

# Public Focus Group Report

2021-22

*Prepared: January 2022*

## INTRODUCTION

Fargo Public Schools patrons were invited to attend a State of the Schools and Public Focus Group event that was held on January 13, 2022. The State of the Schools Address was recorded and is available on Fargo Public School's [YouTube channel](#). After the State of the Schools Address, attendants had the option to break out into smaller discussion groups led by School Board members and administrators to discuss the questions sent to attendees in advance and dive deeper into the questions asked during the live polling section of the State of the Schools Address. A facilitator was assigned to all discussion groups, who helped guide the conversation, and participants were asked to record their input using their mobile device, so results could be shared in real-time.

The following report includes the responses received from the 2022 State of the Schools Address and Public Focus Group. Feedback was collected from attendees at the event through interactive polling as part of the State of the Schools Address and through participation in the optional focus groups afterward.

The attendance at the event continues to be lower than prior years' events, with a high number of pre-registered participants who chose not to attend the day of the event. Based on the lower participation, administration recommends continuing to determine how to host this event in the future and explore other options.

Following the event, an event satisfaction survey was distributed to attendants, similar to previous years. Most of the attendants at the State of the Schools Address and Public Focus Group Event were Fargo Public Schools employees, so event satisfaction data should be taken with consideration to that fact.

The Fargo Public Schools holds the State of the Schools Address and Public Focus Group annually.

## OVERVIEW AND HISTORY OF FPS STRATEGIC PLAN

The purpose of the 2022 State of the Schools and Public Focus Group event was to provide an overview of the school district as reported in our 2020-21 Annual Report, share components of the school district's Strategic Plan, and receive feedback from the community on the direction of Fargo Public Schools (FPS). The feedback and input collected will assist the district in renewing its current Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan is a contract between the Fargo Public School District and its patrons – the residents of the Fargo school district. The 2022 State of the Schools and Public Focus Group event allowed the district to solicit direction from the broader community we serve in order to complete a comprehensive review and update to the existing Strategic Plan to reflect the values of the FPS community. This comprehensive review will address all levels of operations in the district and help pave the road for Fargo Public Schools in the upcoming years.

Fargo Public Schools' mission is to *educate and empower all students to succeed*. To meet that mission, it is important that we continue to engage in thoughtful discussions about our district with the community we serve.

### *FPS Strategic Plan – History and Why Now?*

The District began work on its first Strategic Plan in 2000. During the 2014-15 school year, a new Strategic Plan was created. The current FPS Strategic Plan was approved by the Fargo Board of Education on June 9, 2015, and was developed with an intentional process that allowed for a wide variety of stakeholder input.

Although the plan is a living document that is updated annually with slight modifications, it is also imperative for a periodic comprehensive review to ensure alignment with the Fargo Public Schools mission of *Educating and Empowering All Students to Succeed*.

While COVID-19 has presented many challenges to Fargo Public Schools during the 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years, it has also created many opportunities for growth and innovation. One of the greatest successes during these challenging times was witnessing the staff of Fargo Public Schools provide high quality instruction to our students in a variety of instructional models. A renewed FPS Strategic Plan will allow all patrons to incorporate lessons learned from recent opportunities and replace completed goals of the current strategic plan to keep pushing FPS forward in fulfilling its mission of educating and empowering all students to succeed.

### *FPS Strategic Plan – Purpose*

The FPS Strategic Plan is developed based on the mission, vision, and values of Fargo Public Schools.

### **FPS MISSION**

*Achieving excellence by educating and empowering all students to succeed*

### **FPS VISION**

*Fargo Public Schools is committed to excellence through a student-centered learning environment supported by positive collaborations with students, staff, parents, school, and community.*

*A Fargo Public Schools education will provide students with a broad knowledge base by engaging in a standards-based curriculum with co-curricular opportunities. Graduates will possess sound character and the 21st Century skills in communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity necessary to participate in an ever-changing and culturally diverse world.*

*Equitable opportunities will ensure a quality educational experience to stimulate and support all students in their intellectual, social, and personal growth.*

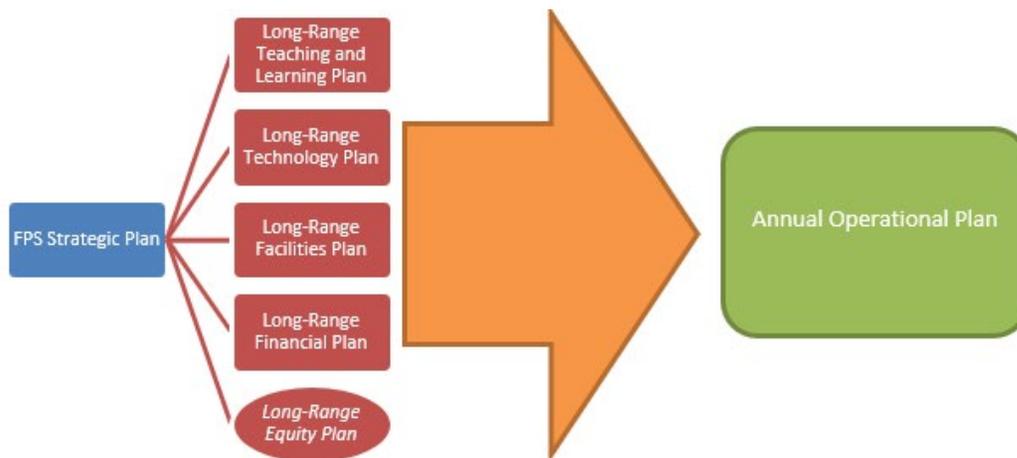
## **FPS VALUES**

*Fargo Public Schools are committed to:*

- *Believing that all students can learn and grow*
- *Creating a supportive and positive school climate*
- *Ensuring that all students receive effective, rigorous, and relevant instruction from highly qualified teachers*
- *Engaging leadership in all student, parent, and community partnerships*
- *Making data-driven decisions for continuous improvement*

The purpose of the FPS Strategic Plan is to be a proactive road map to create the kind of educational experiences we want for children. A balanced mix of current practice and new initiatives can be found throughout the plan, which is comprehensive and addresses all areas of district operations. The academic and operational branches of the District are melded together to create consistency in practice.

The plan makes the district’s priorities clear, ensures full transparency, and uses measurable outcomes to hold FPS accountable for maintaining focus on what benefits students. As depicted in the graphic below, the FPS Strategic Plan is the overarching governing document for Fargo Public Schools. From the Strategic Plan come the long-term plans and annual operational plans, which guide the scope of work for the district.



### ***FPS Strategic Plan – Process Moving Forward***

The Strategic Plan is grouped by seven strategic initiatives, which are directly aligned to the results monitored by the Board of Education based on their policies:

1. Student Achievement and Growth
2. Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM)

3. Positive School Culture and Safety
4. Co-Curricular Activities
5. Community Outreach and Communication
6. Equitable Resources and Planning
7. Continuous Improvement and Accountability

At the 2022 State of the Schools and Public Focus Group Event, attendees had the opportunity to provide feedback on each of the seven strategic areas by answering a broader range of questions applicable to the Fargo Public Schools. Parents and community members provided insight on these topics, which will help the district develop considerations for future indicators of success.

The feedback that was collected will be shared with staff who will be able to utilize the data to renew the Strategic Plan as needed. Once FPS staff (department leaders) receive the data from the 2022 State of the Schools and Public Focus Group event, they will be able to schedule more detailed and refined input sessions, if needed, for clarity, work to incorporate changes within the current Strategic Plan and redevelop the Strategic Plan in Spring and Summer 2022. In the Fall of 2022, the Board of Education will be presented a renewed Strategic Plan reflecting the comprehensive review and updates for final approval.

This process is based on researched best practices for effectively developing and updating strategic plans. Specifically, the questions asked at the 2022 State of the Schools Address and Public Group and process being utilized by Fargo Public Schools originated from *Guide to Strategic Planning for Educators* by Shirley D. McCune. According to McCune, “Strategic plans are designed to provide a sense of direction for a relatively long period. In most instances the strategic plan will remain relevant over time. It should be recognized, however, that situations change, and we will learn and gain experience from implementing plans. It is important to set aside time to carefully evaluate the plan and to renew and modify it to reflect new insights and learnings.”

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT RESPONSES**

The appendices on the following pages include the responses to each of the questions asked during the State of the Schools Address and Public Focus Group. Since an online platform was used to collect answers, we have exported those results and attached them to this report. This includes all the responses that were submitted. Since participants were able to “like” other responses, it also shows which responses were favored by multiple participants. This will help administration recognize where there are areas of greater need, as indicated by the participants.

*Reference:*

McCune, S. D. (1986). Guide to Strategic Planning for Educators. Publication Sales, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 125 North West Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 (Stock No. 611-86044; \$6.00).

Open-text Poll

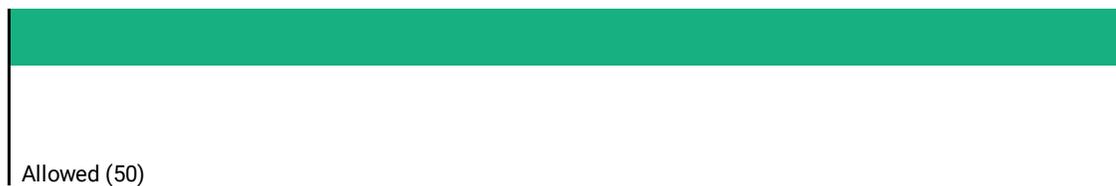
# FPS Strategic Plan - Question #1

13 Jan 2022, 09:00 - 14 Jan 2022, 23:59

|                             |                           |                                      |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>42</b><br>Participants   | <b>125</b><br>Total votes | <b>50</b><br>Answers                 |
| <b>175</b><br>Interactions* | <b>16</b><br>Highest vote | <b>50</b> Allowed <b>0</b> Dismissed |

\* Interactions include the total number of questions, votes, comments and answer ratings

## Answer status breakdown:



**Q: What conditions have changed in the external environment or organizational environment since we wrote the strategic plan in 2014 that should be considered for potential updates?**

## 50 Answers Allowed

**16** VOTES   Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:45  
Increased mental health needs of students. Needs for special education students and an alternative environment for a positive school experience.

**7** VOTES   Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:46  
Mental health needs have surged in the past few years, as well as the need for more safety precautions due to school shooting threats.

**7** VOTES   Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:46  
Increase in mental health needs, COVID, virtual learning

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7  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:47

Students are learning differently today than they did in 2014.

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6  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:47

Fargo has increased by nearly 10,000 people. Foreign born percentage up, poverty rate up, racial diversity increased, citizenship down, home ownership down. FPS must focus on equity even more.

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6  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:47

De-escalation techniques for teachers. Ability to remove behaviors from the classroom instead of removing the children who are learning

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6  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:47

Remote learning Social media and it's consequences

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5  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:47

Mental health Staffing shortages causing a strained system

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5  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:48

Social skills (technology has decreased kids social skills)... safety and acceptance of all beliefs (including mainstream beliefs), teaching kids how to investigate if information is true and valid

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5  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:48

Mental Health is overwhelming in ever since COVID hit. It would be great to see FPS hire more Psychologist and Therapist and not necessarily try to farm these kids out to other places.

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5  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:49

How do we identify postmodern, neo-Marxist and/or anti-American doctrine within the school system and purge it in order to re-focus on core educational principles?

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5  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:58

Virtual learning should be utilized on snow days and days where students are out (specifically when out for long periods of time due to Covid) and would be beneficial to instructors and students.

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**4**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:47  
Addressing the mental health of our students and supporting them in accessing resources in the community.

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**4**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:48  
Virtual learning

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**4**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:48  
With growth south brings needs for additional transportation services

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**3**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:47  
Increased diversity of community which creates opportunity to expand cultural awareness. Instructional flexibility (virtual opportunities). Increased mental health needs and desire for connection.

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**3**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:48  
Increase challenges with students that have trauma. Special Education resources. Not enough time in the school day to hit new initiatives.

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**2**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:47  
Students failing to take ownership

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**2**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:47  
Everyone has a technology device.

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**2**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:47  
Continue with increasing virtual options, as well as mental health supports for students and staff - the use of technology has changed.

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**2**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:47  
More diversity in community brings additional challenges with English as a second language

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**2**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:49  
Improve training/communication for staff so all schools do things the same way. Some principals/schools have given us completely different info about things such as procedures for homeschool, or GT

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2  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:51

Fewer individuals are interested in working in education due to complex behavioral needs

---

1  
VOTE

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:47

We have become more diverse

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1  
VOTE

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:48

There has been great improvement in technology

---

1  
VOTE

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:48

Recognizing dyslexic learners and implementing a curriculum geared towards the way they learn.

---

1  
VOTE

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:48

More educational support for struggling students

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1  
VOTE

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:48

External partners guiding education decisions but are not education experts (FCPH). Mental Health needs, labor shortage, negative internal culture perceptions, and teacher burnout.

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1  
VOTE

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:49

The mental health needs of students AND staff.

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1  
VOTE

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:50

Our community is getting more and more diverse. So our staff and curriculum has to fit that. There need to be more focus on mental health and resources should be invested toward that.

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1  
VOTE

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:50

Scrutiny tied to efforts the district undertakes to be a welcoming community for all students to learn & all staff to work.

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1  
VOTE

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:52

Fewer students are electing to attend post secondary education and going directly into the workforce with limited skills

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1  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:52  
Covid has, unfortunately, deepened the divide for students that have access to programming that benefits them and those that do not. The plan should address those inequities and how we can improve.

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1  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:54  
World with kindness,love,generosity and understanding and valuing the values of the value has reduced to its lowest.This is affecting our students behavior.

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1  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:55  
Staff turnover

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1  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:00  
There could possibly be enhanced ways to measure the effectiveness of the District's co-curricular programs.

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1  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:02  
These days our students are more focused on devices than the co-curricular activities that leads to mental health problem.

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1  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:33  
The ND LGBTQ+ School Climate Survey shows that there is a crisis with those kids, but also low cost solutions. We need to improve our supports of LGBTQ+ students.

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0  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:48  
1.increase need for mental health services/ staff 2. Maintaing Staffing needs 3. Buildings -Additional and updating current buildings 4.Virtual learning

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0  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:49  
Agree

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0  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:49  
Covid and funding for lunch for all students brings challenges to identify needs and other barriers

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0  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:50  
Instructional technology and the stress of technology

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0  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:51

More Mental Health guidance for students and staff More technologically advanced courses for students

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0  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:57

The digital world is driving our children way faster then they actually afford the technology.The ground knowledge is the essentials for becoming self conscious and understanding.

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0  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:03

Kids traumatized

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0  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:04

These days our children are learning to fight to achieve or act violently to respond to their growing fraustation.

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0  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:09

We are rich in technology and getting digital day by day however we have to relax and let our brains function in its own way because we can't consider ourselves as digital beings.

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0  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:30

Family and staff engagement

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0  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:31

Consistent expectations and procedures during extended absence. More training on Canvas and grading to stay engaged and aware of achievement as parents

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0  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:31

Screen time has a direct link to increase in anxiety and stress.

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 Poll (Multiple Choice)

## FPS Strategic Plan - Question #2

13 Jan 2022, 09:00 - 14 Jan 2022, 23:59

|   |                          |                            |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>37</b><br>Participants  | <b>29</b><br>Total votes | <b>10</b><br>Highest votes |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|

### Questions

**Q1: Do the mission statement and strategic goals continue to express our vision of schools and the things we need to do to reach that vision?**

29 Votes

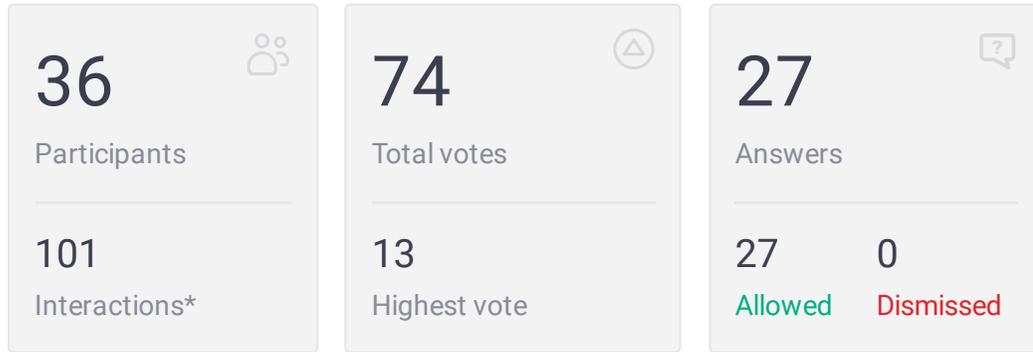
Attendees only voted on the following values:



Open-text Poll

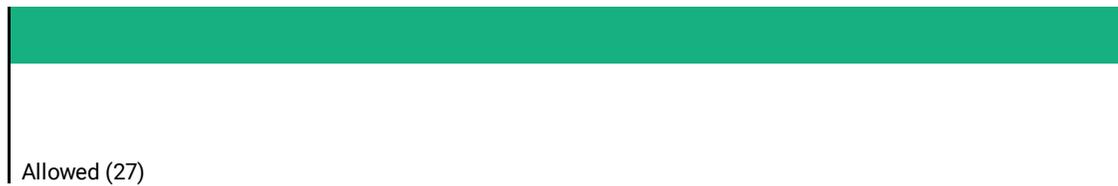
### FPS Strategic Plan - Question #3

13 Jan 2022, 09:00 - 14 Jan 2022, 23:59



\* Interactions include the total number of questions, votes, comments and answer ratings

#### Answer status breakdown:



Q: Have we learned anything from our implementation efforts that would require modifications in our strategic plan?

#### 27 Answers Allowed

13  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:52

Positive school climates are created when ALL students are celebrated, recognized, heard and supported. We need to do more to ensure ALL students (not just the majority) feel this way.

9  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:58

Recognize struggling students and not create labels, increase mental health support, strengthen anti bullying enforcements, stronger support for iep students!

8  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:56

The wording of the strategic initiative only includes gender, race, culture, age. Should add sexual orientation, disability, religion, SES, citizenship/documentation status, and gender identity.

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**6**  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:58

I really wonder if we have heard from our students on what makes school good for them? The more our students connect and relate deeply with our schools the more they will achieve and appreciate FPS

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**4**  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:05

Need for ownership and accountability on data and achievement gaps. Transparency and communication to parents, teachers across, below, above on how parents can partner with FPS and students for succes

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**4**  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:05

A higher focus on financial literacy, civics, and U.S. history should be paramount, as many students are graduating with high deficiency in all 3.

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**4**  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:06

Are we following our students after they graduate to determine if they were, in fact, choice ready when they left?

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**3**  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:58

Cultural proficiency: should add the importance of cultural humility and recognition of the heterogeneity within cultures.

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**3**  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:07

Time is needed to collaborate with teachers and parents regarding students skill set be it reading, math or mental health.

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**2**  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:59

How are staff behaving in schools to make them welcoming, friendly and positive. This creates the "cool" and attractive places that our students and families want to be a part of.

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**2**  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:05

We need better tools in place to measure indicators of success in a more defined manner.

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**2**  
VOTES

Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:05

Giving teachers the time and resources to implement, discuss and use their professional development

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**2**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:07  
Parent involvement encouraged in theory, but invitations buried in newsletters, meetings full of jargon, feedback opportunities limited to a narrow scope. Not real inviting of involvement of everyone

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**2**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:08  
Consider changing either the length of the school day at the elementary level and/or move to a 4 day in-person and 1 day e-learning day.

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**1**  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 18:54  
There's no opportunity to give specific feedback on question #2, only a 1 to 5 scale.

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**1**  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:04  
Increase support for teachers,.. mental health supports. Focus on extra circular is great

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**1**  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:05  
Improvements on data driven decisions, there is a lack of accountability on who is accountable for what, the baselines and actual improvements.

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**1**  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:05  
LGBTQ students need better support.

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**1**  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:06  
Concerns with labor shortages other things we could do to continue to value staff

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**1**  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:06  
What is specifically is being done about the low English and Math scores?

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**1**  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:07  
Greater efforts need to be developed to raise graduation rates for students who struggle.

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**1**  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:08  
We need to be much more targeted in our future strategy as the changing world bring more opportunity to improve.

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**1**  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:08  
Student achievement has decreased YoY even prior to covid. We are missing big on meeting learning outcomes

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**1**  
VOTE Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:08  
Financial inequality is worse than ever. Home and food insecurity is worse than ever. Does FPS need to focus more on their role in feeding and and supporting kids in need?

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**0**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:05  
I am so please with the school strategic plan

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**0**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:05  
The essence of time is challenging. Staff need to have time to really dig into the needs of their students to plan.

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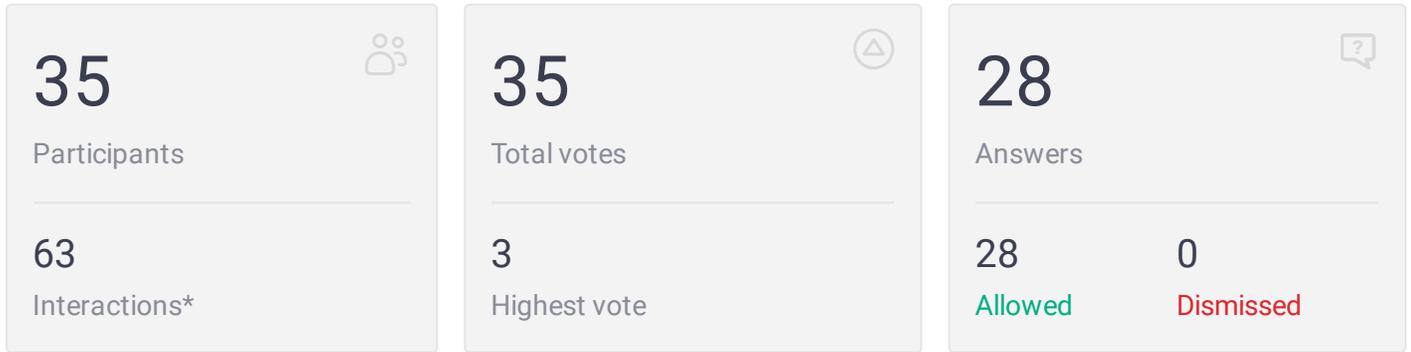
**0**  
VOTES Anonymous • 13 Jan 2022 19:53  
Make sure to address diversity and inclusion in the refresh, both for students/school culture and staff/workplace culture.

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☰ Wordcloud Poll

## FPS Strategic Plan - Question #4

13 Jan 2022, 09:00 - 14 Jan 2022, 23:59



\* Interactions include the total number of answers and votes

### Answer status breakdown:





What is missing from the current FPS Strategic Plan that must be included as it is renewed?

Alternative Discipline  
Mental health  
Family engagement  
Cultural Sensitivity Not now  
Patriotism Virtual learning

### 28 Answers Allowed

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**3** Family engagement

VOTES Voted by: and 3 anonymous users

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**3** Mental health

VOTES Voted by: and 3 anonymous users

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**2** Alternative Discipline

VOTES Voted by: and 2 anonymous users

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**2** Cultural Sensitivity

VOTES Voted by: and 2 anonymous users

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**2** Virtual learning

VOTES Voted by: and 2 anonymous users

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**1** Trauma Responsiveness

VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Wraparound Services  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Inclusivity  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** LGBTQIA+ Inclusivity  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Consistent Standards  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Curriculum audit  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Patriotism  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Delivering instruction  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Literature audit  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Community partnerships  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Transparent curriculum  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Instructional Delivery  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Not now  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Virtual instruction  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Values opinions  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Staff retention  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Maintaining/recruiting staff  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Classroom materials  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Accountability, Patriotism  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Sped curriculum  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Mask mandate  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** Diversity&Inclusion  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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**1** LGBTQ+ Supports  
VOTE Voted by: 1 anonymous user

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