



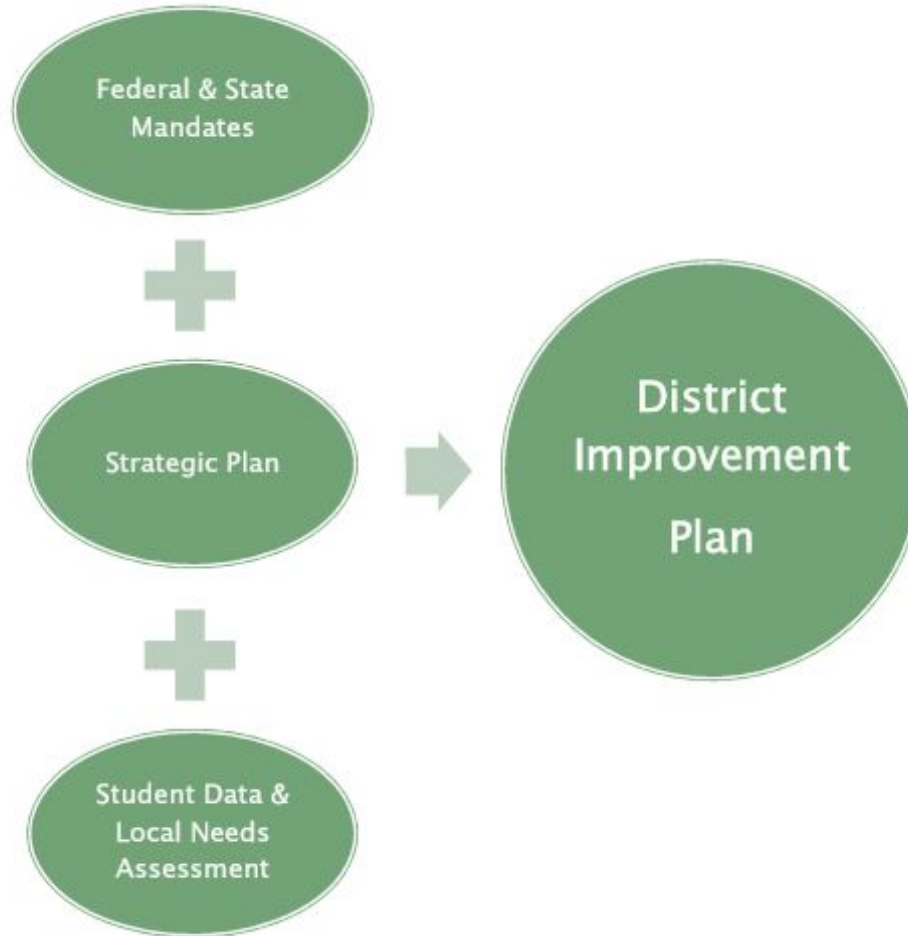
MERSD District Improvement Plan Summary

June, 2025

MERSD Vision

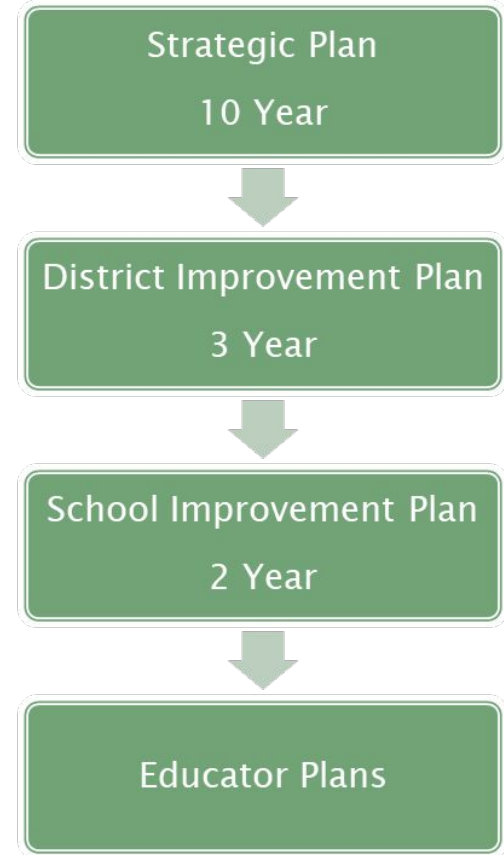
MERSD, with the partnership and support of member communities, will provide educational opportunities and resources so that all students can realize their individual, unique, and highest potential, achieve academic excellence, value integrity and honesty, and become intellectually curious and critical thinkers.





District Plan

- Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan provide the structure
- Establishes district road map
- Informs development of school and educator plans
- Living document



2022-25 District Improvement Plan Strategic Initiatives

Curriculum & Instruction Focused Strategic Initiatives

- Establish and foster an authentic Pre-K-12 learning environment.
- Integrate social emotional learning into all aspects of the school day.
- Celebrate and nurture an inclusive and diverse school culture that recognizes the contributions and uniqueness of all individuals.



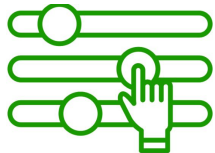
District Improvement Plan Objectives



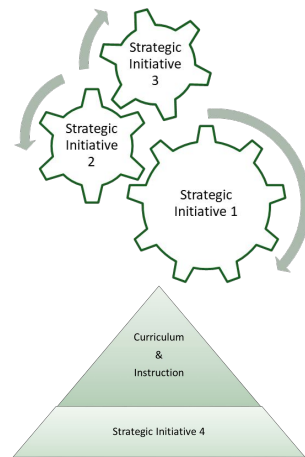
Some objectives are met: *Deliverables Complete*



Some objectives have changed our practice or program: *New “Starting Place”*



Some objectives have been adjusted or reconsidered based on changing needs, inputs, and approaches.



Strategic Initiative 1: Authentic Learning

Establish and foster an authentic Pre-K-12 learning environment.



3 Year District Objectives
1. Conduct external elementary school level assessments of current practice inclusive of authentic learning self study. <i>[Student Centered, Student Achievement]</i>
2. Define “student centered authentic learning” and develop internal needs assessments for secondary level schools. <i>[Student Centered, Student Achievement]</i>
3. Map and deliver a developmentally differentiated professional development plan informed by the outcomes of school-based assessments.
4. Strengthen traditional academic program practices to ensure horizontal and vertical articulation. <i>[Student Centered, Student Achievement]</i>
5. Develop community partners to provide opportunities for students to connect learning to real-life application. <i>[Family and Community Partnership]</i>
6. Prioritize and support programming to promote creativity, innovation, and the arts. <i>[Student Centered, Family Community Partnership]</i>

Strategic Initiative 1: Authentic Learning

Establish and foster an authentic Pre-K-12 learning environment.



As a result of meeting our objectives...

- Staff share a common definition of Authentic Learning.
- Staff report and administrators observe examples of authentic learning experiences embedded across grades, departments, and schools.
- Students experience applied learning experiences like the STEAM Showcase.
- Students report that they get the chance to take part in school events (for example, science fairs, art or music shows).
- Staff experience professional development that is differentiated, support teacher choice, collaborative, school-based, level-based, and department-based.

Strategic Initiative 1: Authentic Learning

Establish and foster an authentic Pre-K-12 learning environment.



As a result of meeting our objectives...

- Elementary students experience a common schedule, curriculum, intervention, and assessment practices across MERSD.
- Staff experience increased collaboration with new and established community partners to support field-based learning experiences, in-house presentations, and enhanced partnerships with experts.
- Staff and community partners experienced a comprehensive examination of arts programming and have identified opportunities for program action steps.

Reference Sources: Annual Assessment Reports 23 & 24 / Arts Council Report / DIP Presentations 23 & 24 / NEASC Report / PD Plan / School Improvement Plan Progress Reports / Shared Elementary Calendar / VOCAL Data



Strategic Initiative 1: Authentic Learning

Establish and foster an authentic Pre-K-12 learning environment.



Carry Forward Objectives

Carry Forward Objectives
3. Map and deliver a developmentally differentiated professional development plan informed by the outcomes of school-based assessments.
4. Strengthen traditional academic program practices to ensure horizontal and vertical articulation. <i>[Student Centered, Student Achievement]</i>
5. Develop community partners to provide opportunities for students to connect learning to real-life application. <i>[Family and Community Partnership]</i>

Strategic Initiative 2: Social Emotional Learning

Integrate social emotional learning into all aspects of the school day.



3 Year District Objectives
1. Create a K-12 SEL Leadership model charged with training staff on ways to integrate a variety of strategies to help increase student availability for learning. <i>[Student Achievement, Student Centered, Equity]</i>
2. Create a Vertical SEL Team to support the implementation of SEL informed instruction. <i>[Student Achievement, Student Centered]</i>
3. Design an integration plan and rubric to use to measure effectiveness of SEL integration at the individual student and classroom level. <i>[Student Achievement, Student Centered, Equity]</i>
4. Involve families and the community in the SEL work that our staff and students are engaged in. <i>[Family and Community Partnerships]</i>

Strategic Initiative 2: Social Emotional Learning

Integrate social emotional learning into all aspects of the school day.



As a result of meeting our objectives...

- Students report through VOCAL data that...
 - they have access to effective help at school if they are struggling emotionally or mentally.
 - they feel as though they belong in their school community.
 - their teachers promote respect among students.
- Staff experience support from SEL Teacher Leadership team (teacher leader positions at each school K-8.)
- SEL Leadership completed Needs Assessment Report and SEL Scope & Sequence.

Strategic Initiative 2: Social Emotional Learning

Integrate social emotional learning into all aspects of the school day.



As a result of meeting our objectives...

- Students experience staff utilizing shared language and methodology. (RULER)
- Staff engaged in a vertical K-12 Attendance Working Committee to address student and school specific needs impacting school attendance.
- Community experienced Parent Education Series with a range of student-support and wellness topics.
- Staff and community reengaged MERSD Wellness Advisory Committee, collaboratively addressing district-wide goals.

Reference Sources: Annual Assessment Reports 23 & 24 / DIP Presentations 23 & 24 / School Improvement Plan Progress Reports / VOCAL Data



Strategic Initiative 2: Social Emotional Learning

Integrate social emotional learning into all aspects of the school day.



Carry Forward Objectives

3 Year District Objectives

1. Create a K-12 SEL Leadership model charged with training staff on ways to integrate a variety of strategies to help increase student availability for learning. *[Student Achievement, Student Centered, Equity]*
2. Create a Vertical SEL Team to support the implementation of SEL informed instruction. *[Student Achievement, Student Centered]*
3. Design an integration plan and rubric to use to measure effectiveness of SEL integration at the individual student and classroom level. *[Student Achievement, Student Centered, Equity]*
4. Involve families and the community in the SEL work that our staff and students are engaged in. *[Family and Community Partnerships]*

Strategic Initiative 3: Cultural Competency

Celebrate and nurture an inclusive and diverse school culture that recognizes the contributions and uniqueness of all individuals.



3 Year District Objectives
1. Identify and hire a consultant/coach to support the district in achieving cultural proficiency in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion. <i>[Student Centered, Student Achievement, Equity, Family and Community Partnership, Resources]</i>
2. Conduct a cultural proficiency, diversity, equity, and inclusion assessment. <i>[Student Centered, Student Achievement, Equity, Family and Community Partnership, Resources]</i>
3. Build on and expand inclusion and cultural competence training for staff and students.

Strategic Initiative 3: Cultural Competency

Celebrate and nurture an inclusive and diverse school culture that recognizes the contributions and uniqueness of all individuals.



As a result of meeting our objectives...

- Students report through VOCAL data that adults working in our schools treat all students respectfully, regardless of a student's race, culture, family income, religion, sex, or sexual orientation.
- Students experience “Understanding our Differences” program
- Students engage with peer models to share student experience in Special Education.
- Staff experienced range of Cultural Competency PD including whole-staff, teacher-choice, and book study options.

Strategic Initiative 3: Cultural Competency

Celebrate and nurture an inclusive and diverse school culture that recognizes the contributions and uniqueness of all individuals.



As a result of meeting our objectives...

- Students and staff experience an inclusive learning environment.
- Staff develop an Equity Lens during each Curriculum Review Cycle.
- Staff developed a materials equity assessment rubric.
- Students experience diverse books, field trips, and presentations from a range of perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds.

Reference Sources: Annual Assessment Reports 23 & 24 / DIP Presentations 23 & 24 / ESSA Monitoring Outcomes Report / NEASC Reports / School Improvement Plan Progress Reports / Special Ed Program Review / VOCAL Data



Strategic Initiative 3: Cultural Competency

Celebrate and nurture an inclusive and diverse school culture that recognizes the contributions and uniqueness of all individuals.



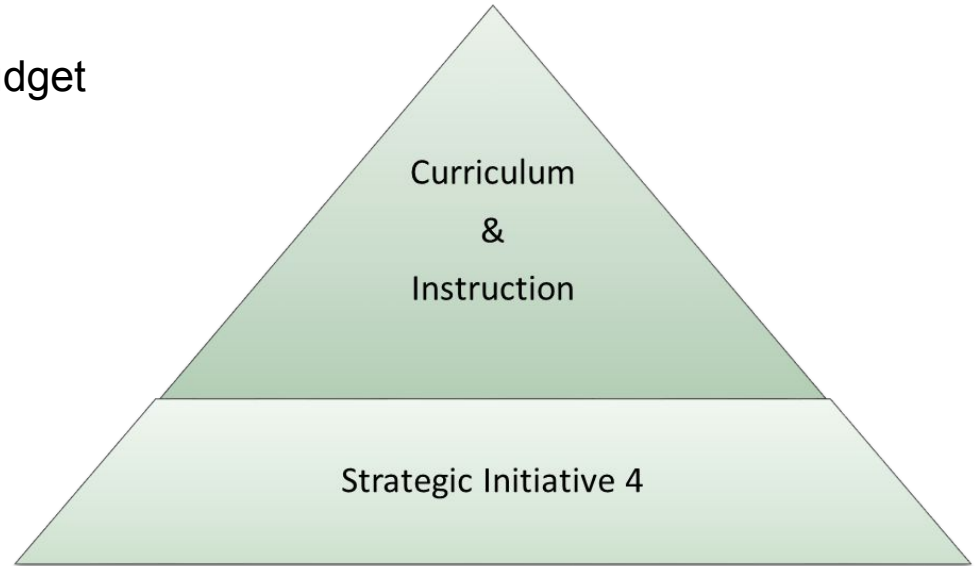
Carry Forward Objectives

3 Year District Objectives
3. Build on and expand inclusion and cultural competence training for staff and students.

District Improvement Plan Strategic Initiatives

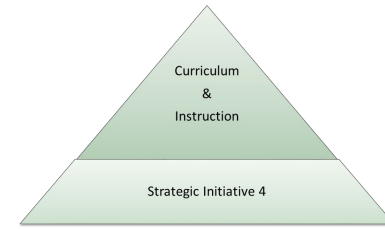
Finance & Operations Focused Strategic Initiative

- Ensure funding for stable, multi-year budget and capital improvement plan through collaboration with town and community partners.



Strategic Initiative 4: Stable Funding

Ensure funding for a stable, multi-year budget and capital improvement plan through collaboration with town and community partners.



3 Year District Objectives
1. Develop and pass a budget that maintains quality and forward progress maintaining efficient practices but shifting to greater advocacy for increased funding to the District.
2. Articulate large and small scale operational and facilities capital needs and obligations. [Student Centered, Student Achievement, Equity, Family and Community Partnerships, Resources]
3. Continue to evolve the central administrative organization structure to efficiently and effectively support district wide improvement goals. [Student Centered, Student Achievement, Resources]
4. Review personnel efficiencies to improve or adjust delivery of programs. [Student Centered, Student Achievement, Equity, Resources]

Strategic Initiative 4: Stable Funding

Ensure funding for stable, multi-year budget and capital improvement plan through collaboration with town and community partners.



As a result of meeting our objectives...

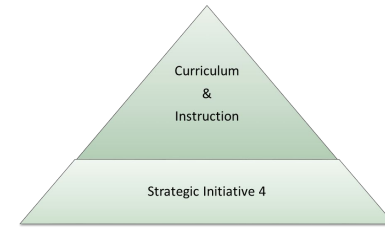
- Maintained continuity of high-quality programs and student supports, retain experienced staff and continue to advance long-term improvement goals.
- Increased clarity around use of reserves in budgeting.
- Established a data-informed roadmap for long-term facilities planning to guide proactive financial planning that supports equitable, well-maintained learning environments.
- Improved quality, coordination, and responsiveness of business office functionality.
- Increased staffing efficiency through the implementation of districtwide positions

Reference Sources: Annual Financial Audit / EES SOI / FY23-FY25 Budget Documents / Habeeb Report 2 / MERSD Capital Plan / Reserves Policy



Strategic Initiative 4: Stable Funding

Ensure funding for a stable, multi-year budget and capital improvement plan through collaboration with town and community partners.



Carry Forward Objectives

3 Year District Objectives
1. Develop and pass a budget that maintains quality and forward progress maintaining efficient practices but shifting to greater advocacy for increased funding to the District.
2. Articulate large and small scale operational and facilities capital needs and obligations. <i>[Student Centered, Student Achievement, Equity, Family and Community Partnerships, Resources]</i>
4. Review personnel efficiencies to improve or adjust delivery of programs. <i>[Student Centered, Student Achievement, Equity, Resources]</i>

Future Planning: District Improvement Plan 2025-2028

The next iteration of the DIP will build on the foundational work of the current plan and incorporate recommendations and inputs from student data, third party reviews and evaluations, local needs, and state and federal mandates.



Future Planning: District Improvement Plan 2025-2028

Objectives & deliverables informed by data from...

DESE District Review *(pending, mid-July)*

DESE Graduation Requirements Guidance

DESE Tiered Focused Monitoring Results

- Special Education, English Language Learners, Civil Rights
- ESSA Grants (Title Grants)
- On-Site Review

NEASC Elementary Program Review



Future Planning: District Improvement Plan 2025-2028

Objectives & deliverables informed by data from...

Educator Evaluation & Recent Admin RBT Training

Student Performance & Growth Data

Student Enrollment, Attendance, & Survey Data

- VOCAL, YRBS, SBIRT, etc.
- Class Enrollment
- Student Listening Sessions

District Patterns & Trends over time

District Curriculum Review Processes

Community Input



Future Planning: District Improvement Plan 2025-2028

The strategic initiatives remain, the objectives and roadmap will evolve as we learn and grow.



Next Steps: District Improvement Plan 2025-2028

June-August

- Data review with Leadership Team & Develop Preliminary Draft

September

- Share Preliminary Draft @ School Committee Meeting - 9/2
- Post DIP Preliminary Draft for Public Comment - 9/3-17

September - October

- Review feedback with Leadership Team & Finalize Plan
- Share Final Draft @ School Committee Meeting - 10/21



Appendix

District Improvement Plan (DIP) Progress Reports

- [FY24 End of Year DIP Progress Report](#)
- [2023-2024 DIP Presentation Slides](#)
- [FY23 End of Year DIP Progress Report](#)



Previous Reports & Presentations

- [FY24 Assessment Report](#) (*Vocal, Assessment, Attendance, etc.*)
- [Arts Council Summary of Findings, 2024](#)

Third Party Reports & Reviews

- [Annual Financial Audit](#)
- [Elementary NEASC Report](#)
- [ESSA Monitoring Report](#)
- [MERHS NEASC Report](#)
- [Special Education Program Review](#)



District Documents

- [Essex Elementary School SOI](#)
- [School Improvement Plan Progress Reports](#)
- [FY 23-25 Budget Documents](#)



MERSD Authentic Learning Definition



Student-centered authentic learning is an approach to teaching and learning that engages students in inquiry-based experiences that have real-world applications guided by students' experiences, skills, and interests. Authentic learning is grounded in real world issues, problems, and applications. It encourages higher order thinking, empowers students with practical and useful life skills, and invites them to make a difference in their world.