

Review of School District Plans

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The strategic plans of member districts of the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) were selected for research. Not all CGCS districts have strategic plans posted on their websites, but the strategic plans of 28 CGCS districts were reviewed. In addition, the strategic plans of 7 other school districts were reviewed. Following are the main points derived from this research:

- Gain school board involvement and approval of the strategic plan
- Involve all stakeholders in a variety of ways in the planning process
- Convey a sense of need, or even urgency, for the plan
- Limit plan components (goals, priorities, objectives, strategies) to a manageable number – ensure that the plan is truly “strategic” in nature
- Present a balance between education and other integral perspectives (e.g., community, staff, resources) in the plan
- Include provisions for monitoring plan progress (performance measures, targets, reporting) and communicating progress to stakeholders
- Provide for “cascading scorecards” at the district, service area, school or department, and individual performance levels
- Ensure that the plan is user-friendly and visually appealing
- Lay out clear expectations for how the plan will be implemented
- Ensure strong alignments between the strategic plan, budget, and other plans of the district
- Include basic information about the district to help orient the reader
- Provide detailed action plans to show how the strategic plan will be implemented, but action plans should be separate documents to keep the strategic plan from being too long
- Include an explanation of the processes involved in plan development