

# Arlington Heights School District 25's Journey

Strategic Plan 2021-2025

A recap of District 25's  
Strategic Plan 2021-2025.



We are  
Together  
Today 2  
Transform  
Tomorrow.



A message from Dr. Brian Kaye

# Dear District 25 Community,



I'm proud to introduce this special publication, a magazine dedicated to reflecting on and celebrating the work done through our 2021–2025 Strategic Plan. Since its adoption at the April 8, 2021 Board of Education meeting, this plan has served as a vital roadmap, guiding our decisions, shaping our goals, and keeping us focused on what matters most, our students, staff, and the greater community.

Rooted in five broad goals, **Student Achievement, Family & Community, Learning Environment, High-Quality Staff, and Stewardship & Resources**, the plan helped align our efforts and initiatives across the district. Within these pages, you'll find a summary of our progress, accomplishments, and the strategies we implemented along the way. You'll also see where we believe we can continue to grow as we look ahead.

Thank you for your continued interest in and support of our strategic work. As we reflect on all we've accomplished, we also look forward with plans to refresh and adopt an updated strategic plan in the spring of 2026. We're excited for what's ahead and remain committed to doing what's best for our students, together.

Sincerely,

*Brian A. Kaye*

Dr. Brian Kaye  
Superintendent of Schools  
Arlington Heights School District 25



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# About This Publication

This magazine offers a look back at the work and impact of District 25's 2021–2025 Strategic Plan. Since its adoption, the plan has helped guide decisions and shape initiatives that support our students, staff, and community.

As you go through this publication, you'll notice each goal is led by a *Goal Champion*, who is a district leader responsible for keeping progress moving forward. You'll also see strategies originally developed by our Strategic Plan Committee brought to life through stories, outcomes, and reflections.

We hope this look back helps frame where we've been, and where we're heading as we prepare to refresh our plan in 2026.

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### Goals & Strategies

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# TOGETHER TODAY TO TRANSFORM TOMORROW!



**Empower an inclusive, diverse community of learners to innovate and thrive as global citizens.**

## OUR VISION

Cultivate a personalized environment of excellence that prepares every learner, every day, for a better tomorrow by:

Building the knowledge, skills and attitudes of learners to be successful, contributing citizens of a global society.

Developing resilience and perseverance in learners to problem-solve and co-create their learning.

Embracing individuality and modeling empathy in an inclusive environment.

Promoting learner confidence, courage, growth mindset and well-being.

Fostering collaboration, voice and engagement with and among staff, families and our communities to partner in ensuring each learner's continuous improvement.

Ensuring equity of resources, access and opportunities for all learners and staff to learn, work and succeed.

## OUR VALUES

The following core values will guide our behaviors and actions:

**Compassion & Empathy**

**Inclusivity & Diversity**

**Equity & Social Justice**

**Innovation & Creativity**

**Collaboration & Communication**

**Resilience & Perseverance**



# OUR GOALS & STRATEGIES

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOAL:

Refine and extend instructional practices, programs and services to ensure all learners are academically ready for high school and beyond.



Strategies that need attention to achieve this goal at a higher level.

Refine and expand our continuum of services to better meet the needs of all students and close performance gaps for identified student subgroups.

Ensure high student engagement and ownership of their learning through hands on, authentic, real-life learning opportunities and innovative teaching practices.

## LEARNING ENVIRONMENT GOAL:

Cultivate a healthy climate and culture that creates conditions and supports to meet the needs of all learners.



Strategies that need attention to achieve this goal at a higher level.

Address the growing social, emotional and mental health needs of our students, families, and staff.

Foster a sense of belonging, mutual understanding and competence to address diversity, equity, social justice, racism and inclusion in our everyday practices.

## STEWARDSHIP OF RESOURCES GOAL:

Demonstrate stewardship by allocating resources effectively and equitably.



Strategies that need attention to achieve this goal at a higher level.

Address time, space and aging facilities to ensure an optimal learning and teaching environment.

Explore and develop new financial strategies to respond to the changing nature of school funding and projections to continue to offer equitable, high-quality programs and services to our students and families.

## FAMILY & COMMUNITY GOAL:

Strengthen family and community relationships to enhance learning, teaching, and partnerships.



Strategies that need attention to achieve this goal at a higher level.

Improve classroom, school and district connections, collaboration, and communication with our families and community to enhance external relationships, trust, respect, commitment, engagement and satisfaction.

Develop effective partnerships with community agencies, higher education and District 214.

## HIGH-QUALITY STAFF GOAL:

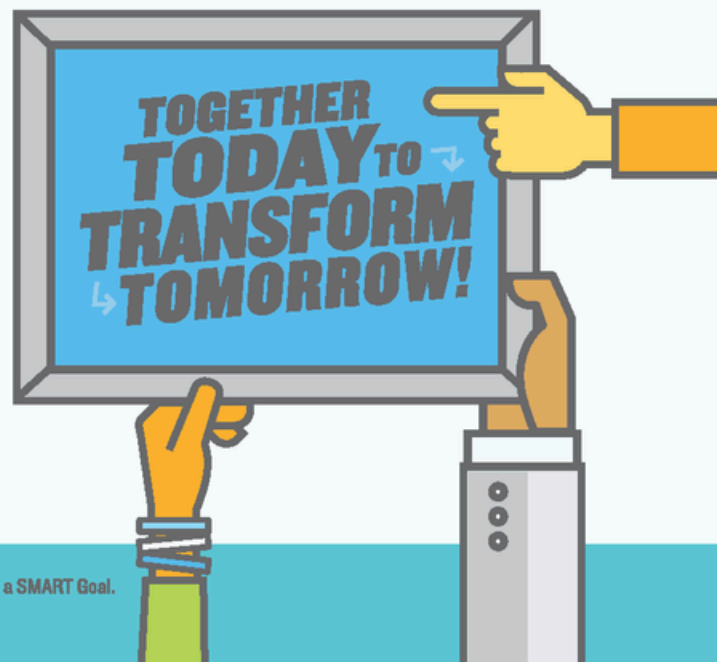
Attract, develop, and retain diverse, high-quality, innovative employees.



Strategies that need attention to achieve this goal at a higher level.

Improve policies, procedures and hiring practices with our employees to enhance internal relationships, trust, respect, commitment, collaboration, communication and satisfaction.

Refine and extend data collection, analysis, progress monitoring and reporting to promote continuous improvement at all levels of the system.



Journey

GOAL 1



# Student Achievement

**Refine and extend instructional practices, programs and services to ensure all learners are academically ready for high school and beyond.**

## **Goal Strategies:**

- Refine and expand our continuum of services to better meet the needs of all students and close performance gaps for identified student subgroups.
- Ensure high student engagement and ownership of their learning through hands on, authentic, real-life learning opportunities and innovative teaching practices.

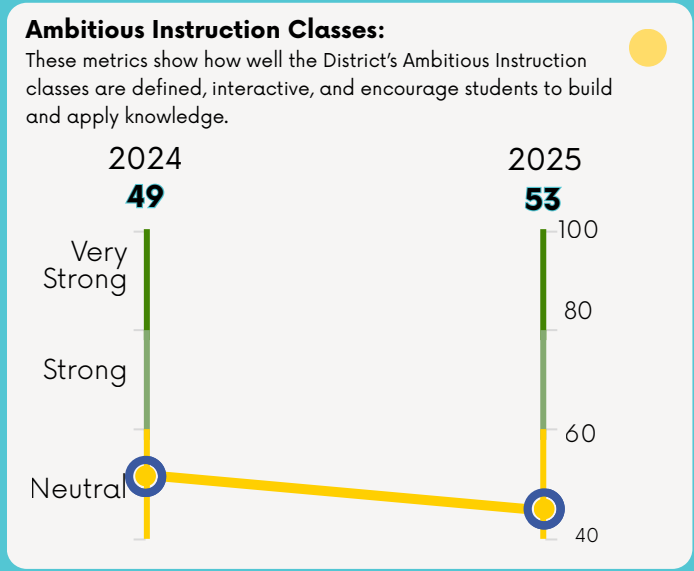
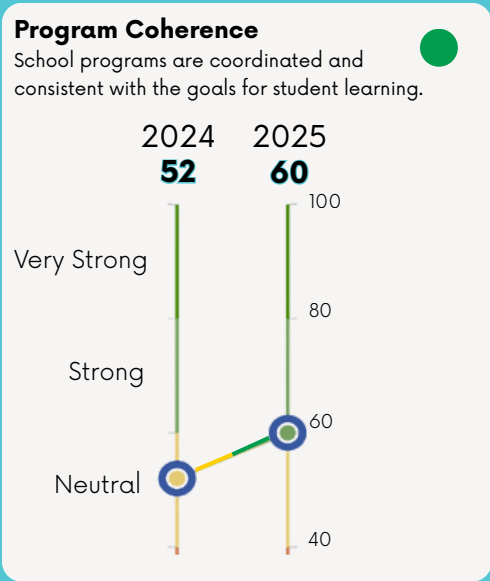
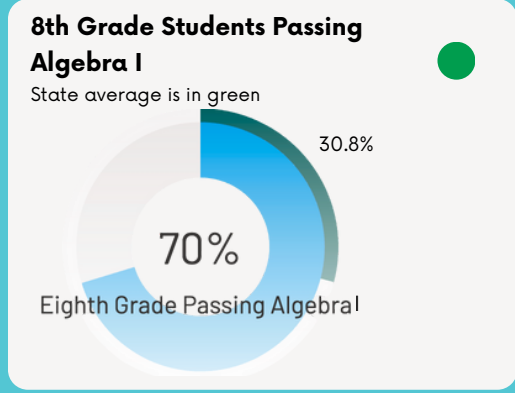
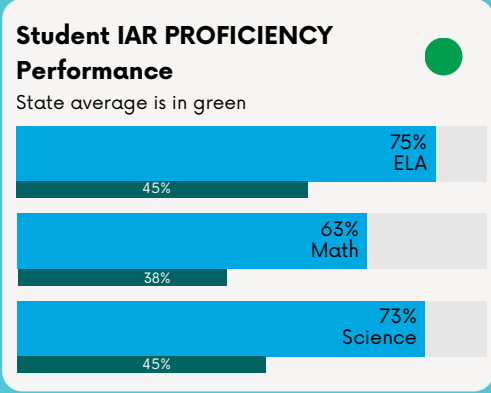
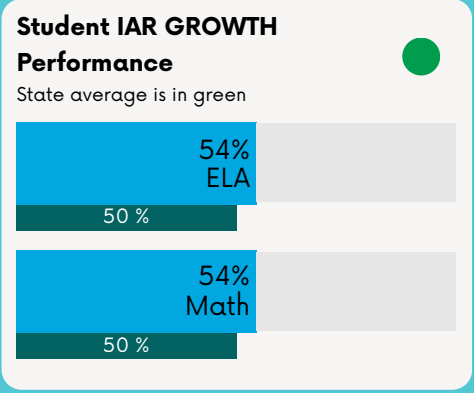




# Goal Accomplishments

- **Implemented a full-day kindergarten program** to strengthen early learning foundations and increase student readiness for first grade.
- **Enhanced foundational literacy instruction** through differentiated professional learning, improving targeted reading support for all students.
- **Expanded differentiated supports for students and staff** by adding Advanced Learning Specialists, Instructional Coaches, and Student Services Specialists, fostering personalized learning and growth.
- **Launched a comprehensive program review process** that integrates professional learning with high-quality instructional materials, driving continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

# Goal Metrics



“Our Student Achievement goal reflects our dedication to ensuring every child reaches their full potential. By strengthening foundational literacy, expanding differentiated supports for students and teachers, and pairing high-quality instructional materials with professional learning, we are building the foundation for lasting success in every classroom.”

— Dr. Becky FitzPatrick, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning



# Family & Community

**Strengthen family and community relationships to enhance learning, teaching, and partnerships.**

## **Goal Strategies:**

- Improve classroom, school and district connections, collaboration, and communication with our families and community to enhance external relationships, trust, respect, commitment, engagement and satisfaction.
- Develop effective partnerships with community agencies, higher education and District 214.





# Goal Accomplishments

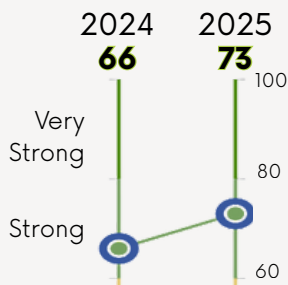
- **Strengthened community connections** through active participation in the Village Community Connections Partnership, helping create over 2,500 welcome bags for new families in Arlington Heights.
- **Ensured District 25 representation in all fifteen North Cook ISC Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging meetings** since 2022, fostering shared learning and regional collaboration.
- **Celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the Dryden Place Project Garden**, highlighting a decade of meaningful community partnership and student engagement.
- **Created a Community Supports webpage and Safe25 webpage** to connect families with resources that promote the well-being of the whole child.

# Goal Metrics

● Strong ● Neutral ● Weak

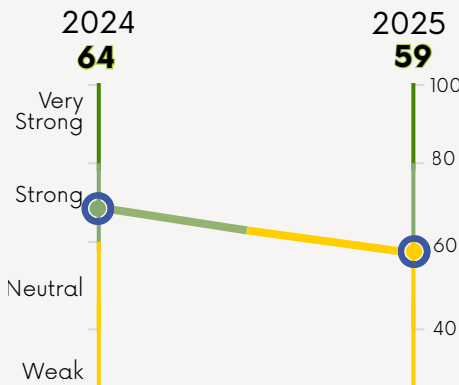
## Teacher-Parent Trust

Teachers and Parents are Partners in Student Learning.



## Supportive Environment

Students feel safe in and around the school and they find teachers trust-worthy and responsive to their academic needs.



## Human & Social Community Resources

Students come from communities who provide a safe and innovative environment.



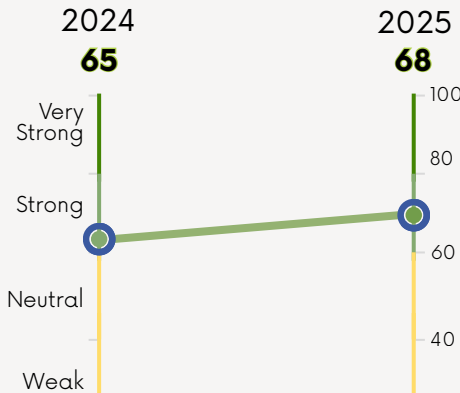
## Parent Involvement in School

Parents are active participants in their child's schooling.



## Involved Families

Parents are partners in helping students learn.



## Parent Supportiveness

Parents are active partners in their child's schooling.



“Our Family & Community goal recognizes that educating a child is a community effort. By ensuring students have support both at school and at home, and by strengthening partnerships with families and community members, we strive to create an environment where every child feels supported, valued, and empowered to succeed.”

— Dr. Brian Kaye, Superintendent

Journey

GOAL 3



# Learning Environment

**Cultivate a healthy climate and culture that creates conditions and supports to meet the needs of all learners.**

## **Goal Strategies:**

- Address the growing social, emotional and mental health needs of our students, families, and staff.
- Foster a sense of belonging, mutual understanding and competence to address diversity, equity, social justice, racism and inclusion in our everyday practices.

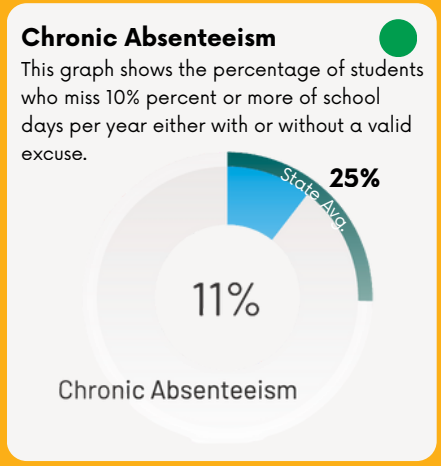
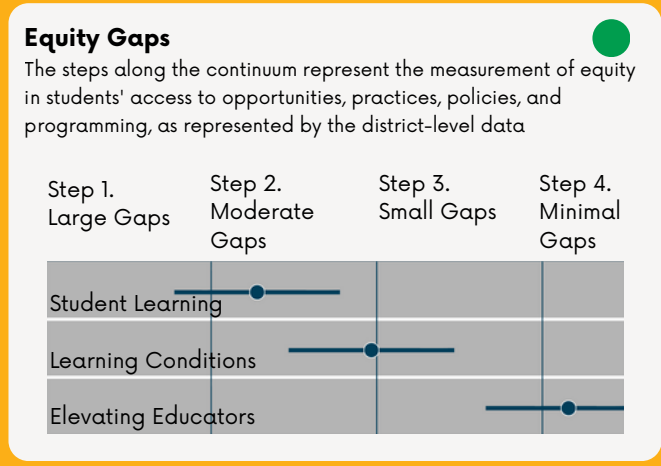
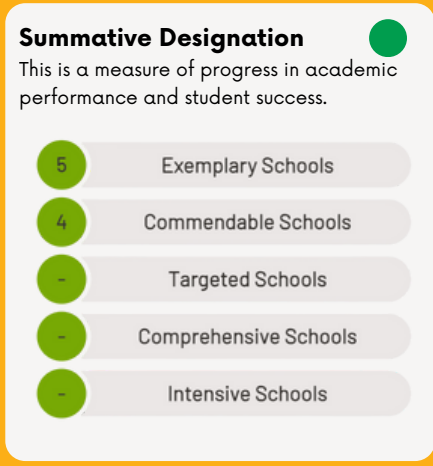
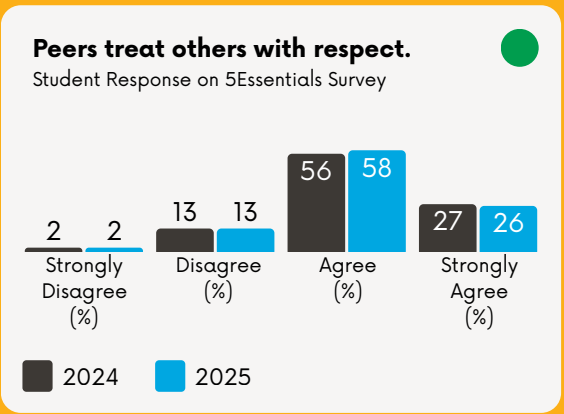
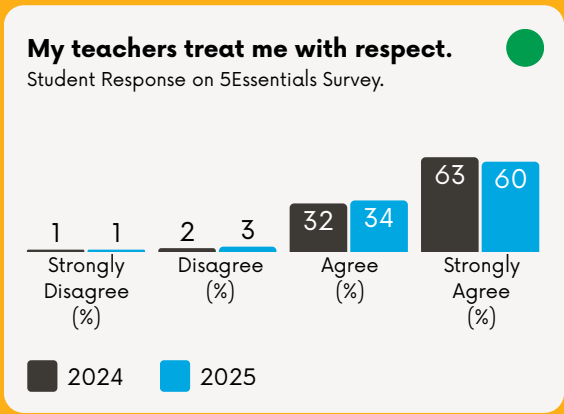




# Goal Accomplishments

- **Implemented RULER for all staff and students** to strengthen social, emotional, and mental health, fostering a positive school climate.
- **Expanded the Student Support Request form** to include social-emotional concerns, improving timely identification and support for student needs.
- **Developed Student Risk and Threat Assessment processes** to enhance safety and proactive interventions for all students.
- **Increased student engagement and inclusion** by expanding club opportunities and initiating Special Olympics for 3rd–8th graders, while establishing mentoring programs for new faculty and middle school student liaisons.

# Goal Metrics



“Throughout our 2021–2025 Strategic Plan, our Learning Environment goal centered on supporting the whole child. By expanding social-emotional supports, strengthening family partnerships, and creating more opportunities for belonging, we worked to ensure every student feels safe, included, and able to thrive.”

- **Diane Kaffka, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services**

Journey

GOAL 4



# High-Quality Staff

**Attract, develop, and retain diverse, high-quality, innovative employees.**

## **Goal Strategies:**

- Improve policies, procedures and hiring practices with our employees to enhance internal relationships, trust, respect, commitment, collaboration, communication and satisfaction.
- Refine and extend data collection, analysis, progress monitoring and reporting to promote continuous improvement at all levels of the system.

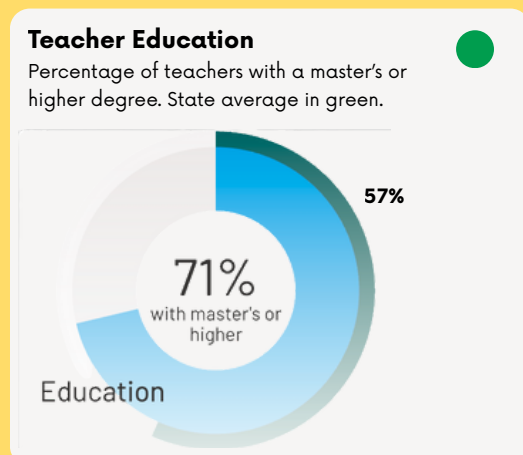
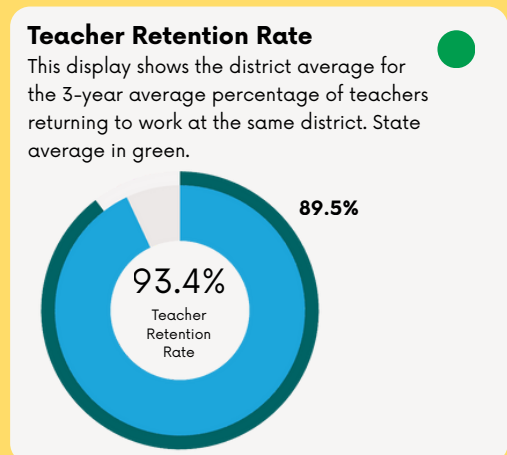
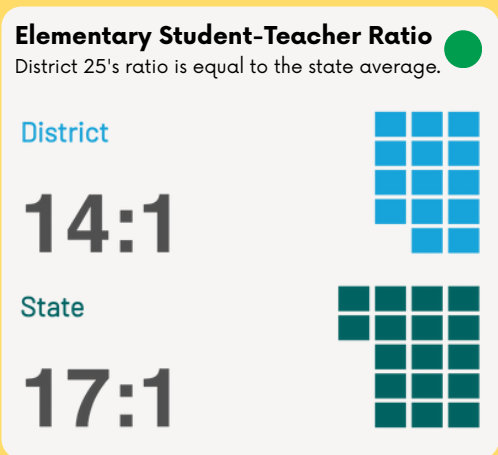
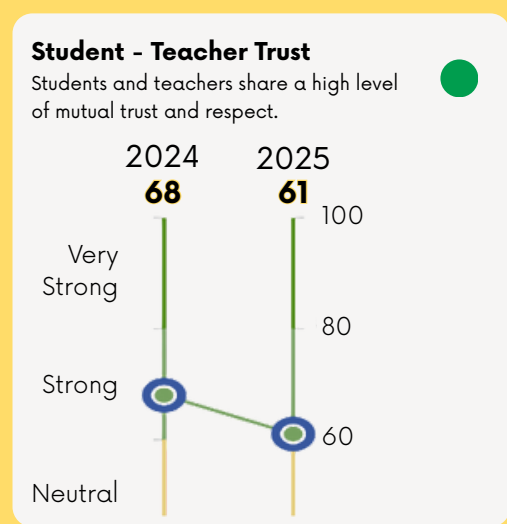
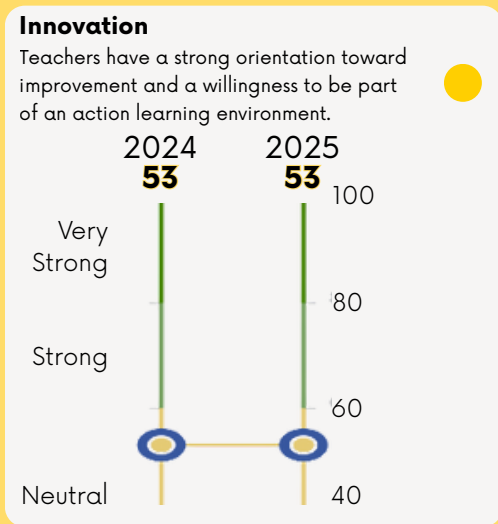




# Goal Accomplishments

- **Launched a 4-level guest teacher pay incentive** and increased overall guest teacher pay, improving substitute fill rates and retention.
- **Restructured TA pay into three categories with increased pay and hours** and added microcredentials to support movement on the salary schedule, promoting staff growth and retention.
- **Streamlined hiring and onboarding processes** through Frontline Central and digital interview software, enhancing recruitment efficiency and new teacher integration.
- **Maintained highly qualified staff and expanded partnerships** with NEIASP, NCISC, universities, and regional DEIB initiatives, ensuring access to top talent and fostering collaboration.

# Goal Metrics

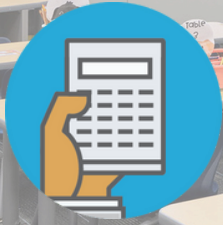


"Our High-Quality Staff goal is about ensuring District 25 attracts, supports, and retains exceptional educators. By strengthening hiring practices, investing in professional growth, and building strong partnerships, we are creating a team of dedicated professionals who help every student thrive."

- **Kendra Perri, Assistant Superintendent of Personnel & Planning**

Journey

GOAL 5



# Stewardship of Resources

**Demonstrate stewardship by allocating resources effectively and equitably.**

## **Goal Strategies:**

- Address time, space and aging facilities to ensure an optimal learning and teaching environment.
- Explore and develop new financial strategies to respond to the changing nature of school funding and projections to continue to offer equitable, high-quality programs and services to our students and families.





# Goal Accomplishments

- **Passed a \$75 million referendum** to expand facilities for full-day kindergarten and modernize aging buildings, supporting long-term district growth.
- **Invested \$1.6 million in new furniture** based on district-wide staff survey results, improving learning environments for students and staff.
- **Secured new funding through State capital grants**, literacy grants, and DCEO grants to support district priorities and ongoing financial needs.
- **Maintained strong financial stability** with a fund balance over 60%, a sustained Aaa bond rating, and annual transfers from Operations & Maintenance to Capital Projects for future facility needs.

# Goal Metrics

● Strong
 ● Neutral
 ● Weak

**Per Pupil Expenditures** ●  
Financial Year 2024 | School Finances

**\$17k** District Avg Spending Per Student

**\$129,579,330**  
Total District Expenditures

**Financial Recognition** ●  
Awarded by IASBO


**32** straight years awarded a Certificate of Excellence by the Association of School Business Officials International (IASBO)



**Financial Recognition** ●  
ISBE School District Financial Profile

**RECOGNITION**

'Recognition' is the highest financial rating a District can receive in their state profile.



**Evidence Based Funding** ●  
Financial Year 2024 | School Finances

FY25 Evidence-Based Funding: \$73M  
Adequacy Target


\$67M EBF Final Resources

This district is at 92% of adequacy

**Financial Recognition** ●  
Bond Rating

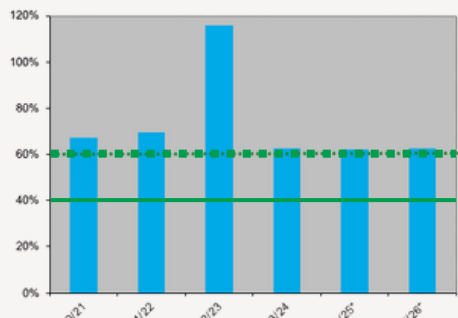
**Aaa**

District 25 is 1 of only 91 districts nationwide with a Triple A Bond Rating. Having a AAA rating means lower borrowing costs for the District.



**Fund Balance** ●  
As a % of next year's expenditures.

The Board's goal was to keep the fund balance between the green lines, with flexibility beyond 60%.



Year	Fund Balance (%)
2020/21	~65%
2021/22	~70%
2022/23	~115%
2023/24	~60%
2024/25	~55%
2025/26	~60%



"Our Stewardship of Resources goal reflects our responsibility to manage finances wisely while investing in our schools. By expanding facilities, upgrading learning spaces, securing new funding, and maintaining a strong financial position, we are ensuring resources support student success now and into the future."

- **Stacey Mallek, Assistant Superintendent of Business/CSBO**



# Moving

# Forward with a

# Refresh

### Feb - May 2025

- **Feb 11, 2025:** Superintendent Dr. Brian Kaye introduced the next Strategic Planning Process to the Board, with facilitator Perry D. Soldwedel.
- **Mar 11 & Apr 22, 2025:** Updates and details shared with the Board about pursuing a Strategic Plan refresh, aiming for adoption by Feb 2026.
- **May 7, 2025:** Special Board Session with community members, parents, staff, students, and Board to launch the refresh and begin building a new Portrait of a Graduate (Learner).

### June - Sept 2025

- **Portrait of a Learner:**
  - **Jun & Aug–Sep 2025:** Two community survey windows.
  - **Jun & Sep 2025:** Student feedback from Thomas MS and grades 5–8.
- **Portrait of an Educator:**
  - **Aug–Sep 2025:** Certified staff provided input during two survey windows.
- **Portrait of a System:**
  - **Aug 2025:** Cabinet and Board of Education feedback sessions.

### Aug 25 - March 26

- **Aug 26, 2025:** Goal Champions met to close out the 2021–2025 Plan and prepare for the refresh.
- **Nov 2025 – Mar 2026:** Series of facilitated retreats and meetings led by Perry D. Soldwedel:
  - **Nov:** Orientation
  - **Dec:** Data Retreat
  - **Jan:** Vision Retreat
  - **Feb:** Setting Direction
  - **Mar:** Recommendation Meeting

### Initial Meetings & Kickoff

### Community & Stakeholder Feedback

### Strategic Plan Refresh Team Work



# Journey



Board of Education from left to right: Deb Tranter, Kevin Michael, Melissa Buchberger, Greg Scapillato, Dr. Anisha I. Jogee, Elizabeth Nierman, Brian Cerniglia

# Board of Education



The School Board is the guardian of the public trust and our board members take that job to heart. Through the policies they make and guidance they give the District, our School Board is essential in establishing the standards and philosophies by which District 25 is run.

Elected by the residents of Arlington Heights to ensure that District 25 is adding value to this Village, our board makes decisions and guides this District to be of service. District 25's Board of Education affirms the unique role of public education, whereby each community collectively pools its resources for the common good through the education of its students. Therefore, our Board seeks to uphold and improve public education for Arlington Heights.



Arlington Heights School District 25's

# Journey

Strategic Plan 2021-2025



**Dr. Brian Kaye**  
Superintendent



**Chris Fahnoe**  
Director of Technology



**Dr. Becky FitzPatrick**  
Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning



**Adam Harris**  
Head of Communications & Storytelling



**Diane Kaffka**  
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services



**Andrea Luessow**  
Director of Student Learning



**Stacey Mallek**  
Assistant Superintendent of Business/CSBO



**Kendra Perri**  
Assistant Superintendent of Personnel & Planning



**Ryan Schulz**  
Director of Facilities Management



**Sandy Voss**  
Director of Food & Nutrition Services

Thank you for your support on  
our Strategic Plan

## Journey.

**ARLINGTON HEIGHTS  
SCHOOL DISTRICT 25**

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