



From the Cabinet

By Superintendent Dr. Rupak Gandhi

Welcome to the Start of the 2022-23 School Year!

What is your measure of success?

I know it seems odd to start thinking about next summer on the first day of school, but I am going to challenge you to do so anyway. When you are enjoying the sunshine and looking back on this school year next summer, how will you define a “great school year?”

What is your measure of success?

As I reflect on my own schooling, I approached each year with different criteria constituting a great school year. While my success metrics as an elementary student were weighted to disproportionately favor my own perceptions of the school lunch menu, the success metrics for my last years in high school were dependent on the autonomy I allowed myself with off periods, study halls and having enough credits to select the classes I wanted to take.

The beauty of being an educator is that we are in the people business, serving adults and youth alike. The challenge of being an educator is that we are in the people business, serving adults and youth alike. In professions dedicated to serving others, it becomes very evident that people can vary in the educational experiences they value from one another. People can vary in their own values over time, like I did.

So, is the role of an educator to meet the preferred educational experience of every student and adult based on their own individual metrics for success? If so, educators and educational systems are designed to fail. I don't know of a profession that has enough resources and capacity to provide the user experience that meets the preferred expectation of every client and those invested in them. In Fargo Public Schools, we contend that the role of an educator is to maximize the finite resources allotted to us so that we can ensure we are working towards providing every student the education they *deserve* as measured in the *results* we produce.

This year, Fargo Public Schools will present an updated Strategic Plan to the Board of Education. The plan makes our priorities clear, ensures full transparency, and provides formative information that can be used to hold us accountable for maintaining focus on the results that will benefit our students. The theory of change used as a framework for the Strategic Plan is Peter Senge's Systems Theory. Systems thinking creates a true learning organization “where people at every level of the system continually expand their capacity to learn to create the results they truly desire ... and where people are continually



From the Cabinet, continued

learning how to learn together to reach what we aspire and commit to together.” As a learning organization, Fargo Public Schools works to get better every day as a full team, in service of all students.

The Fargo Public Schools updated Strategic Plan defines success for our school district in multiple ways:

- 1) The utilization of Formative Information on an ongoing basis for reflection and improvement of practices by all staff.
- 2) Meeting, sustaining, and creating new baseline Strategic Plan Standards utilized to provide desired educational experiences.
- 3) Achieving or making reasonable progress toward the Results identified in the Fargo Public Schools Strategic Plan.

Fargo Public Schools recognizes that fulfillment of the district’s mission requires success in all three areas listed above. However, the District does not distribute the focus of these three measurements of success equally. Fargo Public Schools’ primary focus and leading factors for decision-making is achieving or making reasonable progress towards the Results outlined in our plan.

In a time when labor shortages continue to rise across all industries, public education continues to be challenged based on personal politics and ideologies and the profession of education continues to see lower numbers of future employees, I hope we can work together to recognize that varying metrics of success do not equate to a lack of success. We’re people, we’re not perfect. I hope you take time this year to build relationships with our staff, ask questions, and if there are experiences that don’t meet your metric of success, seek to understand versus seek to attack. Our educators in Fargo Public Schools are here for our students.

Our staff in Fargo Public Schools look forward to welcoming all students for the 2022-23 school year and will work relentlessly to achieve the results that define our organization and provide students the education they deserve. We can’t commit to all students being pleased with the lunch menu or their class schedules, but as a learning organization, we can commit to learn, grow, and reflect daily. We commit to working with all students and meeting them where they are, so we can help achieve our desired results. Most importantly, we commit to upholding our mission of *educating and empowering all students to succeed*.

I am excited to begin the 2022-23 school year in Fargo Public Schools. I have no doubt that 175 school days from now, I’ll reflect and confidently state, “this was a great school year.”

Will you?

