

NRHEG Public School

Independent School District No. 2168



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What do we want to become?

by Dale Carlson, NRHEG Public School Superintendent

What do we want to become? This is a question we ask ourselves as we grow and plan for our future either as individuals, families, communities, businesses, and even school districts. What is most important to our future? What are our priorities and goals we want to achieve? How will we achieve those goals? How will we know that we have achieved those goals? What do we do once we have accomplished what we set out to do? How do we respond when we are not making progress toward meeting our goals? These are critical and essential questions we should be asking ourselves as we plan for our future in our personal lives, in our work, and as a school community responsible for providing a quality education for students.

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva Public School has embarked on an exciting journey of determining our vision of *what we want to become* as a school community. What is our shared purpose or mission? What are our shared beliefs or values that define who we are and that guide our actions and decision-making as a school district? And finally, what are our priorities or goals we believe are most important to achieve for our students?

A group of thirty parents, community members, students, staff, and board members have been meeting for the past month to explore who we are as a school district and what do we want to become. The advisory committee met three times and developed a shared vision, mission, and set of belief statements for the School Board to consider adopting. The committee also identified focus areas and goals that it believes are priorities for the school district to address in the next three to five years. The School Board will be examining the collective work of the committee, make necessary modifications, and consider adoption of the strategic plan at an upcoming School Board meeting as early as the May 16 meeting.

The committee spent a great deal of time reviewing, analyzing, and discussing input from staff, students, parents, and community members. A wealth of information was gathered from the community survey conducted in January as well as listening sessions facilitated by our consultants from the Minnesota School Board Association and the South Central Services Cooperative. Student, staff, and financial performance data were examined, as well as educational programming opportunities currently offered. From this information, the committee identified areas most important to focus in on as a school community. Those draft focus areas for consideration include:

1. Student Achievement: Achieve the goals of the World's Best Workforce plan while focusing on how we define, measure, and report student achievement.
2. Student Support: Develop and implement sustainable support systems that enable all students to achieve at high levels.
3. Facilities: Ensure the facilities and infrastructure of the school district are designed to optimize student learning and staff performance.
4. Workforce: Recruit, retain, and develop quality teachers and support staff.

Dale N. Carlson, Superintendent

David A. Bunn, High School Principal

Douglas A. Anderson, Elementary Principal

5. Communication and Marketing: Foster partnerships with parents, communities, businesses, and organizations in support of the School District's mission and vision.
6. Finance: Preserve the School District's strong financial standing while maintaining programs, services, and facilities at maximum efficiency.

The six focus areas are in response to the input from the community as well as a review of student, staff, and financial performance data. The School Board will review the recommended areas as well as developed goals and objectives, and consider approval of the plan. After approval by the School Board, staff will begin the work of developing action plans that will outline a plan on how we are going to achieve the stated goals, determine how we will know if we have achieved the goals, next steps once the goals have been achieved, and steps to take if we are not meeting the desired goals.

Thank you to the members of the Advisory Committee for their time and insight. Most importantly, thank you for your commitment in improving our School District and what we do for students. The journey of continuous improvement is difficult, but it is also one that is so important and essential. It begins with a shared commitment by all who have an interest and investment in our students and schools, to always improve and get better at what we do for our students and their future. We are fortunate to have a School Board that realizes we can, and must continue to improve. Thank you to our School Board members for their collective leadership and for their commitment to improving all of us. Together, we will be *a school district of choice, inspiring excellence in academics, arts, and activities* (draft Vision Statement), by *empowering students with the knowledge and skills to succeed* (draft Mission Statement).

The School Board conducts its regular monthly meeting on the third Monday of each month. The location of the meeting is rotated monthly between the NRHEG Secondary School Media Center in New Richland and the NRHEG Elementary School Media Center in Ellendale. The May 16, 2016, School Board meeting will be at the Elementary School beginning at 6:30 pm, and the June 20, 2016 School Board meeting will be at the Secondary School beginning at 6:30 pm.

Thank you for all you do to support our students!