

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2023



**ESM**  
East Syracuse Minoa  
Central School District

**Priorities 2019-2020**



## 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.

## BUILDING ON OUR STRONG FOUNDATION

**Our strategic plan is our district's commitment to our students.** It is our commitment to achieve specific results on behalf of our students. It intentionally recognizes and builds on our past accomplishments, while continually looking to the future to achieve our vision of being “an exemplary 21st Century learning community whose graduates are prepared to excel in a complex, interconnected changing world”. Our priorities and actions are identified by our community through significant shared decision-making.

Our community originally came together in 2007-2008 to collaboratively create our 2008-2013 Strategic Plan. **The first Strategic Plan for 2008-2013 established a clear vision for our staff, students and community and set a strong foundation for learning.** It established a culture where we collaboratively study and learn from experts and each other, with a willingness to take risks to innovate to better meet the needs of our students. We adopted and implemented a consistent framework for our instruction with the Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework and a consistent framework for our leadership with the Thoughtful Classroom Principal Effectiveness Framework. It launched us on a professional journey of transformational change that focused our thinking and efforts, and set us on a course with an exponential increase in student and staff successes.

**Our second Strategic Plan, 2013-2018, created many innovative learning models and programs.** We developed a deeper focus on inquiry-based and trans-disciplinary learning through authentic problem-solving learning experiences. Our schools developed innovative STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) curricula and programs for PK-12. We infused technology to create learning opportunities for our students that wouldn't be possible without this technology integration. We continued developing strong innovative partnerships with our community, locally and nationally. We created and implemented Career Pathways and increased the college-level courses available to our high school students. We launched our Spartan Academy, which allows our high school students to obtain 24-60 college credits while striving for an Associates Degree in a STEM area at the same time they receive their Regents high school diploma. Many of our CTE (career and technical education) programs received New York State certification. We rebuilt our middle school into an innovative award-winning learning space to match our learning model for grades 6-8. We celebrated numerous recognitions of our students, staff and district and shared our innovations with educators from our region, state, country and world. The synergy of our students, staff and community continue to open new opportunities for learning for our students.

**Our third Strategic Plan 2018-2023, focuses on coherence and alignment, while looking to the future of continued academic achievement in a global rapidly changing world, while consistently focusing on developing the whole child to prepare all students for lifelong success.**





**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.

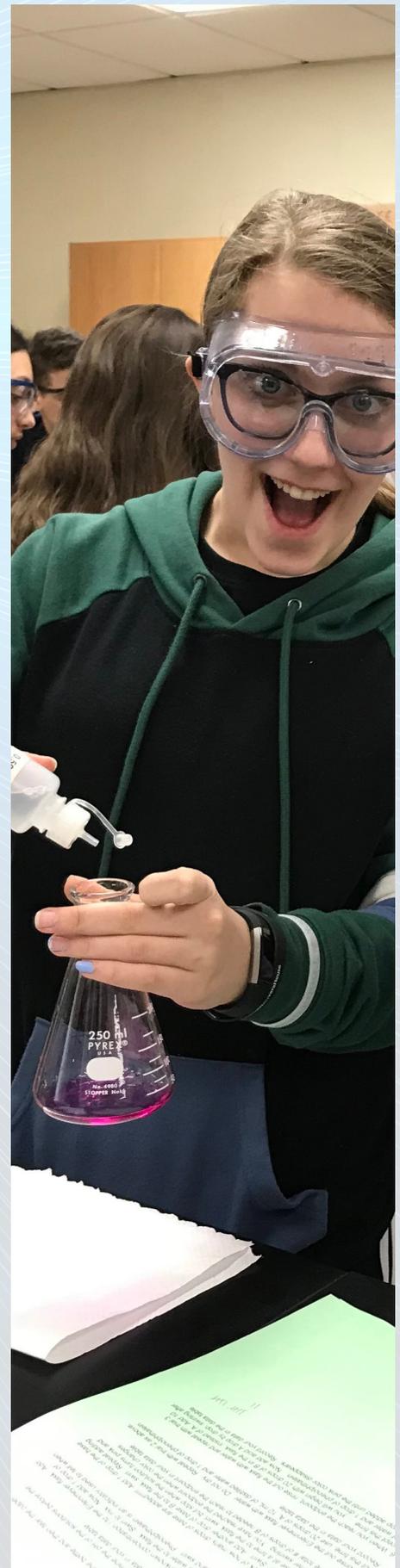
## **DISPOSITIONS – THE INTERNAL MOTIVATION TO:**

- ◆ 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 curriculum, instructional strategies, assessment and grading practices in the district. 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, the learning of our students is measured in multiple ways, and students are provided meaningful feedback to improve their dispositions, skills and content knowledge.

### PRIORITY 1A

Increase knowledge of NYS Next Generation Learning standards and ensure alignment of curriculum, instruction, assessments and grading practices

### ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Build capacity for teachers related to understanding of the Next Generation Learning Standards in all subject areas
- ◆ Identify essential standards for courses/subjects
- ◆ Document and align curriculum, instruction and assessments in Atlas online platform
- ◆ Develop common assessments aligned and tagged with standards so they may be easily analyzed and used to inform instruction
- ◆ Examine effective grading practices, while aligning grading to assessments
- ◆ Align instruction and instructional practices to the Next Generation Learning Standards, addressing the needs of English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, and other exceptional learners through culturally responsive teaching
- ◆ Continued deep implementation of the Thoughtful Classroom Framework as our instructional framework



## PRIORITY AREA 1B

Support the needs of all students, using a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)



## ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Enhance systematic understanding and documentation of a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, with district-wide alignment
- ◆ Strengthen understanding of the Social-Emotional Learning Framework
- ◆ Provide social-emotional supports at all levels through the use of evidence-based practices and strategies
- ◆ Embed a strong Tier 1 curriculum, while expanding use of evidence-based strategies at Tier 2 and 3
- ◆ Focus on strengthening and implementation of Professional Learning Communities with a continued focus on high levels of learning for all students
- ◆ Ongoing focus on relationship building that supports learning



## 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. Integrating technology for teaching and leading allows us to infuse classrooms with digital learning tools, such as computers and hand held 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.

### PRIORITY AREA 2

Integrate the ESM Technology Standards into content areas, with a focus on the SAMR model and internet safety

### ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Provide students with age level appropriate internet safety information with district-wide fidelity.
- ◆ Develop consistent expectations for administering Professional Learning around the technology SAMR model.
- ◆ Define and implement consistent expectations for collecting evidence that the SAMR model is being used across all grade levels.
- ◆ Use technology to consistently engage families through varied communication tools in order to increase student achievement
- ◆ Define expectations for the Tech Competencies, including Atlas integration



## 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 through the use of common platforms to provide increased opportunities for engaging with their child's education as partners in learning. Additionally, we will seek out new partnerships and enhance current partnerships with community members, businesses and organizations to enhance student learning. Thoughtful, intentional communication with families is critically important for families to understand what their children are learning in order to increase communication with their child and support student learning. Family engagement in schools improves student achievement and outcomes. Parents who can support their children's learning result in higher achievement.

#### PRIORITY AREA 3A

Continue to improve the quality and consistency of communication with families

#### ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Identify resources to make communication accessible to all families
- ◆ Update website to provide ADA accessibility
- ◆ Implement TAP APP emergency communication system
- ◆ Provide employee professional learning to ensure a welcoming environment

#### PRIORITY AREA 3B

Increase student involvement in/with community partnerships

#### ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Develop collaborative activities and events with community partners to strengthen relationships
- ◆ Regularly analyze and communicate what community partnerships and resources are available
- ◆ Actively seek out opportunities for new partnerships to maximize student learning





## FOCUS AREA 4

### EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

We will improve academic outcomes for all students and ensure student engagement and achievement by ensuring all instructional staff participate in research-based professional learning aligned with our Strategic Plan priorities and receive support to effectively implement these practices. This prioritizes professional learning to increase our 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 learning to continually improve our practices that support our learning system for our students.

#### PRIORITY AREA 4

Ensure all instructional and non-instructional staff participate in research-based professional learning aligned with our Strategic Plan priorities and receive support to effectively implement these practices

#### ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Focus on strengthening and the implementation of Professional Learning Communities to ensure coherence and alignment
- ◆ Provide employee professional learning for a welcoming environment
- ◆ Operationalize a comprehensive Professional Learning Plan for all staff to improve our academic system
- ◆ Coordinate training and professional learning opportunities for all staff
- ◆ Align professional learning to the Strategic Plan



## 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.

#### PRIORITY AREA 5A

Enhance communication that will provide ongoing updates for the Elementary Objective

#### ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Provide ongoing updates related to the Elementary Objective with pertinent information via Board of Education meetings, the website, newsletters, and district-wide meetings

#### PRIORITY AREA 5B

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

#### ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Continue visiting innovative design spaces, including analysis of furniture and learning models to support innovative learning
- ◆ Provide collaborative time for design teams and landscapers/architects to develop outdoor learning/instruction spaces that are developmentally appropriate and accessible.



## OUR LEADERSHIP

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Dr. Thomas B. Nevelidine, Deputy Superintendent  
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Kieran O'Connor, Executive Director of Planning, Development and Technology  
Kate Skahen, Executive Director of School Business Administration  
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