SCSD SAN CARLOS
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Strategic Plan
2013-2018
(Revised August 2015)

The following Strategic Plan outlines the vision, strategy, direction, and goals of the San Carlos School District ("SCSD" or the "District") and was created over a period of two years in collaboration with District staff and community members. While this plan is intended to serve as a guide for the District over the next five years, it is also intended to be an evolving, living document, and so will be reviewed and updated annually, as appropriate. This Strategic Plan was adopted on June 20, 2013 and revised August XX, 2015.

A Vision for Our Children
The San Carlos School District shall provide an innovative and engaging learning experience that fosters the development of the Whole Child to ensure each student is well prepared for success in the 21st Century, as evidenced by:

- Reaching his/her highest academic, social, emotional, intellectual, and physical potential; and
- Becoming a problem solver, critical thinker, risk-taker, designer, collaborator, and innovator; and
- Developing into a contributing, empathic citizen and leader who is a responsible steward of his/her world and cares about equity and justice, both locally and worldwide.

Context and Background
We are at a watershed moment in the history of public education. Nineteenth century conditions no longer constrain when, where, and how learning takes place and how we organize our system—students, teachers, community members, facilities, and resources. Current changes and trends are not fads or temporary states. If anything, their effects will magnify over time. We have a unique opportunity and responsibility to address structural challenges in an educational system that was designed for a very different time. The District's status of having mostly charter schools allows it more flexibility to implement many of the changes envisioned in this plan, but it still must comply with many state and federal education mandates.

Additionally, this Strategic Plan is written in the context of political and economic factors as well as demographic and social trends. As an LCFF (formerly known as Revenue Limit) District, SCSD is dependent upon the state of California for its funding, and given current trends in policy, it is likely that state funding for SCSD

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will remain modest with continued uncertainty. As such, SCSD relies on local sources of funding, including monies raised by the San Carlos Educational Foundation (SCEF), as well as a parcel tax currently in place, which would have to be renewed in 2021 to be able to maintain current levels of local funding.

SCSD relies on a very active, involved, and informed parent community to provide an exemplary educational experience for all children. In addition, SCSD is a feeder district for the Sequoia Union High School District, and as such must work closely and continuously with the high schools to ensure the smooth articulation of curriculum and programmatic transition for its students.

SCSD has gained a reputation for excellent schools, and it believes that adoption of this plan will further raise the profile and performance of our schools. Our successes to date have resulted in recurrently increasing enrollment (as many young families move to San Carlos in part based on this reputation), and it is expected that this trend will continue for the foreseeable future.

Emerging Trends
Our students will enter a world of work and social interactions that will be very different from those of their parents. In order to prepare them for the future and yet undefined careers, it is imperative to consider and address a number of emerging trends that provide the context and conditions for their future success.

A Connected and Borderless World
The technological world and its associated network of social interactions are undergoing enormous changes. They serve as drivers of change that present a suite of challenges, and more importantly, opportunities for rethinking the educational landscape. Children today are born into a world where digital access to information is commonplace. For these post-Millennials, such is not considered "technology," but rather the normal way of interacting with the world. Our increasingly networked world allows the connection of all human enterprises through information networks and unprecedented creation and sharing of educational and social content. This ubiquity and access present the challenge of how to best educate children in a world where the sum of human knowledge is generally at their fingertips and instantaneously available to them.

All this is taking place in an increasingly global and "flattened" world where traditional barriers among countries – both literal and conceptual – have broken down. Information travels freely to all corners of the globe, and citizens around the world can participate in educational and political processes like never before. Furthermore, the tremendous advancement in manufacturing and information technology has enabled us to hold a device in our hand as powerful as most computers, becoming a primary information resource device for most citizens. We have been freed from "place" as a requirement for learning and sharing.

Workplace Requirements for 21st Century Skills

Parallel and intertwined with the changes taking place in the technological landscape is a rethinking of skills and conceptual tools that are critical for 21st Century learners. Partnership for 21st Century Skills calls for a focus on the 5Cs: Critical Thinking & Problem Solving, Communication, Collaboration, Citizenship (from local to global), and Creativity & Innovation. The 5Cs embody mindsets that are critical for our students to successfully participate in the contemporary and evolving workforce. The successful development of these skills happens in school and home environments that adopt a whole child perspective that engenders the development of each student's social-emotional, psychological, and physical well-being, in addition to building technology proficiency and adroitness with information.

Need for Global Environmental Awareness
A third trend is the recognition that human activities are exerting an enormous influence on the designed and natural world. Unlike any generation before it, children today will face unprecedented challenges related to the Earth's environment, including climate change, deforestation, loss of habitat, human overcrowding, and growing shortages of natural resources. Accordingly, environmental awareness and stewardship are paramount to 21st Century learning. To a great extent we as humans are able to modify and design our surroundings. Design thinking and problem solving are key ingredients to improving the human condition and ameliorating our impact on our planet. Students will need the ability to understand their environment and responsibly manage their future.

Implications for Teaching and Learning

The implications of these trends for education are far-reaching and fundamentally "game changing." Although technology advances have catalyzed many of the above shifts, adding more technology into a 19th Century classroom does not in and of itself make a 21st Century learning experience. Rather, it is both the content of our curriculum and the process of teaching and learning that are shifting. The design of the physical environment both inside and outside of "school" needs to support new approaches to teaching and learning. Developments in technology and social networking have given us the opportunity to create new forms of collaboration and communication systems to change the way educators, students, and community members interact.

We also must recognize that the availability of these technologies presents certain risks and challenges, such as inequities in access, data security and privacy issues, the increasing potential to isolate people, distractions from learning, as well as greater opportunities for making poor choices (e.g. cyber bullying). All of these have real implications on the development of basic social and communication skills, particularly for children. Schools must be cognizant of this and be encouraged to experiment with new approaches that are more aligned with research on brain science and innovative approaches to education,

such as incorporating principles of gaming cognition and motivation theory, as well as innovative ways to support the healthy social-emotional development of our children in a tech-centered society. If anything, the ubiquity of technology and virtual interactions make more important a true 21st Century Education that focuses on "life skills" such as teamwork, problem solving, confidence, taking initiative and being resilient.

Specifically, the Who, What, Where, When, and How of educational endeavors will undergo a process of transformation, including:

- **Who**: Bringing together a team of educators, broadly defined, from the community and across the globe as well as challenging the traditional "sorting" mechanism of students
- **What**: Emphasizing the Whole Child, focusing on the 5Cs of 21st Century skills and environmental stewardship as outlined above, and embodying design and innovation thinking - reinforced by and built upon the foundation of the Common Core Standards
- **Where/When**: Extending and redefining the school day, leveraging the exploding opportunities afforded by personalized and blended learning, and redefining the notion of the "classroom" and "school"
- **How**: Developing a project-based, technology-infused approach to teaching and learning, featuring real-world, meaningful design challenges, including a deep appreciation for and exploration of the creative expression found within the arts

California's adoption of the Common Core Standards (CCS) brings these new elements of teaching and learning to the forefront and helps address the opportunities and challenges we currently face. CCS provides a more student-centered approach to assessment and gives teachers, schools, and the District a richer set of formative data to inform teaching and learning, while allowing students to self-monitor their progress in real time. Student collaborative and conversational skills cannot simply be practiced as teaching strategies but instead need to be second nature to our students, as they participate fully in this new academic experience.

Achievements and Milestones
SCSD has many ongoing and important goals, obligations and commitments that have always been and will continue to be priorities for the District. These include, for example, ensuring that all schools are safe places for students and staff, that all students will be instructed in core curriculum (Math, Science, Language Arts, etc.), and the District is managed with financial prudence ensuring fiscal solvency and health.

The District will aggressively pursue alternative sources of funding from foundations, individual and business donors, and other philanthropic organizations to financially support the innovative programs contained in this

plan. In order to expand and fulfill the Vision above, the District will focus on the following high leverage goals:

I   *Align Curriculum and Instruction to a 21st Century Model of Learning*

A. Continue to move forward with the plan for implementing a coherent and innovative PK–8 curriculum founded on the Common Core and subject-specific standards (e.g. Next Generation Science Standards) while leveraging powerful 21st Century approaches to deepen and accelerate teaching and learning (e.g., personalized learning, technology-infused project based learning, and design and innovation learning).

B. Align curriculum to emphasize new, effective practices in Whole Child, Common Core Standards, STEM, and health/wellness with an emphasis on formative rather than summative assessments. Ensure that the requisite training/professional development and support, along with access to high quality educational materials, are in place.

C. Create greater emphasis on a relevant, real-world, global curriculum that builds extended learning experiences and choices/electives (relevant to the Whole Child approach), including integrating environmental stewardship, equity and justice, and related topics into the curriculum as well as an expansion of physical, social, and emotional wellness programs.

D. Place greater emphasis on Project-Based Learning to focus on problem solving, collaboration, critical-thinking, and time management skills, thus allowing greater student engagement and "ownership" of their own learning. Additionally, students will have personalized learning plans that ignite their passions and adapt to their particular learning styles and needs. These personalized learning plans will be collaboratively designed among educators, parents, and the students and will outline individualized goals and measurements.

E. Continue and expand the District's emphasis on the arts, including vocal music, instrumental music, and visual and theater arts.

F. Implement a comprehensive, district-wide Technology Plan outlining learner outcomes and effective use of technology for teaching and learning, data collection and analysis, and district-wide operations.

G. Experiment with "blurring the lines of time and place" on all campuses such that some students may experience a modified school day, outreach work in the community, and learn from first-hand resources (including expansion of SMART-E). This may include the use of

Personalized and Blended Learning approaches, integration of "non-traditional" activities into the school day, a greater integration of community activities and resources into the learning process, and redefining the boundaries of "school." In addition, the District shall experiment with the traditional "sorting" mechanism of students with the goal to focus on achievement and mastery rather than time spent on task.

H. Partner with a cogent set of support providers (parents, program/community partners, elective teachers, design schools, subject matter experts working virtually, etc.) working with students in and out of school environments

I. Support all learners, including those with exceptional needs at any point on the learning spectrum, encompassing those with accelerated learning needs to those requiring specialized intervention and differentiation.

J. Create new rubrics and measurements of student, school, and district success, including measuring Whole Child outcomes (e.g. physical wellness, character development, etc.); a practice for collaborative review, including self-review, and Authentic Assessment of student work; and a district-wide longitudinal data system and protocols to support collaborative and personal assessment of student performance.

K. Build internal mechanisms to allow for "rapid prototyping" of new approaches to quickly learn successes and failures, and use the measurement of such approaches to inform future strategies.

II. *Align Human Capital to Support Staff as 21st Century Educators*

A. Pursue a path to greatly professionalize the role of the educator by providing an increased level of autonomy, responsibility, and support.

B. Build a robust professional development ("PD") plan to provide all staff with ongoing professional development to support their ability to teach in new ways and with new, emerging tools, including PD related to Common Core. Emphasize Professional Learning Communities and build a culture of learning and embracing of change.

C. Create time for teachers to engage in professional learning and collaboration by developing programs and utilizing support staff (music, health educators/counselors, Librarians, Technology Associates, etc.) to work in teams.

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D. Build social-based forums for staff collaboration and learning.

E. Expand the definition of "educator" to include larger community-based and worldwide resources, including parents, other community members, and experts from afar (through virtual connections) and integrate such resources into the curriculum.

F. Establish a new system of evaluation for all staff (e.g. teachers, administrators, classified staff, etc.) that is based on professional growth, coaching and mentoring. Such a system will include multiple measures, including feedback from peers, students, and parents, student performance, and robust and frequent subjective evaluations by qualified administrators and master/mentor teachers. The District recognizes that it will need to make a significant investment in resources to do such robust evaluations.

G. Create new system of career path, roles, and compensation that reflect the increased professionalism of our staff (including master teachers, mentors, coaches, resource specialists, etc.) and the modern requirements of the role, including adjusting work rules to match with reality of modern borderless environments. Build an appropriate hiring plan with job requirements relevant for these new and changing roles.

III. **Build Learning Environments for all SCSD Schools that will Reflect, Support, and Sustain 21st Century Learners**

A. Meet timelines of Facility Master Plan to build new schools and update existing schools -- within the principles of sustainability -- with flexible learning and collaboration spaces for student and educators, including spaces that are for: (a) individual, (b) small group/large group, (c) indoor/outdoor, (d) whole campus use, and (e) collaboration work.

B. Establish learning spaces as sustainable and natural environments.

C. Ensure spaces have robust technology infrastructure and flexibility for future growth and technological developments. Such infrastructure shall provide capacity for one-to-one computing, a platform for district-wide collaboration and sharing, and sufficient training for staff, students and parents in its use.

D. Build spaces and develop other programs (e.g. transportation) to minimize traffic flow and improve student safety.

E. Involve each school's staff, students, and community in the design of these new environments.

F. Secure additional sources of funding above Measure H bonds to support more comprehensive parts of the Facility Master Plan, including from grants, donations, matching funds, etc.

Measurement and Communication

The District will develop measures to monitor and support its continuous improvement in implementing the Strategic Plan and its programs and systems in support of student learning. This will include data analysis and engagement of all constituencies. The District acknowledges that a communications plan must be outlined and implemented to ensure that all staff and parents are informed and educated on both the Strategic Plan as well as progress made toward its objectives as well as to receive relevant feedback from all constituents. Communication shall be ongoing, integrated and disseminated broadly such that school and district leadership can both communicate plans and monitor progress for accountability.

Annually, each school site will develop goals as part of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) process that will outline actions to improve student outcomes aligned with the District's strategic plan. In addition, parent and student input will be solicited as to how we are succeeding in meeting our goals at the site and student level. Each year, the governing board and district administrative council members will undertake a review of collected data in order to monitor progress in achieving intended outcomes.

Measures for monitoring progress of this Strategic Plan include, but are not limited to, the following:

STUDENT
- Solicit student input regarding their experience in 21st Century Learning environments and Whole Child development.
- Create portfolios of Authentic Assessments, including but not limited to standardized testing information and selected exemplary work products subject to longitudinal review.
- Establish exit criteria for 3rd, 5th and 8th grades and review achievements of students against the criteria.

STAFF
- Outline a strategy for staff to review student data using integrated and comprehensive tools and undertake longitudinal review of student work and exhibits in an electronic and/or physical portfolio format.
- Survey staff, summarize findings, and implement action plans regarding personalized professional learning, curriculum, teaching and learning environment, health and wellness, etc.
- Establish and annually review processes for evaluation, training,

mentoring, and coaching.
- Create measures of progress in collaboration and Authentic Assessments.

COMMUNITY
- Solicit parent input, report findings, and create action plans regarding student experience, growth and whole child well-being and understanding of 21st Century Learning practices.
- Explore, establish and evaluate community relationships and partnerships with non-profit organizations, industry, and local businesses, as well as state and federal governmental agencies.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Authentic Assessment** - The measurement of intellectual accomplishments that are worthwhile, significant, and meaningful, as compared to multiple-choice standardized tests. Authentic Assessment can be devised by the teacher, or in collaboration with the student by engaging student voice. When applying Authentic Assessment to student learning and achievement, a teacher applies criteria related to construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry, and the value of achievement beyond the school.

- **Blended and Personalized Learning –** An educational experience that combines effective virtual learning (often done at home in form of a video "lecture" or something similar) with a more robust and interactive experience with a qualified educator who can better personalize instruction and support for each student. This is most effectively facilitated in a "one-to-one" computing environment where every student has access to a mobile device to allow for individualized work using independent computing power and internet access. Students learn through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace and at least in part at a supervised location away from home.

- **Common Core State Standards (CCSS) -** A national education initiative to align state education standards. CCSS was sponsored by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers and adopted by 46 states, including California, which intends to implement CCSS in 2014-2015. Generally most educators are optimistic about CCSS as it offers a robust and real world curriculum that aligns with the District's vision of providing learning experiences that promote the development of academics, problem solving and critical thinking skills necessary for success in a global world

- Design Thinking/Learning – Design Learning gives students the space to collaborate and innovate as they create unique solutions to real-world science and engineering challenges. Leveraging the design process students learn science, technology, engineering and mathematical concepts as they brainstorm, design, build, test, and redesign their way to creative solutions (https://www.thetech.org/educator-resources/design-challenge-learning).
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- **Environmental Stewardship (Sustainability) -** Taking action to promote sustainability in our schools and community and delving into science-based health and environmental issues will positively impact the whole person and community over time. The District adopted a sustainability policy in February 2013 which can be viewed here: https://sancarlos.csbaagendaonline.net/cgi-bin/WebObjects/sancarlos-

eAgenda.woa/files/MTM2NjQ3MzQ0Mzc3Mi9zYW5jYXJsb3NlQWdlbmRhLzExMzUvNTM1S9GaWxlcw==/sustainability_policy_2-26.pdf

➢ **Facility Master Plan** - A plan adopted by the District in March 2013 to outline the plans for building and renovation of facilities throughout the District, including the building of two new 4th-5th grade schools. The plan can be viewed here; http://www.scsdk8.org/wp-content/uploads/scsd_fmp_3.14.13.pdf.

➢ **Global Curriculum** -- A developmentally appropriate curriculum that recognizes the interconnected nature of the world and focuses on a greater understanding of world history, culture, foreign language, civics, environmental stewardship, and politics.

➢ **Health/Wellness -** Educating students on how to interact with the people around them and how to make well-informed decisions with regard to nutrition, physical fitness, interpersonal relations and conflict resolution, and social and emotional well-being leads to healthy and productive lives.

➢ **Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)** – A formula, developed by the State of California and implemented first in the school year 2014-15, to determine the allocation of funding per students in districts whose local property tax revenue does not exceed such calculated amount per student. Essentially, LCFF is a formula change for calculating the amount previously known as the Revenue Limit. LCFF provides a greater funding amount to districts that have higher populations of English Language Learners and students at lower income levels.

➢ **Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)** – Implemented along with LCFF, the LCAPs are required district plans to describe its overall vision for students, annual goals and specific actions the district will take to achieve them. Each school district must engage parents, educators, employees and the community to establish these plans. The LCAPs must focus on eight areas identified as state priorities, including areas of student achievement, school climate, and community engagement.

➢ **Professional Learning Communities (PLC)** -- An extended learning opportunity to foster collaborative learning among colleagues within a particular work environment or field. It is often used in schools as a way to organize teachers into working groups.

➢ **Project-Based Learning-** Students learn by engaging in rigorous projects (usually in teams) that are carefully planned, managed, and assessed to help students learn key academic content, practice 21st Century skills, and create high-quality, authentic products and presentations. Students are often the catalysts for project ideas and design.

➢ **Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA)** -- A document that represents a school's cycle of continuous improvement of student performance. The annual process of developing, reviewing, and updating the SPSA includes a comprehensive review of data and the development of actions necessary to achieve school goals. The plan also addresses funding and proposed expenditures related to state and federal categorical programs.

➢ **STEM** -- Students learn Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics in sequences that build upon each other and can be used with real-world applications and projects promoting creativity and innovation.

➢ **Whole Child** -- the notion that learning needs to go significantly beyond the traditional basic subjects and cover areas such as music and the arts (fine arts, theater, etc.); sustainability; physical, social, emotional wellness; leadership skills and community involvement; and communication and collaboration skills. Students are encouraged to examine their own thoughts and actions and be sensitive to others' feelings and needs. Within the context of guided activities and peer feedback, children acquire the tools to be successful within the interpersonal domain, as well as to develop personal resiliency and awareness in the intrapersonal domain.