

Introduction

In 2014-2015, community members, board members, administrators, teachers, support staff, students, and parents from what was then Addison Central Supervisory Union worked together to develop ACSU's five-year Strategic Plan. Through that process, the diverse team explored the current state of the supervisory union, identified existing strengths and needs, and developed a vision for the future. Then they mapped out the goals, action steps, and timeline to realize that vision. That map has guided our district work in the years since.

Together, the strategic planning teams set a course for a supervisory union which has since become a single school district. That school district is now well on its way to full authorization as an International Baccalaureate World District and is deeply immersed in the shared work of designing the system of services and supports that will ensure all students have access to and find success within a world class educational community.

To be sure, much work lies ahead, but developing a Strategic Plan was a critical step toward building unified, coherent systems and structures to serve all nine Addison Central schools with a shared sense of purpose and a shared emphasis on increasing equity for all ACSD learners. Half-way through year five of a five-year plan, the ACSD community has much to celebrate. This mid-year report addresses each of the original Strategic Plan goals and objectives, offering updates and highlights and pointing toward next steps.

ACSD MISSION: Our mission is to provide an innovative, rigorous, and supportive educational community that inspires a passion for learning and cultivates empathy and responsibility.

ACSD VISION: All students will reach their full academic potential and be prepared for success as engaged citizens.

IB MISSION STATEMENT: The International Baccalaureate® aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Addison Central School District is in the candidacy phase of becoming an IB World District. IB World Districts share a common philosophy—a commitment to improve the teaching and learning of a diverse and inclusive community of students by delivering challenging, high quality programs of international education that share a powerful vision. Only schools authorized by the International Baccalaureate can offer any of its four academic programs: the Primary Years Program (PYP), the Middle Years Program (MYP), the Diploma Program, or the IB Career-related Certificate (IBCC). Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted. Middlebury Union High School became an authorized DP school in the summer of 2019. Our Middle Years and Primary Years Programs are on track for authorization by the fall of 2020. For further information about the IB and its programs, visit www.ibo.org.

ACSD Strategic Plan Goals: Highlights and Next Steps

Foundational Goal 1: Educational Success

We will build a culture of innovation and continuous improvement that personalizes learning experiences, provides equitable opportunities, and results in high learning outcomes for all students.

Instructional Framework

Objective: Establish an educational framework based on the ACSD vision and mission that provides for the needs of each student in ACSD.

Year Five Highlights	Next Steps
<p>In October 2016, the ACSD unified board voted unanimously to build the continuum of International Baccalaureate (IB) programs across all nine district schools. That set off a multi-year authorization process which has involved rewriting curriculum; learning new instructional approaches (e.g., concept-based and inquiry-based pedagogies); developing IB policies on language acquisition, assessment, academic honesty, and inclusion; reorganizing school days; adjusting staffing models; and developing skills for extensive professional collaboration.</p> <p>The IB Diploma Program (DP, grades 11-12) at Middlebury Union High School (MUHS) was formally authorized in the summer of 2019, and the first cohort of Diploma candidates began their courses this fall. The Middle Years Program (MYP, grades 7-10), which spans Middlebury Union Middle School (MUMS) and MUHS is on track for authorization in the spring of 2020. We anticipate authorization in the Primary Years Program (PYP, grades PreK-6) across all seven ACSD elementary schools by the fall of 2020.</p> <p>In 2018-2019, we partnered with the Hannaford Career Center on a flexible pathways grant from the Vermont Agency of Education. That grant funded a co-exploration of the IB Career-related Program (CP). The Career Center is pursuing authorization to offer that final program of the IB continuum.</p>	<p>IB provides concrete, effective frameworks for building curricula that emphasize concept-based, thematic learning and international mindedness. In the coming months and years, we will continue writing, reflecting on, and revising curricula using the IB planning structures.</p> <p>We we also shift some of our focus back to strengthening instruction in literacy, math, and social-emotional learning - the academic, personal, and interpersonal foundation that allow access to and success throughout the rest of the curriculum.</p>

Learning Outcomes

Objective: Students will achieve learning outcomes that prepare them to be engaged and responsible citizens.

Year Five Highlights	Next Steps
<p>All four IB programs emphasize the development of the Learner Profile attributes (inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, reflective) and Approaches to Learning (thinking skills, communication skills, social skills, self-management skills, research skills). All four encourage personalized learning and student agency. These learning outcomes are essential to preparing students to be engaged, responsible citizens.</p>	<p>IB emphasizes service learning and service as action across programs. In the coming years, this will be an area of focus as ACSD educators continue the shift from writing IB curriculum to teaching it.</p>

Instructional Practices and Design

Objective: Leverage significant ACSD educational resources to establish personalized, student-centered teaching and learning models.

Year Five Highlights	Next Steps
<p>Each IB program culminates in a personalized, student-centered capstone project. These include the PYP Exhibition in 5th/6th grade, the MYP Personal Project in 10th grade, and Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) in 11th/12th grade. In ACSD, we have come to think of these as IB Milestone Projects. We are in the process of developing these discrete projects, not only as components of each of the IB programs, but also as key elements of our new, district-wide personalized learning plan (PLP), the <i>Celebration of Learning</i>.</p> <p>The <i>Celebration of Learning</i> is an update to the Personal Learning Plan (PLP) models we had in place at MUMS and MUHS. The new version is a digital space (a Google site) within which students set goals, document Milestone Projects, and capture snapshots of learning/assessment experiences to reflect on how they are developing Learner Profile attributes. This year, we are rolling out the <i>Celebration of Learning</i> to all students in grades 7 and 9. Students in grades 8 and 10-12 continue to use the previous PLP model.</p>	<p>In the spring semester and the years ahead, we will continue to refine our implementation of the <i>Celebration of Learning</i> at MUMS and MUHS. Over time, we will extend this new PLP model into all secondary grade levels, and we will determine how and when to introduce this tool across elementary schools.</p> <p>A series of questions will guide our thinking as we continue to develop a personalized approach to learning in IB and beyond: How can we ensure that personalized learning is purposeful and authentic? How can personalized learning opportunities support students in developing independent inquiry skills? How might we scaffold personalized learning experiences to maximize access and success?</p>

Curriculum and Assessment

Objective: Build an ACSD articulated teaching and learning system.

Year Five Highlights	Next Steps
<p>We use the Math Learning Center <i>Bridges</i> program in all K-5 classes, and we use <i>Wilson Foundations</i> as the structured language component of our early literacy instruction across most K-2 classes. All elementary schools use a combination of WomenSafe and Second Step personal safety curricula to address requirements under Act 1.</p> <p>Our shared IB curriculum includes the Program of Inquiry (PoI) for grades PreK-6, Subject Area Overviews for each content area in grades 7-10, and a course outline for each DP course. At every level, curriculum documents are or will be anchored to state standards. These are all works in progress. In DP courses, internal and external assessments come from the IB. For PYP and MYP courses, teachers are in the process of developing common summative assessments.</p> <p>Common IB assessments are one component of our Local Comprehensive Assessment System (LCAS), which also includes screeners and diagnostic assessments in the areas of literacy and math, state assessments (the Smarter Balanced Assessment in math and English Language Arts, the Vermont Science Assessment, and the Vermont PE Assessment).</p>	<p>Having focused for the past few years on building IB in our schools, we are now turning some of our attention to reviewing past and current math and literacy curricula, engaging in new professional learning in both content areas, and recommitting to shared instructional agreements (e.g., common use of <i>Bridges</i> curricula, common commitments in the area of phonics instruction).</p> <p>Through authorization and beyond, we will continue to develop, reflect on, and refine our IB curricula and assessments. When the majority of our local common assessments are fully implemented, we will have a well-balanced LCAS.</p> <p>An area of growth for us in the coming years will be in strengthening our use of data to inform instruction.</p>

Foundational Goal 2: Community

We will engage our communities in improving outcomes for all students.

Students Feel They Matter

Objective: All students feel they matter to people in the community.

Year Five Highlights	Next Steps
<p>In our year-end Strategic Plan reports, we share data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) which explicitly asks students the extent to which they feel like they matter to their community. This spring we will include the most recent results (not yet released) from 2019. Our district equity audit, piloted last school year, includes a series of related questions under the theme “engaged and inspired learners.”</p> <p>While patterns in those data over time will point to the general impact of our district initiatives on students’ beliefs that “they matter,” it is important to consider less measurable, more personal experiences in the schools. One example is MUHS’ student recognition breakfast hosted 4 times a year at the Glass Onion restaurant in the Hannaford Career Center. That event celebrates individual students, nominated by teachers, for their dedication to learning and their contributions to the MUHS learning community. At the most recent breakfast in November, multiple 10th graders were recognized for the inspired, self-directed work they are engaged in through their MYP Personal Projects. While this is hard to quantify, it is hopeful to see a new structure for personalized learning create opportunities for individual students to shine.</p>	<p>Our ongoing focus on social-emotional learning (SEL) and our current efforts to refine systems of support for students who struggle connect directly to this goal of improving outcomes for all students. Likewise, our continued attention to issues of equity - in the contexts of race, socioeconomic status, gender identity, etc. - is at the heart of this objective.</p>

Strengthen Partnerships

Objective: Strengthen and broaden partnerships between our schools and communities to improve outcomes for students.

Year Five Highlights	Next Steps
<p>ACSD has partnered with UVMHN-Porter Pediatric Primary Care to offer health care services to high school students during the school day in the new MUHS Wellness Center. This partnership has been in development for almost two years. Services will begin on December 5th on Thursdays from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm. Services include: Assessment of and treatment for acute illnesses including ear infections, strep throat, influenza, rashes, etc.; concussion assessment and management; care coordination for chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, etc.; Management of recurring health concerns such as headaches and stomachaches; management of musculoskeletal and sports injuries; Laboratory testing (strep throat, mono, flu, urinalysis, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases); Sexual/Reproductive health services; Wellness counseling on topics such as exercise, healthy eating, substance use, sexual health, mental health. Appointments can be requested through the</p>	<p>The Community Partnership Council has been working to develop a partnership with Shorewell Community Health to provide medical and dental services to students in Bridport and Shoreham Schools during the school day. We have begun work on the next steps to move this partnership forward.</p> <p>During the coming months there will be a number of opportunities to learn more about the “Dinner Together” campaign. We will be connecting with our Partnership Teams to host a family dinner night, when we can learn more together as a school community. Students will also be learning about nutrition and engaging in screen free</p>

health office and will be scheduled by the nursing staff.

We have partnered with Addison County Rise VT, “OK: You’ve Got This,” and the UVM Health and Medical Center’s “Dinner Together” campaign, which seeks to highlight the simple yet profound impact of eating together on families and youth. Throughout this school year we will be working together to raise awareness about how to make family dinners matter, and how to bring intention to these traditions in our families. “A 2017 survey of Addison County high school students showed that teens who regularly ate family meals participated in fewer risky behaviors and had significantly lower substance use” (from addison.risevt.org).

Our partnership with Middlebury College continues to grow. This August as part of ACSD’s preweek, the Middlebury Education Studies Program funded a keynote address and workshop on the theme of inclusive education by international speaker Shelley Moore. This year, we are running a graduate level education course, codesigned by Middlebury and ACSD faculty. The course, focused on Individuals and Societies and international mindedness, is the first in a series titled *For the Love of Learning*. The Addison Central Middlebury Partnership Professional Development School implementation committee is currently cataloging the many ways that our two organizations collaborate.

dinners and family time. Tips and resources will be shared via our school newsletters and websites.

Build Support

Objective: Build a relationship-based model of mutual support between schools and families.

Year Five Highlights	Next Steps
<p>Partnership Teams at Mary Hogan, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge Elementary Schools had a successful year piloting the partnership program. Teams held a variety of well attended family engagement activities including a “Family Literacy Night” and a “Family Math Night” at Mary Hogan which included a spaghetti dinner cooked and served by families and staff; “Fall into a Great Book” and “Community Kickball” at Shoreham, “Have Fun Learning Together Family Night” at Salisbury with a pizza dinner, and monthly potluck dinners with a variety of facilitated conversations on parenting topics that included childcare at Weybridge. Teams will continue to plan a variety of activities for this school year.</p> <p>Bridport, Cornwall, and Ripton Elementary Schools along with MUMS are in the process of creating teams for the 19-20 school year. Team members from each school attended the team training workshop in November and are now in the process of scheduling their first meeting to begin work on their action plan.</p> <p>We recently received a \$3,000 Spark! Connecting Community grant from the Vermont Community Foundation to support this work.</p>	<p>We will be holding two cross-school team gatherings this year. These gatherings will provide an opportunity for school-based partnership teams to support each other by sharing the work they are doing, discussing challenges, and to collaboratively grow our partnership program.</p>

Foundational Goal 3: Systems

We will develop operational and educational systems to support learning for all students.

Professional Development

Objective: Develop, support, and retain effective teachers and school leaders.

Year Five Highlights	Next Steps
<p>Our New Teacher Orientation is a single day in August, but each year we update the event to reflect changes in our system. This was the second year that New Teacher Orientation included an introduction to the IB programs presented by our IB coordinators and the first year that building and district administrators co-led an introduction to the ALICE school safety protocol.</p> <p>New teachers continue to receive support throughout the year by faculty mentors. This year we are hosting an introduction to the IB PYP for those educators hired within the past two years. Our teaming structures for curriculum design and reflection (departmental teams at the secondary level, grade level teams across elementary schools) are critical to the sustainability of our IB programs as staff turns over.</p>	<p>We are working on a more systematic approach to training new teachers - and keeping learning current for all teachers - in the areas of math, literacy, and social emotional learning. And we are working on systematizing schedules for trainings that must happen regularly (e.g., Infant and Child CPR for preK faculty and staff).</p>

Improve Communications

Objective: Develop communication systems that support students' and staff's educational success and that reach and coordinate all stakeholders.

Year Five Highlights	Next Steps
<p>We communicate with the community through regular school and district newsletters, facebook posts, and updates to our webpage. The superintendent sends a monthly communique to ACSD faculty and staff. This year, Central Office developed a structure for weekly communication to school-based administrators to streamline information and reduce email overload.</p> <p>At both MUMS and MUHS, we have updated our grading practices and progress report structures in line with the IB approach to proficiency-based teaching and learning. This big change has required, and will continue to require, thoughtful communication with families.</p>	<p>At the elementary level, we are currently redesigning progress reports to reflect current practices in teaching and learning. This spring the design team will carefully consider how to communicate with families prior to and through the roll out of that new system next year.</p>

School Culture Equitability

Objective: Boost student supports and develop infrastructure to support student success.

Year Five Highlights	Next Steps
<p>This past year, ACSD hired a second school psychologist along with two behavior consultants. The added positions will provide support to teachers across the district in meeting the increasing needs of students.</p> <p>The System of Services Design Team continues to meet on a regular</p>	<p>We will continue to identify the systems and supports that need to be in place to better meet the needs of students who struggle.</p>

basis. The team has met with Nate Levinson, District Management Group Consultant, to clarify priorities and identify key factors for consideration when developing and implementing a plan to support students who struggle.

This year, ACSD also began working on a district-wide approach to Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). An SEL team has been developed, and the focus has been on identifying short- and long-term needs as we move this work forward.

Employee Information

Objective: Develop systems to enhance the availability of employee information.

Year Five Highlights	Next Steps
We will be rolling out the state-mandating E-Finance software system on January 1. This includes a new employee portal, which links to a Google Drive of employee resources.	Over the next several months, we will fully implement E-Finance and continue to develop our the employee information sections of our ACSD website for ease of use.

Equitable Distribution of Resources

Objective: Assure the equitable distribution and optimal use of resources in order to best support the success of our students.

Year Five Highlights	Next Steps
Now in our third year as a unified school district, we continue to focus on budgeting for equity across schools and contexts. This includes attention to relatively small budget items (e.g., per pupil amount for elementary supplies and books developed and utilized in FY20 budget) and relatively large ones, like staffing levels. We continue to aim for equitable distribution of behavior specialists, speech language pathologists, and special educators, and we are currently examining world language staffing at the elementary and middle levels to meet the needs of an expanded world language program, now in place for all students, starting in grade 2.	Over the next several budget cycles, we will continue to examine and develop staffing ratios and define per pupil amounts for non-wage and benefit items.

Summary

This mid-year report provides a qualitative update to highlight current efforts in our fifth year of work on the Strategic Plan. The spring report will include quantitative metrics as well. As much as possible, we report longitudinal data (e.g. graduation rates from year to year, changes in the numbers and types of learning opportunities offered) to track change over time. Tying the efforts and initiatives outlined in the tables above to concrete points of data helps us to measure our impact, reflect on our progress, and identify leverage points to impact change going forward.

As we approach the end of the projected timeline of the ACSD 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, we have much to reflect on. It’s clear that our community’s work in creating the Plan has been critical in providing a direction for our district that has set us on the path to meet many of the objectives that we laid out five years ago. With significant and articulated work underway, we believe that we have the direction necessary to continue to do the work before us, and that investing our time in implementing that work is imperative. We are considering ways in which to follow our Strategic Plan with a more streamlined structure that will provide a framework for deep analysis of outcomes as well as strategic direction.