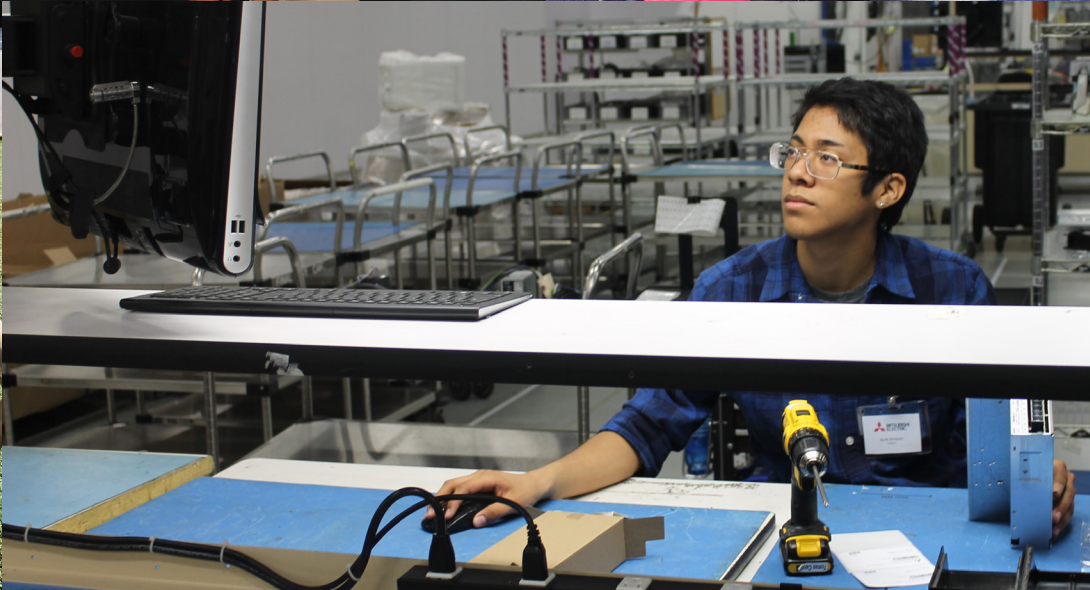




Northern Suburban
Special Education District

2018 - 2021 Strategic Plan





Questions and Answers About NSSED and Strategic Planning NSSED Superintendent Meeting, December 8, 2017

1. Why is NSSED undertaking Strategic Planning?

The Leadership Council determined that a new strategic plan was needed during the tenure of the previous superintendent, Dr. Thomas. Because Dr. Thomas was set to retire, the Leadership Council decided to wait for a new superintendent to arrive before launching the process. The Leadership Council stated that articulation of vision and strategic planning was an important area of need for the organization when working with the superintendent search firm.

This need for a vision and strategic planning was again confirmed as a top need when superintendent transition visits with each member district superintendent took place in the Fall of 2016. Superintendents discussed growth areas and strengths of the organization. In general, superintendents expressed that NSSED was becoming incongruent with some of their districts' initiatives; for example, many districts had been working on building internal capacity to serve diverse learners and had begun to reduce the number of student out-placements. Others said NSSED was no longer a leading organization offering a progressive vision of the future, and could be helping districts move forward in other new ways.

It has been more than 10 years since NSSED has engaged in strategic planning. A healthy, continuous improvement process is needed and appropriate for any organization.

2. Is the major purpose of NSSED to partner with districts as they provide special education services for their students?

Yes. This purpose is stated in our Articles of Agreement. It is also implied by our name, *Northern Suburban Special Education District*. The NSSED Superintendent is the state approved Director of Special Education for our 18 districts, and this position continues to be responsible for a comprehensive assurance of services for students with disabilities.

The strategic planning process has revealed a desire for a shift towards a more collaborative partnership culture and a more reciprocal relationship with districts. In the past, NSSED has been known as a resource with special education expertise; this identity has oftentimes limited its work with districts to serving identified populations by providing programs when districts did not have the full financial means or ways to serve those

populations. Further, the role of NSSED has been to react to a district and fulfill their requests for identified students.

Through the strategic planning process, many stakeholders have expressed a desire for NSSED to move into a proactive posture, to strengthen its partnerships with all districts, and to mutually discuss programs and services that best suit students. Other systems desire more leadership and to be challenged in new and innovative ways. This involves not only sharing of expertise within special education populations, but also working with districts to address the needs of non-labeled individuals who may also benefit from approaches used with identified special education populations.

3. **Why does the Mission, Vision, and Beliefs document NOT refer to “special education” or “students with disabilities?”**

Special education is explicitly mentioned as a part of NSSED in the title of the document and mentioned throughout. The purpose statement is our intent to articulate the organization’s need to serve students with disabilities. That said, both research (*e.g.*, Hattie) and parents have indicated that labels should be avoided wherever possible in order to focus on instructional goals and services to meet those goals, rather than on a particular program, location or label. Removing such labels increases perceptions of students as learners, promotes a growth versus deficit-based mindset and is a cultural shift that is needed if educational organizations are going to improve student outcomes. Emphasizing all students as learners first, and not their label or identification, is an important next step in helping raise this population’s status in the hearts and minds of the general population. This work with the majority population is critical if the goal of creating better outcomes for students with disabilities is to be realized. That is our intent in the strategic planning document.

4. **Why is the word “All” children used in the Strategic Plan document?**

We believe the work we undertake with districts affects all students. For example, in co-teaching classrooms, a special education teacher should work with a student with a disability, but also any student who needs assistance. And, one way of doing so is working collaboratively with the full classroom, being seen as an equally highly qualified teacher. Using this example, if a district wants NSSED to work with co-teachers on Universal Design for Learning or behavior/climate, all students will benefit from these practices, including the student with a disability. Furthermore, all teachers benefit from such training as well. Focusing on the full population, which was a shift required in Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 through Response to Intervention, intentionally reduced the silos between special and general education. The intent was to reduce the misidentification of students, thus reducing the number of students needing special education services, and increasing their achievement. Research has informed federal law, and indicates that all children benefit when we maximize time students spend heterogeneously learning

together. So, the NSSSED strategic plan is not an attempt to overtake all areas of general education, but to acknowledge that our work should be seen as affecting all children if we are going to improve the performance and acceptance of students with disabilities. The added bonus is that all students benefit. To do so we must do the hard work of shifting the paradigm from the perception that a student with a disability is a problem and must improve in some way in order to fit into the general education curriculum and environment, to instead working with the larger population and creating structures that are built intentionally with all learners in mind from the outset.

5. **Is the goal to have all students included in the general education curriculum?**

To answer this question, we must first remind ourselves of the difference between curriculum and environmental location. If this question is regarding location, full time general education placements for every student is not appropriate. That said, with all the talent and resources of the northern suburban districts, we believe it is a reasonable goal for all of us to work collaboratively to be above the state average when looking at this question. Further, state and local data, like national data, shows very small percentages of students with low-incidence disabilities accessing the general education environment the majority of their school day. We believe this data point is also an area for growth for all of us to improve upon.

If this question is regarding curriculum, the answer is yes, all students should have access to the general education curriculum in whatever form that curriculum is individualized and specially designed for them (*e.g.*, through differentiation, modifications, accommodations, replaced, etc.). IEP teams then need to decide the duration of time, supplementary aids and services needed, and the location where such instruction will occur.

6. **Is NSSSED looking to expand its role with districts in areas like Gifted, English Learners, curriculum, instruction, assessment, etc.? Are there circumstances when NSSSED should work to support students/districts where the need is not specifically special education?**

Yes, and No. NSSSED has expertise that transcends traditional categorical disability areas. For example, NSSSED staff have deep knowledge in such areas as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Universal Design for Learning, and data utilization and have been frequently asked to support districts in the development of these areas. These are frameworks and practices that are in demand in member districts as they work to proactively meet the diverse learning needs of students. Partnering and collaborating with districts to leverage this expertise in serving all students is important work for our next era and is stated in such federal policies as IDEA and the Every Student Succeeds Act.

NSSED is not looking to take over such areas that are stated above and become a full-service cooperative. However, NSSED's work does affect all children, and if we are to improve the performance of students with disabilities, we must shift the paradigm from emphasizing the disability and improving special education to working within general education to create inclusive structures that support diverse learners and the special education population, while we also maintain high quality programs and services for members in need. As districts build capacity, collaborate and look for efficiencies, NSSED may be called upon to provide more support in other areas, and this answer will need to be explored in more detail in the years ahead.

7. **Does NSSED wish to dissolve or change existing programs like ELS, EXP, NSAE, NSA or Arbor/SAIL? Does NSSED plan to maintain or change OT, PT Adaptive PT, Coaching and other services etc.?**

No, there has never been an agenda to dissolve or eliminate existing programs or services. This has been repeatedly stated verbally and in writing at NSSED Leadership Council meetings, in superintendent reports, presentations, and in various committee forums. What has been emphasized in research and policy are the trajectories over time that further reinforce the least restrictive environment and the blurring of the lines of special and general education services to improve educational outcomes for all learners.

That said, like member districts, we are always looking at increasing efficiencies, and part of the implementation of the strategic plan will be to establish long-range budget and facility plans. As we shift mindsets from categorical labels and approaches to one of identifying needs of students and services, more cross disciplinary collaboration will occur that may result in other recommendations. Finally, changes may be driven by choices our districts make. Districts' choices affect enrollment in NSSED programs and services, and in response, we may need to make modifications. These changes are not new and have always been a part of an evolving NSSED organization, much in the same way that each of your districts makes changes when needed.

8. **What does including students in general education classes look like for teachers?**

This is a big question that we will need to talk more about in greater depth. But a few thoughts for guiding decisions follow:

- Monitoring proportional representation across classrooms and teachers.
- Providing professional development so staff better understand that students with disabilities should not always be expected to attain all the exact same goals of the class, or do the same exact work or projects as their peers. Individuals may be receiving specially designed instruction in a general education classroom and are working on their IEP goals and assessed accordingly.

- Students should be enrolled into classes where they can make growth without the risk of losing dignity.
- Paraprofessionals, classroom teachers, and general education staff all need professional development and support to better understand how to maximize their roles when working together in the classroom.
- Systems must work collaboratively with parents on issues related to developing greater student independence, with less reliance on paraprofessionals.
- General education staff need professional development to better understand IDEA intentions and the current research relating to students with disabilities.
- Where students can be included, they should be. All students benefit from learning together in heterogeneous groups.

9. **How were the Goal Teams selected [those staff who are writing the objectives for the goal areas]?**

When selecting members for the Goal Teams (each of which has 6-8 members) our aim has been:

- To continue having heterogeneous groups of stakeholders give input into the objective development of the goal areas because all roles share responsibility for the success of students with disabilities, and their peers;
- To balance representation across the three regions;
- To include high, middle, and elementary school representation;
- To spread representation to those who have not been involved in the strategic plan process thus far;
- To assure every district has had representation in some phase of the work; and,
- To use the skills of district staff where they have job descriptions similar to goal areas, *i.e.*, communications, personnel or finance.

10. **What are NSSED's financial implications for the future?**

Like all districts across Illinois, we are experiencing a funding shift related to equity and access. For example, we know monies are shifting from special education personnel reimbursement into the general state aid. We also know from research that self-contained programming has historically cost more to fund than educating students together. We believe our equity and access work aligns with the larger state goals of equity and access, and with improved educational outcomes based upon research and federal policy.

Our Strategic Plan Goal Team for Fiscal Responsibility and Resource Allocation will develop objectives geared towards ways to examine revenues in the fairest and most effective ways. There is no doubt that funding remains a critical area of concern as we move forward in an unknown revenue future, so we must remain open to new ways of addressing issues and doing so as partners.



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PHILOSOPHY



A strategic planning process is one of discovery, wherein key stakeholders engage in learning, discussion, and critical thinking. The process challenges current beliefs and leads to new ways of viewing the organization and its work; reflection and the development of new practices is necessary for the growth of any healthy organization. Our intent in the NSSED strategic planning process is to create better outcomes for students with disabilities. Through the strategic planning process we have arrived at an understanding of how our work reaches beyond the individual learners we serve to impact entire communities.

In our discussions, and in listening particularly to the parent community, we learned labels should be avoided wherever possible. As educators we should focus on instructional goals and services to meet those goals, rather than on a particular program, location or label. Removing such labels increases perceptions of students as learners, promotes a growth versus deficit-based mindset and is a cultural shift that is needed if educational organizations are going to improve student outcomes. Emphasizing all students as learners first, and not their label or identification, is an important next step in helping raise this

population's status in the hearts and minds of the general population.

The first step toward this goal is to ensure all students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum in whatever form that is individualized and specially designed for them (e.g., through differentiation, modifications, accommodations, etc.). Individual Education Plan teams decide the duration of time, supplementary aids and services needed, and the location where such instruction will occur.

The important work we undertake with districts affects all students. In shaping the educational environment for student with disabilities, the employment of best practices in instructional methodologies raises the levels for all students in the general education setting. This work with the majority population is critical if the goal of creating better outcomes for students with disabilities is to be realized.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL PRESIDENT SUZANNE SANDS



Dear Families, Staff, Member Districts and Students:

This cooperative was established in 1957 to support member districts in meeting the needs of students with disabilities because no district could effectively provide for all of the diverse needs of their learners independently. Over the years NSSED has proven to be a highly valued resource for member districts. In recent years, it has become clear the needs of the 18 member districts are as diverse as the learners we serve and in order to sustain the value of the cooperative for all, strategic planning was needed.

Over the past year and a half, the Leadership Council embarked on a journey of learning with our Superintendent, Dr. Kurt A. Schneider. We heard from national experts about best practices in education and how those practices can positively impact students with learning differences of all kinds. We reviewed the history and current state of special education legislation and policy in our country and state, as well as the history of our organization. Superintendents from each of the three regions provided us with presentations about their districts' needs and how they view NSSED's current and future role in their school systems. We discovered we have much exciting work to do!

During the last six months, we focused on developing a strategic plan. Heterogeneous groups of stakeholders from across our member districts including parents, staff, general and special education administrators, board members and community partners provided input and engaged in each phase of this process with us. The mission, vision, beliefs and goals articulated in this document will challenge existing practices and mindsets, demanding change and growth as we work to hold ourselves, our communities and our students to higher expectations. We want to continue to maximize the value that NSSED adds to the educational experiences of students across all member districts. At the same time, we hope to further educate our parents, communities and policymakers so our students can expect to lead enviable lives after they leave our schools.

It is my hope that, as a result of the learning, collaboration and listening that we have done together, NSSED will not only be viewed as a resource moving forward but also as a respected partner to all member districts as they strive to meet the diverse learning needs of all students. It is evident based upon input from our stakeholders, findings in educational research, and current educational policy we must continue to increase inclusive opportunities, promoting high expectations, engagement and growth for all learners.

On behalf of the entire Leadership Council, I am extremely proud to have been a part of this process and look forward to our continued work together ensuring the vision articulated can be realized for our learners, our schools and our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suzanne B. Sands". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Suzanne Sands
Leadership Council President

SUPERINTENDENT DR. KURT A. SCHNEIDER



Dear Families, Staff, Member Districts, and Students:

It is an honor to present to you NNSSED's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. I am confident you will find it is anchored to our cooperative's strong foundation and sets a course to meet the diverse and changing expectations of our students, families, staff and districts. It continues NNSSED's tradition of forward thinking and inclusive educational practices, and strengthens its commitment to collaboration and innovation.

It also challenges us. We are challenged to raise expectations, to increase access, to expand our definition of success, and to better prepare our students and families for more ambitious post-school opportunities. In essence, we are applying our member districts' traditions of excellence and opportunity with equity, and committing to support all learners.

Much of the past eighteen months have been spent engaging with each member district superintendent, their administrative teams, families, school boards and community partners. Those meetings were deeply informative and led to ongoing, candid and productive dialogue. The appreciation and demand for NNSSED's expertise and services is clear, yet there are natural differences in the ways our existing, and potential, supports have been requested and realized.

The development and implementation of this strategic plan is a recommitment to our cooperative: we collectively heard the needs of our families and districts, evaluated NNSSED's strengths, identified disparities, and sought mutually held principles. The question was not whether NNSSED could serve the needs of all 18 member districts, but rather how to best provide a framework of stability, flexibility and progress.

I was inspired as I observed the development of this plan. While at times there was wholehearted agreement, there was also rigorous debate, courteous challenging of ideas, and a firm commitment to remain true to the feedback and data provided by all stakeholders. Ultimately the process itself reflected the sense of common purpose and collaboration as is detailed in the strategic plan.

I am extremely grateful to everyone for your contributions to this plan, and appreciate the many hours that have been dedicated to its creation. Dr. Linda Hanson provided excellent facilitation and management, and I sincerely thank her for her efforts. We are now tasked with important and exciting work, and it is my true privilege to lead the organization as we begin.

Sincerely,

Kurt A. Schneider, PhD.
NNSSED Superintendent



STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS OVERVIEW

In recent years the needs of the 18 member districts of NSSED have become more diverse as each district plans and structures learning environments for their own district and student needs. As a cooperative, NSSED is guided by the needs and the missions of our 18 member districts, and understandably these diverse needs have pulled the cooperative in different directions. In order to continue to sustain the value of the cooperative for all, the time had come to develop a strategic plan.

In April 2017, NSSED engaged the services of Dr. Linda Hanson. Dr. Hanson taught and served as an administrator at all levels of education, and served most recently as superintendent in Township High School District 113 (Highland Park and Deerfield). In addition, she founded School Exec Connect in 2003, an educational search firm that provides board workshops, conducts long range planning, and facilitates administrator and superintendent job searches.

INPUT ON THE FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING

Developing a strategic plan is a truly collaborative process, and must involve all stakeholder groups. Thoughtful consideration was given to meaningful ways to reach all NSSED stakeholder groups. Eighteen boards of education, 17 superintendents and administrative leadership teams, 19 groups of teachers and employees, 18 communities of families, and the entire region of businesses, agencies, universities, and partners all had valuable perspectives to share. The number of stakeholders involved increased the complexity of our strategic planning process. Dr. Hanson and Dr. Schneider began by collaborating with stakeholders on a planning framework.

In May 2017 we reached consensus on a series of activities and status reports that included representative voices from all stakeholder groups. All agreed that it struck the right balance between opportunities for involvement and the necessity that a small group of representatives would do the actual drafting.

Activity	Date
Stakeholder Survey	August 15 - September 5, 2017
Community Engagement Event	September 14, 2017
Core Group Meetings	September 20 and 26; October 5 and 26, 2017
Review of Draft Document	November 2 and 3, 2017
Core Group finalize Mission, Vision Document	November 14, 2017
Goal Team Meetings	November 29 - December 21, 2017
Superintendents Review of Plan	December 8, 2017
Leadership Council Reviews Plan	January 10, 2018
Leadership Council Final Plan Approval	February 7, 2018

INPUT THROUGH SURVEY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT

We designed a survey about the strengths and needs of the organization and level of implementation of evidence-based practices in member districts. The survey was made available to families and administrative leaders, both special and general education, in every member district and to all NSEED staff. Over 880 people contributed their ideas and opinions through the survey.

At a Community Engagement Event on September 14, 2017, 138 participants engaged in conversations about the future of NSEED. Intentionally diverse groups of parents, teachers, employers, general and special education administrators, superintendents, and community members were seated at tables together and given questions to guide their conversations. The questions related to the future of education and of NSEED. Each group turned in notes of their opinions and ideas.

In late September the Community Engagement responses and the survey data were analyzed by the NSEED Strategic Planning Core Group, a representative group of 14 stakeholders. The Core Group members included building principals, directors of special education, directors of curriculum and instruction, parents, and NSEED staff. The group included a minimum of two representatives from each of the three member district regions. The Core Group developed a draft document with a Vision, Mission, and Belief Statements during a series of half-day meetings. The group collectively spent an estimated 200 hours developing the statements.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT ON DRAFT DOCUMENTS

These draft statements were shared with our member district superintendents, member district special education directors, the Advisory Committee of our Leadership Council, the Association of Parents and Staff board members, and our own administrative team on November 2 and November 3, 2017. Their feedback was incorporated into the statements by the Core Group on November 14, 2017.

The next step in the process was to develop objectives related to each of the identified Belief Statements, or Goal Areas. Goal Development Teams were organized again with a focus on heterogeneous representation from all stakeholder groups. These teams met twice between November 27th and December 21st to develop objectives in each of their identified areas.

The Mission and Vision Statements, Purpose, and Belief Statements developed by the Core Group, and the Objectives developed by the Goal Teams were presented to the NSEED Leadership Council on January 10, 2018 for review, with their final approval at the February 7, 2018 meeting.

PURPOSE



NSSED is an educational cooperative comprised of 18 school districts in the northern suburbs of Chicago that was established in 1957 to support member districts in meeting the needs of students with disabilities. NSSED provides a wide array of programs and services designed to give students access to the highest levels of learning possible. Informed by research and policy, NSSED and member districts have historically

believed that diverse learners are best served when they learn alongside their typical peers. Therefore, NSSED programs and services will continue to support member districts as we partner to increase inclusive opportunities that promote high expectations, engagement and growth for all learners.

MISSION, VISION, AND BELIEFS

MISSION

Committed to the possibilities in every learner, every day.

VISION

NSSED is a national leader and highly valued partner with a courageous commitment to inclusive communities that equally value all people and inspire them to be active participants in our world.

BELIEFS

Culture of Excellence: NSSED is committed to the highest standards of professionalism and quality in all we do. Creating intellectual excitement and supporting personal growth inspires everyone toward excellence. Research and data drive continuous improvement and promote a culture of inquiry, innovation and progress.

Equity and Access: NSSED values each individual's contributions and recognizes that the diversity of our cultures, interests, skills, and backgrounds is an asset that makes us stronger. Student success is not predicted by race, economic status, language, or ability. We partner with districts to ensure a culture of high expectations for all students through an equitable allocation of resources, the identification and elimination of systemic barriers, and the provision of increased opportunities for growth.

Fiscal Responsibility and Resource Allocation: NSSED is committed to wisely, transparently, and efficiently managing cooperative resources.

Learning: NSSED believes in designing, providing, and supporting learning opportunities that empower all students. We foster environments that are inclusive, proactive, and flexible when responding to student needs.

Relationships and Communication: NSSED believes collaborative relationships are vital to success and are grounded in mutual trust and candor. Building positive relationships with all stakeholders requires honest conversations, effective communication, and a commitment to solutions.

Unity: NSSED's member districts believe in the power of a cooperative to support our communities to work together to benefit students.

GOAL FOCUS AREAS

Culture of Excellence

Equity and Access

**Fiscal Responsibility and
Resource Allocation**

Learning

Relationships and Communication

Unity

GOAL OBJECTIVES

CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

Recruit and retain high quality staff in alignment with NSSED and member district goals and initiatives.

Rationale: Staff that fully understand, embrace, and act in alignment with NSSED and member district goals and initiatives will maximize opportunities for all learners.

Develop a regional and district focused professional learning framework.

Rationale: Differentiated learning for NSSED and member district staff, families, and community partners is important for each organization in order to make progress toward improved student outcomes.

Identify and utilize data systems within NSSED to guide effective and innovative practices.

Rationale: Development of data infrastructure is required to drive data-based decisions throughout the organization.

EQUITY AND ACCESS

Identify and understand pathways to success.

Rationale: Common understandings about factors leading to student success are required for member districts and NSSED in order to move forward together.

Identify and understand systemic barriers inhibiting growth.

Rationale: Common understandings about systemic barriers are required in order for member districts and NSSED to move forward together.

Eliminate systemic barriers to growth through adaptive and flexible solutions.

Rationale: Removal of systemic barriers to growth enables all students to flourish; the task requires representation from perspectives in and outside NSSED and member districts, as well as flexible, creative use of tools and strategies.

GOAL OBJECTIVES

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Systemically align all resources.

Rationale: Resources must be prioritized and allocated at an organizational level to align with the beliefs in the strategic plan.

Utilize resources efficiently while identifying alternative revenue sources.

Rationale: The economic pressure of fluctuating federal, state and local revenues requires fiscal stewardship and innovation.

Develop a sustainable, equitable and flexible financial model that provides affordable access to a full continuum of supports and services.

Rationale: The financial model must build additional supports in the least restrictive environment while continuing to provide for a full continuum of services.

LEARNING

Expand and strengthen the quality of instructional design throughout the continuum of programs and services with an emphasis on instruction, relevance, and rigor. Instructional design priorities must include social emotional learning, academic content, and pathways to community, college, and careers.

Rationale: Looking at the whole child through their entire educational career is essential. High quality instructional design integrates curriculum with inclusive service delivery for all learners in order to maximize their true potential.

RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION

Facilitate collaboration and sharing of knowledge among all stakeholders in partnership with member districts.

Rationale: All stakeholders need a central hub to share resources and practices and to establish collective efficacy.

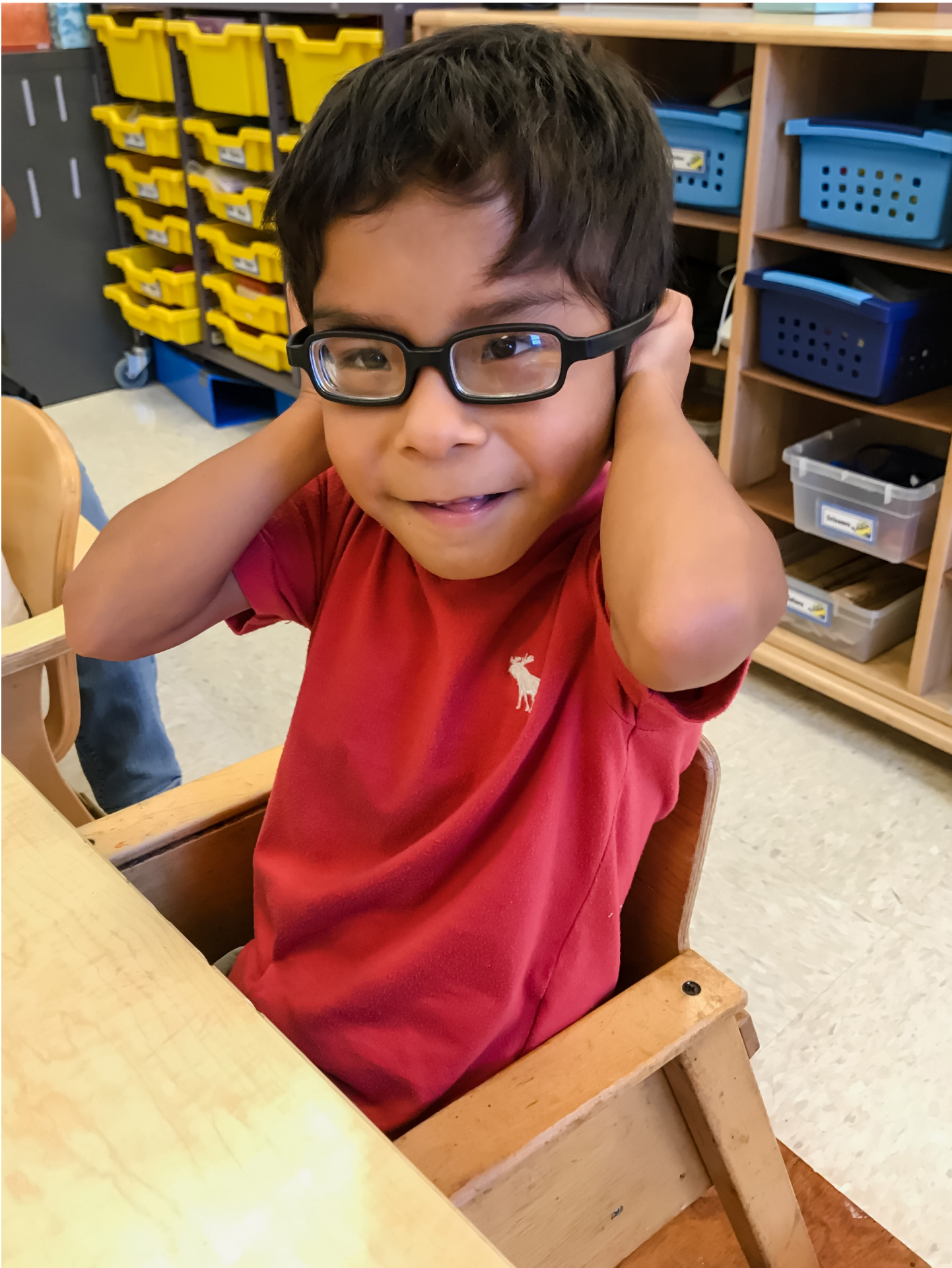
Build a structure for customized support and mutual sharing of information between each of the member districts and the cooperative.

Rationale: The cooperative must meet diverse district needs to ensure its ongoing viability.

UNITY

Districts will commit and contribute to the collective work of the region.

Rationale: A healthy cooperative requires active engagement and consistent participation from the highest levels of leadership.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank everyone who has given their time and provided their thoughts to this process.

Thank you to all who participated in our Community Engagement Event in September. With 138 participants, there are too many to list by name. We are grateful to the parents and educators who attended the event and participated in group discussions. We are particularly grateful to our community partners who took time to join us.

The NSSED Strategic Planning Core Group came together multiple times following that event to review all of the collected data, and refine the language in this document. We are very grateful for their commitment and willingness to rework the language for the Mission, Vision, and Belief Statements after each feedback session. They worked diligently to incorporate all of the information and views provided to them. Our sincerest thanks goes out to:

Debbie Doyle, Director of Instructional Design and Innovation, NSSED
Kristen Endre, Parent, Northfield School District 28
Kimberly Grzymala, NSSED ELS/District Instructional Coach
Dr. Chala Holland, Principal, Lake Forest High School, Lake Forest School District 115
Debbie Hymen, NSSED Leadership Council Vice President, Township High School District 113
Valerie Lamberti, Director of Pupil Services, Glencoe School District 35
Anthony McConnell, Asst. Supt. Teaching, Learning and Innovation, Deerfield School District 109
Dr. Kathy Olson, Asst. Supt. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Northbrook School District 27
Joanna Robbins, Intervention Specialist/School Psychologist, North Shore Academy
Mary Morgan Ryan, Director of Next Generation Technology and Data Services, NSSED
Suzanne Sands, NSSED Leadership Council President, Lake Forest School District 67
Lauren Schulman, Director of Student Services, Northbrook/Glenview School District 30
Kendra Wallace, Principal, The Joseph Sears School, Kenilworth School District 38

Entirely different groups of people came together to develop objectives under each of the goal areas listed below, and we would like to thank them for their time and effort.

Culture of Excellence

Lisa Anderson, Employment Specialist, Transition Services, NSSED
Sabrina Beaudry, Program Supervisor, Arbor Academy/SAIL, NSSED
Katie Bittner, NSSED Leadership Council Member, Deerfield School District 109
Dr. Theresa Fournier, Asst. Supt. Personnel and Student Services, Northbrook School District 27
Lindsay Kiraly, Coordinator of Professional Development and Coaching, NSSED
Maria Kotsinis, Parent, Glenbrook High School District 225
Beth Martin, Director of Student Services, Winnetka School District 36
Andy Piper, Director of Personnel and Compliance, NSSED
Sue Smith, Intervention Specialist/School Social Worker, North Shore Academy, NSSED

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Equity and Access

Tiffany Chavez, Director of Student Support Services, Township High School District 113
Richard Cutler, Dean of Students, North Shore Academy Elementary
Dr. Chala Holland, Principal, Lake Forest High School, Lake Forest High School District 115
Natalie Jachtorowycz, NSSED Leadership Council Member, Glenview School District 34
Dave Kanne, Principal, Carleton Washburne School, Winnetka School District 36
Carolyn Koppel, Parent, Deerfield School District 109
Dr. Carol Michels, OT/PT/APE Services and Integrated Technology Support Coordinator, NSSED
Mary Morgan Ryan, Director of Next Generation Technology and Data Services, NSSED

Fiscal Responsibility and Resource Allocation

Lynn Clarke, Administrator of Educational and Life Skills Services and Arbor/SAIL, NSSED
Jason Edelheit, Director of Finance and Operations, Glencoe School District 35
Jim Fitton, Director of Business Services and Facilities, NSSED
Katie Herak, Payroll Specialist, NSSED
Eric Martin, Technology Systems Support Supervisor, NSSED
Ted Moorman, NSSED Leadership Council Member, Lake Forest High School District 115
Jennifer Pearson, Director of Special Education, Glenbrook High School District 225

Learning

Sarah Crawford, Parent, Sunset Ridge School District 29
Lori Deichstetter, Administrator of Transition Services, NSSED
Dr. Carrie De La Cruz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, West Northfield School District 31
Debbie Doyle, Director of Instructional Design and Innovation, NSSED
Melissa Estes, NSSED Leadership Council Member, Glencoe School District 35
Maggie Schmieder, Teacher, Educational and Life Skills Program, NSSED
Dr. Kristin Swanson, Asst. Superintendent of Student Services, North Shore School District 112

Relationships and Communication

Cindy Bean, Occupational Therapist, NSSED
Doug Bolton, Principal, North Shore Academy, NSSED
Christy Crabtree, Administrator of Early Childhood Services, NSSED
Ed Feld, NSSED Leadership Council Member, Northbrook School District 27
Corinne Guarraria, Parent, New Trier Township High School District 203
Susan Hans, Parent Mentor, NSSED
Joanna Klopfer, Asst. Superintendent for Student Services, Deerfield School District 109
Scott Meek, Principal, Northbrook Junior High School, Northbrook School District 28

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Members of NSSED's Association of Parents and Staff have attended meetings, provided input and reviewed documents. They also engaged in deep conversations around educational practices, policy, and system change efforts. We deeply appreciated the volunteer time they provided our organization and recognize the strength of our partnership with them individually and collectively.

Neil Burmeister, Township High School District 113
Sarah Crawford, Sunset Ridge School District 29
Kristen Endre, Sunset Ridge School District 29
Corinne Guarraia, New Trier High School District 203
Carolyn Koppel, Deerfield School District 109
Maria Kotsinis, Glenbrook High School District 225
Cori Mohr, Glenview School District 34
Kate Mueller, Northbrook School District 28
Patty O'Machel, Deerfield School District 109
Allison Orlinsky, Deerfield School District 109
Heather Remien, Northbrook School District 28
Teri Rosenberg, NSSED Volunteer Coordinator
Meade Whitaker, Glenview School District 34

Key stakeholders in the continued success and unity of NSSED are the 18 member district superintendents. The superintendents participated in every event and discussion. Their strong voices made the process authentic and the outcome better. We are grateful to them individually and collectively for their time and commitment to NSSED.

Superintendents

Dr. David Kroeze, Northbrook School District 27
Dr. Larry Hewitt, Northbrook School District 28
Dr. Edward Stange, Sunset Ridge School District 29
Dr. Brian Wegley, Northbrook/Glenview School District 30
Dr. Alexandra Nicholson, West Northfield School District 31
Dr. Dane Delli, Glenview School District 34
Dr. Catherine Wang, Glencoe School District 35
Dr. Trisha Kocanda, Winnetka School District 36
Dr. Crystal LeRoy, Kenilworth School District 38
Dr. Jean Sophie, Lake Bluff School District 65
Mr. Mike Simeck, Lake Forest School District 67 and Lake Forest High School District 115
Dr. Scott Herrmann, Bannockburn School District 106
Dr. Mike Lubelfeld, Deerfield School District 109
Mr. Ed Rafferty and Dr. Jane Westerhold, North Shore School District 112 (Interims)
Dr. Chris Dignam, Township High School District 113
Dr. Paul Sally, New Trier High School District 203
Dr. Mike Riggle, Glenbrook High School District 225

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are deeply grateful for the support and insight of our Leadership Council. Their engagement and encouragement to be bold and take risks has been critical in ensuring we continued to move forward in the process.

Leadership Council Members 2017-2018

Ed Feld, Northbrook School District 27
Michael Gilmore, Northbrook School District 28
Bill Hayes, Sunset Ridge School District 29
Nancy Artz, Northbrook/Glenview School District 30
Melissa Choo Valentinas, West Northfield School District 31
Natalie Jachtorowycz, Glenview School District 34
Melissa Estes, Glencoe School District 35
Jennifer Pehlke, Winnetka School District 36
John Gottschall, Kenilworth School District 38
Mark Barry, Lake Bluff School District 65
Suzanne Sands, Lake Forest School District 67
Nancy Nervick, Bannockburn School District 106
Katie Bittner, Deerfield School District 109
Eric Ephraim, North Shore School District 112
Debbie Hymen, Township High School District 113
Ted Moorman, Lake Forest High School District 115
Lori Goldstein, New Trier High School District 203
Karen Hanley, Glenbrook High School District 225
Dr. Alexandra Nicholson, Northfield Region
Dr. Trisha Kocanda, New Trier Region
Dr. Jean Sophie, Northern Region

Additional Leadership Council Members 2016-2017

Adelbert Spaan, Sunset Ridge School District 29
Beth Shabelman, Northbrook/Glenview School District 30
Chris Northwick, Glenview School District 34
Eddie Chez, Glencoe School District 35
Tim Kollar, Kenilworth School District 38
Yumi Ross, North Shore School District 112

Thank you to Peggy Miller, Executive Assistant to the NSSED Superintendent, who kept track of every moving piece in the process to help get us to this point.

Thank you to Dr. Linda Hanson, who facilitated the entire strategic planning process.



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Special Education District

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2018 - 2021 Strategic Plan



Northern Suburban
Special Education District



PHILOSOPHY

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- **Better outcomes for students with disabilities**
- **Our work reaches beyond the individual learners we serve to impact entire communities; therefore, work with majority population is critical**
- **Removing labels increases perceptions of students as learners**
- **Focus on instructional goals and access to general education curriculum**



Quiet Voice

Do Your Work

Following the Group

Whole Body Listening!

1. Look
2. What
3. Make
4. Do wh
5. Follow

Group

1. Rules
2. jolly sounds
3. Memory
4. Sound counting / syllables
5. cut sounds
6. sort sounds - glue
7. Review
8. All Done / Check schedule

PROCESS OVERVIEW

PROCESS OVERVIEW

- **Learning: Presentations, Outside Speakers, Research Articles, and Policy Review**
- **Stakeholder Survey**
- **Community Engagement Event**
- **Core Group Meetings**
- **Review of Draft Document**
- **Core Group finalize Mission, Vision, Beliefs Document**
- **Goal Team Meetings**
- **Superintendents Review of Plan**
- **Leadership Council Reviews Plan**
- **Leadership Council Final Plan Approval**

PURPOSE STATEMENT



Northern Suburban
Special Education District

NSSED is an educational cooperative comprised of 18 school districts in the northern suburbs of Chicago that was established in 1957 to support member districts in meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

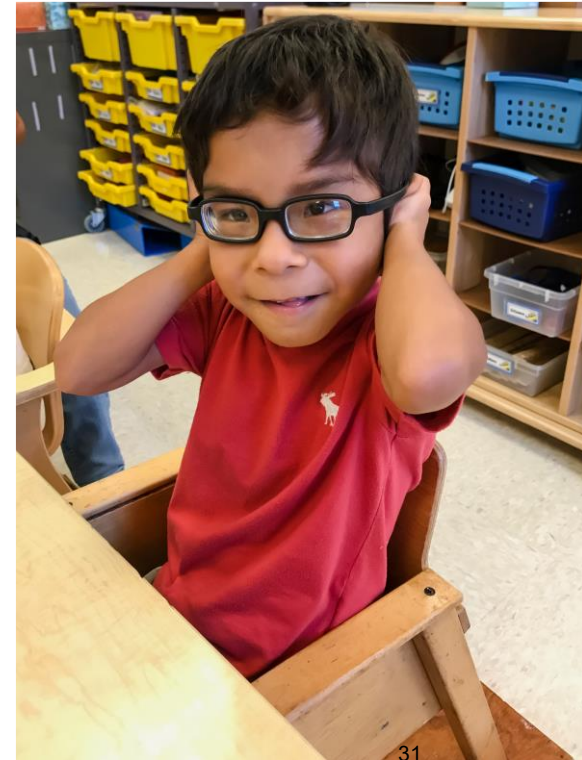
NSSED provides a wide array of programs and services designed to give students access to the highest levels of learning possible. Informed by research and policy, NSSED and member districts have historically believed that diverse learners are best served when they learn alongside their typical peers. Therefore, NSSED programs and services will continue to support member districts as we partner to increase inclusive opportunities that promote high expectations, engagement and growth for all learners.



MISSION, VISION, AND BELIEFS

MISSION

Committed to the possibilities in every learner, every day.



VISION

NSSED is a national leader and highly valued partner with a courageous commitment to inclusive communities that equally value all people and inspire them to be active participants in our world.



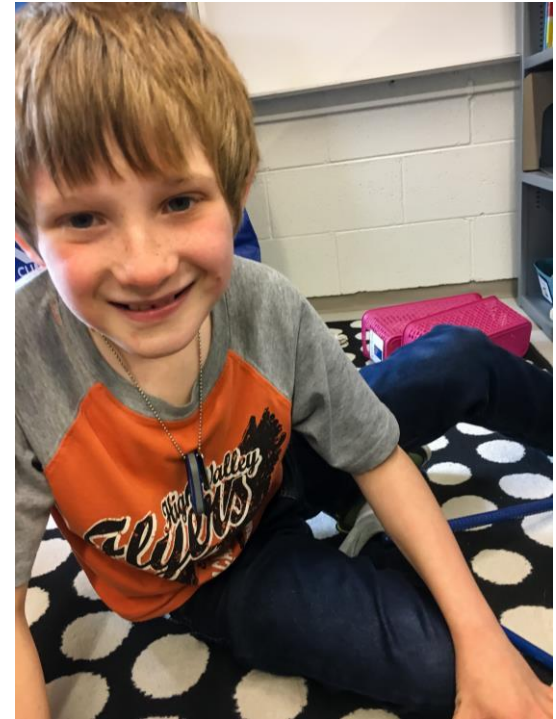
BELIEFS: CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

NSSED is committed to the highest standards of professionalism and quality in all we do. Creating intellectual excitement and supporting personal growth inspires everyone toward excellence. Research and data drive continuous improvement and promote a culture of inquiry, innovation and progress.



BELIEFS: EQUITY AND ACCESS

NSSED values each individual's contributions and recognizes that the diversity of our cultures, interests, skills, and backgrounds is an asset that makes us stronger. Student success is not predicted by race, economic status, language, or ability. We partner with districts to ensure a culture of high expectations for all students through an equitable allocation of resources, the identification and elimination of systemic barriers, and the provision of increased opportunities for growth.



BELIEFS: FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

NSSSED is committed to wisely, transparently, and efficiently managing cooperative resources.



BELIEFS: LEARNING

NSSED believes in designing, providing, and supporting learning opportunities that empower all students. We foster environments that are inclusive, proactive, and flexible when responding to student needs.



BELIEFS: RELATIONSHIPS AND

NSSSED believes collaborative relationships are vital to success and are grounded in mutual trust and candor. Building positive relationships with all stakeholders requires honest conversations, effective communication, and a commitment to solutions.



BELIEFS: UNITY

NSSSED's member districts believe in the power of a cooperative to support our communities to work together to benefit students.





GOAL FOCUS AREAS

BELIEFS: GOAL FOCUS AREAS

- **Culture of Excellence**
- **Equity and Access**
- **Fiscal Responsibility and Resource Allocation**
- **Learning**
- **Relationships and Communication**
- **Unity**

OBJECTIVES: CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

Recruit and retain high quality staff in alignment with NSSED and member district goals and initiatives.

Develop a regional and district focused professional learning framework.

Identify and utilize data systems within NSSED to guide effective and innovative practices.

OBJECTIVES: EQUITY AND ACCESS

Identify and understand pathways to success.

Identify and understand systemic barriers inhibiting growth.

Eliminate systemic barriers to growth through adaptive and flexible solutions.

OBJECTIVES: FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Systemically align all resources.

Utilize resources efficiently while identifying alternative revenue sources.

Develop a sustainable, equitable and flexible financial model that provides affordable access to a full continuum of supports and services.

OBJECTIVE: LEARNING

Expand and strengthen the quality of instructional design throughout the continuum of programs and services with an emphasis on instruction, relevance, and rigor. Instructional design priorities must include social emotional learning, academic content, and pathways to community, college, and careers.

OBJECTIVES: RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION

Facilitate collaboration and sharing of knowledge among all stakeholders in partnership with member districts.

Build a structure for customized support and mutual sharing of information between each of the member districts and the cooperative.

OBJECTIVE: UNITY

Districts will commit and contribute to the collective work of the region.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank everyone who has given their time and provided their thoughts to this process.

