School Town of Munster

Strategic Plan

2015-2020

Creating a World-Class Learning Organization

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Superintendent's Message

The School Town of Munster has a long tradition of excellence—we have received state and national recognition for our academic and extra/co-curricular accomplishments. However, the environment is changing and many new demands and challenges present themselves. We must plot a path forward toward higher performance, system alignment, implementation of best practices, improved efficiencies of operation and greater collaboration and transparency. To these ends, we embrace the operating philosophy of continuous quality improvement, defined as: "Ensuring the continuous improvement of processes and outcomes through evidence-based strategies and empowered staff and learners in order to exceed stakeholder expectations." We believe that the CQI philosophy, related tools and processes represent proven methods for creating STM's High Performance Culture.

We began developing our 2015-2020 strategic plan in October 2014, seeking input regarding our strengths and opportunities for improvement from a Broad-Based Planning Team of students, parents, community members and STM employees. Our STM Strategic Planning Team met in December 2014 to review the broad-based team's ideas and begin fashioning targets, evidence-based strategies and specific action steps, and we met with them again in February to share draft materials. In the Spring of 2015, we provided opportunities for faculty members and employees, our Broad-Based Planning Team, the community, as well as the Board of School Trustees to review draft materials and to provide recommendations for improvement. We believe that the resulting strategic plan provides a clear pathway toward improved performance across several key focus areas.

We appreciate the dedication, professionalism and support of our staff, faculty, administrators, students, parents and community members as we begin the challenging work indicated in the following pages. Together, we can achieve our goal of honoring the School Town of Munster's proud tradition of excellence while ensuring that we attend to challenges and needed improvements.

Research tells us that strategic plans often do not work out in practice because leaders place too much emphasis on high-level strategy and philosophizing and not enough on implementation (Bossidy and Charan, 2002). One of the most important aspects of our strategic plan is the use of action plan monitoring, System-to-System Talks and continuous improvement (Plan, Do, Check, Improve—PDCI) cycles that are designed to ensure our plans are implemented as intended, and that results are checked frequently to determine if performance is improving. The School Town of Munster intends to be *results-focused* and *evidence-based* as we move toward the creation of a world-class learning organization.

Thank You,

Dr. Jeff Hendrix, Superintendent

Section 1. Process and Participants

In an effort to listen and learn from as many stakeholder groups as possible, the School Town of Munster Strategic Planning Team developed the following timeline of activities. Our intent was to work efficiently, so our timeline spanned only 7 months. No plan is perfect, and we will make revisions each year based on progress and results.

Table 1. Timeline of Major Activities and Products

October 2014	Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Challenge (SWOC) activity with Broad-Based Planning Team (BBPT)
November 2014	Process the input received from BBPT
December 2014	Strategic Planning Team (SPT) reviews SWOC data, Board goals and *AdvanceEd* feedback
December 2014-January 2015	SPT teams meet to identify targets, strategies and actions
January-February 2015	Develop draft document for review by BBPT and SPT
February 2015	SPT meets with BBPT to share initial big ideas
March 2015	Based on feedback from BBPT, meet with SPT to develop final draft
March/April 2015	Provide draft materials to wider STM stakeholders for review and comment prior to submitting to Board at end of April
April 2015	***School Town of Munster Board of School Trustees approves 2015-2020 Strategic Plan***

STM Broad-Based Planning Team

We would like to acknowledge the following individuals who provided input during October 2014 meetings regarding STM strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges in relation to the five focus areas reflected in Table 2. The Broad-Based Planning Team (BBPT) also met with the Strategic Planning Team in February 2015 to review common themes and related targets, strategies and action steps. Based on comments provided by participants, the majority appreciated the opportunity to assist with the strategic planning activity and saw their involvement as a meaningful attempt by the School Town of Munster to listen to its stakeholders.

- Happy to be involved. Loved structure and objectives of the evening. I look forward to seeing draft in February, but would welcome the opportunity to be involved more along the way. Thank you.
- I felt this process was very beneficial. It allowed for so many to have valuable input in a short period of time. Thanks for including me.
- This is great in creating transparency and involvement.
- It's reassuring knowing that people care enough to have this meeting, and also that there will be avenues taken to assess and fix certain problems.
- Liked the whole process of being able to express my thoughts to make the school system go in the right direction.

Table 2. STM Broad-Based Planning Team Members

Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Samantha Barraza	Student	Kris Loos	Parent
Linda Bevil	Principal	Kathy Manno	Teacher
Amanda Bielak	Teacher	Michelle McIntyre	Teacher
Lorin Brown	Community Member	Becky McKeever	Parent
Kim Burzynski	Teacher	Lucas Newell	Student
Kevin A. Cappo	Parent	Morgan Nolan	Assistant Principal
Karen Cipowski-Smith	Parent	Vrusha Patel	Student
Mega Dafiagher	Student	Nick Peirick	Student
Karen Demitroulas	Director, Support Services	Margaret Pruzin	Parent
Jennifer Dettlo	Teacher	Ingrid Schwarz-Wolf	Parent
Nancy Ellis	Principal	Kathy Sharpe	Parent
Judy Florczak	School Board Member	Savannah Sharpe	Student
Laura Florek	Teacher	Tricia Shelton	Parent
Kosta Fotopoulos	Student	George Shinkan	Parent
Phyllis Gilworth	Assistant Superintendent	Nadene Shinkan	Teacher/Parent
Julie Glavin	Instructional Assistant	Kristen Smith	Parent
Nicole Guernsey	Principal	Tim Sopko	Principal
Jeff Hamstra	Dean	Sara Stanzione-Emerson	Assistant Principal
Brad Hemingway	Parent	Craig Thompson	Parent
Melissa Higgason	School Board Member	Karen Tomko	Teacher
Christy Hoop	Parent	Steve Tripenfeldas	Assistant Superintendent
Lynn Karr	Parent	Jaclyn Webber	Student
Sarah Krzus	Teacher	Sherri Webber	Parent
Adam Kulum	Student	Mike Wells	Principal
Ruth LaBuda	Teacher	Frank Wolf	Student

Broad-Based Planning Team Members Considering Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

STM Strategic Planning Team

We would like to acknowledge the following individuals—STM administrators and teachers—who committed many hours to attending strategic planning meetings and conducting independent research related to targets, strategies and action steps in order to assist in the development of this 5-year plan.

Table 3. STM Strategic Planning Team Members

| Student Learning and Achievement	
Dr. Phyllis Gilworth, Assistant Superintendent	Co-CEO
Linda Bevil, Principal	Co-CEO
Jeff Hamstra, Dean	Member
Denise Moore, Teacher	Member
Safe, Orderly and Caring Schools	
Mike Wells, Principal	Co-CEO
Tim Sopko, Principal	Co-CEO
Peggy Matanic, Teacher	Member
Amanda Bielak, Teacher	Member
Highly Effective and Motivated Staff	
Steve Tripenfeldas, Assistant Superintendent	Co-CEO
Nancy Ellis, Principal	Co-CEO
Morgan Nolan, Assistant Principal	Member
Sarah Krzus, Teacher	Member
Strong Parental, Family and Community Involvement/Satisfaction	
Nicole Guernsey, Principal	CEO
Rob Snyder, Assistant Principal	Member
Kim Burzynski, Teacher	Member
Kathy Manno, Teacher	Member
Effective Operations/Fiscal Responsibility	
Dr. Jeff Hendrix, Superintendent	CEO
William Melby, Dean	Member
JoAnn Harveth, Teacher	Member
Karen Demitroulas, Director Support Services	Member
Janice Swanson, Director Financial Operations	Member
Facilitators	
Dr. Jeff Hendrix	Superintendent, Facilitator
Dr. Steve Benjamin	CQI Facilitator

Strategic Planning Team Members Considering Data Received from the BBPT

The mission of the Strategic Planning Team (SPT) was identified as: "Assist in the development of a 5-year strategic plan for the School Town of Munster. This plan will incorporate the existing vision, mission and beliefs as well as the updated Board of School Trustees goals and indicators. The SPT will review input received from the BBPT and other pertinent materials, especially the recent *AdvanceEd* accreditation feedback report, in order to develop strategic plan targets, strategies and action steps that will position the STM as one of the highest performing school systems in the nation. The SPT efforts will reflect a systems approach to organizational improvement. We understand that our role is advisory and that the final content and format of the strategic plan will be determined by the STM Superintendent and Board of School Trustees."

By assembling a team of STM stakeholders, we have achieved improved communication, increased transparency, greater alignment, a sharper focus on shared responsibilities and improved strategies for improvement. We will continue to create a learning system that resembles Figure 1.

Figure 1. STM Systems Model: Building a High Performance Culture
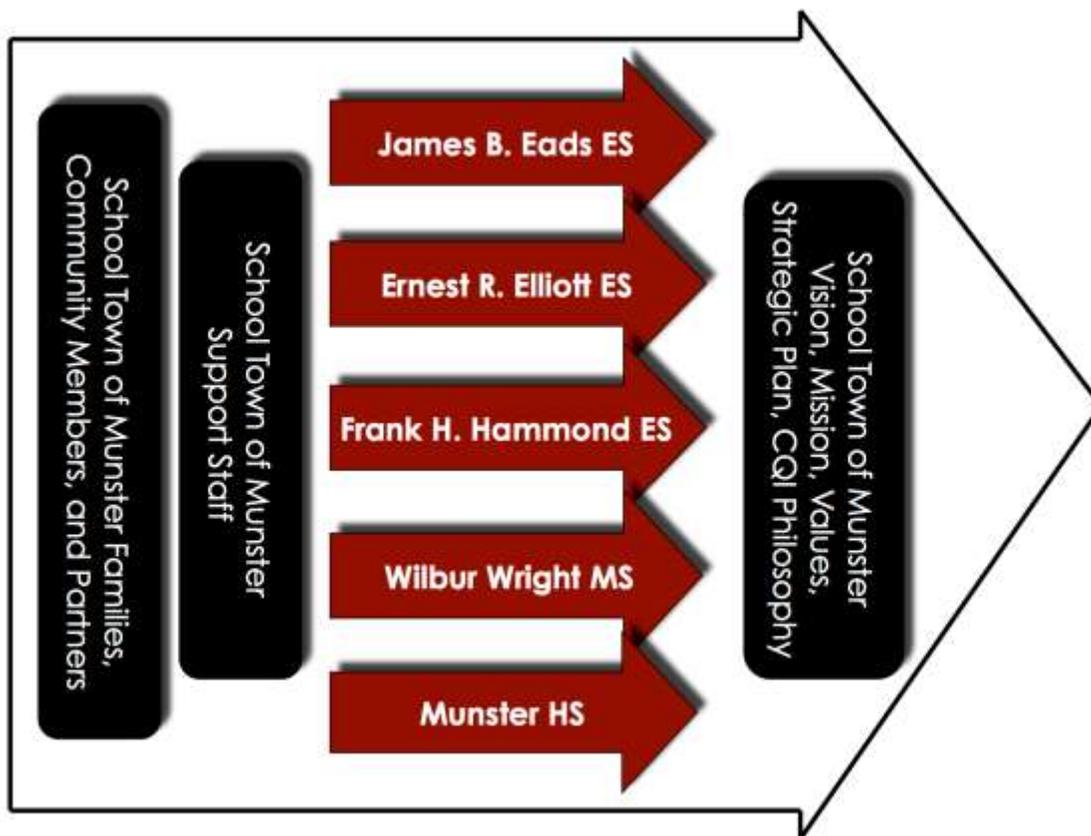
The Core Drivers: Values, Vision and Mission

Rosenthal and Masarech (2003) write that, "to gain competitive advantage and to achieve high performance, it is essential to understand the elements of high-performance cultures—in particular, the core drivers: organizational values, vision and mission." High-performing leadership and management systems recognize that values, vision and mission represent the *magnet* that can pull the various individuals, departments, processes and systems into alignment.

Vision

All School Town of Munster students have the skills necessary to participate successfully in a global society.

Mission

The School Town of Munster, in partnership with all stakeholders, implements equitable and challenging learning experiences that provide the foundation for independent and innovative thinking.

Beliefs

- The success of our school system depends on collaboration and the commitment of all students, parents and staff to high quality standards, expectations and performance.
- Addressing unique learning styles and needs enables all students to learn.
- A safe and supportive learning environment enables continuous learning opportunities for all students and staff.
- Students will solve real world problems through the development of creativity, critical thinking and communication skills.
- The curriculum is aligned both horizontally and vertically with national, state and local standards and includes a variety of assessment strategies that provide feedback about learning to students, parents and staff.
- We use data to drive instructional practices and monitor program effectiveness.
- Professional development in the use of research-based instructional practices is an integral part of our ongoing plan for continuous improvement.
- Diversity enriches our school system through the recognition of various ideas, values and cultures.
- Access to and utilization of current technology is necessary for success in an ever-changing world.
- All stakeholders have a voice and the opportunity to participate in the educational process.

In addition, as part of the continuous quality improvement leadership and management philosophy, we will embrace the values of Student Focus, Alignment, Accountability, Shared Leadership, High Expectations, Evidence-Based Decision Making, Continuous Improvement, Results Focus and Social Responsibility.

Figure 2 indicates the importance of moving beyond merely identifying and posting a set of core values. In order to truly create a high-performance culture, we will challenge ourselves to continually find ways to live and embed our values in daily operations.

Figure 2. Embedded Beliefs/Values Reflect a High Performance Culture
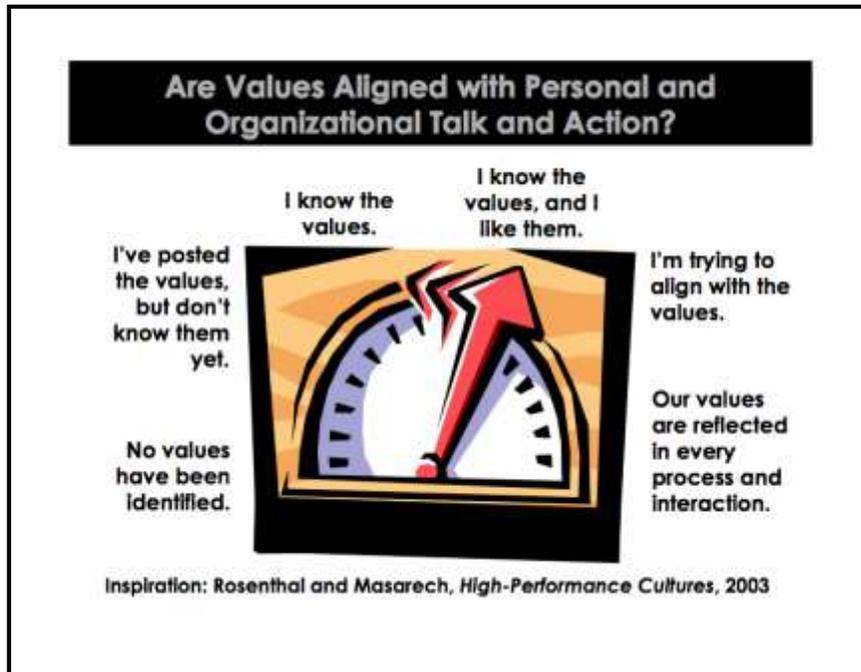
The mission, vision and core values must be measurable, and we are working to establish systems, processes, expectations and tools that ensure we are able to gather data regularly regarding the degree to which we are embedding these *magnet* leadership statements into daily practice.

Board of School Trustees Goals

In October 2014, and coinciding with additional strategic planning meetings, the Board of School Trustees met to identify broad priority goals for the School Town of Munster. The Strategic Planning Team incorporated this input when developing the targets, strategies and action steps found in the second half of this document. The Board's goals for student achievement, financial stability, leadership, safety and communication are listed below:

Student Achievement Goal: Provide differentiated educational programs that support individual proficiency and growth for all students in all disciplines.

Indicators:
- 90% of K-12 students at or above grade level in reading, writing and mathematical reasoning
- Develop and administer common assessments at each grade level and in each discipline
- State and national assessment results
- Graduation rates
- Attendance rates
- Participation rates in Advanced Placement, CTE and Dual Credit Programs

Finance Goal: Demonstrate fiscal responsibility and financial stewardship as a district by developing a plan to reduce deficits, to maintain education programs and to retain highly qualified teachers, administrators and support staff.

Indicators:
- Demonstrate movement toward positive cash balances through the generation of revenue and reduction of expenditures as revealed in monthly, semiannual and annual reporting of funds
- Generate additional revenues through donations and pursue the changing of the state funding formula
- Review all staffing and building operations for efficiencies and cost savings
- Monitor enrollment to establish appropriate staffing
- Seek partnerships with local businesses and Town of Munster for shared services or funding of educational programs
- Review all insurance, contracts and agreements with outside vendors for cost savings
- Work with the Munster Teacher Association to develop ways to provide a strong educational program while controlling costs to the district

Leadership Goal: Develop multi-faceted educational leaders at all levels in the district.

Indicators:
- Utilize data to inform, guide and drive decision-making in the following categories: student performance, finances, programs, facility maintenance and upgrades, safe learning environments and staffing
- Provide professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators and board members to enhance student learning
- Create and sustain Professional Learning Communities
- Develop and demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills
- Collaborate with other school districts, government and business entities

Safety Goal: Provide a safe learning and work environment for all students and staff.

Indicators:
- Maintain a school safety specialist in each building
- Implement the corporation crisis procedures and safety measures for man-made and natural disasters
- Continue to work with community resources to provide training and protection
- Provide stronger external security measures for building entry

Communication Goal: Provide opportunities for student, staff, parents and community involvement in the school district and communicate effectively at all levels.

Indicators:
- Encourage parents, students, teachers and the community stakeholders to use the *chain of command* to answer questions and resolve problems

- Use press releases, podcasts, newsletters and school messaging services (internet, email, student information system) on a regular basis and during emergency situations
- Use social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+, etc.
- Provide opportunities for public comments and principal reports at all regularly scheduled monthly board meetings
- Use intra-town communication (Police, Chamber, Town Council, Public Library, Parks, etc.)
- Participation in school committees by parents, teachers, students and the community stakeholders
- Update the webpage regularly

Narrowing the Focus of our Strategic Plan

In order to limit the scope of work, the SPT targeted five most important focus areas. These categories were identified following a content analysis of strategic plans created by dozens of high-performing school corporations across the nation, including a number of Baldrige award winners and national Blue Ribbon schools and districts. The target areas are:

- Student Learning and Achievement
- Safe, Orderly and Caring Schools
- Highly Effective and Motivated Staff
- Strong Parental, Family and Community Involvement/Satisfaction
- Effective Operations/Fiscal Responsibility

Members of the SPT self-selected or were assigned to one of these five teams, and Section 2 (Targets, Strategies and Action Steps) displays their work.

STM Dashboard and Scorecard

As part of the strategic planning process, we have begun to create a district scorecard and dashboard The examples shown in this document (Tables 4 and 5) are for illustration only—much work remains before finalizing these tools. We must continue to review the research regarding the most important indicators. For example, ensuring that we have simple, yet effective measures of number sense for ages 4-10 because "number sense performance in kindergarten, as well as number sense growth from the start of kindergarten through the middle of 1st grade, account[s] for 66% of the variance in 1st grade math achievement" (Jordan et al., 2007, p. 42). An aligned series of dashboards will drive regular collegial discussions of performance data in order to use the results to validate excellent programs and approaches while pointing us in the direction of needed improvement (Figure 3). The development of these tools demonstrates that we are living the following STM belief: "We use data to drive instructional practices and monitor program effectiveness."

The STM prototype dashboard (Table 4) includes eight performance indicators that have been judged to be among the most important leading indicators of student learning success. Just like the dashboards in our automobiles, an organization dashboard must frequently produce reliable data that can be used for instructional and managerial decision-making. Our dashboard will indicate those best practice measures that have been selected to provide us regular information about our performance. We will select

assessments and measurement tools that provide data to the system on a daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis using, in many cases simple, inexpensive curriculum-based measures.

Figure 3. Data Dashboards and Knowledge Management Cycle
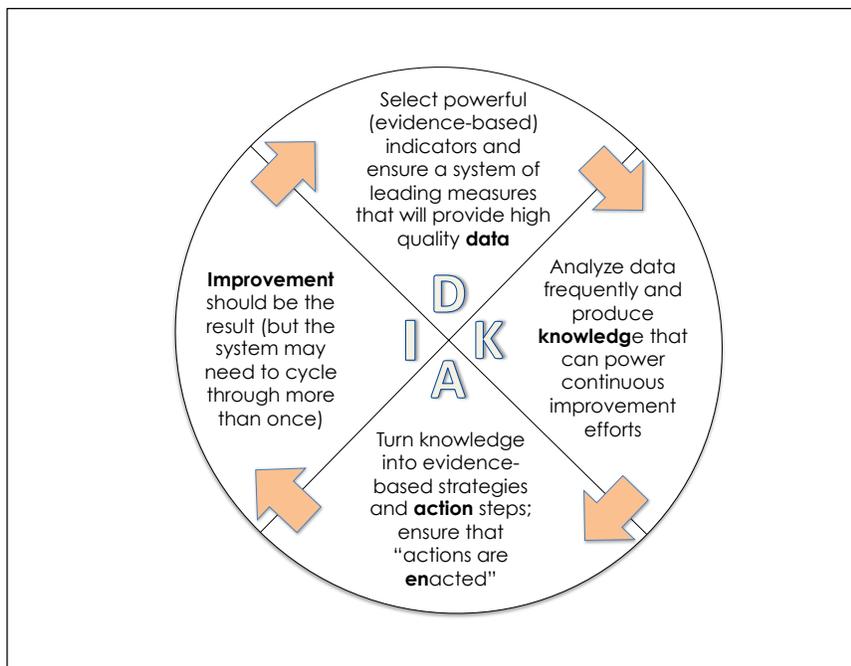
Our elementary schools have begun the process of creating aligned grade-level dashboards (all grade 2 teachers, for example, will collect the same research-based data using commonly agreed tools). Future work will see an expansion of professional learning community talks linked to critical performance data.

> *"After the leadership team has developed its dashboard, it is presented to the next level of the organization with this message: 'This is what we are watching. Design a dashboard that is appropriate for your work and that is aligned with and supports our dashboard.' This process continues until each level and department in the organization has designed its own dashboard. All dashboards are linked and aligned both vertically and horizontally and support the organization's strategy" (Huggett 1999).*

The STM prototype scorecard (Table 5) contains several additional performance indicators that are also important to monitor, but which are *once-a-year* or *once-a-career* in nature (e.g., graduation rate, dropout rate, ISTEP+ and end-of-course assessment results). In addition, the scorecard includes non-student learning indicators such as satisfaction levels of employees, students and stakeholders; financial results; and facility adequacy data.

Table 4. STM Dashboard		
Key Performance Indicators	*Leading Measures*	*Frequency*
KPIs 1-5 represent our most important indicators for student learning. We will spend the bulk of our efforts on improving performance in these areas.		
1. Percent of K-12 students reading at or above grade level and/or showing progress by subgroups	**Phonemic Awareness:** Pre-K and Early K: Get It, Got It, Go! and mClass DIBELS	Fall screening, mid-year and end-of-year (K-1) and screening/progress monitoring for later grades and as needed TBD by teachers
	Phonological Awareness: Pre-K and K: STM Curriculum-Based Measures (CBM)	Fall screening, mid-year and end-of-year (K-1) and screening/progress monitoring for later grades and as needed TBD by teachers
	Vocabulary: Pre-K and Early K and beyond: Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-4	Fall screening, mid-year and end-of-year (K-1) and screening/progress monitoring for later grades and as needed TBD by teachers
	Vocabulary: Fry list of 100, 200, etc. words targeted at each grade level through elementary	Fall, mid-year and end-of-year
	Vocabulary: STM K-12 CBMs for core academic vocabulary (Burke List and Tier 3 Standards-Specific Terms)	Fall, mid-year and end-of-year
	Oral Reading Fluency Assessment (Elementary): Fountas and Pinnell fluency charts and STM CBM process	Fall leveling and mid-year, end-of-year with additional screening/progress monitoring TBD by teachers
	Oral Reading Fluency Assessment (Secondary): STM CBM process	Fall screening (students suspected, based on elementary, middle school data, etc.), mid-year and end-of-year and screening/progress monitoring and as needed based as determined by teachers
	Overall Measure of Reading Comprehension (Elementary): Fountas and Pinnell Running Records/Leveled Books with target designations per grade level	Fall leveling and mid-year, end-of-year and screening/progress monitoring TBD by teachers
	Overall Measure of Reading Comprehension (Middle School): AIMSweb**,** Reading Plus, Read 180 and Curriculum-Based Measures **(High School):** Acuity and Curriculum-Based Measures	Fall screening (students suspected, based on elementary, middle school data, etc.), mid-year and end-of-year and screening/progress monitoring as determined by teachers
2. Percent of K-12 students mastering state/common core academic standards in writing/language arts and/or showing progress by subgroups	Grades K-12: 6 Traits Rubric plus elements of argument-based writing with cold reads (for citing evidence from text)	Quarterly write to common prompts, plus additional use of 6 Traits Rubric/Argument in content area classrooms
	Grades K-12: Language Arts Standards-Aligned Common Assessments	Monthly

3. Percent of K-12 students mastering state academic standards in math and/or showing progress by subgroups	Pre-K-4: Number Sense Checklist (IES-inspired)	Fall leveling and mid-year, end-of-year with additional screening/progress monitoring TBD by teachers
	K-12: STM Math CBM Standards-Aligned Common Assessments of Critical Standards	Monthly
	Grades K-12: Mastery Reteaching Assessments	Weekly, biweekly as determined by teacher/data
	Grades K-12: Math Essential Words Mastery Checks	Quarterly
	Grades K-8: STM Authentic Math Facts Assessments	Fall leveling and mid-year, end-of-year with additional screening/progress monitoring TBD by teachers
	Grades 2-12: STM Authentic Math Problem-Solving Tasks with Common Rubric	Monthly
4. Percent of K-12 students mastering state academic standards in science and social studies and/or showing progress by subgroups	Grades 6-12: Science and Social Studies Standards-Aligned Common Assessments of Critical Standards	Monthly
	Grades 6-12: Mastery Reteaching Assessments	Weekly, biweekly as determined by teacher
	Grades K-12 Science and Social Studies Essential Words Mastery Checks	Fall, mid-year and end-of-year
5. Percent of K-12 students mastering state academic standards in all other subject areas and/or showing progress by subgroups	Content and Fine Arts Standards-Aligned Common Assessments of Critical Standards	Monthly
	Mastery Reteaching Assessments	Weekly, biweekly as determined by teacher
	Content and Fine Arts Essential Words Mastery Checks	Quarterly
	Content and Fine Arts Essential Words Mastery Checks	Quarterly
KPIs 6-8 represent additional indicators in support of student learning.		
6. Percent attendance	Real-Time Report for Attendance	Daily and weekly as needed to monitor specific students
	Tardies	Weekly
7. Percent of students with appropriate/inappropriate behavior	Positive Behavior Reports	Monthly
	Office Referrals Report	Weekly
	Suspension Report	Quarterly
	Expulsion Report	Quarterly
8. Percent of students involved in extra-/co-curricular and service activities	Extra/Co-curricular Activities Report	Quarterly
	Service Learning Report	

Performance results linked to the STM Dashboard will be reviewed multiple times each year during System-to-System (S2S) Talks that occur between the Superintendent and building leaders; building leaders and faculty and staff; and teachers with students. We expect that many students will lead their own S2S talks with parents and family members during student-led conferences. Annually, the district reviews (with appropriate directors and building leaders) additional data contained in the scorecard (Table 5). We are confident that excellent results in our dashboard performance indicators will result in improved scorecard results.

> *Our Dashboard of Key Performance Indicators specifies the few most important results that we monitor on a daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly basis. The data gathered as a result of dashboard operations allow us to make frequent adjustments to practice and programs for the benefit of our students. We meet in System-to-System talks on a quarterly basis to discuss results and to plan. Together, this system allows us to "inspect what we expect."*

The following display (Table 5) provides information about the STM scorecard. We refer to these performance indicators as *lagging data* because they are only available for review once each year. The STM reviews our results in these areas to ensure that our strategies and continuous improvement efforts are resulting in higher performance.

Table 5. STM Scorecard

Student Learning Outcomes	Frequency
ISTEP+ Pass/Pass Plus Rates and ECA Results (by subgroups)	Annual
IREAD Pass Rate	Annual
AP Scores	Annual
SAT Scores	Annual
ACT Composite Scores	Annual
Percent of Students on Target to Graduate with Cohort	Semester
Number of Credits Recovered	Semester
Graduation Rate	Annual
Dropout Rate	Annual
Percent of Graduates Enrolling/Graduating from Post-Secondary Institutions, Percent Employed	Annual
Percent of Graduates Reporting *Very Well Prepared* for College and Career	Annual (Spring of year following graduation)
Student and Stakeholder-Focused Results	
End-of-year Attendance Rate	Annual
Student/Parent Satisfaction Results	Annual
Overall Student Enrollment	Annual
Behavior Data (Expulsions, Suspensions, Referrals)	Annual
Volunteer Hours	Annual
Number of Community Partners	Annual
Budgetary, Financial and Market Results	
Audit Findings	Annual
Percent of Budget Allocated to Instruction	Annual
Energy Savings	Annual
Grant Dollars Received	Annual
Transfers In	Annual

Teacher Turnover Rate	Annual
Percentage Highly Qualified Staff	Annual
Employee Satisfaction Results	Annual
Number of Professional Development Hours per Employee	Annual
Satisfaction with Professional Development	Annual
Leadership Outcomes	
Ethical Violations	Annual
Compliance Results (drills, reports)	Annual
Satisfaction with Leadership	Annual
Percent Strategies and Action Plans Deployed According to Strategic Plan Timelines	Annual

"Not surprisingly, schools and school systems that do well under external accountability systems are those that have consensus on norms of instructional practice, strong internal assessments of student learning and sturdy processes for monitoring instructional practice and for providing feedback to students, teachers and administrators about the quality of work" (Elmore 2003).

Continuous Improvement Teams

As previously noted, the Strategic Planning Team has been subdivided into five focus categories following an analysis of strategic plans developed by high performing school districts across the nation:

1. Student Learning and Achievement
2. Safe, Orderly and Caring Environments
3. Highly Effective and Motivated Staff
4. Strong Parental, Family and Community Involvement/Satisfaction
5. Effective Operations/Fiscal Responsibility

The broad mission of these teams has been to:

- Catalog current STM best practice strategies designed to close the performance gaps in major goal focus areas
- Seek additional strategies through evidence-based decision-making
- Create detailed action plans for each strategy
- Identify professional development and related resource requirements
- Report progress with action plan implementation regularly to the Board of School Trustees
- Engage in continuous improvement

Following research and benchmarking activities, each of the six focus teams completed TSA (Target, Strategies, Actions) forms that specified broad goals, a few most powerful evidence-based strategies designed to close performance gaps, and detailed action plans in support of each strategy. These TSA forms are found on pages 20-39.

Figure 4. Success Requires Planning, Implementation and Continuous Improvement

Blum (2010) notes that, "strategy and execution don't occur in a vacuum" (p. 18), rather they require teamwork, communication and adaptation in order to reach the target. Unfortunately, experience suggests that even leading organizations often fail at strategy execution because individuals inside the organization are unconnected with major strategy initiatives or there is misalignment between the strategy and their attitudes and actions. The STM leadership system will regularly review *progress to plan* to ensure that we are *doing what we said we will do* and making timely adjustments as needed. Each TSA includes a column for monitoring the status of our action plan deployment. CEOs of each of the targets will provide updates to the STM Board of Trustees on a regular basis as scheduled by the Superintendent.

As part of the strategy identification process, the BBPT engaged in a SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges) activity in order to determine existing and future positive/negative factors related to STM that may help or hinder our planning activities. The SPT used input provided by the BBPT to develop five Strategic Thinking Charts such as this example:

The SPT met with representatives of the BBPT in the high school cafeteria on February 17, 2015, in order to receive feedback regarding draft Strategic Thinking Charts as well as initial TSA charts that will be presented later in this document. See the four additional Strategic Thinking charts in the Appendix.

"The strategic planning process was very much a collegial activity. We felt that our opinions were valued, that the STM administrators and teachers really listened to our viewpoints. I am very thankful for the opportunity to have contributed. I feel confident that this plan will help ensure that our school system remains one of the best in the nation." (Participant)

Members of The BBPT and SPT meeting to review draft materials

Table 6. School Town of Munster Strategic Thinking Chart: Student Achievement		
	Strengths 1. High performance on minimum proficiency state-mandated tests 2. Graduation rate 3. Attendance rate 4. Parental/community support 5. Variety of academic and extra-curricular programs	**Weaknesses** 1. No unified standardized assessment system K-12 to monitor student growth 2. Underutilized 1:1 potential 3. No college and career readiness framework 4. Using data to drive instruction 5. Insufficient time, financial resources for professional development
Opportunities 1. Research how to create K-12 assessment system 2. Technology is available 3. CCR research, preliminary planning have begun 4. Community support for internship program 5. Build additional time into school day for PLCs	**Opportunity-Strength (OS) Strategies: Use strengths to take advantage of opportunities** 1. Strong performance on minimum proficiency exams creates expectation for even higher performance 2. Community support allows for development of internship program	**Opportunity-Weakness (OW) Strategies:** **Overcome weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities** 1. No current K-12 assessment system; have opportunity and research to pilot in Spring 2015 2. By building extra time into school day, time for professional development is embedded
Challenges 1. Budgetary constraints 2. Demographics 3. Several paradigm shifts occurring systemically	**Challenge-Strength (CS) Strategies: Use strengths to avoid challenges** 1. Community, parental support with financial distress 2. As high performing district, programs, placements available to meet changing demographics	**Challenge-Weakness (CW) Strategies:** **Minimize weaknesses and avoid challenges** 1. Develop budget committee to review fiscal priorities 2. Utilize technology to deliver and customize professional development opportunities

Section 2. STM Targets, Strategies and Action Plans

In this section, you will find detailed information regarding performance targets, key strategies, specific action steps, personnel responsible for overseeing implementation of the plan activities and due dates as well as a column where CEOs can note progress (green = completed; yellow = in progress; and red = not begun). Most strategic plans tackle too many goals and strategies. In Munster, we believe that focusing on a few high-value targets (Figure 5) and strategies will deliver better results.

Figure 5. STM Targets 2015-2020

- 90%+ of students K-12 are highly proficient in reading, writing and mathematical reasoning by 2020.
- 90+% of students will master state and national standards by 2020.
- 100% of STM students will be college and career ready upon graduation by 2020.
- 100% of buildings will be deemed safe in regards to the number of entry/accessibility points by conducting a yearly safety audit by the end of the 2015-16 school year.
- 100% of schools will engage in a minimum of two non-traditional safety drills per year at the building level and at least one large scale district-wide exercise every 3 years, in addition to the current state-required drills, beginning at the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year.
- 100% of all schools will provide at least two anonymous means of reporting bullying.
- 90%+ of stakeholders report high levels of satisfaction regarding STM.
- 95+% of stakeholders rate communication with the STM as "excellent" or "very good."
- 90+% of students and family members report satisfaction with the transition process for students enrolling in and moving between grades/levels within STM.
- Maintain and increase the number of school-community partnerships to a total of 50.
- 100% of all employees are rated as "effective" or "highly effective" or are observed making meaningful improvement towards specific indicators.
- 100% of employees are provided with professional development that adheres to best practices in their area of operation.
- STM will provide competitive compensation as compared to local schools and schools of similar academic performance. Reduce current deficits in any STM financial funds. Increase communication efforts on the financial situation of the district. Develop transparent and accurate accounting practices that monitor all funds revenues/expenditures and cash flow.
- Accumulate a 6-month operating balance while devoting 65% of expenditures from the General Fund to instruction thus ensuring that STM will sustain financial stability. Furthermore, continuously monitor all school funds in terms of revenues/expenditures with the intent of recognizing that instruction is the most important priority in expending school funds.
- 90+% of employees, parents, community members, and students report satisfaction with the quality of our facilities.
- 90+% of staff, administrators, and students will report satisfaction with technology.
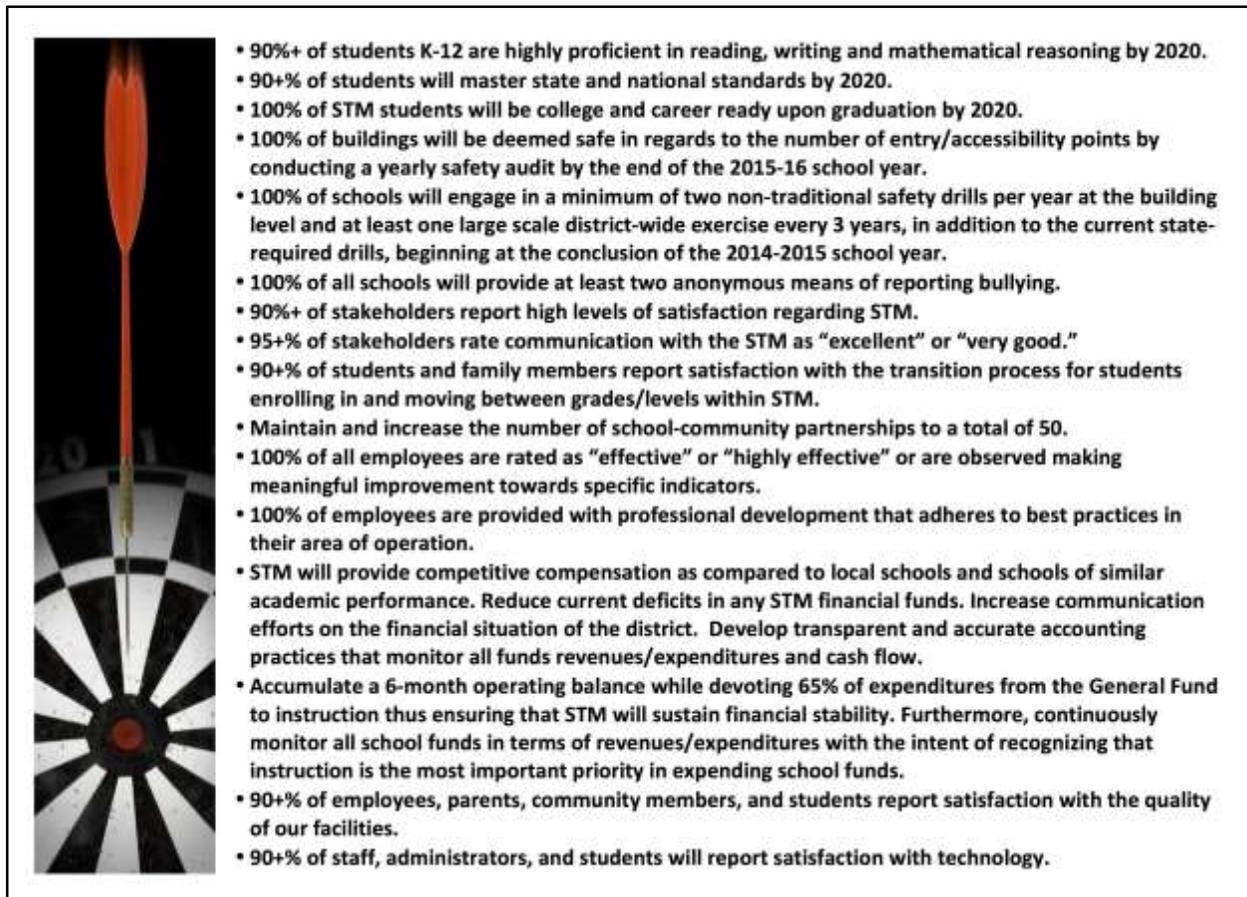
Table 7: 1. Student Learning and Achievement
Target 1.1: 90%+ of students K-12 are highly proficient in reading, writing and mathematical reasoning by 2020. *Board Goal 1A, AdvancEd Indicators 3.1,3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6*
CEOs: Assistant Superintendent, Administrators
Strategy 1: Provide professional development, coaching, supervision and resources to teachers (K-12) to enable them to become experts in the use of standards-based assessments and evidence-based instructional strategies in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary acquisition, use of comprehension strategies and fluency building in all subject areas/disciplines. *Board Goal 3B, AdvancEd Indicators 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.11*
Evidence in Support of Strategy: Literacy (reading and writing) is at the heart of all learning and may explain as much as 50-67% of the cause of success in state testing in all subjects including math, science and social studies. The Turnaround Schools Literature discusses the centrality of literacy and the importance of high quality instruction. Herman, Dawson, Dee, Greene, Maynard, Redding and Darwin (2008) suggest that we should maintain a consistent focus on improving instruction. Hershbery (2005) has found that good instruction is 15-20 times more powerful than family background, income, race and gender. Joyce, Bruce and Showers (2002) have found that coaching of teachers that takes place in the classroom led to 95% of participants able to transfer those skills to the work setting as opposed to 20% of participants with demonstration outside the classroom. Cryan (1992) reports that "overall, students who attend full-day kindergartens manifest significantly greater achievement than students who attend half-day kindergarten." Improvement in the use of formative assessments for learning has shown significant potential to increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning in literacy" (Black and William, 1998). Reynolds et. Al. (2002) found that the most consistent predictor of children's academic achievement are parent expectations of the child's academic attainment, while Dauber and Epstein (1993) found that parents want to know more about how to help their children learn.

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Implement pre-K and kindergarten readiness screening prior to school starting to establish baseline on reading, writing and mathematical reasoning readiness skills.	Assistant Superintendent, Elementary Administrators, Teachers	Spring 2015	🟩
2. Identify a K-12 Literacy Model and design systematic professional development in assessment and differentiated instruction.	Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent, Administrators, Teachers	During Reading Adoption Year	🟥
3. Ensure that high quality tiered vocabulary instruction, modeling of reading comprehension strategies and fluency building are embedded in content area instruction K-12. Provide staff with a list of indicators to ensure fidelity.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators, Teachers	2015-2020	🟥
4. Identify and acquire a high-quality screening/benchmark assessment K-10 that meets state and national guidelines for the purpose of determining students' grade-level proficiency and monitoring growth in reading, writing and mathematical reasoning. Monitor district performance on state and national assessments in order to gauge progress toward goal.	Assistant Superintendent, Building Administrators, Teachers	2015-2016	🟩
5. Assess all grade K-8 students using screening/benchmark assessments. Use data to identify students requiring diagnostic assessments.	Teachers	2015-2020	🟩
6. Assess identified students in grades K-12 using diagnostic assessments and provide instruction based on student data. Determine next steps.	Teachers	2015-2020	🟨
7. Utilize RtI process K-8 and personnel to identify individual gaps in reading skills and provide remediation as appropriate and relevant as per data.	Interventionists, Teachers, Counselors/Social Workers, Administrators	2015-2020	🟩
8. Develop RtI plan 9-12 and allocate resources to provide instruction based on reading skill gaps as appropriate and relevant as per data.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators, Counselors, Teachers	2015-2016	🟨
9. Review/revisit reading, writing and math reasoning rubrics being used at each level: elementary, middle school and high school.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators, Teachers	2015-2020	🟨
10. Develop District Professional Development calendar for district and building administration to provide professional development relative to district strategic goals and *AdvancED* recommendations.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators, Building Secretaries	Summer 2015	🟩
11. Establish schedule of times and prompts for writing training, assessment review and collegial conversation utilizing Thursday mornings and release time. Investigate possibility of scheduling half-day professional development opportunities through Performance Qualified District protocol.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	2015-2020	🟨

Target 1.2: 90+% of students will master state and national standards by 2020. *Board Goal 1A, AdvancEd Indicators 3.1,3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6*

CEOs: Assistant Superintendent, Administrators

Strategy 1: All subjects and grades horizontally and vertically align the taught and tested curriculum (which includes themes, resources, skills and vocabulary) with Indiana Academic Standards as identified by current IDOE Model Curriculum Maps and *AdvancED* recommendations, engage in data-driven instruction and engage in mastery learning. *Board Goal 3B, AdvancEd Indicators 3.1,3.2, 3.5*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: Effective Schools Research states that for each loop of reteaching, we can expect a 25% gain in student achievement (Lezotte and Pepperl, 1999); Goldberg and Cole (2002) found that achievement gaps can be closed by 20 points and overall student achievement can approach 90+% for all groups; Marzano (2002) indicates that the most important factor at the school level that impacts student achievement is the guaranteed and viable curriculum; and Benjamin (2009) has found that aligning the taught and tested curriculum with state standards, identifying essential skills, use of interim assessments of mastery and reteaching contribute to higher student mastery levels. The implementation of School-wide Positive Behavior Supports (SW-PBS) makes the school environment more conducive to learning and results in significantly higher test scores and academic achievement when all elements of SW-PBS are implemented with fidelity to the model (Eber, Esperanza, Horner, Nakasato, et al. (2009). Reynolds et. Al. (2002) found that the most consistent predictor of children's academic achievement are parent expectations of the child's academic attainment, while Dauber and Epstein (1993) found that parents want to know more about how to help their children learn.

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Map curriculum and correlate current standards and assessments to the Indiana Academic Standards and associated state assessments to identify gaps and adjust curriculum to address the new requirements and maps while at the same time focusing on state and national standards of excellence. Ensure horizontal and vertical alignment utilizing the *Understanding By Design* framework.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators, Teachers	2015-2020	🟨
2. Provide release time and resources to align the above components with support and oversight provided by a facilitator experienced in the curriculum mapping and alignment process.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	2015-2020	🟨
3. Create higher-level assessments of individual standards to be used as pretests, posttests, guided and independent practice checks and periodic review tests in grades K-12.	Teachers	2015-2020	🟨
4. Develop and administer common assessments at each grade level and in each discipline.	Teachers	2015-2020	🟨
5. Develop and Implement consistent and valid grading practices K-12 based on student learning.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators, Teachers	2015-2020	🟥
6. Schedule time to initiate S2S (System-to-System) Talks and PLC meetings in order to review data regarding student mastery of critical standards for the purpose of using data to drive reteaching and enrichment.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	2015-Ongoing	🟩
7. Develop and implement Key Performance Indicators and benchmarking expectations K-12.	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	2015-2020	🟨
8. Ensure that parents and stakeholders are aware of current curricular resources and information.	District Administrators, Building Administrators, Teachers, District Technology Team	2015-2020	🟩

Target 1.3: 100% of STM students will be college and career ready upon graduation by 2020. *Board Goal 1A, AdvancEd Indicators 3.1,3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6*

CEOs: Assistant Superintendent, Administrators

Strategy 1: Develop a framework outlining college and career expectations/experiences K-12. *Board Goal 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F, AdvancEd Indicators 3.1 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: Every year in the United States, nearly 60% of first-year college students discover that, despite being fully eligible to attend college, they are not ready for postsecondary studies. After enrolling, these students learn that they must take remedial courses in English or mathematics, which do not earn college credits (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2010). About two-thirds of Indiana's Class of 2012 was college-ready, meaning students did not need to take a remedial English or math course. The state saw 2-3 percentage-point improvements in the proportion of students who were college-ready across nearly all student groups, including race/ethnicity and income level. However, a closer look at the numbers reveals deep disparities in college readiness by diploma type. Sixty-two (62) percent of students that graduated with a Core 40 diploma and 93 percent of Academic Honors diploma graduates were college-ready. In contrast, only 22 percent of general diploma graduates and 18 percent of waiver-diploma graduates were college-ready (Indiana Commission for Higher Education, 2014). See Conley, *Redefining College Readiness*, 2007 for more information regarding mismatch between typical high school preparation and college readiness needs. Munster High School will continue to review the Indiana College Readiness Report that is released annually. This report contains a breakdown of college matriculation to Indiana schools. It also shows remediation, needs, career paths and degree types. According to the 2013 report, few Munster students are in need of remediation at the post-secondary level, meaning that they are demonstrating college and career readiness. The report, however, suggests areas where we can continue to focus our attention, specifically on our students who earn general diplomas with evidence-based waivers.

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Review and revise the middle and high school curricula to include college and career opportunities.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	2015-2020	
2. Develop K-12 College and Career framework. Review documents such as Conley, *Redefining College Readiness*, 2007 for more information regarding mismatch between typical high school preparation and college readiness needs.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators, Social Workers, Guidance Counselors, Teachers	2015-2020	
3. Provide more opportunities at the high school level for students to receive Career and Technical Education.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators, Hammond Area Career Center	2015-2020	
4. Develop an internship program at the secondary level to provide specific career authentic learning opportunities. Goal is 20 new internship partnerships by 2020.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	2015-2020	
5. Monitor graduation rates, attendance data and participation in AP classes, Career and Technical Education courses and Concurrent Enrollment courses as indicators of College and Career Readiness.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	2015-2020	

Table 8: 2. Safe, Orderly and Caring Environments			
Target 2.1: 100% of buildings are deemed to be safe in regards to the number of entry/accessibility points by conducting a yearly safety audit by the end of the 2015-16 school year. *Board Goal 4D, AdvancEd Indicator 4.3*			
CEOs: Assistant Superintendent, Administrators			
Strategy 1: Buildings will conduct a needs assessment of access points based on usage, as well as staff and student needs. Determine necessary building access during non-school hours for staff members. *Board Goal 4D, AdvancEd Indicator 4.3*			
Evidence in Support of Strategy: A school safety audit will highlight both the strengths and weaknesses of the current practices at all schools in the district. According to A. K. (Vijay) Ramnarain, an architectural consultant with the Virginia Department of Education, designated points of entry are necessary to control who is able to gain access to the building and to ensure that all visitors are greeted by a staff member who will identify their purpose and evaluate their demeanor. (Virginia Department of Education, School Safety Questions and Answers, 2015). Research has shown that limiting access points is a critical component to ensuring the safety of the school. Organizations have found that by implementing intelligent card procedures Card access control solutions allow campus administrators to eliminate mechanical keying. Proximity cards, biometrics, bar codes, smart cards, or other credentials give authorized cardholders access when and where they need it. Access can be easily removed for anyone no longer employed by the school district. Limit entrances/exits to campus buildings. Today's demands for safety compel school security administrators to limit the number of entrances and exits available for use by visitors. By designating a single entrance to each building, you can better control security and safety. A combination of intrusion detection, access control and video surveillance provides the strongest protection for access points. (Top 10 Ways to keep your school building secure, Noblitt, Allegion, 2012). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the most often used strategy that schools turn to when looking to improve security and safety in their schools is "controlled access to their buildings during school hours. In fact, 88.2% of public schools have used that strategy when securing their schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). The National Association of School Psychologists reinforces that schools should limit the accessibility to a school by reducing the amount of access points and ensuring that all doors are locked during the school day. (Tips for School Administrators for Reinforcing School Safety, NASP Resources, 2015)			

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Survey staff and students in each School Town of Munster building to find out which door they enter through in the morning.	Administrators	Fall 2015	🟩
2. Identify team members who will be part of the implementation of reducing entrance/accessibility points.	Administrators, Assistant Superintendent	Fall 2015	🟩
3. Team makes decision on which entry points are necessary.	Entry Point Team	Spring 2016	🟩
4. Eliminate unnecessary morning entry points.	Maintenance	Summer 2016	🟥
5. Install new key card entry system on designated doors.	Contracted Agency	Summer 2016	🟥
6. Survey staff members to find out when they are accessing the building during non-school hours.	Administrators	Spring 2016	🟥
7. Determine entry points and access hours for all staff members.	Administrators	Spring 2016	🟨
8. Conduct Security and Vulnerability Assessment, as demonstrated through cooperation with Security and Vulnerability Assessment conducted by Risk Solutions International, with school safety specialists within district. The team will then meet yearly to review the audit results and develop plans to implement improvement steps.	Risk Solutions International and STM School Safety Specialists	By end of the 2015-2016 school year	🟥

Target 2.2: 100% of schools will engage in a minimum of two non-traditional safety drills per year at the building level and at least one large scale district-wide exercise every 3 years, in addition to the current state-required drills, beginning at the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year. Non-traditional drills may include drills during lunch or passing time, earthquake drills, drills in which exits are made unavailable or blocked, or any other drill that presents an extraordinary circumstance not typically anticipated in the regularly-conducted drills. *Board Goal 4B, 4C, AdvancEd Indicators 4.3, 4.4*

CEOs: Assistant Superintendent, Administrators

Strategy 1: All buildings will engage in a district-wide, full-scale, non-traditional drill at least one time every 3 years. *Board Goal 4B, 4C, AdvancEd Indicators 4.3, 4.4*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: According to Dr. Victoria Calder of the Texas School Safety Center through Texas State University (Texas School Safety Center, 2013), school campus drills must extend beyond the traditional fire drill. Evacuation drills, reverse evacuation drills, weather drills, shelter-in-place drills and lockdown drills are essential and must be included in a school's preparedness plans. In its most recent adaptation to its Fire Prevention Code (FIRE PREVENTION CODE (EXCERPT), 2012), the state of Michigan legislated a requirement that a "school that operates any of grades kindergarten to 12 shall conduct at least 1 of the drills required by this section during a lunch or recess period, or at another time when a significant number of the students are gathered but not in the classroom." The Center for Disease Control and Prevention also sites the needs for schools to include earthquake drills and "emergency training and drills for different situations." (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013) In a 2011 article in *Content Strategy*, Mandy Brown approached the subject of looking beyond what has happened in past drills and emergencies and focusing on what could happen. (Fire Drills: Communications Strategy in a Crisis, Brown, 2011) Practicing these drills creates muscle memory, and taking into account other factors and eventualities that could occur during an emergency will make a proper reaction to that situation more likely should that occur during the actual emergency. For district-wide preparation for a natural or man-made disaster, the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) works through FEMA and stresses the importance of providing readiness through planning, practice and validating response capabilities. ORISE prepares emergency response assets through the following capabilities: exercise planning, operations support and planning, training, emergency management, emergency response and communication. (Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education)

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Review resources through the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to assist in taking a comprehensive safety review of our drills and procedures.	District- and Building-level School Safety Specialists	Spring 2016	
2. Meet monthly and eventually bi-monthly with first responders to plan full-scale exercise within the district.	MPD, MFD, EMS, LCHLS/EMA, Community Hospital, STM	January 2015-- June 2015	
3. Recruit students and staff to participate in exercise.	MHS Administrators	Spring 2015	
4. Inform staff and community of exercise plans and details.	STM Administrators	Spring 2015	
5. Execute initial full-scale exercise.	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Agency Team Members	June 12, 2015	
6. Evaluate SMART goals given to HSEEP for evacuation and reunification procedures.	STM Administrators	Spring 2016	
7. Debrief school staff regarding strengths and improvements needed for exercise.	STM Administrators and Staff	Spring 2016	
8. Continue process and planning of future district-wide, non-traditional drills.	STM Administrators	Summer 2016	

Strategy 2: Each school will conduct a minimum of one non-traditional drill each semester in conjunction with their required state drills (passing period, lunch, block exit, earthquake drill, etc.). *Board Goal 4B, 4C, AdvancEd Indicators 4.3, 4.4*

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Discuss during principal/administrative meetings types of non-traditional drills and when they will occur.	Administrators	Ongoing	🟩
2. Conduct first non-traditional drill.	All STM Schools	Fall 2015	🟩
3. Evaluate first non-traditional drill for accuracy and execution.	Administrators	Fall 2015	🟩
4. Conduct second non-traditional drill.	All STM Schools	Spring 2016	🟩
5. Evaluate second non-traditional drill for accuracy and execution.	Administrators	Spring 2016	🟩

Target 2.3: 100% of schools will provide at least two anonymous means of reporting bullying. *Board Goal 5A, AdvancEd Indicators 4.5, 4.7, 4.8*

CEOs: Assistant Superintendent, Administrators

Strategy 1: Create anonymous bullying tip lines and drop boxes for all five schools. *Board Goal 5A, AdvancEd Indicators 4.5, 4.7, 4.8*

Evidence in Support of Strategy:

Anonymous bullying reporting is now required for schools by many state laws and is recommended by the major anti-bullying curriculum programs. If anyone believes that bullying doesn't take its toll on schools, families, society and, most of all, children, consider these startling statistics provided by Anonymous Cyber Bullying Reporting Service:

- 25% of children are bullied
- 43% of young people have been bullied while online
- 35% of adolescents have been threatened online
- Nearly 20% have been threatened more than once

Bullying is a problem that affects millions of students, and today bullying (including cyberbullying) is at an all-time high. Interestingly, forty-seven states in the United States have passed school anti-bullying legislation, many mandating anonymous bullying reporting. Yet there are no federal laws dealing directly with school bullying. This has left schools and districts searching for anti-bullying curriculum programs and effective resources to address this epidemic problem. The anonymity is the key aspect of the CyberBully Hotline. Many students internalize bullying episodes and are often reluctant to tell a parent, a teacher, a counselor or even their own friends. Bystanders and witnesses are often equally fearful of being seen going for help or coming forward (Anonymous Cyber Bullying Reporting Service Launched by SchoolReach, SchoolReach, 2012).

Schools that have implemented anonymous reporting systems have found it beneficial and more useful than "drop boxes" that many schools have adopted in their policies. One school stated, "that it had became clear that we needed to provide an anonymous means for students to report an incident that was available when they are available and accessible to all because the "Bully Report" drop boxes have been ineffective. In the year since implementation of the form, we have had around 144 submissions with around 3 false reports. While this has been a tremendous number of reports for a school of 1,100 kids, we believe that the time spent in follow up and investigation is well worth the payoff of having students feel safe at school. In fact, the number of reports has been manageable and has also led to more prevention than punitive action (Anonymous Reporting for Bullying and Cyberbullying Incidents, Hinduja, 2012).

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Talk with technology staff to determine what would be the best way to create tip phone line.	Administrators and Technology Team	Summer 2015	🟩
2. Create tip lines	Technology Team	Spring 2016	🟨
3. Disseminate information about tip lines and drop boxes to students, staff and community	Administrators	Spring 2016	🟨

Table 9: 3. Strong Parent, Family and Community Partnerships

Target 3.1: 90%+ of stakeholders report high levels of satisfaction regarding the School Town of Munster. *Board Goal 5A, AdvancEd Indicator 3.8*

CEOs: STM Strategic Planning Communications Team

Strategy 1: Seek input from random samples of students, parents, families and community members regarding satisfaction. *Board Goal 5A, AdvancEd Indicator 3.8*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: Jacobs and Coghlan (2004) summarize the extensive literature on the importance of organizations listening to their stakeholders and acting on the data gathered from the listening process (http://www.imagilab.org/pdf/wp04/WP41.pdf). The 2015-2016 Baldrige education award materials recommend that high performing organizations must consider how to "engage students and other customers for long-term marketplace success, including how you listen to the voice of the customer, build relationships with students and other customers and use student and other customer information to improve and to identify opportunities for innovation."

(See Education Criteria Category and Item Commentary at http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/education_criteria.cfm).

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Examine surveys used by high-performing schools.	Communications Team	Fall 2015	🟨
2. Develop or adopt surveys for the STM (to include open ended questions).	Communications Team	Spring 2016	🟥
3. Make surveys accessible to randomly-sampled group (online and paper).	Supervisors, Administrators, Technology Department, Communications Team	Spring or Fall 2016	🟥
4. Report the findings to the Board of School Trustees.	Communications Team	Fall 2016	🟥
5. Analyze surveys and identify areas of improvement for the following school year.	Communications Team	2016-2017	🟥
6. Recommend next steps to the school board and district administration.	Communications Team	Fall 2016	🟥

Target 3.2: 95+% of stakeholders rate communication with the School Town of Munster as *excellent* or *very good*. Board Goals 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, 5E, 5F, *AvancEd Indicators 2.5, 5.5*			
CEOs: STM Strategic Planning Communications Team			
Strategy 1: Improve and increase the use of the STM website. *Board Goal 5G, AdvancEd Indicator 4.5, 4.6*			
Evidence in Support of Strategy: See resources found at the National School Public Relations Association: http://www.nspra.org/getting_started "Public relations needs to be in the public's interest. It needs to be grounded in solid two-way communication techniques and used as a vehicle to build trust, confidence and support for doing the best for all children in our schools. NSPRA firmly believes that school systems and schools have a Public Responsibility to tell parents and taxpayers how the schools are spending their money, and seeking their insight on helping the school district deliver high quality and an efficient educational program. The public has a right to know and be engaged in their schools. And they need someone in the schools trained in communication so they can get clear answers and guidance on how to work with their schools."			
Action Steps	**Who**	**When**	**Status**
1. Add a *Feedback* and *Recognize A Staff Member* link to each school's site for suggestions.	Communications Team and Technology Department	Immediately	🟨
2. Use and/or increase messages to families via all-call and all-email.	Administrators	Regularly/As Needed	🟩
3. Research tools that enable the development of a web-based, district-wide calendar that contains all events for the school year. Explore possible building calendars.	Technology Department	Fall 2015	🟩
4. Explore and implement the use of sites such as HootSuite, Remind or MailChimp for social networking at the building level.	Administrators and Technology Department	Spring 2015	🟩
5. Update images posted to school websites.	Administrators or Designee and Technology Department	Monthly	🟨
6. Increase postings that celebrate school success.	Administrators or Designee and Technology Department	Weekly	🟩

Target 3.3: 90+% of students and family members report satisfaction with the transition process for students enrolling in and moving between grades/levels within STM. *Board Goal 3A3, 3D, AdvancEd Indicators 1.1, 2.4, 2.5, 3.8, 4.7*

CEOs: STM Strategic Planning Communications Team

Strategy 1: Survey new students and families. *Board Goal 5A, AdvancEd Indicators 3.8, 3.12*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: See Transition Planning for 21st Century Schools at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/curriculum/home/transitions.pdf.

"Because learning is a continuous process, transition planning is important for all who educate and guide students. Effective programs recognize that groups of students will exhibit a range of abilities and accomplishments. Therefore, all students need a learning environment that engages them at their levels and provides differentiated instruction for their unique learning styles so that they will have a better opportunity for a successful transition as they progress through each level. It is important to link subsequent steps in students' education to earlier experiences and to involve parents in these activities and decisions (Nebraska Department of Education, 2001). The primary goal of transition planning is to ensure that all students have opportunities to experience academic excellence and a strong sense of well-being. Educators know the importance of outlining steps to take in promoting success for all students and their families as they move on to new experiences. "Transition practices are implemented by a range of partners, in a variety of settings and in multiple domains of continuity" (Harvard Family Research Project, 2004)." See Best Practices at: http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/91-Medway.pdf "The chapter will clarify the impact of relocation on children and their parents and provide guidelines and resources for intervention. The chapter examines the concept of mobility, describes variable associated with family move and presents research on effects of moving on indices of children's adjustment."

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Survey students and families new to the STM.	All STM Buildings	Spring 2016	■
2. Analyze survey data to determine improvements.	All STM Buildings and Communications Team	Summer 2016	■
3. Implement new strategies for the following school year so that students and families feel more comfortable transitioning. Include a transition checklist for new families.	All STM Buildings	Summer 2016	■
4. Implement an ambassador program in each building that pairs new students with existing students.	All STM Buildings	Summer of 2015	■
5. Evaluate the above mentioned transition steps and revise as needed.	All STM Buildings	Summer 2016	■

Target 3.4: Maintain and increase the number of school-community partnerships to a total of 50. *Board Goal 2E, AdvancEd Indicator 2.5*

CEOs: STM Strategic Planning Communications Team

Strategy 1: Develop a list of partnerships that currently aid the STM. *Board Goal 2E, AdvancEd Indicator 2.5*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: See http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/famncomm/pa400.htm for research and ideas about how to increase family involvement in schools. The National PTA Standards (2008) recommend "collaborating with community members to connect students, families and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services and civic participation." The results of a meta-analysis indicate that parental involvement is associated with higher student achievement outcomes. These findings emerged consistently whether the outcome measures were grades, standardized test scores, or a variety of other measures, including teacher measures (Jeynes, 2005). Baldrige 2010 award-winning school Montgomery County Public Schools. Baldrige 2009 award winning school Iredell-Statesville, NC. See the extensive research on the value of service learning (Sudeck and Hartman, July 2009, Service Learning: The Power to Inspire, Educational Leadership.

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Work with building administrators to populate a roster of community partnerships.	Communications Team and Administrators	Spring 2015	green
2. Classify the information gathered and make it accessible for STM employees.	Communications Team	Ongoing	green
3. Determine additional partnerships that would be most beneficial.	Supervisors, Administrators, Communications Team	Ongoing	yellow
4. Report the findings to the Board of School Trustees.	Communications Team	2015-2016	green
5. Publish a list of STM partnerships on the STM website.	Technology Department	Winter 2015	yellow
6. Create a process for outside organizations to partner with the STM.	Communications Team	Fall 2016	red

Table 10: 4. Highly Effective and Motivated Staff

Target 4.1: 100% of all employees are rated as *effective* or *highly effective* or are observed making meaningful improvement toward specific indicators. *Board Goal 3A6, AdvancEd Indicators 2.6, 4.1*

CEOs: Assistant Superintendent and Administrators

Strategy 1: Develop, implement and provide professional development in alignment with a high quality teacher evaluation system, which specifically defines and measures the components of teaching. *Board Goal 3B, AdvancEd Indicators 2.6, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: Charlotte Danielson describes a framework for teaching that identifies the aspects of a teacher's responsibilities that have been documented through empirical studies and theoretical research as promoting improved learning. These responsibilities seek to define what teachers should know and be able to do in the exercise of their profession. These four domains of responsibility are Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction and Professional Responsibilities (Danielson. (2007). *Enhancing Professional Practice A Framework for Teaching.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development). Research on planning and preparation is abundant including Skowron (2001), Shulman (1987), Marzano (2004), Schmoker (1999) and Wiggins (1998). Research on the development of expertise shows that novice teachers must master at least the basics of classroom management before they can provide effective instruction. Routines, procedures, physical environment and establishing norms for student behavior are prerequisites to good instruction (Whitaker, 2004), Tomlison (1999), Brooks and Brooks (1993), The National Board of Teaching Standards (2004) and Moore (2004). Instruction, Domain 3, is supported by Skowron (2001), Tomlison (1999), Brooks and Brooks ((1993) and the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (2004). Professional Responsibilities, Domain 4, is supported by The National Board of Teaching Standards (2004), Colton and Sparks-Langer (1992, 1993), Schunk (1991), Tucker and Stronge (2005). DuFour and Eaker (1998) summarize the importance of professional practices: "The most promising strategy for sustained, substantial school improvement is developing the ability of school personnel to function as professional learning communities."

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Develop a comprehensive evaluation program for certified staff.	District Teacher Evaluation Committee	May 2015	■
2. Train evaluators to assess components of effective teaching.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	May 2015	■
3. Train a pilot group of teachers on the components of effective teaching.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators, volunteer teachers	May 2015	■
4. Administer a pilot evaluation program with volunteer teachers.	Assistant Superintendent, Principals and Volunteer Teachers	May 2015	■
5. Provide teachers with training and information about the new evaluation plan. Train the entire teaching staff on the components of effective teaching that will be used in the assessment rubric.	Assistant Superintendent and Administrators	August 2015	■
6. Implement the teacher evaluation plan .	Administrators	August 2015	■
7. Research evaluation methods of extra-curricular positions. Collect best practices from other school districts.	Athletic Director, Administrators	May 2016	■
8. Implement revised evaluation methods for extra-curricular positions.	Athletic Director, Administrators	August 2016	■
9. Conduct meetings with administrators and teachers to discuss the new evaluation plans and work to revise any areas in need of improvement.	District Teacher Evaluation Committee	January 2016 and ongoing	■

Strategy 2: Develop and provide a best practices model for classified staff. *Board Goal 3B, AdvancEd Indicators 4.3, 4.4, 4.5*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: While the educational literature is replete with evaluation models for classroom teachers, little work has focused on support and nonteaching staff. Stonge and Helm (1990) suggest a framework for evaluations that include the following: identify the needs of the organization, relate program expectations to job responsibilities, identify staff behaviors, set standards of performance, document job performance and evaluate performance.

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Create job descriptions for all classified staff.	Administrators, Directors and Assistant Superintendent	May 2015	🟩
2. Investigate best practices for professional development and evaluation.	Assistant Superintendent, District Directors	December 2015	🟨
3. Set standards for performance based upon best practices.	Superintendent, Directors, Administrators	May 2016	🟥
4. Revise the current evaluation plan and practices to align with best practices and research.	STM Board, Superintendent	July 2016	🟥
5. Revise and or create handbooks for classified positions.	Superintendent, Directors	July 2016	🟨
6. Provide classified staff orientation.	Assistant Superintendent, Directors and Administrators	August 2016	🟥

Target 4.2: 100% of employees are provided with professional development that adheres to best practices in their area of operation. *Board Goal 3B, AdvancEd Indicators 4.3, 4.4, 4.5*

CEOs: Assistant Superintendent and Administrators

Strategy 1: Align job descriptions and designate time within schedules to provide specific professional development. *Board Goal 3B, AdvancEd Indicators 2.1, 2.6*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: Professional development is defined as "the process of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce outstanding educational results for students" (Hassel, 1999) The complexity of teaching is so great that one-third of teachers leave the profession within three years and 50% leave within five years (Ingersoll, 2003). Mizell (2010) suggests that the number of unfamiliar issues, such as classroom management, instruction, curriculum, school culture, operations, test preparation, state standards, parent relations and interaction with other teachers can become overwhelming when educators are not provided with consistent and adequate professional development. Research and experience help us recognize that high-quality ongoing professional development that deepens teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical skills; provides opportunities for practice, research and reflection; and includes efforts that are job embedded, sustained and collaborative will assist in the goal to remain up-to-date (Sparks, 2002).

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Create job descriptions for all positions within the district.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators, District Directors, MTA	March 2015	🟩
2. Investigate methods used by other schools to provide time within the regular day for collaboration and professional development.	Administrators and Teachers	December 2015	🟩
3. Investigate state policies and laws that provide flexible scheduling for high-performing school districts.	STM School Board, Assistant Superintendent	December 2015	🟩
4. Educate the community regarding the need to change school schedules to allow for professional collaboration.	STM School Board, Superintendent	May 2016	🟩
5. Implement a program for professional development that is aligned with best instructional practice and this strategic plan.	Superintendent, Administrators, District and School Improvement Teams	August 2016	🟨
6. Evaluate the effectiveness of scheduling and professional activities.	District and School Improvement Teams	May 2017	🟥

Strategy 2: Provide high quality digital resources, workshops and presentations for professional development aligned with best practices, and require a certain number of hours of professional development for all employees. *Board Goal 3B, AdvancEd Indicators 2.6, 3.11, 4.6*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: In the development of organizations, training plays a vital role in improving performance as well as increasing productivity, eventually putting companies in the best position to face competition and stay at the top. This means that there is a significant difference between the organizations that train their employees and organizations that do not (April, 2010). Training, according to Brum (2010) and Owen (2006), will increase employees' commitment, which can further counter the numerous direct and indirect costs associated with employee turnover. Developing the desired knowledge, skills and abilities of the employees to perform well on the job requires effective training programs that may also effect employee motivation and commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The trend toward providing more E-learning and/or blended learning opportunities is gaining more acceptance among training and development professionals; a 2008 survey by the American Society of Training and Development found that nearly one-third of all training content is now delivered electronically. Given the overall satisfaction rates regarding the quality of online learning versus face-to-face instruction, it is highly likely that this number will continue to increase (Allen & Seaman, 2010).

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Develop a Substitute Teacher Handbook for all substitute teachers	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	August 2015	🟩
2. Develop a substitute teacher training program including an orientation program.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	December 2015	🟨
3. Implement a Substitute Teacher Orientation Program	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	August 2016	🟥
4. Develop a digital tool kit of professional development resources for teachers and staff.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	May 2016	🟨
5. Maintain digital professional development tool kit and revise as needed.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	May 2017 and ongoing	🟥
6. Establish continuing education requirements including the number of hours required each year for various employee categories.	STM School Board, Assistant Superintendent, District Directors, Administrators, School Improvement Teams	December 2016	🟨
7. Align professional development with District Beliefs, best practices and available resources.	District School Improvement Team	October 2015	🟩
8. Implement professional development activities.	Assistant Superintendent, District Directors and Administrators	August 2017	🟨
9. Review the Professional Development Program and compare to research of best practices.	District Directors, Administrators, District Improvement Team	May 2018 and ongoing	🟥
10. Create a committee of coaches and parents to review and revise current extra-curricular handbooks.	Athletic Director, Administrators	May 2016	🟨
11. Create extra-curricular handbooks where needed and provide professional development opportunities for extra-curricular sponsors and coaches.	Athletic Director, Administrators	May 2016	🟨

Target 4.3: STM will provide competitive compensation as compared to local schools and schools of similar academic performance. *Board Goals 2B, 2F, AdvancEd Indicators 2.1, 4.2, 4.4*			
CEOs: Assistant Superintendent, Administrators			
Strategy 1: Find the funding. *Board Goals 2B, 2F, AdvancEd Indicators 2.1, 4.2, 4.4*			
Evidence in Support of Strategy: The complexity of teaching is so great that one-third of teachers leave the profession within three years and 50% leave within five years (Ingersoll, 2003). To encourage teachers to continue with the complexity of teaching, fair and competitive compensation must be provided to get the right people to join the district and stay. Collins (2001, p. 50) states, "compensation and incentives are important… The purpose of a compensation system should be not to get the right behaviors from the wrong people, but to get the right people on the bus in the first place and to keep them there." A compensation model must be created that encourages people to join the School Town of Munster and stay with the district.			

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. We must wait for the action steps of the financial committee before creating specific action steps.	Finance Committee	TBD	
2. Research compensation models of local districts and districts within the state that are similar in performance.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	July 2015 and ongoing	
3. Solicit donations to provide monetary compensation for teachers.	STM School Board, Superintendent	May 2016	

Strategy 2: Develop a system for staff recruitment and retention *Board Goals 2G, 3A6, AdvancEd Indicator 4.1*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: Thorndike's Law of Effect states that a response followed by a reward is more likely to recur in the future. Moreover, expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) focuses on the link between rewards and behaviors (instrumentality perceptions), although it emphasizes expected (rather than experienced) rewards (incentives). Equity Theory (Adams, 1963) suggests that employee perceptions of their return-contribution ratio compares to others inside and outside the organization determine how they perceive their employment relationship. Finally, Agency Theory focuses on the divergent interest and goals of the organization's stakeholders and the ways that employee compensation can be used to align these interests and goals (Eisnehardt, 1989; Fama & Jenson, 1983). Recent research on cash compensation, incentives and pay for performance has failed to effectively align motivation, incentives and performance. (Kruse, Blasi, Freeman, 2012; Kohn, 1999). However, the complexity of teaching is so great that one-third of teachers leave the profession within three years and 50% leave within five years (Ingersoll, 2003). To encourage teachers to continue with the complexity of teaching, fair and competitive compensation must be provided to get the right people to join the district and stay. Collins (2001, p. 50) states, "compensation and incentives are important… The purpose of a compensation system should be not to get the right behaviors from the wrong people, but to get the right people on the bus in the first place and to keep them there." A compensation model must be created that encourages people to join the School Town of Munster and stay with the district.

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Research school districts across the state and nation for compensation models.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators	July 2015	🟩
2. Create a Compensation Model for teachers.	STM School Board, Superintendent, Teachers' Association	September 2015	🟩
3. Develop leadership positions for effective and highly effective teachers.	Superintendent, Administrators	August 2016	🟥
4. Develop marketing strategies for recruiting highly-qualified staff.	Superintendent	August 2016	🟨
5. Research non-monetary recognition plans for staff.	Assistant Superintendent, Teacher Evaluation Committee	May 2016	🟨
6. Create a non-monetary recognition program for staff.	Assistant Superintendent, Administrators, Teacher Evaluation Committee	Spring 2017	🟥
7. Survey staff for motivators and de-motivators.	Administrators	September 2016	🟥
8. Align district goals, research, finances and survey data to develop a compensation model for non-certified staff and revise model for certified staff.	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, School Board and Administrators	Fall 2017	🟥
9. Implement compensation model, continue to review and update goals and adjust finances.	Superintendent, School Board	Fall 2017	🟥

Table 11: 5. Effective Operations/Fiscal Responsibility

Target 5.1: Reduce current deficits in any School Town of Munster financial funds. Increase communication efforts on the financial situation of the district. Develop transparent and accurate accounting practices that monitor all funds revenues/expenditures and cash flow. *Board Goals 2A, 2B, 2C, 2F, 5B, AdvancEd Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.5*

CEOs: Superintendent and Administrators

Strategy 1: Improve accounting practices in the district by using monthly fund reports, cash flow sheets and revenue/expenditure projections for all funds. *Board Goal 2A, AdvancEd Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.5*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: IC 20-29-6-3 Unlawful deficit financing
Sec. 3. (a) It is unlawful for a school employer to enter into any agreement that would place the employer in a position of deficit financing due to a reduction in the employer's actual general fund revenue or an increase in the employer's expenditures when the expenditures exceed the employer's current year actual general fund revenue.
(b) A contract that provides for deficit financing is void to that extent and an individual teacher's contract executed under the contract is void to that extent. As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.13. Amended by P.L.48-2011, SEC.13.

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Continue to complete monthly funds reports upon closing each month's banking statement.	Superintendent and Director of Financial Operations	October 2014 and ongoing	■
2. Project revenues/expenditures for new budget year by December (annually).	Superintendent and Director of Financial Operations	December 2014 and ongoing	■
3. Continue to use financial advisors to monitor and review all funds and funding practices.	Superintendent and Director of Financial Operations	October 2014 and ongoing	■

Strategy 2: Review all current employee positions for possible reductions. All current salary schedules and hourly rates should be reviewed and any new-hires adjusted at a lower rate. *Board Goal 2C, AdvancEd Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.5*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: IC 20-29-6-3 Unlawful deficit financing
Sec. 3. (a) It is unlawful for a school employer to enter into any agreement that would place the employer in a position of deficit financing due to a reduction in the employer's actual general fund revenue or an increase in the employer's expenditures when the expenditures exceed the employer's current year actual general fund revenue.
(b) A contract that provides for deficit financing is void to that extent and an individual teacher's contract executed under the contract is void to that extent. As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.13. Amended by P.L.48-2011, SEC.13.
Moreover, 100% of the STM General Fund is devoted to personnel expenses, by far the largest cost to the district. Therefore, it is only logical that we examine this operational area in order to identify opportunities for cost reductions.

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Review all job descriptions to ensure that the descriptions confirm the actual job duties of each employee.	Assistant Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	🟩
2. Review all current staffing and reduce/eliminate positions if possible.	Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent, Directors and Administrators	January 2015 and ongoing	🟩
3. Review all salary and benefit options for all employees.	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	🟩
4. Establish hiring practices and compensation models for all employee groups and new hires.	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	🟨

Strategy 3: Change the model in which we clean classrooms in an effort to be more effective and cost efficient. *Board Goal 3A4, AdvancEd Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.5*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: The APPA Standards and Codes Council monitors standards and code activities among standards-setting organizations; communicates and educates APPA member institutions on standards compliance; and influences the development and creation of standards and codes, to ensure that the interests of educational institutions are realized in the standards-setting process (APPA, 2015).

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Train all custodians in best practices for cleaning classrooms, restrooms and community use areas effectively and use cost efficient methods that reduce the time and cleaning materials/supplies but keep all areas clean to reduce transference of germs causing student and staff illness.	Superintendent, Director of Support Services, Principals and Head Custodians	January 2015 and ongoing	🟨
2. Continue to inventory all custodial supplies on a monthly basis. Purchase supplies on a monthly basis. Use competitive pricing quotes in determining best price thus saving monies for the district.	Superintendent, Director of Support Services, Administrators and Head Custodians	January 2015 and ongoing	🟩

Strategy 4: Reduce energy costs by exploring high efficiency processes. *Board Goal 3A4, AdvancEd Indicator 2.1, 2.2, 2.5*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: Rebuilding or renovating schools to high performance standards can have multiple positive impacts, including: A healthier, more productive learning environment which has been shown to improve test scores and student attendance. Energy efficiency and renewable energy lessons can be incorporated into curriculum. Energy efficiency is cost effective, reducing the life-cycle cost of new and renovated schools (US Department of Energy).

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Continue to monitor energy usage of all buildings.	Maintenance, Director of Support Services, Administrators and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	
2. Continue to train and encourage all staff to focus on energy saving practices to save monies.	Maintenance, Director of Support Services, Administrators and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	
3. Replace all older equipment with energy savings equipment when possible.	Maintenance, Director of Support Services, Administrators and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	
4. Explore alternative financing for energy savings.	Maintenance, Director of Support Services, Administrators and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	

Strategy 5: Continue to review all budget issues and report fund balances at monthly school board meetings. *Board Goal 2A, AdvancEd Indicator 2.1, 2.2, 2.5*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: See resources found at the National School Public Relations Association: http://www.nspra.org/getting_started. "Public relations needs to be in the public's interest. It needs to be grounded in solid two-way communication techniques and used as a vehicle to build trust, confidence and support for doing the best for all children in our schools. NSPRA firmly believes that school systems and schools have a Public Responsibility to tell parents and taxpayers how the schools are spending their money and to seek their insight on helping the school district deliver high quality and an efficient educational program. The public has a right to know and be engaged in their schools. And they need someone in the schools trained in communication so they can get clear answers and guidance on how to work with their schools."

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Provide reports on the General Fund and Referendum Fund revenues/expenditures to Board	Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing (monthly)	
2. Provide reports on all financial funds in the school corporation involving the revenues/expenditures to Board.	Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing (quarterly)	
3. Continue to use Mustang Express newsletter and SuperChat podcasts to share information on the budget.	Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing (monthly)	
4. Utilize community resources to provide guidance in finance and budgeting.	Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	
5. Investigate alternative financing options to support school programs.	Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	

Target 5.2: Accumulate a 6-month operating balance while devoting 65% of expenditures from the General Fund to instruction thus ensuring that School Town of Munster will sustain financial stability. Furthermore, continuously monitor all school funds in terms of revenues/expenditures with the intent of recognizing that instruction is the most important priority in expending school funds. *Board Goal 2A, 2B, 2C, 2F, AdvancEd Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.5*

CEOs: Superintendent and Administrators

Strategy 1: Benchmark high performing school corporations and review best practice documents in order to identify powerful methods for increasing the percentage of expenditures devoted to instruction. *Board Goal 3A2, 3E, AdvancEd Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 4.2, 4.4*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: Increasingly, the relationship between spending and student achievement is taking center stage in education debates across the country. The No Child Left Behind Act, Indiana accountability statutes and school compensation models are pressuring educators to achieve annual gains in their students' performance. School district budgets are being stressed by rising operating costs, status quo state funding, circuit breaker legislation and rising health care costs for district staff. Consequently, policymakers, "taxpayers and district leaders are seeking ways to maximize the impact of every dollar spent on public education and thus improve their educational "return on resources" (Standard and Poor's, 2005).

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Conduct a review of the literature and identify benchmark organizations that have increased the percentage of school fund expenditures devoted to supporting instruction, staffing, maintenance, busing and other financial needs in order to identify potential methods of increasing efficiency and effectiveness throughout the district.	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing (monthly)	🟨
2. Implement the best solutions. Continue this process each year.	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing (quarterly)	🟨
3. Generate and monitor all fund reports for monthly revenues/expenditures via accounting software system.	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing (monthly)	🟩
4. Evaluate progress towards meeting percentage of cash surplus balance in identified funds (GF, Referendum, CPF, Transportation, Debt Service, Pension and Rainy Day)	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	🟩
5. Continue to evaluate and monitor all services to reduce spending (transportation, food service, maintenance, utilities, classroom supplies and custodial supplies)	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	🟩
6. Incorporate walk zones for students to reduce transportation costs.	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	🟩
7. Incorporate a corporation suggestion page for ideas on saving monies in the corporation.	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	🟥
8. Partner with the Town of Munster to share services.	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	🟩
9. Allow for advertisers to purchase space on the School Town of Munster web page.	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	July 2016 and ongoing	🟨

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
10. Establish a financial advisory committee made up of local experts in the field of finance to review all financial practices.	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	🟩

Strategy 2: Seek external grants (USDOE, IDOE, private foundations, local businesses and faith-based organizations, etc.) to support instructional programs, personnel, resources and activities. *Board Goal 2B, AdvancEd Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.5*

Evidence in Support of Strategy: Building effective partnerships is one method for generating support (financial, materials, people/mentors) (Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence, 2011).

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Continue to utilize a person who will seek grant opportunities for the Munster School Corporation (those targeted at increasing funds for instruction, e.g., technology, professional development). Continue to use a person who will provide this service on a pay-for-grants-received basis or share this person/cost with other organizations.	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	🟨
2. Regularly report grant opportunities to Superintendent in order to receive approval for go ahead.	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	🟨
3. Update Board and Superintendent on grants submitted and received.	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	🟨
4. Form a committee tasked with researching possible fundraising opportunities. (Fundraising, naming rights, TIF, etc.).	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	Fall 2016 and ongoing	🟥
5. Have committee put its findings to work and begin networking to maximize the fundraising opportunities.	Assistant Superintendent, Director of Financial Operations and Superintendent	Fall 2016 and ongoing	🟥

Target 5.3: 90+% of employees, parents, community members and students report satisfaction with the quality of our facilities.

CEOs: Superintendent and Administrators

Strategy 1: Develop a Comprehensive Facilities Plan that is maintained and updated annually for all buildings in the School Town of Munster by 2017 and compile all known information about each structure and building in the corporation along with operational costs and replacement costs for these areas in a comprehensive facilities plan (electronic document). *Board Goals 2E, 3A4, AdvancEd Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.5*

Evidence in Support of the Strategy: Castaldi (1994) writes: "The high cost of labor and the dwindling availability of energy places an extremely high value on the cost of maintenance and on the selection of energy-saving equipment." Without planning and a proactive approach to maintaining the current facilities to operate at high levels while saving energy and costs to the corporation from high utilities would create a bigger burden on the school corporation and the taxpayer in the future. Our current facilities are very well-maintained and need to continue to perform at efficient levels. Without a plan that identifies current and future needs, the lack of planning will lead to unnecessary and expensive future costs to the corporation.

Action Steps	Who	When	Status
1. Complete a materials needs assessment for each structure and building in the corporation.	Director of Support Services, Maintenance and Superintendent	March 2015 and ongoing	▉
2. Provide a cost analysis for each identified need in the assessment and work with an architect, engineering group or local vendor to cost out the replacement or upgrade.	Director of Support Services, Maintenance and Superintendent	March 2015 and ongoing	▉
3. Create an electronic facility plan that breaks down building material needs/inventories by category and life span. Each area must have a purchase price and replacement price. Must include projected replacement dates for materials for each structure or building.	Director of Support Services, Maintenance and Superintendent	Fall 2015 and ongoing	▉
4. Conduct a survey of staff and stakeholders to assess the needs and wants of the community and individual schools.	Director of Support Services, Maintenance and Superintendent	Fall 2015 and ongoing	▉
5. Analyze the results of the survey and take appropriate steps to maintain high quality facilities while staying fiscally responsible.	Director of Support Services, Maintenance and Superintendent	Fall 2015 and ongoing	▉
6. Utilize energy saving technology and equipment in any maintenance or upgrade capital projects plan.	Director of Support Services, Maintenance and Superintendent	Fall 2015 and ongoing	▉

Target 5.4: 90+% of staff, administrators and students will report satisfaction with technology. *Board Goal 3A3, AdvancEd Indicators 1.1, 2.4, 2.5, 3.8, 4.7*			
CEOs: Superintendent and Administrators			
Strategy 1: Engage district technology team to conduct a comprehensive review of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges regarding technology. *Board Goal 3A3, AdvancEd Indicators 1.1, 2.4, 2.5, 3.8, 4.7*			
Evidence in Support of the Strategy: 21st Century Classroom reported key findings that in order to create and sustain an educational experience that prepares students to succeed in today's classroom and on tomorrow's college campus, faculty must have technology that includes access to the Internet and teacher computing devices and large-group displays.			
Action Steps	**Who**	**When**	**Status**
1. Align current technology, future technology purchases and the District Technology Plan with student achievement goals as noted in the Strategic Plan.	Director of Technology, Administrators and Superintendent	Summer/Fall 2016 and ongoing	RED
2. Research how and what technology best raises student achievement.	Director of Technology, Administrators and Superintendent	Summer/Fall 2015 and ongoing	YELLOW
3. Conduct needs assessment to all staff K-12 regarding satisfaction with technology to support effective teaching and learning.	Director of Technology, Administrators and Superintendent	Fall 2016 and ongoing	RED
4. Analyze results of survey and align needs and purchases with Strategic Plan.	Director of Technology, Administrators and Superintendent	October 2016	RED
5. Ensure that purchases and allocations are made according to above alignment as well as finding ways to cut costs to help reach fiscal responsibility	Director of Technology, Administrators and Superintendent	Fall 2016 and ongoing	RED
6. Ensure that our district's current Technology Plan as submitted to IDOE is made available to all stakeholders and implemented. Add to dashboard.	Director of Technology, Administrators and Superintendent	Fall 2016 and ongoing	RED
7. Conduct a program evaluation of the 1:1 initiative that has been in place over the past few years.	Director of Technology, Administrators and Superintendent	Winter 2016 and ongoing	RED
8. Review all current online assessments for effectiveness and best practice to inform instruction in the classroom, building level and the corporate level.	Director of Technology, Administrators and Superintendent	Fall 2015 and ongoing	YELLOW
9. Train staff with technology to support effective instruction and learning.	Director of Technology, Administrators and Superintendent	January 2015 and ongoing	YELLOW

Conclusion

We believe that this strategic plan offers the proper foundation for continuous improvement because we have:

- Embraced the philosophy of continuous improvement
- Listened to and learned from our stakeholders and employees
- Reviewed our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges as part of our planning processes
- Rededicated the School Town of Munster to our vision, mission and belief/value statements
- Created an evidence-based dashboard and scorecard designed to focus us on the most important performance indicators
- Specified 16 targets for STM for the period 2015-2020
- Chartered continuous improvement teams that will report regularly to the STM Board of Trustees regarding progress to plan and ongoing performance results
- Established System-to-System Talks to monitor dashboard and scorecard results system-wide

We envision a learning system in which all students, teachers, staff, administrators, family members and community stakeholders work together to help us achieve our vision and mission. We will keep our stakeholders regularly updated regarding progress toward establishing a High Performance Culture at STM.

If you have questions about this strategic plan or other aspects of our school corporation, please contact me.

Thank you,

Dr. Jeff Hendrix

Appendix

School Town of Munster Strategic Thinking Chart 2. Safe and Orderly Environments		
	Strengths 1. School Safety Specialist(s) at every school and School Resource Officer availability 2. Most staff members exhibit caring characteristics 3. Regularity of procedural safety drills	**Weaknesses** 1. Safety of traffic patterns and procedures before and after school 2. Inconsistent after-school supervision procedures 3. Building accessibility before and after school 4. Lack of a truly anonymous bullying reporting system, including cyber-bullying 5. Some staff members need to be more sensitive to student needs
Opportunities 1. Involve more parents and students with school safety, including accepting volunteers 2. Providing safety training for all staff/students on regular basis 3. Utilizing technology resources to reinforce a safe and caring environment	**Opportunity-Strength (OS) Strategies: Use strengths to take advantage of opportunities** 1. School Safety Specialists and School Resource Officers train volunteers with safety responsibilities. 2. Continue to focus on and practice non-traditional monthly/semester drills. 3. Encourage students and staff to utilize available technology to communicate and maintain a safe and caring environment.	**Opportunity-Weakness (OW) Strategies: Overcome weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities** 1. Volunteers help maintain safe traffic patterns before and after school. 2. Inform staff of the necessity of consistent before/after school supervision. 3. Incorporate online anonymous bullying reporting system across the district.
Challenges 1. Monitoring all types of bullying 2. Monitoring or controlling access points before and/or after school 3. Creating an environment where all students feel supported	**Challenge-Strength (CS) Strategies: Use strengths to avoid challenges** 1. Encouraging School Safety specialists to continue to attend anti-bullying training at annual School Safety Conferences 2. Staff members continuing to be trained in bullying recognition and prevention 3. School Resource Officers and School Safety Specialists continuing to monitor which access points are necessary before and after school and regularly monitor access points 4. Continuing to encourage staff to be cognizant of student needs and the importance of establishing rapport with students	**Challenge-Weakness (CW) Strategies: Minimize weaknesses and avoid challenges** 1. Monitoring needs of students being dropped off with the amount of entry access points. 2. Encouraging and convincing students to utilize an anonymous reporting system. 3. Identify staff members who need to be more supportive of students' needs. Convince these members that student support is a requirement of the job.

	Strengths 1. All-Call, Email, HootSuite, Remind, Web Site, PowerSchool, Newsletters, PTO Concern Requests 2. Strong family involvement 3. Supportive community	Weaknesses 1. College and Career Readiness 2. Percent of parents Involved 3. Community partnerships 4. New students/families transitions 5. Celebrating School Success
Opportunities 1. Determine communication methods 2. Untapped families 3. Untapped community resources	**Opportunity-Strength (OS) Strategies: Use strengths to take advantage of opportunities** 1. Use existing communication to survey students 2. Use existing parent involvement to promote increased participation 3. Determine partnerships within community	**Opportunity-Weakness (OW) Strategies: Overcome weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities** 1. Need new methods of communication (personal, invites) 2. Need systems for new families/students (at building levels with evaluation opportunity) 3. Need to gather data regarding community involvement (Where do we need them? What can they offer?, etc.)
Challenges 1. Parent disengagement 2. Feedback opportunities 3. Celebrating community	**Challenge-Strength (CS) Strategies: Use strengths to avoid challenges** 1. Use current communication methods to reach out to disengaged parents. Use PTO membership to garner additional support. Use involved families to gather additional membership. 2. Polling and surveying attendees of school events, meetings, etc. Adding link to each school's webpage so that families can voice concerns. Personal outreach to families that were not involved in a given session. Determine feedback format for all (paper). 3. Visible presence in the community (business flags, banners in downtown, digital connections with town agencies and realtors) 4. Strong family involvement and community support to establish internships (use Career Fair participants to see if their businesses would accept interns as well as membership in community organizations to gauge interest in internships)	**Challenge-Weakness (CW) Strategies: Minimize weaknesses and avoid challenges** 1. Create opportunities for parents to attend school sessions and to contribute. 2. Create opportunities to get feedback from all stakeholders. 3. Speak with the town and community groups to determine means of celebrating school success and student achievements. 4. Explore and examine how other schools implement internship programs.

School Town of Munster Strategic Thinking Chart: 3. Strong Parent, Family and Community Partnerships

School Town of Munster Strategic Thinking Chart 4. Highly Effective and Motivated Staff		
	Strengths 1. Highly qualified, dedicated and collaborative teachers 2. Current academic achievement, community reputation, quality facilities 3. Opportunities for professional development	**Weaknesses** 1. Staff compensation and incentives 2. No official mentor program 3. Lack of resources for comprehensive staff development programs 4. Recruitment of highly qualified staff 5. Staff recognition
Opportunities 1. New Evaluation plan 2. Access to technology 3. Recognize teachers 4. Community resources	**Opportunity-Strength (OS) Strategies: Use strengths to take advantage of opportunities** 1. Because we have dedicated teachers who are motivated to improve and grow, implementing the new evaluation plan will provide training that defines components of effective teaching and creates a common language for all certified staff 2. Because of our firm commitment to PD, technology resources can be used to provide cost- effective staff development 3. Because we have qualified teachers who have worked to create high academic achievement, we have several opportunities to acknowledge staff and to include the community in that acknowledgment	**Opportunity-Weakness (OW) Strategies: Overcome weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities** 1. Because of the lack of resources for staff development, digital resources can be used to provide comprehensive training 2. Because of the lack of resources for staff compensation, STM can elicit support from the community for compensation and other recognition 3. Because of the limitations with staff recruitment and retention, STM can use community resources and technology to improve the recruitment of highly qualified staff
Challenges 1. Limited funding 2. Finding time for PD 3. Demands placed upon staff 4. Staff morale	**Challenge-Strength (CS) Strategies: Use strengths to avoid challenges** 1. Because of the district's highly qualified and dedicated staff, their professional motivation transcends inadequate funding 2. Because of the demands placed upon the staff, meaningful PD must provide efficient strategies to manage an ever-increasing workload 3. Because of the high quality and collaborative nature of the district's staff, we can rely on their ideas to develop solutions to the issue of finding adequate time for PD. Moreover, this relationship can increase staff morale and investment.	**Challenge-Weakness (CW) Strategies: Minimize weaknesses and avoid challenges** 1. Using state laws that allow high performing districts to schedule PD activities during school day 2. Finding resources to provide adequate compensation and incentives to improve the district's recruitment, recognition and morale 3. Using fact that we have limited resources to stress importance of evidence-based PD activities (will force us to do research before jumping into new initiatives) 4. Finding methods to mitigate the lack of resources to increase PD

School Town of Munster Strategic Thinking Chart 5. Effective Operations/Fiscal Responsibility		
	Strengths 1. Leaders with fiscal responsibility experience 2. More transparent budgeting practices 3. Energy conservation practices and programs 4. Technology used in classroom to cut costs 5. Willing staff working collaboratively looking for cost cutting practices in all schools and departments 6. Ability to explore extra revenue generating practices 7. Well-maintained, up-to-date facilities	W**eaknesses** 1. Large debt in General Fund (which impacts salaries, benefits and programs) 2. Past communication on fiscal responsibility not transparent 3. Selection, care, cost and use of technology 4. Outdoor maintenance 5. Past management of school budgets
Opportunities 1. Using community and business support and other governmental agencies to provide financial programs 2. Advisory committee for the Superintendent to gain additional resources, ideas 3. Improving technology by using different funding methods as well as methods used in the classroom 4. Reducing bus routes 5. Outsourcing services for savings (technology, maintenance, custodial, financial, etc.) 6. Changing practices to obtain rebate as well as save energy and costs	**Opportunity-Strength (OS) Strategies: Use strengths to take advantage of opportunities** 1. Incorporating transparent budgeting policies and forming an advisory committee for the Superintendent to gain additional resources, ideas 2. Ability to explore extra revenue generating practices to gain outsourcing services as well as other governmental agencies to provide financial programs 3. Energy conservation practices and programs used to obtain rebates and save on energy and costs	**Opportunity-Weakness (OW) Strategies: Overcome weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities** 1. Overcoming past communication issues with board meetings, pod casting, newsletters and community meetings 2. Investigating outsourcing some maintenance issues 3. Fixing poor management of school budgets with the formation of the advisory committee to the Superintendent. 4. Sharing resources with the community and businesses to reduce the debt

Challenges	Challenge-Strength (CS) Strategies: Use strengths to avoid challenges	Challenge-Weakness (CW) Strategies: Minimize weaknesses and avoid challenges
1. Keeping technology updated 2. Reducing debt without reducing people and programs 3. Maintaining and upgrading facilities 4. Changing perceptions from community when it comes to communication and Board actions	1. Using more transparent budgeting practices to change the perceptions of the community 2. Using several different bond issues over the next five years to maintain and upgrade facilities and technology which will reduce the overall debt in the general fund and capitol projects	1. Changing purchasing practices for technology by using a four-year rotational program for laptop initiatives 2. Implementing promotional projects to increase student population to reduce the debt without reducing people and programs 3. Reducing debt by just-in-time ordering, better inventories of supplies, possibly not replacing retirees or resignations unless needed, possible RIF and backing down salaries with retirement 4. Lobbying with legislation to increase the funding formula