



Irvine Unified School District

Strategic Initiatives

2002 - 2008

Vision Statement

A commitment to excellence is the hallmark of the Irvine Unified School District. As a school and community partnership, our promise is to provide the highest quality educational experience we can envision. To that end, we are dedicated to:

- *The joy of learning for all*
- *Respect for each individual's worth and uniqueness*
- *A celebration of diversity*
- *An environment that nurtures the quest for quality*
- *A culture founded on relationship and inclusion*

We focus on significant results in order to make a meaningful difference in today's and tomorrow's world by:

- *Nurturing the diverse gifts and capabilities within each individual*
- *Challenging every student and adult learner to persevere for excellence*
- *Developing competent, resourceful, resilient, and empowered learners prepared to meet the challenges of a complex future*
- *Enhancing the human capacity for courage, compassion, and contribution*

We weave our organizational values — integrity, empowerment, collaboration, trustworthiness, and learning — into all we do.

Strategic Initiatives

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the Irvine Unified School District.

The Irvine Unified School District has a well-deserved reputation for excellence and success – a reputation earned through our commitment to continually examine our delivery of services and determining how we can be even better. We have been fortunate to attract professionals that are among the best in the business, and have created programs aimed at addressing the unique needs of individual students.

Our academic test scores, from basic skills to Advanced Placement, are the envy of the county. Students have hands-on access to current technology, used as a tool to provide access to information and facilitate learning. Our athletic programs provide important opportunities to learn important life lessons. With strong support from parents, we have maintained education in the arts and sciences at all levels. Taken together, our students enjoy a wide range of learning experiences that will amply prepare them for what happens beyond our doors.

The school district is fortunate to be located in a community that understands the importance of education, and to have parents who make education a priority in the home. We count on you to insist on dedicated time for reading and study. And we count on your support in making sure the resources are available – both in terms of financial contribution and contribution of time – to ensure our kids are receiving the very best we have.

Our children come this way but once, and you have our promise that we will continue to focus our resources, our thinking, and teacher talents to provide the highest quality educational experience we can envision. We will continue in our vigorous pursuit of excellence in our delivery of service, and in student performance.

Sincerely,

Gwen E. Gross, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

I.

We shall prepare students for their future.

We believe preparing students for their future requires that learning substantially exceed the traditional understanding of basic skills. Adequate preparation requires that attention be given to depth and to process, to application of skills and to concepts, to thinking and to problem solving. In order to improve the results for all students, greater reliance on evidence must be made for the purpose of reshaping instruction and for intervening where necessary.

Strategy 1: Teach essential content standards in a context of application.

Strategy 2: Achieve a balance between content standards and outcomes essential to students' futures.

Strategy 3: Adopt instructional practices that achieve desired results.

Strategy 4: Modify instruction after critically analyzing evidence on outcomes.

II.

We shall develop a comprehensive human resources system to attract, retain, and support a professional staff who create and deliver the highest quality educational experience we can envision.

Based upon our belief that people are our most valuable resource and that they make a difference every day as they provide extraordinary educational experiences for our students, we are committed to hiring and developing employees who support our vision and values. Approximately eighty-five percent of our fiscal resources are spent on people. Therefore, it is imperative that we optimize these resources by nurturing and supporting a professional staff as they prepare our students for their future.

Strategy 1: Attract extraordinary professionals for all programs.

Strategy 2: Create a climate and culture that connects employees to the organization.

Strategy 3: Design Professional Growth Learning and Support options for all employees.

III.

We shall provide learning environments that are safe, culturally sensitive, and supportive of learning.

Being prepared for challenges to a safe environment for our students and staff is the best antidote to their occurrence. Planning, training, and coordination with other governmental agencies is essential for staff to feel confident and supported in protecting the safety of our students and themselves.

Strategy 1: Collaborate with law enforcement, social services, religious, recreational, public housing, health agencies, and the business community to produce safe and healthy schools and community.

Strategy 2: Design programs that reduce violence by promoting mutual respect among all community members, student self-respect, and appreciation for diversity.

Strategy 3: Develop comprehensive staff training in strategies that assure safe and healthy schools for all Irvine Unified School District staff.

IV. *We shall form strategic alliances to secure the support and resources necessary to deliver our vision.*

In this age of interdependence and information, it is crucial to recognize the importance of a strong communications program and diligence in connecting with our internal and external communities. Quality communication and a service orientation with our community, parents, staff, business, and civic leaders must be a high priority in order to develop support for our schools and programs. A citizenry, well-informed about our problems, successes, needs, and issues requires a plan that utilizes various modes and strategies. Working together with other key players in the local, state, and national arenas will enhance the District's ability to influence and shape the future for our 24,000 students.

Strategy 1: Create a comprehensive approach to communications with various "publics" in order to connect them to the IUSD vision and values.

Strategy 2: Expand within the organization the entrepreneurial skills, creativity, and passion for reaching out to various publics and drawing on their unique capacities.

Strategy 3: Forge synergistic coalitions with organizations such as PTA, IPSF, Employee Organizations, City of Irvine, Chamber of Commerce, Service Clubs, other school districts, and state and national organizations in pursuit of common goals.

V. *We shall provide effective facilities to enhance and maximize learning opportunities.*

At a time when the local community and the State Legislature have expectations for students to achieve maximum potential, and consistent with the District's vision "to provide the highest quality educational experience we can envision," it is important to provide our students and teachers the very best facilities public education can afford. Clean, attractive, efficient facilities, which provide for adequate space for curriculum related activities, will help our students to achieve their maximum potential during their years of K-12 instruction. Future facilities must be designed and constructed to accommodate known and anticipated future needs. Existing facilities must be continuously assessed to address their specific needs in a timely fashion. Support functions need to be evaluated to achieve maximum service potential for each facility.

Strategy 1: Implement a system of facilities support focused on efficient, effective, and predictive maintenance.

Strategy 2: Anticipate and support school District technology infrastructure.

Strategy 3: Establish comprehensive school design processes.

Strategy 4: Enhance and modernize existing facilities to assure desirable learning environments.

VI. *We shall develop a business plan that aligns with the District's vision.*

An effective spending plan is a major tool in delivering the District's vision, goals, and objectives. To address the educational vision, a clear fiscal picture is essential. This includes a thorough analysis of the budget and the development of a long-range fiscal plan which emphasizes the maximization of revenues and prudent spending. The spending plan should be fluid and adapt to the District's educational needs.

Strategy 1: Design a system to maximize fiscal resources.

Strategy 2: Cultivate an entrepreneurial approach in securing additional funds outside the current state-funding model.

VII.

We shall promote, among staff and students, healthy choices relative to nutrition, physical fitness and lifelong wellness.

We believe healthy lifestyles are the result of wise choices made by staff and students every day. A key indicator of the effectiveness of our educational programs in Health and Physical Education is the extent to which students adopt personal practices that apply what is learned. Our goal is for each person to take responsibility for his or her own health, and to become a physically healthy individual by adopting lifelong personal fitness practices, and by making good personal choices about nutrition.

Strategy 1: Assume that all students acquire the knowledge, skills and understandings necessary to make wise decisions relative to their personal behavior and well-being.

Strategy 2: Integrate sound nutrition and fitness practices into the daily school life of staff and students, in order to model and foster a culture of healthy habits and life styles.

Strategy 3: Collaborate with parents and appropriate community agencies in their efforts to improve nutrition and fitness practices among students.

Strategy 4: Provide resources for students and staff to self-monitor the results of their nutrition and fitness practices.

Strategy 5: Assure district and school policies and practices, affecting both staff and students, are aligned with sound nutritional, fitness and wellness principles.



