

Strategic Planning in West ISD: Progress Report

By David Truitt, Superintendent

“Action is the foundational key to all success.” – Pablo Picasso

Several weeks ago in “The West News”, I shared an overview of the strategic planning process, framework, and goals for a newly formed Strategic Planning Team in West ISD. Since that article, this team has met three times and made significant progress in crafting solutions for a number of areas of improvement across the district. In the previous article, I mentioned the importance of district transparency in what was discussed by the team and ensuring the community of West was kept apprised of all information. The key for the team’s work centers on our ability to communicate the vision and work to all West ISD stakeholders.

To date, the Strategic Planning Meetings have focused on several areas. Remember, strategic planning helps define our purpose, our why. It provides the avenue to evaluate our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and possible threats to the work. The team membership ended up totaling eighty-eight staff members, parents, community members, business leaders, and local government leaders. It is a true cross-section of West. We did our best to think about gender, age, and ethnicity as well. Everyone has truly been committed to putting our students first throughout all discussions. They truly love West and want to help ensure West ISD is truly an education destination.

The first meeting focused on sharing the vision for the team’s work. Meeting goals, the framework for the strategic planning process, meeting targets, and team norms were shared and discussed. The team brainstormed breakout session topics including how and where we hope to educate our youngest learners at grades Prekindergarten through 5, technology integration across all campuses, dual credit tuition costs for West High School students, STEM integration across all campuses, the best use of the 1967 gym, intervention programs for our struggling learners, staff wellness, construction of a new track, the completion of the athletic complex, and much, much more. District student growth trends, census data, student demographic, and student achievement data were presented as well.

The second meeting focused on three breakout sessions. Each session was designed to allow the Strategic Planning Team members time to ask questions and begin constructing possible action statements for the West ISD Board of Trustees to consider at a future Board Meeting. The first breakout session centered on the current Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs offered across all campuses. The team broke down strengths and weaknesses of the programs and discussed areas for improvement and growth. The second breakout session focused on current tuition costs for West High School students taking dual credit courses through McLennan Community College. The team heard several proposals on how West ISD could reduce the cost of the dual credit courses for our families. A presentation was made on the possibility of West ISD applying for Early College High School status via the Texas Education Agency. The last breakout session centered on the current and possible future state of the West ISD athletic complex. Information was shared on the completion of the baseball and softball complex for the start of next season. The new perimeter fencing, sidewalks, batting cages, bleacher additions on the first and third base lines of each field, and a restroom and concession building were all discussed. Next, the team heard an overview of a proposal to construct a new track behind West Middle/High School. The team discussed the need for grass or turf inside the track, and a

presentation was made on the pros and cons of playing football long-term at Trojan Field. The Hall of Fame wall, trophy case work, and the track and field record boards were also discussed.

The third meeting centered on tours of the 1923 and 1957 buildings, 1967 gym, and the new athletic complex. The team was able to see the construction progress on the new administration building. The project should be completed by Thanksgiving, and the district leadership team should be moved in by the start of school in January. The maintenance and operations team shared their vision for the use of the 1967 gym. The facility is perfect for freezer and furniture storage and a maintenance area for the school buses. The meeting ended with the team touring the outside grounds of the athletic complex. The team was able to review where a track could go on the east end of West Middle/High School. The next round of tours is set for West Elementary School. The team will walk the entire campus to get a better understanding of a typical instructional day for our students, parents, and staff.

The team is on track to present an action plan and recommendations to our Board of Trustees for consideration. The strategic planning process has truly helped bring our future into the present. You can find all of the meeting handouts and presentations on our district website at www.westisd.net. I believe our work is just beginning. I believe the best is yet to come. We have a chance to ensure all Trojans, Prekindergarten through Grade 12, have the best opportunities for success in life after graduation from West High School, and, like you, I want to see this vision fulfilled. I cannot thank the Strategic Planning Team enough for all their hard work and attention to this planning process and project. The future of West ISD is in good hands. Go Trojans!