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In Lexington, Kentucky, we believe in possibilities. In each foal we see a possible Derby winner. In each college basketball season we see a possible national championship. And in each child, we see the possibility for a future brighter than our present.

With this strategic plan, we are establishing excellence as the expectation.

It has been said that every student is just one caring adult away from being a success story, and in the Fayette County Public Schools we take our charge as change agents seriously. Every day in our district, talented and committed staff members are answering the call to serve students. We want for each of our students what we want for our own children – excellent schools where learning is engaging, expectations are high, individual needs are met so students can succeed, and everyone feels welcome, safe, and loved.

Delivering on the promise of a world-class education for each and every student requires an uncommon commitment to putting the needs of students above all else. Every action we take and every decision we make must be grounded in doing what’s best for the more than 41,000 children we serve.

For two years, we have been listening to our community, gathering input from more than 18,800 stakeholders on the strengths and challenges facing the Fayette County Public Schools.
The school board also commissioned five external reviews by independent auditors to provide an objective evaluation of the overall district and services it provides for students.

This strategic plan synthesizes those reports with the observations of our stakeholders and maps out an informed set of priorities to guide our work for the next five years.

When asked, more than 77 percent of survey respondents rated the Fayette County Public Schools as excellent or good. In focus groups our community expressed pride in the high-quality offerings and innovative programs available in the Fayette County Public Schools and celebrated the fact that our students and staff rank among the best in the state and nation, regularly bringing home top honors in academic, artistic, athletic, and professional competitions. We want that world-class experience for all students.

Achievement data reveals that alarming and unacceptable achievement disparities persist for students of color, students with special needs, students living in poverty, or students whose native language is not English. For far too many of our students, demography continues to equal their destiny.

With this strategic plan, we are establishing excellence as the expectation. We are clearly defining what equity means in the Fayette County Public Schools and outlining the steps necessary to accomplish it. We have two moral imperatives – to accelerate the learning of our students who have not reached proficiency, while also pushing our already proficient students to become globally competitive.

If achieving equity and excellence for all students is possible anywhere, it is here in Fayette County. The talents of our students and staff are unmatched. The support from our families, business leaders, elected officials, civic organizations and faith-based communities is demonstrated daily. We have 10 colleges and universities within 40 miles; our county is one of the most educated in the nation; our local economy is strong; and our district is growing by roughly 700 students per year.

As Nelson Mandela once observed, “There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.” Let’s show the world what is possible right here in Fayette County when a community comes together to ensure that every student reaches his or her unlimited potential.

We want for each of our students what we want for our own children – excellent schools where learning is engaging, expectations are high, individual needs are met so students can succeed, and everyone feels welcome, safe, and loved.
Fayette County Public Schools by the Numbers

41,686 Students

66 Schools and Special Programs

1 District

5 High Schools

12 Middle Schools

36 Elementary Schools

13 Special Programs

8,846 Students identified as gifted and talented 21.2%

4,820 Students identified for special education 11.6%

5,907 English language learners 14.2%

22,559 Percent qualify for free or reduced price meals 54.7%

978 Students experiencing homelessness 2.3%

7,584 Employees

2,840 Teachers

3,024 Student support staff, office staff, and administrators

1,720 Substitutes and temporary employees

$481.5 million 2016-17 Budget
The second-largest school district in the state of Kentucky, Fayette County Public Schools (FCPS) is known throughout the Commonwealth for its high-achieving students, exemplary staff, engaged families, and involved community. Support for the district is evidenced by the fact that we enroll roughly 90 percent of school-aged children who live in Fayette County.

Fayette County students consistently rank at the top on state and nationally recognized measures of academic performance, posting ACT scores, state test scores, and national test scores higher than state averages. Although the district accounts for just 6 percent of the student enrollment in the state, we represent two to three times that percentage of National Merit semi-finalists, Governor’s Scholars, and Governor’s School for the Arts participants. Students from our graduating class of 2016 are attending roughly 240 different colleges and universities in 40 states, the District of Columbia, and abroad and garnered $95.6 million in scholarship offers.

Our district is proud to have six National Blue Ribbon Schools – a trademark of excellence and a symbol of quality noted by everyone from parents to policymakers. We also have four National Green Ribbon Schools, selected for exemplary efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, promote better health, and ensure effective environmental education, including civics and green career pathways.

Building on this strong foundation, we are committed to becoming a world-class system of great schools that leads not only the state, but serves as a model of excellence nationally. A world-class system inspires and engages every student to discover and reach his or her unlimited potential. We want our graduates to be prepared for college, career, and success in a global society. The true benchmark is not a high school diploma, but where that diploma takes each graduate in life.

FCPS serves roughly 90 percent of school-aged children who live in the district.

90%
Today’s students will hold jobs that do not yet exist, use technology that has not yet been invented, and solve problems that haven’t yet been identified. We must equip our students to navigate an increasingly global environment where the competition for talent is fierce.

Our students won’t graduate from high school or college knowing everything they’ll need for the jobs they’ll hold in their lifetimes. Instead, they need to be able to conduct research and find the answers they seek. They’ll need to collaborate with a team to solve complex problems. They’ll tap creativity and apply critical thinking to the task at hand. Communication and innovation will be crucial in every situation.

In the past decade, FCPS has blossomed from 34,433 students in 2005 to more than 41,686 in 2016. Thanks to the generous support of our local community, a 5-cent property tax dedicated to construction and renovation has made it possible for our district to completely renovate 22 schools and build four new schools and a new preschool center since 2008. A sixth high school will open in the fall of 2017. Next on the facilities plan is a STEAM high school, an expanded school for the creative and performing arts, a new middle school, two new elementary schools, renovations and additions to 17 more schools including the five high schools and three technical centers.
Growth has brought new challenges for our district. Student enrollment is becoming more diverse as Fayette County’s success attracts people from around the world. The percentage of students of color, students living in poverty, students learning English, and students with disabilities continues to grow, requiring us to make greater investments to meet the needs of our changing student body while still maintaining excellent opportunities for all students.

Schools become places of excitement and discovery, where art, music, civic engagement, service opportunities, and world language instruction are valued as part of developing the whole child. Along the way, we monitor student progress. But testing is just a tool, not the end itself. Students learn to think creatively, solve problems, persevere, and work collaboratively as they grow as leaders and graduate prepared to change the world for the better.

Community support for a 5-cent facilities property tax increase has funded 22 school renovations, four new schools and a new preschool center since 2008.
When Alice met the Cheshire Cat in Lewis Carroll’s classic *Alice in Wonderland* novel, she was literally at a crossroads. The cat advised, “If you don’t know where you are going, any road will take you there.”

This strategic plan is a landmark for the Fayette County Public Schools, outlining where we will focus efforts and resources between now and 2021 to achieve our shared goals. For the first time in more than a decade, we will have alignment between our vision and mission by connecting our current state to our desired state. **The strategic plan will serve as our road map for where we want to go, how we will know when we arrive, and what milestones we will achieve along the way.**

FCPS is already doing many things well, and we applaud our employees for their commitment and dedication. Nothing in this plan detracts from the great work currently happening. Rather, it affirms the commitment of our entire FCPS community to ensure excellence and equity for all students, while focusing efforts on our five Imperatives: Excellent Student Opportunities, Excellent Staff, Excellent Schools, Excellent Supports, and Excellent Relationships.

Additionally, this plan is meant to serve as a declaration of our vision and mission. For the first time, a shared definition of equity, found on page 16, is established to guide our pursuit of success for every student.

We have not included detailed monthly timelines or a laundry list of outcomes that can become quickly outdated when real-world challenges require us to adapt. We want this plan, and the community that supports it, to be resilient and flexible but also rooted in a shared sense of equity and excellence.

To that end, we have included high-level measures of success and statements of impact that will be measured through the District Scorecard. It is up to the board and the superintendent to ensure that this plan and upcoming scorecards communicate the progress that has been made and the challenges that remain. We hold ourselves accountable for delivering on results. Our students and community deserve no less than our best.
This is your plan. More than 18,800 students, employees, families, and community members have given voice to this work during the past 24 months, and we have heard you. This plan is our effort to capture your dreams for all students and outline a path to a future brighter than the present.

Our strategic planning journey began when the Fayette County Board of Education kicked off its search for a new superintendent in February 2015 with a broad community engagement effort to understand what qualities Fayette County stakeholders wanted in their next district leader.

After 4,375 survey responses, 21 online dialogues and 42 listening sessions attended by 523 people, school board members used the input gathered to develop a profile of its next schools chief. Our community identified expressing a vision for academic excellence for all students and setting goals for putting that vision into practice as the top qualities they hoped the candidate would possess.

A change in leadership brings with it a unique opportunity for positive change within an organization, setting the stage for a new direction, a revitalized culture, and increased ownership in shared priorities and goals.
Superintendent Manny Caulk started in August 2015 and launched a “Listening, Learning and Leading” entry plan that included visiting every school and special program, reviewing documents, analyzing data and gathering stakeholder input through surveys, individual meetings, focus groups and listening sessions.

A communitywide “Entry Plan” survey drew more than 6,150 responses from students, employees, families, and community members. Another 1,400 people participated in targeted surveys of principals, district-level staff, business partners, and families of children with special needs. We also conducted a series of 14 listening sessions that had more than 600 participants.

Additionally, the Fayette County Board of Education commissioned five reports on services to students and on the district itself. These examinations included a review of the overall district organization and structure, the district’s career and technical education program, services offered for students who have special needs, are learning English as a second language, and those who are identified as gifted and talented. Each of the audits included substantial input from students, staff, families and community partners – more than 4,600 people completed surveys, participated in focus groups and consented to interviews.

In May 2016 the superintendent released his Blueprint for Student Success: Achieving Educational Excellence and Equity for All outlining 100 specific strategies to help improve outcomes for all students during the 2016-17 school year. Immediate changes included the addition of college and career coaches in every high school, and hiring more teachers to work with students who have special needs, students whose home language is not English, and students who are identified as gifted and talented.
The board then engaged with a partner experienced in district change efforts to help craft a strategic plan defining the goals, objectives, and strategies that will enable FCPS to be one of the best districts in the country by the academic year 2020-21.

Our consultants reviewed all the stakeholder input and external reviews, as well as 2020 Vision, a community visioning effort conducted in 2005, and One Community, One Voice, an action plan aimed at eliminating achievement disparities, developed by the community in 2003.

Once they developed a draft framework, a core strategic planning team of employees, families, and key community stakeholders were invited to participate in two work sessions further refining the plan, reviewing the district mission, and crafting a definition of equity.

Feedback from the Fayette County Board of Education was collected during a school board retreat, and after revisions were made, all stakeholders were invited to take a survey giving additional input on the draft plan, including the mission and vision, definition of equity, and imperatives. Surveys were available in six languages, and 1,134 people shared their insights.

The plan was revised again based on that input, and a new draft was presented to the board for consideration and action.

We thank each and every member of the community who contributed feedback so that we could develop a strong but flexible strategic plan that has clear, visible goals and an ambitious but realistic timeline. Continued communication and input from our students, employees, families, business leaders, government partners, and fellow citizens will be critical to delivering on the promise of excellence and equity for every student.

The Blueprint for Student Success included 100 strategies to improve outcomes for all students during the 2016-17 school year.
Throughout the strategic planning process, stakeholder feedback and audit reviews revealed that much of the work happening in FCPS is the right work, and is being done well. Survey results show that 76 percent of students, employees, families, and community members are familiar with the Fayette County Public Schools mission statement. Further, 84 percent of survey respondents believe the district is accomplishing its mission somewhat or to a great extent.

The adoption of a new strategic plan also provides an opportunity to revisit the existing mission and vision and ensure that it still captures the direction of the district. Several key observations from stakeholders suggest the statements should be expanded to reflect the following:

- Providing a world-class education in a constantly changing world means our students must graduate from high school able to think critically, work in teams to solve problems, and communicate effectively. In particular, stakeholders emphasized the need to address the importance of collaboration and communication skills – especially those involving communicating across different viewpoints and cultures.

- All students must have access to a strong curriculum that enables them to develop academic proficiency and technical skills to be successful. Students also need to develop resiliency, social skills, and critical thinking skills to excel in their chosen fields.

- Finally, all students should be equipped to actively participate in our community and make the world a better place. Graduates should have the tools needed to fulfill civic responsibilities, contribute to society, value inclusiveness, and reflect on the world around them and take action.

To incorporate these key ideas, the district is revising its vision and mission.

**Our Vision for the graduates of Fayette County Public Schools:**

All Fayette County Public Schools graduates are prepared for college and careers, engaged fully in their communities, and ready to excel in a global society.

**In order to ensure this vision of Fayette County Public Schools becomes reality, we will adopt the following as our Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Fayette County Public Schools is to create a collaborative community that ensures all students achieve at high levels and graduate prepared to excel in a global society. To meet this goal, we will provide:

- **Excellent Student Opportunities:** Provide every student in every grade with rigorous curriculum, strong instruction, and aligned assessments in core subjects.

- **Excellent Staff:** Recruit, retain, equip, and develop every employee to serve students at high levels.

- **Excellent Schools:** Set and uphold high expectations for every student in every school.

- **Excellent Supports:** Provide efficient and effective central supports to every school.

- **Excellent Relationships:** Foster collaborative family, community, and industry partnerships.
The mission of the Fayette County Public Schools is to create a collaborative community that ensures all students achieve at high levels and graduate prepared to excel in a global society.

76% 76 percent of students, employees, families and community members say they are familiar with the Fayette County Public Schools mission statement.
### ACADEMICALLY PREPARED

- Master essential content
- Apply academic content knowledge and skills to real-world situations
- Possess inquiry and research skills necessary to do rigorous academic work
- Grow as independent, self-directed learners
- Analyze and evaluate ideas and information sources for validity, relevance, and impact
- Make connections across content areas to discover new knowledge and ideas
- Use technological skills and contemporary digital tools to explore and exchange ideas
- Utilize creative and critical thinking to define problems and create solutions
- Explore a variety of creative and artistic forms and disciplines
- Identify learning goals and monitor progress toward reaching them

### COLLEGE AND CAREER READY

- Discover and develop talents, interests, and passions
- Explore a spectrum of industries and sectors
- Align knowledge, skills, and personal interests with career opportunities
- Master study skills and time management
- Able to read, write, listen, and speak effectively
- Prepared to lead, collaborate, and work in teams
- Demonstrate productive workplace skills, qualities, and behaviors
- Manage resources and decisions entrusted to them equitably and responsibly
- Engage in problem solving, inquiry, and design of innovative solutions to overcome obstacles and improve outcomes in everyday life and in the workplace
- Seek and use feedback from others to adapt ideas and persist in accomplishing difficult tasks
- Understand personal learning and working styles and strive to become wellrounded in order to contribute to collective efforts and shared goals
CIVICALLY ENGAGED
Advocate for self, others, and the community
Understand the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of living in a democracy
Contribute to solutions that benefit the broader community
Be aware of local, national, and world events and issues
Serve others through active, responsible participation in community efforts
Demonstrate civility, empathy, compassion, and respect for others
Respect divergent thinking to engage others in thoughtful discussion

CULTURALLY COMPETENT
Understand and respect diverse cultures
Connect across racial, cultural, and linguistic boundaries
Appreciate, evaluate, and apply a range of viewpoints
Navigate and engage in an inclusive and interconnected global society
Interact effectively with diverse individuals and groups
Be exposed to, and have fluency in, multiple languages
Share knowledge, understanding, and ideas with others, using multiple tools and languages to communicate

EQUIPPED FOR THE FUTURE
Develop a strong sense of self and sense of individual purpose and value
Graduate with a plan for the future
Display perseverance, confidence and drive to achieve personal goals, complete tasks, and manage projects
Accept responsibility for personal actions
Maintain physical and social-emotional wellness
Cultivate and maintain positive relationships
Exhibit financial literacy
Engage in reflection for individual improvement
Possess knowledge, skills, and experience to navigate the real world
Conduct selves ethically and with integrity
Express thoughts, ideas, and emotions meaningfully and appropriately
Every student who walks through the doors of the Fayette County Public Schools is an individual with unique talents and gifts. Our job as educators is help them discover and cultivate those gifts by providing a learning environment where all students are actively engaged in challenging instruction that is tailored to their strengths, interests, and needs.

Achieving our vision and mission requires that we provide every student with the opportunity to succeed. We must constantly evaluate whether we are investing our resources in the right places to ensure that each student has access and opportunities to fulfill his or her unlimited potential.

To achieve this vision and provide all students with appropriate resources to reach and exceed their goals, we must be guided by principles of equity, as described here in our equity statement.

The FCPS Equity Statement

Fayette County Public Schools shall commit to providing educational excellence for every student. Achieving equity requires strategic decision-making to remedy opportunity gaps and create a barrier-free learning environment. District leaders will reflect this commitment in policy and in governance. As a district, we believe educational equity focuses on:

Inclusion: All learners are welcomed, accepted, and protected against harassment or discrimination in our schools as we celebrate the diversity of our students, staff, families, and community and teach our students to understand and effectively engage with people of different backgrounds.

Access: All learners shall have an equal opportunity to actively engage in all academic and extracurricular opportunities.

Process: All learners shall receive fair and just but not identical treatment and supports, including high-quality coursework that reflects the diversity of our students, and highly qualified teachers who are prepared and supported to meet student needs.

Outcome: All learners shall have educational experiences that ensure achievement of high academic and social expectations.

To ensure that all students demonstrate growth and achievement, we must take timely, deliberate, and unified action to eliminate exclusionary practices and address historical and social barriers that prevent our students from reaching their highest potential.
Our vision is bold and our mission is urgent. We need to redouble our existing efforts to ensure that every student is inspired to learn, challenged to excel, and supported to succeed so they graduate prepared to compete in our global society. As our students progress through elementary, middle, and high school, we will look for the following benchmarks:

**By the end of 3rd grade:**
All students should be meeting or exceeding academic expectations.

**By the end of 5th grade:**
All students should be academically and socially prepared for middle school.

**By the end of 8th grade:**
All students should be academically prepared for high school and ready to engage in a real-world relevant academic program.

**By the end of 12th grade:**
All students should be academically prepared, college and career ready, civically engaged, culturally competent, and equipped for the future.
Excellent Student Opportunities:

Provide a rigorous curriculum with aligned instructional materials and assessments in core subjects and all grade levels.

The district must ensure that each student is inspired to learn, supported to succeed, and challenged to discover their path to success in college, career, and life. Recognizing that one size does not fit all, the district must provide a continuum of services and programs to meet the needs and interests of all students. We are always open to innovative solutions and models of excellence that enhance our offerings.

Excellent Staff:

Hire and retain a talented, effective workforce with diverse cultural and experiential backgrounds, and provide them with meaningful professional learning.

All employees deserve to work in a system that encourages innovation, celebrates success, and invests in their professional learning while providing reliable, consistent feedback for growth. Everyone who works in the district, whether they work in a classroom or kitchen, in a school office or central office, in a warehouse or on a school bus, must have the resources, support, and ongoing professional learning they need to serve students, families, our community, and one another at high levels.

Our Five Imperatives

All the suggestions and recommendations from the audits and community engagement activities were used to inform the development of a set of draft strategies to improve Fayette County Public Schools. A review of those strategies prompted two key questions:

Do these strategies effectively capture and organize the highly specific, highly technical recommendations into a manageable number of key priorities?

Will the impacts of implementing these strategies be meaningful to the broader community and measurable using district reporting structures and tools?

The answers to these two questions crystallized the need to focus district efforts in five areas of concentration to build on current success and achieve our vision and mission while also ensuring every student has access to an equitable education. We call these efforts our Imperatives for Excellence.
Excellent Schools:
Set and uphold high expectations for schools.

Fayette County Public Schools must develop a portfolio of school options that can meet the diverse needs of our students. Within this portfolio model, leaders and teachers need to be empowered to set ambitious goals, meet high standards, and celebrate students, families, and staff success together. School leaders must be able to allocate resources to these rigorous goals, to choose school models and educational programs that ensure students meet or exceed state academic standards, and direct staff in pursuit of the goals.

Excellent Supports:
Provide efficient and effective central supports to schools.

Central office supports must be tailored to individual school and community needs. At the same time, all schools must be treated equitably, which requires a districtwide commitment to using available resources, including money, staff time, skills, and expertise, and our programs, as efficiently as possible to meet our goals. With a commitment to continuous improvement, district office staff must examine processes and services to ensure that support is timely, comprehensive and responsive to the needs of students and schools.

Excellent Relationships:
Establish a culture of transparency, trust, and mutual respect.

Ensuring the success of every student will require a shared commitment from staff, families, and community partners. We must maintain open lines of communication, listen to our stakeholders, and consider a wide range of diverse viewpoints when making decisions. Keeping students first, schools and families must come together, bolstered by the support of our community to find solutions and share accountability for educational outcomes.
Provide every student in every grade with rigorous curriculum, strong instruction, and aligned assessments in core subjects.

Although average student proficiency rates in language arts and math exceed state averages, for too many students demography still determines destiny. For example, only 35% of black students and 38% of Hispanic students achieved proficiency in the 2015-16 elementary reading KPREP – well below the 56.7% district average. This gap is just one example of the disparate learning outcomes across all grade levels and content areas. Multiple district audits conducted in 2015-16 emphasized the need for a comprehensive districtwide curriculum and supplementary resources to support student-centered, differentiated instruction to meet needs of every student. In particular, a comprehensive district review found that FCPS schools have varied approaches to curriculum and instruction, which lead to inconsistencies in teaching and learning practices.

All students deserve a guarantee that they will receive high-quality instruction grounded in a strong curriculum that ensures they meet high expectations. Additionally, the curriculum must support their pursuit of opportunities that match their unique set of skills, interests, needs, and dreams. This is a complicated challenge, but one that we think the following strategies can deliver:

**Provide each student, regardless of ability, language, background, or race, access to a high-quality core instructional curriculum.**

All students at all schools need access to a strong, standards-based curriculum that can be reliably assessed and high-quality instructional resources to ensure students have the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed beyond graduation. Written and taught curricula must be student-centered and support all learning styles and include art, physical education, and other courses that develop critical thinking, social/emotional learning, and a wide range of real-world skills.

**Create and maintain a districtwide menu of high-quality supplemental resources.**

Several 2015-16 audits emphasized the need to improve and expand instructional delivery to meet the
needs of the diverse FCPS student population. One diagnostic found that only 13% of FCPS classrooms exhibited evidence of students being provided with opportunities to learn about their own and others’ backgrounds or culture. The same report noted that differentiated learning opportunities were only evident in 33% of classrooms.

All students deserve supports and opportunities that leverage their unique talents and skills. FCPS commits to ensuring that students with disabilities receive the supports they need to succeed alongside their non-disabled peers. FCPS will also ensure all English language learners (ELLs) have access to high-quality materials and resources that help them become proficient speakers, readers, and writers. Gifted and Talented (GT) programs will grow and expand so that opportunities are shared equitably for all qualified students. Students in secondary schools will have access to career education, dual enrollment, and work-based learning programs.

**Provide each teacher in the district a shared set of instructional tools that they can tailor to student needs to ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to learn the curriculum.**

Providing a districtwide, high-quality curriculum is only the first step toward improving instruction and achievement for all students. FCPS must also ensure teachers and instructional staff receive the necessary training and supports to deliver the curriculum effectively, including how to tailor the curriculum and resources to meet the diverse needs of all students. District reviews of ELL supports and offerings found that classroom instruction across the district inadequately addressed the specific language needs of students. Similarly, classroom observations conducted for the same review revealed that instruction does not differentiate for GT students’ needs and learning styles. To address this, FCPS will ensure that all purchased and developed materials include tools and instructional strategies that help educators differentiate instruction to meet student needs, challenge all learners, and provide real-life applications.

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**Impact Statements and Key Indicators of Progress**

**Key Impacts:** Students, staff, families, and the community will see progress in these areas:

- An equitable core curriculum, resources, and offerings to reduce barriers for equal access and opportunities to learn provided to all schools by the end of the 2017-18 school year
- All students on path to graduate ready for college and careers by 2021
- Districtwide instructional tools aligned to the core curriculum by the end of 2018-19 school year
- A thoughtful menu of supplementary resources chosen to meet individual school and student needs available by the end of the 2019-20 school year

**Key Indicators:** The district will provide regular updates on progress using the following metrics:

- Student achievement scores and growth across all student groups
- Amount of reduction in any or all achievement gaps between student groups
- College Readiness (percentage of students on path to graduate, ACT scores, etc.)
- Career Readiness (career and technical education enrollment, industry certifications, etc.)
- Access to advanced coursework, AP/IB, dual enrollment
Excellent Staff

Recruit, retain, equip and develop every employee to serve students at high levels.

We have great employees in FCPS, and we must continue strengthening our talent to meet a rising standard of excellence. To continue our tradition of excellence and ensure success for all students, our staff must be prepared to teach diverse learners and provide them with equitable supports to succeed. We are committed to providing all staff with professional learning supports needed to reach and maintain excellence, and translate that personal excellence into student, school, and district success. To address these needs, FCPS will:

Provide all district staff with an individualized career path that recruits, trains, and retains highly skilled professionals who can provide all students with excellent school experiences.

Several district audits conducted during the 2015-16 school year revealed the need to hire and develop diverse staff to better meet needs of students, including increased support from principals to recruit, evaluate, and retain effective teachers.

We will develop a system of supports for all staff that allows them to customize their own career path and obtain help along the way. Through trainings, coaching and mentoring, and other growth opportunities within their school, division, or job-alike group, FCPS will train and retain the best possible professionals to work in service of our students and communities.

Enhance districtwide professional learning to increase educator capacity to support individual student needs and diversity.

Numerous audits and stakeholder analyses conducted between the summer of 2015 and 2016 revealed that teachers need to be better equipped to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners, students identified as gifted and talented, and students with different cultural backgrounds.

Our curricula will have the necessary resources to serve the needs of all students, and so our teachers must have the skills to use those resources. We will prioritize providing staff with the skills needed to meet our ever-diversifying student needs through school- and district-chosen professional learning.
Provide educators and leaders with the differentiated supports and job-embedded professional learning they need to provide every student with a rigorous and engaging curriculum.

Teachers must be better equipped to handle an increasingly diverse student body, and that means providing teachers with opportunities to gain and strengthen skills that are proven to get results.

While districtwide professional learning is a key element to ensuring that all educators develop a shared understanding of what high-quality instruction in the core curriculum looks like, allowing communities of educators – by school, subject, grade level, or affinity – to work together to improve their practice is critical to maintaining the professionalism of a high-quality workforce. FCPS will ensure that all teachers get timely support and training on culturally responsive practices, skills to support English language acquisition, and modifying instruction to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Impact Statements and Key Indicators of Progress

**Key Impacts:** Students, staff, families, and the community will see progress in these areas:

- Best-in-class recruitment and retention of staff adept at addressing achievement gaps by the end of the 2018-19 school year
- High-quality professional learning and job-embedded support to address diverse learning needs of students by the end of the 2019-20 school year
- Committed staff who maximize individual student potential by the end of the 2017-18 school year

**Key Indicators:** The district will provide regular updates on progress using the following metrics:

- Increase in the demographic and linguistic diversity of FCPS employees to mirror and be in proportion to student enrollment
- Increase in the return on investment of professional learning/job-embedded support
- Staff trained in research-based best practices (e.g. culturally responsive teaching and learning, differentiation of instruction)
- Average teacher growth in instructional effectiveness
- The number of National Board certified teachers in district
- Staff attendance
Set and uphold high expectations for every student in every school.

Fayette County has many excellent schools. However, our mission and vision require that all students have access to excellent schools that provide them with opportunities to succeed. According to state data, 56% of Fayette County’s schools (29 out of 52 schools rated) are in “needs improvement” status.

To achieve our mission, FCPS will support the growth of great schools that meet the diverse needs of all students by focusing on key tenets of a school portfolio strategy including: building a diverse network of schools and programs; doing what we can to establish and nurture new and innovative school models, dramatically improving our lowest-performing schools by creating and investing in evidenced-based school turnaround strategies and models; reviewing and improving school models for at-risk students; and continuously collecting, analyzing, and evaluating school performance around a common school performance framework to inform future plans for replication and transformation. To provide the necessary conditions for innovation and transformation, FCPS commits to implementing all options available under Kentucky state statutes.

We believe the following strategies will increase the district’s ability to ensure all students have opportunities for academic success at excellent schools.

Grow the opportunities for excellence by introducing and expanding successful practices and models to additional school communities, and share successful practices broadly so schools can learn from and adopt those practices.

Public feedback and audit reports identified many successful programs and strategies in FCPS. Identifying, promoting, and replicating successful strategies could lead to faster growth than starting from scratch.

We will create an internal process to highlight, share, and spread schools’ individual successes in raising student achievement. This way, all schools can learn from each other and adopt these practices. Furthermore, schools should be able to understand how such programs function on a detailed level so that other schools can make program adjustments necessary to make those practices successful. Developing a library of successful practices will help schools choose strategies that work or adjust their own practices, where applicable. For example, when a school demonstrates exceptionally strong growth in student achievement in English language learning, a district process will begin in which the efforts the school took to achieve those results are documented and shared with other schools so the success can be replicated. The process will collect and/or create artifacts such as videos, project plans, student work, and lesson plans that colleagues in other schools can use to replicate and grow these successful practices in their own schools.

Schools need to be empowered to set ambitious goals.
Define school management models and educate school communities on the statutory and regulatory roles and responsibilities of the School-Based Decision-Making Council (SBDM), the school administration, and staff.

The district diagnostic review found that current district supports insufficiently help schools in setting and achieving clear goals for student achievement. Specifically, district documents “did not reveal clear or consistent expectations or processes to support a collaborative, systematic, inclusive or comprehensive process for review, revision, and communication of a purpose for student success.” Additionally, stakeholders’ response to the Superintendent’s Entry Plan revealed a strong desire to improve shared decision-making at every school, ensuring SBDM councils fulfill their statutory responsibilities as effectively as possible, in a manner that leads to achievement gains by every student.

FCPS will update and revise its support to SBDM councils and school administration. One initiative will be revising outreach, education, and training for school councils. Second, FCPS will review school board policies that support school councils. Once reviewed, school board policies that no longer align with the strategic plan will be revised. School councils can then implement these policies and the related school-based strategies in order to improve achievement and equity within schools. Additionally, FCPS staff and school councils should consider whether the current school management structure is the best fit for their needs, and work together to identify more effective models where there are gaps – particularly when existing strategies are not successfully meeting the needs of all learners. For example, audits identified a need for school-level advisory committees for schools adopting career-technical education programs. Developing policy and structures for adding these committees would be one such revised management model. Another necessary initiative is to provide districtwide policies and practices for reviewing, analyzing, and setting targets on a biennial basis, as required under current policy.

Develop a menu of district supports that prioritizes improvement efforts designed to improve equity – across and within schools – and accelerate improvement.

School audits conducted during the 2015-16 school year revealed the need for FCPS central offices to improve and differentiate service delivery and supports to schools. In particular, school leaders need better supports. One audit recommends the district “invest in an induction program to help new principals transition to building leadership roles.” Another noted that principals’ needs include hiring staff and retaining excellent staff.

Schools need to be empowered to set ambitious goals, to meet high standards, and to celebrate students, families, and staff member success together.
Schools require customized supports as much as students do. FCPS will develop a menu of supports for schools that includes evidence-based improvement strategies to increase schools’ capacity to address areas of improvement, equity, and satisfaction. Schools will have the flexibility to use current resources differently to meet student needs, while still complying with board policies. Additionally, FCPS will develop supports for expanding services to English language learners, increasing support to grow successful special education or gifted and talented programs, and developing standard frameworks for effective professional learning communities and coaching cycles that leaders can use to make their school – and our district – more equitable. FCPS will identify existing strong models for these services in schools and spread these practices across the district wherever possible. Additionally, the district plans to name and target six academic priorities, develop supports from the central office that align with those priorities, and monitor their implementation to learn how the central office can best support schools. These priorities should be named by the conclusion of the 2016-17 school year.

Impact Statements and Key Indicators of Progress

Key Impacts: Students, staff, families, and the community will see progress in these areas:

- Schools will provide educators with time and supports to work collaboratively to address student achievement challenges by the end of school year 2016-17
- FCPS will continue to create systems through which schools have defined autonomies, are empowered to improve, and are accountable for results by the end of school year 2017-18
- All schools will be provided with appropriate supports to address their different needs by the end of school year 2017-18
- Schools will provide each student with equitable access to excellent opportunities by the end of school year 2020-21

Key Indicators: The district will provide regular updates on progress using the following metrics:

- School improvement as measured by the state accountability system and school scorecard
- Increase in number of schools closing opportunity gaps
- Increase in number of schools meeting the percentage of scorecard targets demonstrating student success
- Perception surveys that track student, staff, and family satisfaction with school quality
- High-quality implementation of improvement efforts
Provide efficient and effective central supports to every school.

Lexington is an increasingly attractive place to live, and therefore the student population and our school system is changing right before our eyes. However, our schools do not have the systems in place to match this rate of change. FCPS will provide schools with guidance and support to ensure they are utilizing data to drive improvement and meet their objectives. To address these needs, FCPS commits to the following strategies:

Train all staff to utilize the district’s performance management systems to empower them as problem solvers, improve overall performance, and better communicate progress to stakeholders.

The current District Scorecard contains a wealth of information about progress and success, but its comprehensiveness can make highlighting areas of progress difficult. The district will develop a more streamlined, high-level scorecard that aligns with the strategic plan’s imperatives. Departments will then align their projects and targets to the plan and a system for department-level problem solving will be created so that all staff can help improve services to schools. Our community will have access to reports to hold the district accountable for timely communication regarding progress.

FCPS will also strengthen our ability to better understand and improve operational and academic function. This will allow us to better allocate and match the appropriate resources to school needs. Providing School-Based Decision Making councils more information about school performance gains and challenges will help the councils more effectively allocate resources to advance student achievement.

Reexamine and improve FCPS school management strategies to ensure equity for all students within School-Based Decision Making council statute requirements.

FCPS currently implements a school-based management strategy in which schools can make their own decisions, but also carry out many functions that might otherwise be supported centrally. A 2015-16 district review revealed that while FCPS is supporting some functions centrally, the full benefits of the strategy are not being realized. The review
recommended FCPS centralize more aspects of district operations to ensure academic excellence and equity. FCPS commits to reviewing and revising the district’s current support for School-Based Decision Making councils in the following areas: student scheduling, staff hiring and retention, and principal supports.

FCPS will create scheduling options for school councils to select schedules that allow for equitable student access to all offerings (such as Career and Technical Education) and best fit the school’s needs. In addition, the district commits to supporting school councils and school leaders with efforts to recruit, hire, and retain highly effective staff that can meet the diverse needs of all students. FCPS will also review and improve district provided supports for principals to ensure they can address school performance data regularly with stakeholders, ensure high-quality development and implementation of school plans for closing the achievement gaps, ensure student wellness, and allocate and monitor school budgets that address the needs of all students.

Ensure that all district staff can focus on providing students and schools with timely and coordinated operational and instructional support.

District audits made several recommendations to ensure students and schools are served effectively. The district review named three in particular: “establish systems and processes for improved service delivery,” “improve communication within and between district offices,” and “increase the rigor and breadth of school reviews.”

First, the district must ensure all schools have their operational needs met and are bright and welcoming throughout the year. Second, more rigorous school reviews that provide detailed information regarding schools’ academic and operational needs can inform supports to schools and improve delivery. Finally, implementing this strategic plan is going to take hands-on coordination of communication. Revisiting when and how district staff will collaborate in achieving this plan will help different offices avoid duplicating efforts or otherwise ending up in challenges that result when everyone is working hard but separately.
Develop policies and systems to identify barriers to rapid improvement for struggling students and empower district and school leaders and staff to act quickly to eliminate barriers to teaching and learning.

Stakeholder surveys, the district review, and the various audits conducted since 2015 all conclude that FCPS has several barriers to achieving its mission of creating a collaborative community that ensures all students achieve at high levels and graduate prepared to excel in a global society.

The diagnostic review named as a key improvement priority: “Create and implement guiding documents (e.g., policies, procedures, plans, protocols) that clearly establish expectations for individual schools to systematically engage in a process to review, revise and communicate a school purpose and direction for improvement in student achievement that commit to high expectations for learning. Ensure that these processes include clear timelines for implementation and are inclusive of all stakeholder groups.” FCPS is committed to creating these documents and identifying the key supports necessary for rapid improvement and providing them to the schools. These supports could consist of new resources, a change in the use of current resources, or new freedoms to address the challenges faced by the school in a more appropriate manner for the school’s context.

Impact Statements and Key Indicators of Progress

Key Impacts: Students, staff, families, and the community will see progress in these areas:

- All schools will be clean, bright, and welcoming at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year
- Central office will track and report to school leaders that supports are delivered on time and on budget by the end of the 2017-18 school year
- Resources reclaimed through new efficiencies will be used to fund equity efforts no later than school year 2018-19

Key Indicators: The district will provide regular updates on progress using the following metrics:

- The general fund balance is healthy
- Major projects are delivered on schedule and on budget
- Perception surveys show increased effectiveness of central office supports
- School surveys report increased responsiveness from supporting staff over time
- School budgets are increasingly equitable over the length of the plan, as judged by an annual equity analysis
- Increase in the percentage of instructional support requests supported by data
- Increase in the percentage of support cases with satisfactory customer feedback
- Increase in transparency related to budget/spending (e.g. public-facing dashboard)
Foster collaborative family, community, and industry partnerships.

While last in this list, authentic relationships are a priority for FCPS. Schools are a people-driven enterprise, so a district’s success is dependent upon productive relationships among and between students, staff, and stakeholders. Only by listening to each other’s interests and concerns, and finding positive ways to address them, can we deliver on our mission and vision.

During the 2015-16 school year, K12 Insight conducted community listening tours to learn about the community’s priorities for FCPS. Community members expressed satisfaction with FCPS’ collaboration with people outside of the district, engagement with local businesses and organizations such as Junior Achievement, Commerce Lexington, United Way, YMCA, and communication with community members. Participants also emphasized a desire for FCPS to ensure all families are welcomed, treated respectfully, and given a clear point of contact who responds to them. They also noted a need for “accessible, reliable, transparent, timely, and up-to-date communication from the district.” To address these needs, FCPS commits to the following strategies:

**Ensure district communication is plainly shared in multiple languages, delivered proactively, and consistent across all schools and to all community members.**

To ensure communication with stakeholders is timely, accessible, reliable, and transparent, FCPS commits to using a combination of translation services for print, radio, television, and social media. This will allow FCPS to reach its increasingly diverse student and family populations more effectively.

Better connections to schools means more effective partnerships with teachers and leaders, which can lead to a richer educational experience for students and a more fulfilling professional experience for FCPS staff.

**Engage families and community partners in strong, formal collaborative relationships that promote consistent dialogue and enhance partnerships that support student success.**

As noted, community focus groups expressed the need to ensure families are welcomed, treated respectfully, and given clear points of contact within the district. Similarly, a 2015-16 district review conducted by Cross & Jofus emphasized the need for central office departments to create standard operating procedures and supports that clearly align with the needs of families. To improve trust and collaboration between central office, schools, and families, FCPS will ensure all district staff, regardless of their position or certification, enter into partnerships with families and community members regularly. FCPS will provide all staff with the processes, skills, and tools necessary to build and strengthen positive relationships with community members.
Identify and expand opportunities for student and family voice and choice of high-quality options to ensure that district priorities align with the priorities of students and families.

Community focus groups conducted during the superintendent’s listening tour and district audits revealed the desire for FCPS to continue building collaborative relationships with students and families. These relationships will improve the equitable sharing of resources across schools so that all can achieve excellence and access specialized programs.

District audit findings also reveal that although the community is supportive of the district and superintendent, they have asked for an increased emphasis on ensuring equity across FCPS. To achieve this, FCPS commits to conducting an equity audit of its schools to determine how more resources can be spent to address barriers to excellence at the school level and in district supports. The equity audit should focus on identifying opportunities to align the district’s priorities with the challenges to equity named in the audit. Family and community partners will then be asked to participate in a well-designed, coordinated engagement strategy that shares district efforts to improve equity and celebrates success while remaining clear about persistent challenges.
We are committed to delivering on the efforts described in this plan, and the timeline on pages 34-35 should be used to hold us accountable to doing so. We also acknowledge that a chart of milestones is insufficient – we need detailed plans that describe the ongoing work.

FCPS will be tracking the implementation of this strategic plan through a revised, condensed District Scorecard, and will use board meetings, public forums, and school-level meetings to provide our community with necessary information. We’ll share and celebrate our successes, hold ourselves accountable for missteps or stalled initiatives, and share new information that causes us to change course.

Using the District Scorecard is preferable to adding a long list of charts and project plans for three reasons:

- Our strategic plan should guide our work, but should not constrain how we adjust to new challenges and opportunities presented by the real world. We need to be able to adjust when economic, social, or other forces impact how we proceed.

- We need to effectively tell you, our community, what is impacting performance, how it is happening, and why. A strong scorecard can help tell the “story behind the data” in a much more accurate, timely fashion than a five-year strategic plan.

- In a complex system with more than 41,000 students, 66 schools and special programs, and more than 5,800 employees, we must all be on the same page. By using the District Scorecard as the single, official home of the implementation plans, there will be no competing versions of what is happening in FCPS.
In a complex system with more than 41,000 students, 66 schools and special programs, and more than 5,800 employees, we must all be on the same page.
Achieving the large number of goals in this plan will not be easy, but we can chart a successful course by using our desired impacts as milestones. While work will proceed on all imperatives so that we can meet our impact statement timeline, we expect to complete the work associated with those impact statements in the year in the milestone chart to the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperative</th>
<th>Key Impacts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excellent Student Opportunities</strong></td>
<td>Equitable curriculum, resources, and offerings to reduce barriers for equitable access and opportunities to learn</td>
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<td>Districtwide instructional tools</td>
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<td>A thoughtful menu of supplementary resources chosen to meet individual school and student needs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Students who are on path to graduate ready for college and careers</td>
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<td><strong>Excellent Staff</strong></td>
<td>Committed staff who maximize individual student potential</td>
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<td>Best-in-class recruitment and retention</td>
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<td>High-quality professional learning and job-embedded support</td>
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<td><strong>Excellent Schools</strong></td>
<td>Schools are empowered to improve and are rewarded for creativity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Schools are provided with appropriate supports to address their different needs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide educators with time and supports to work collaboratively to address student achievement challenges</td>
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<td>Schools provide each student with equitable access to excellent opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Excellent Supports</strong></td>
<td>Clean, bright, and welcoming schools</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Needed central office supports provided on schedule and on budget</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increased efficiency leads to better matching of needs and resources</td>
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<td><strong>Excellent Relationships</strong></td>
<td>Consistent, trustworthy communications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strong community partnerships that support families and schools</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Engaged and empowered students and families</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Student Opportunities</td>
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<td>2016-17</td>
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<td>2020-21</td>
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## Annual Planning Rhythm

### JANUARY
- **Budget and Finance Committee review Draft Budget** and discuss upcoming budget cycle
- Draft Budget presented to school board
- Begin working with departments in regard to budget preparation and needs assessment for the upcoming school year

### FEBRUARY – MARCH
- **Budget and staffing work sessions with departments and schools**

### FEBRUARY – MAY
- **Compilation of tentative budget with strategic plan alignments**

### MARCH
- **Departmental budgets submitted with strategic plan alignments**
- School councils finalize budget plans and have exit meetings with district departments

### MARCH – APRIL
- **Annual surveys of students, families, employees**
- Tentative Budget/revenue recommendations are finalized with superintendent and senior leadership team

### MAY
- **Budget and Finance Committee review of Tentative Budget**
- School board adopts Tentative Budget

### MAY – JUNE
- **Annual District Scorecard results reported**

### JUNE
- **State of the District address**
- Senior leadership planning retreat

### JUNE – AUGUST
- **Annual strategic plan review:**
  - School board reaffirms or revises Strategic Plan Framework and Strategic Plan Scorecard
  - Superintendent and senior leadership reaffirm or revise the Four-Year Implementation Plan

### JULY
- **Superintendent’s Leadership Institute**

### AUGUST
- **Beginning of school year convocation with all district staff**
- Board adopts tax rate for current fiscal year

### SEPTEMBER
- **Budget and Finance Committee review of Working Budget**
- Board adopts Working Budget

### SEPTEMBER
- **State assessment results released**

### OCTOBER – DECEMBER
- **Comprehensive District Improvement Planning process:**
  - Review data
  - Establish goals and objectives
  - Identify strategies and activities

### NOVEMBER
- **District leadership planning retreat**

### NOVEMBER – DECEMBER
- **Budget meetings with superintendent and senior leadership team related to budgeting priorities for the upcoming school year**

### DECEMBER
- **Comprehensive School Improvement Plans submitted and reviewed by district personnel**
- School board approves Comprehensive District Improvement Plan

### JUNE
- **Annual District Scorecard results reported**

### OCTOBER
- **Comprehensive School Improvement Plans submitted and reviewed by district personnel**
- School board approves Comprehensive District Improvement Plan

### JULY
- **Superintendent’s Leadership Institute**

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- **Beginning of school year convocation with all district staff**
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