

STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2023



PRIORITIES 2021-2022



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, 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, Richard and Becky DuFour's Professional Learning Communities and CASEL Competencies, we prioritize our teaching, reinforcing and celebrating the positive dispositions in our students and staff.

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

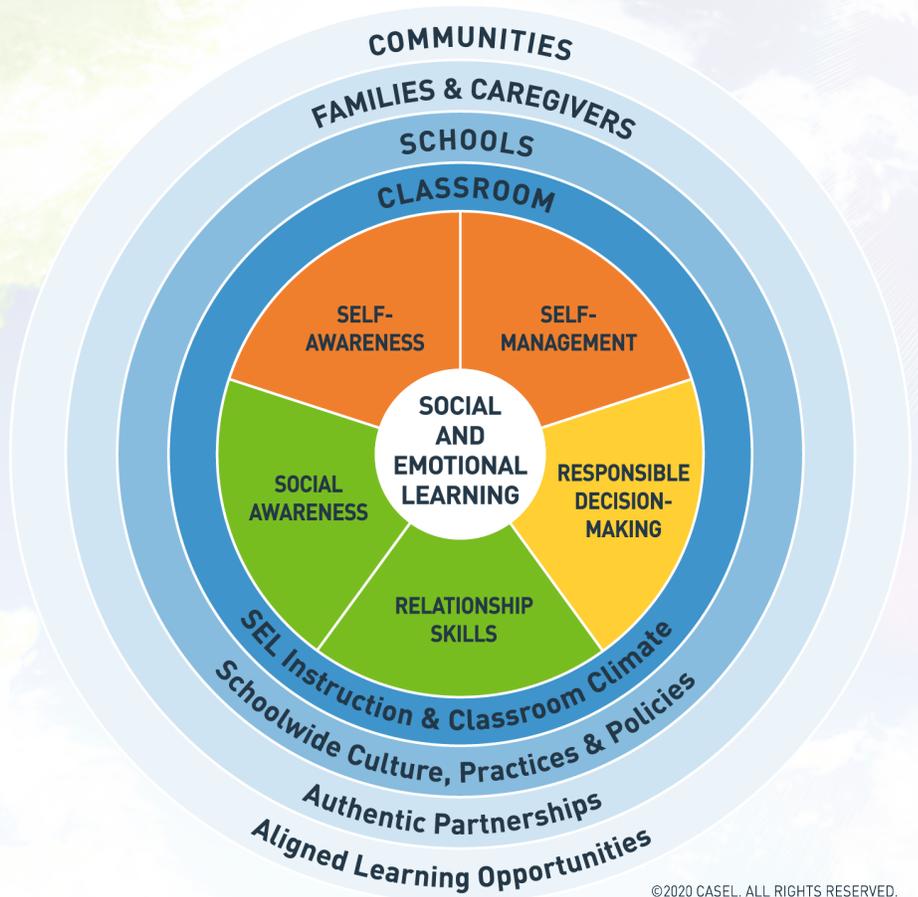
- ◆ Celebrating our successes, balancing and renewing our resources, and focusing on service

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



Social and emotional learning is key to the educational process and human development and advances equity for students. Multiple decades of research indicates that an education rich in social emotional learning (SEL) gets results and leads to increased academic outcomes, up to 11 percentile points. The benefits and impact of social emotional learning and programming can positively impact academics, conduct, emotional distress, poverty, substance abuse, and overall lifetime outcomes.



At ESM, we believe it is critically important to include the SEL competencies as a framework around which we align practices and policies for all. These competencies identify what students from PK-12 should be able to do for success in school, the community, and in careers. Well-designed, evidence-based programs and practices are foundational to the successful implementation of SEL. We believe it is most beneficial to “integrate SEL throughout the school’s academic curricula and culture, across the broader contexts of schoolwide practices and policies, and through ongoing collaboration with families and community organizations.”

Taken from <https://casel.org/sel-framework/>

CASEL's (Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning) SEL framework “fosters knowledge, skills, and attitudes across five areas of competence and multiple key settings to establish equitable learning environments that advance students’ learning and development” (CASEL, 2020).

- ◆ **Self-awareness:** The abilities to understand one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts

Examples: *Identity, Integrity, Emotional Intelligence*

- ◆ **Self-management:** The abilities to manage one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations

Examples: *Self-Care, Self Advocacy, Time Management*

- ◆ **Social awareness:** The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts

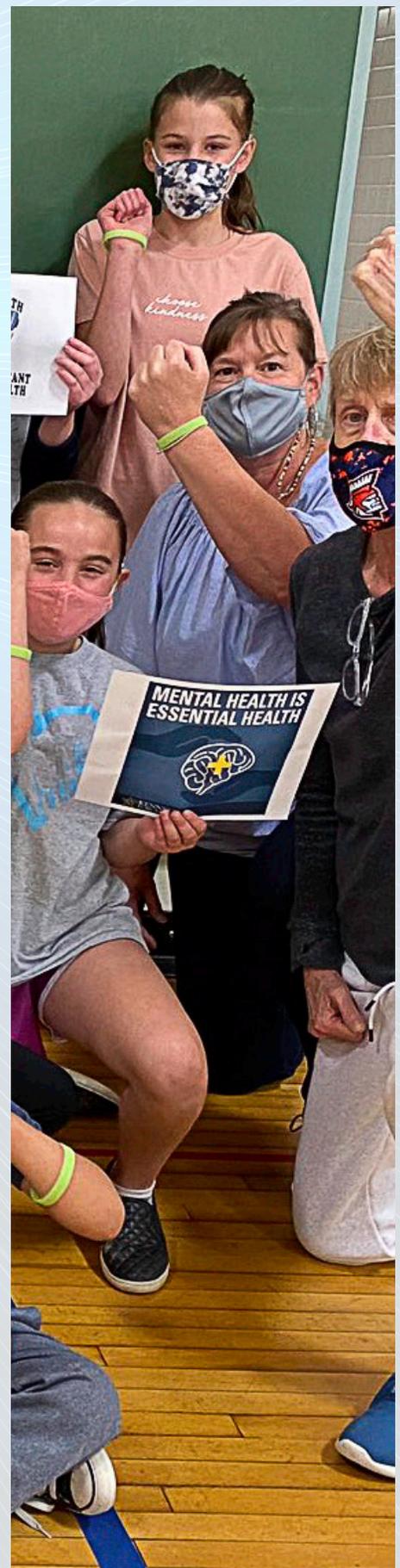
Examples: *Empathy, Compassion, Gratitude*

- ◆ **Relationship skills:** The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups

Examples: *Interpersonal skills, Communication skills (including digital communication)*

- ◆ **Responsible decision-making:** The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations

Examples: *Open-minded, Curious, Solution-focused, Reasoned judgment, Critical thinking, Self-Reflection*



For additional detail: <https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CASEL-SEL-Framework-11.2020.pdf>

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 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

All ESM students will be supported through a multi-tiered system of supports that focuses on high levels of academic, social-emotional, and grade-level appropriate learning, that is culturally responsive and inclusive of all members of the learning community.

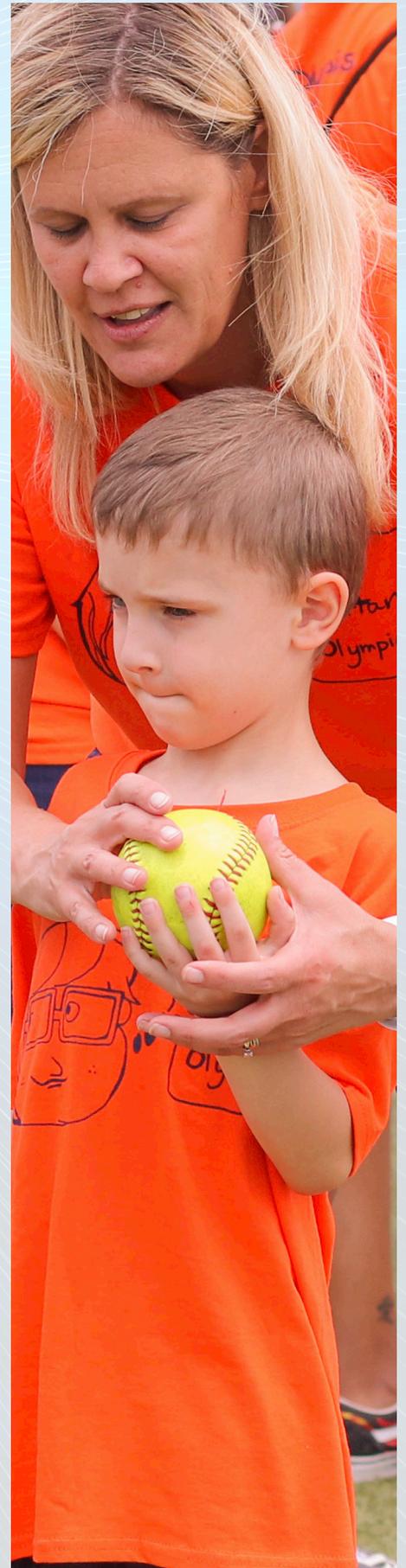
PRIORITIES

- ◆ Evidence based Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programming in place at all grade levels.
- ◆ Accelerated learning through a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), with continued focus on Tier 1 curriculum, and a renewed focus on Tiers 2 and 3
- ◆ Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Practices
- ◆ Professional Learning Communities will engage in data-driven discussions to target student learning across all content areas, including the use of academic and social emotional learning data, that focus on high levels of learning for ALL students



ACTION STEPS FOR 2021-2022

- ◆ Embed Social Emotional Learning assessment tools to align necessary supports
- ◆ Incorporate CASEL competencies into all classrooms
- ◆ Prioritize and unpack essential learning standards focusing on acceleration and grade-level access, with appropriate scaffolds for all students
- ◆ Increase awareness and implementation of culturally responsive practices and pedagogy to ensure equitable access for all students
- ◆ Strengthen Professional Learning Communities, through regular collaborative reviews of data that inform all instructional decisions
- ◆ Implement evidence-based academic and behavioral approaches at all tiers of instruction to address new and unfinished learning
- ◆ Provide ongoing standards-based feedback and grades to students that represents the student's academic progress



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 tools and expand our course offerings, experiences, and learning materials. Alignment of digital resources will allow for more consistent access and provide the ability to more effectively communicate with all stakeholders. Continued implementation of the SAMR model (substitution, augmentation, modification and redefinition, by Dr. Ruben Puentedura), along with integration of the technology competencies, will increase student engagement and motivation and accelerate learning.

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

- ◆ Standardize the technology platforms across the district.
- ◆ Ensure digital equity and access to resources for all stakeholders
- ◆ Embed technology competencies into all subject areas

ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Evaluate and align technology learning platforms that are consistent, effective and reliable
- ◆ Support the implementation of ParentSquare
- ◆ Develop and share on-demand professional learning tutorials for staff
- ◆ Provide digital resources to all students and families
- ◆ Embed keyboarding and basic computer skills, with a focus on integration of SAMR and technology competencies at all grades



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 they may understand what their children are learning and be able to further support them. Regular family engagement and communication between home and schools improves student achievement and outcomes. Additionally, we will seek out and enhance partnerships with community members, businesses and organizations. These ongoing partnerships strengthen student learning and offer opportunities for real world experiences.

GOAL

We will improve academic outcomes and social-emotional development for all students by increasing the opportunities for family and community involvement, with a more intentional focus on inclusivity of all families.

PRIORITIES

- ◆ Implement ParentSquare
- ◆ Increase communication about how to support students at home (both academics and socially and emotionally)
- ◆ Strengthen participation and engagement of families from diverse backgrounds

ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Implement and train all stakeholders on the use of ParentSquare, through coordinated messaging PK-12
- ◆ Improve family resources available on the website, including those to support social emotional learning
- ◆ Identify additional stakeholders from diverse groups to provide opportunities for voice and to share perspectives





FOCUS AREA 4

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

We will improve academic outcomes through Professional learning for all staff. Through continued professional learning and opportunities for staff to learn 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 build the capacity of 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

We will seek to diversify our workforce, while providing relevant professional learning to all stakeholders related to all focus areas.

PRIORITIES

- ◆ Staff Hiring, Recruiting and Retention
- ◆ Equitable opportunities for professional learning available for all staff, including
 - Professional learning communities
 - Multi-tiered system of supports
 - Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Practices

ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Recruit to diversify workforce in all areas and levels
- ◆ Develop Employee Engagement and Accountability website for staff
- ◆ Build staff morale through ongoing activities
- ◆ Align professional learning to the Strategic Plan

FOCUS AREA 5

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

We will improve academic outcomes through the integration of all learning environment systems, structures, components and processes in a fiscally sound district. The systems and processes that support our learning environment must be coherent, efficient, and aligned to our vision, mission and beliefs. As we continue with Our Elementary Objective capital project, Woodland and Fremont school communities will move back into newly-renovated, state-of-the-art school buildings while construction is ongoing at Minoa, Park Hill and East Syracuse Elementary.

GOAL

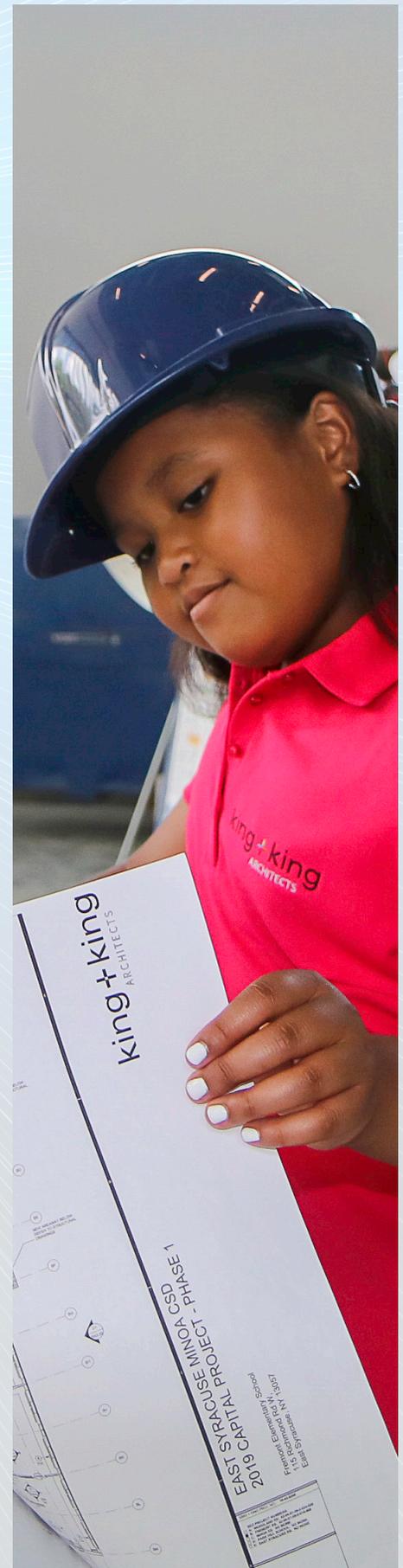
Improve academic outcomes of all students and ensure student engagement and achievement by providing a safe, welcoming Pre K-5 environment that helps students and families feel safe, valued, and included during our continued Elementary Objective.

PRIORITIES

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

ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Coordination of next phase of Elementary Objective
- ◆ Continue relocation meetings as needed
- ◆ Develop operational plans for arrival/dismissal, safety plans, etc.
- ◆ Communicate progress with stakeholders
- ◆ Establish plans for safe and welcoming environments for learning at all levels
- ◆ Finalize selections for Phase II buildings and review outdoor learning spaces



OUR LEADERSHIP

Board of Education

Mrs. Debbie Kolod - President
Mr. D. Paul Waltz - Vice President
Mrs. Lori Aird
Mr. John Albanese
Mrs. Susan Cain
Mrs. Tracy Callahan
Mrs. Leah Cushing
Mrs. Kay Gallery
Mrs. Dee Seaman

Executive Cabinet

Dr. Donna J. DeSiato, Superintendent
Dr. Thomas B. Nevelidine, Deputy Superintendent
N. Shane Hacker, Executive Director of Curriculum, Learning and Assessment
Kieran O'Connor, Executive Director of Planning, Development and Technology
Katherine Skahen, Executive Director of School Business Administration
Douglas Mohorter, Executive Director of Employee Engagement and Accountability

Strategic Action Leadership Team

Christa Andrus
Greg Avellino
Marshall Bailey
Amy Brennan
Pam Buddendeck
Beth Crump
Kelsey DeLany
Tom Decker
Christy Fahey
Gary Gerst
Gina Terzini
Gina Gabriel
Michele Gipe
Kim Goode
N. Shane Hacker
Pam Herrington
Justine Hill
Paul Holzwarth
Sarah Kelley

Sue Kowalski
Shelly LaMarche
Catherine Martin
Denise McGinley
Kevin Michaud
Douglas Mohorter
Alyssa Moskowitz
Shadia Nesheiwat
Kieran O'Connor
Leslie Pcolinsky
Ron Perry
Amy Shields
Erin Simmons
Katherine Skahen
Tom Sweeney
Cheryl West
Ashleigh Wilson
Jamie Zimmer



407 Fremont Road, East Syracuse, NY 13057
esmschools.org