- ▶ Offering a learning approach that recognizes the needs for development and educational opportunities beyond the classroom;
- ▶ Establishing truly flexible, student-centered learning supports to facilitate student success;
- ▶ Creating new opportunities to engage students in pursuits that promote a holistic approach including physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing;
- ▶ Expanding personal growth, community building and life-skills opportunities;
- ▶ Ensuring mechanisms are in place to anticipate and respond to changing student needs.

Connected, Authentic, Relevant and Meaningful Learning

Learning is connected to the experiences and real world of the learner when:

- ▶ Learning is of interest to the learner, encouraging the learner to form his/her own questions in order to seek his/her own answers;
- ▶ Learning provides a bridge from what is already known to further knowledge and skills development;
- ▶ Learning is not discipline dependent—learners acquire knowledge and skills to solve problems in the same way in which we learn and solve problems in our daily lives;
- ▶ Students have choices, as guided by teachers;
- ▶ Students are connected and challenged beyond the world of the school using learning technologies;
- ▶ Learning is deepened through authentic, relevant and meaningful student inquiry.

Many Roads to Success

There is no single road to success. In Superior-Greystone District School Board we will continue to honour the many pathways students may wish to take by:

- ▶ Strengthening and expanding partnerships with post-secondary institutions (dual credit, specialist high skills major credits, school-to-work pathways and articulation agreements);
- ▶ Increasing the number and variety of cooperative education field placements;
- ▶ Offering exposure through multi-modality instruction;
- ▶ Ensuring learning environment is strategic, flexible and responds to the needs of all students;
- ▶ Providing tiered interventions, supported by a team approach to respond to individual student learning needs.

Building Community Strength in Character

We believe in an inclusive education system within our region in which all students, parents, and other members of the school community are welcomed and respected. Respect for diversity is essential in all our schools to meet the needs of our learners.

We will:

- ▶ Create positive school environments based on mutual respect and empathy by embedding character education;
- ▶ Use a variety of strategies to close achievement gaps;
- ▶ Accommodate diverse learning styles and provide programming that supports this diversity;
- ▶ Connect student learning to the real world;
- ▶ Involve our parents and community in meaningful ways to support student learning;
- ▶ Deliver programming to increase student engagement.

Share Our Great Story

We have a great story to tell. To have it heard, we need to be sure it is told in a compelling way. We will tell our story in a way that makes the community, the district and the province sit up and take notice.

We will do this by:

- ▶ Being consistent and unique in our messaging;
- ▶ Celebrating and showcasing our schools through media relations, print publications, special events, electronic media, social media and our Board website;
- ▶ Promoting and utilizing the use of our Board website as a central communication tool;
- ▶ Connecting with the world.

Maintain Focus

We will maintain our focus on student achievement and student well-being. Through this concerted focus, staff, students, parents and community partners will share an understanding of and a commitment to the Board's goals and priorities.

We will:

- ▶ Identify key priorities based upon student need (obtained from current and relevant student achievement data) with a sustained focus on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum;
- ▶ Communicate the key priorities to all school community members ensuring a shared understanding;
- ▶ Assist staff in maintaining a focus on the key priorities by introducing initiatives that align with the priorities;
- ▶ Engage in learning that is continuous, clear and focused on the needs of students;
- ▶ Be vigilant about “distracters” that do not align with our priorities;
- ▶ Work together to hold ourselves accountable.

Effective Use of Resources

To continue to improve and offer more to our students, we must optimize our resources.

We will achieve balanced budgets through responsible management by:

- ▶ Recognizing risks and being proactive in dealing with them;
- ▶ Implementing business process improvements;
- ▶ Using a “common sense” approach to all management issues;
- ▶ Maximizing investment in academic resources, utilization of space, facilities and services;
- ▶ Following the Ministry of Education’s Procurement Policy;
- ▶ We need the ability to interact in an increasingly complex and connected world. Thus, we are committed to incorporating 21st century technology into our facilities.
- ▶ Technology is accessible to the needs of our students;
- ▶ Professional practice, lifelong learning and leadership are modeled through the effective use of digital tools and resources;
- ▶ Policies for the safe, legal and ethical use of digital information and technology are established modeled and promoted.

We are committed to outreach and the development of community partnerships to support student achievement and well-being:

- ▶ We will model and promote environmentally responsible practices in all of our facilities;

Effective Use of Resources

- ▶ Systemic change in thinking and practice to ensure sustainability of our natural resources;
- ▶ Integrate sustainable practices to reduce our footprint;
- ▶ Respect for nature; ▶ Energy Conservation; ▶ Reduction of waste.

Develop Leaders

We are committed to collaborative leadership development at all levels.

We will:

- ▶ Strive to offer leadership in our classrooms and communities to help our students achieve academic, physical, social and moral excellence;
- ▶ Encourage students to participate in programs and activities that develop leadership, teamwork and advocacy both inside and outside the school;
- ▶ Provide opportunities for student input that reflects the diversity, needs, and interests of the student population;
- ▶ Promote leadership from within;
- ▶ Practice distributive leadership at all levels;
- ▶ Foster the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective leadership practice;
- ▶ Develop leaders who are responsive to the diverse nature and needs of our communities.

Parental Expectations

Students benefit when their parents/guardians are involved in their education and have high expectations for their achievement.

We will:

- ▶ Communicate effectively with parent(s)/guardian(s);
- ▶ Create opportunities for parental/guardian interaction;
- ▶ Provide parents/guardians with the information they require to make informed decisions about their child's learning;
- ▶ Collaborate in creating the highest possible shared expectations for learning;
- ▶ Improve student attendance with parental/guardian support;
- ▶ Use varied communication strategies that help parents/guardians support student learning;
- ▶ Welcome parents/guardians as respected and valued partners within the school community.

Building Relationships

We will foster an environment that challenges employees to be their best and to make a difference.

We will promote an inclusive and engaging work environment built on valuing diversity, trust and respect for all people.

We will do this through:

- ▶ Creating a work and learning environment that inspires and supports our employees to strive and achieve career aspirations;
- ▶ Operating in a transparent manner to inspire a sense of fairness, caring, compassion and tolerance in everything we do;
- ▶ Ensuring purposeful, ongoing, open exchanges of ideas, sharing of information and awareness of decisions;
- ▶ Communicating effectively with employees;
- ▶ Ensuring all human resource programs and activities reflect the concepts of respect, equity, fairness, and the value of diversity;
- ▶ Striving to ensure the safety and security of everyone on our properties, including all employees and students;
- ▶ Setting new standards for employee wellness (physical and emotional) through innovative and integrated programs and services;
- ▶ Fostering a collaborative, creative, solution-oriented work environment where the contributions of all staff are recognized, valued and respected;
- ▶ Providing employees opportunities for sanctioned involvement with community projects, and giving recognition to such work;
- ▶ Ensuring that we continue to follow best practices for Labour Relations;
- ▶ Working collaboratively with our Unions;
- ▶ Building a performance management system that aligns leadership and management activities to our strategic plan and recognizes accomplishments and contributions;
- ▶ Developing and encouraging a succession plan that allows people to understand the requirements of different jobs and what competencies and skills are required to move into a position with success.