

Published in the Waunakee Tribune, March 22, 2018: *"From Your Waunakee School Board"*

The *Waunakee Tribune* does a good job covering our meetings and featuring accomplishments of students and staff. At least once a year, school district superintendent Randy Guttenberg shares his thoughts in "From the Administrator's Desk". Our district website contains up to date information on what's going on in our schools plus access to other valuable information (see www.waunakee.k12.wi.us).

This year, the School Board decided to write our own articles on topics we think you should know about. We believe it's important to share our perspectives and general information on some of the key factors that influence the decisions we make. Our plan is to write four articles this year that will be published in the *Tribune*, distributed to staff and parents via Infinite Campus and posted on the district website.

Today's topic: ***A Strategic Planning Framework Guides Our Decisions***

During a recent board meeting discussion, we agreed hosting a community linkage meeting on the topic of "Strategic Planning" would probably not draw many people. However, we also believe it is important you know (1) a planning framework exists that guides our resource allocation decisions and (2) this framework reflects community input.

What is the framework?

In April 2016 the Board approved a new district Strategic Planning Framework. The framework starts with our mission statement and vision for the school district that reflects the values community members have stated over the years are important.

The framework illustrates the "business" of managing your schools and contains 6 major domains: teaching and learning; student services; human resources; budget and finance; facilities and district growth; community engagement. You can find a copy of the framework on the district website at www.waunakee.k12.wi.us/district/strategicplanning.cfm.

For those who pay attention to our monthly school board meetings, you may have noticed some changes over the past two years in the topics we discuss, agenda items and order. These changes were made to focus discussion on topics that align with strategic priorities yet still carry out our monthly business in an orderly fashion.

At each of our regular meetings, updates on one or more of the critical action areas in the strategic plan are provided by staff. If you are interested in finding out if a specific topic has been presented and want to learn more, our board meeting agendas and packets are found on the district website at www.waunakee.k12.wi.us/district/BOE.cfm.

Finally, you should know the board is committed to making resource allocation decisions within the framework of this strategic plan as part of our annual budget planning process.

Public input in the plan

When two facility referendums failed to pass in 2010, community members told us they would not support a new building proposal unless it was presented within the context of a long-range facility plan. We listened. We took a step back and focused efforts on developing a long-range plan, with public input provided through surveys and information meetings in the community.

The success of the 2014 referendum told us the public agreed with this plan, appreciated being part of the process and provided some lessons for us on effective ways to inform and engage our communities. We decided this could be a good model to follow for other areas of strategic business planning.

In May 2015, our first community linkage meeting with 30 citizens of diverse backgrounds gathered to learn about and discuss some of the changes we were seeing in student needs, what we are doing to meet student and staff needs and ideas for keeping them informed.

We also asked for input into what they wanted to see from their schools. Their insights and questions provided input into the strategic planning framework's "visionary direction statements" and "areas of focus".

Community Engagement: The Key to Continued Success

We are thankful for the ongoing support and input from citizens, parents, area businesses and our partners in education. It has lead us to where we are today and helped pave the way towards continued success.

As elected school board representatives we are honored to serve all students, staff and each of the communities we represent. If you have any questions or want to talk, you can find our contact information at <http://www.waunakee.k12.wi.us/district/BOE.cfm>.