

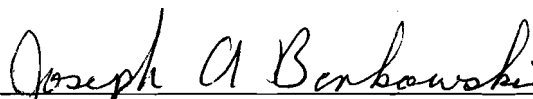
Strategic Planning in Education: A Case Study  
of the Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin  
Area Unified School District

By

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A Research Paper  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the  
Master of Science Degree in  
Training and Development

Approved for Completion of Four Semester Credits  
TRHRD-735 Field Problem in Training and Development

  
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December, 2006



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**Title:** *Strategic Planning in Education: A Case Study of the Chippewa Falls, WI Area Unified School District*

**Graduate Degree/Major:** MS Training and Development

**Research Adviser:** Dr. Joseph A. Benkowski

**Month/Year:** December, 2006

**Number of Pages:** 91

**Style Manual Used:** American Psychological Association, 5<sup>th</sup> edition

ABSTRACT

Under the direction of a new Superintendent, the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD) began a strategic planning process in September, 2004. Through the review of literature, it is suggested that one reason strategic planning is important in an educational setting is to assist the organization in establishing and monitoring its goals. Without attainable goals in place, the organization does not know what it is supposed to do or how to achieve future successes. This case study provides a detailed examination and evaluation of the goals of the CFAUSD, and provides insight into the direction in which the district should continue.

The researcher's goals of this case study are to determine the commitment to the strategic planning process that the CFAUSD has made, recognize the goals of the district, identify barriers to the strategic planning process, and make recommendations that provide support to the process. The researcher will conduct a survey during this case

study to assess the progress that has been made during the first two years of the strategic planning process in the CFAUSD. Information collected from the survey will help the researcher in identifying barriers and making recommendations to assist in overcoming identified barriers. Through this process the researcher hopes to provide the CFAUSD with information to support continued success and to provide other school districts with a successful model of strategic planning in education.

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Acknowledgments

There are several people that I feel deserve to be acknowledged for the support that they have given me so that I can complete my master's degree. My family has been a constant source of support since I decided to pursue my education. To my mom, you have been my number one supporter, believing in me and keeping me focused when I didn't think that I could do this anymore. Both you and dad (Carol and Ken) have supported me by helping with Lucas and Nathan to make this possible and I don't feel that any amount of gratitude that I display will ever truly convey my thanks for everything that you have given me through the years.

To my husband Chris, thank you for supporting the financial commitment to my education and the time that I have taken away from our family so that I can pursue this goal. Please know that my ultimate achievement will be using my education to provide for our family.

To my boys Lucas and Nathan, you are the light of my life and without the love that I feel for the both of you I would never have gone to college. I want to make your lives memorable and provide for you financially, but most importantly show you that a woman and mother can have it all. I am lucky enough to be that woman, having an amazing family and career. I also hope that you will see the importance of being educated. My hope is that one day you too can have it all!

To Dr. Joseph Benkowski, Research Adviser, thank you for the laughs along the way and keeping me sane when I felt like accomplishing this goal would be impossible. Your insight and expertise inspired me to complete a study that was practical and meaningful. I am most appreciative of you for asking to be my adviser and providing me with such a wonderful learning opportunity.

I would like to thank the administration of the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District for allowing me to complete this study and for providing such a positive work environment. I am truly blessed to work with intelligent, thoughtful people who have a genuine interest in creating a professional learning community for children. I am also grateful to the original members of the District Strategic Planning Committee for completing the survey that I conducted.

Not forgotten are all the friends that provided support along the way. I am so thankful that I have so many wonderful people in my life. Also, to my Labradors Toby and Riley, thanks for understanding that the walks will have to wait. I owe you!

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## Chapter I: Introduction

At a time when many school districts are facing budget cutbacks, many people were surprised when the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD) announced that it would be conducting a major strategic planning process. However, with a new superintendent a fresh approach was needed to ensure that the CFAUSD was meeting the needs of the students, staff, and community members that it serves. The realization of the intricacies involved in the process seemed overwhelming to some and it was evident that a clear plan was needed to make the process a success. Now, two years into the strategic planning process, the CFAUSD is still in the midst of transition. By completing this study it is the researcher's intention to clearly understand the commitment to the strategic planning process, determine goals to be reached, identify barriers that have arose and make recommendations to overcome them, and suggest strategies for dealing with change so that employees do not feel threatened. The researcher hopes that this study will serve as a model to other districts that are conducting a strategic planning process.

There is evidence of previous long range planning in the CFAUSD, but it was a response to an immediate need, i.e., building referenda, technology referenda, or redistricting for elementary schools. Although solutions were offered to solve the immediate problem, there had been no change in organizational structure or efforts for a continuing plan to be implemented.

In the fall of 2004 the district embarked on its most recent attempt at continuous school improvement through strategic planning. The Wisconsin Association of School Board (WASB) was contacted and the Superintendent of the Menomonee Falls School

District and consultant for WASB was asked to facilitate the planning process. The facilitator used the Cook Model as the district proceeded through the strategic planning process.

In December, 2004 a group of 35 individuals consisting of community members, administrators, staff members, parents, school board members, and students met to begin the process. That group met for three days at the Chippewa Valley Technical College Chippewa Campus to draft the initial strategic plan for the district. The Board was asked to adopt the plan in the fall of 2005 and the building level planning groups will use it to plan for the 2006-07 school year. To better understand the goals of the CFAUSD this researcher deems it essential to understand the philosophy of the district. Peterson (1989) states that "A strategic plan begins with a mission statement" (Section 2, para 1). Fogg (1994) adds that a mission statement is "...the navigational star toward which the organization aligns the bow of the corporate ship in order to reach its desired destination" (p.10). With this in mind the vision statement, mission statement, commitment statement, and educational philosophy follow.

*Vision Statement*

Educational excellence for a changing tomorrow.

*Mission Statement*

The Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District, in partnership with the community, is committed to excellence; empowering and challenging all students to learn while preparing them for an ever-changing global society.

### *Commitment*

The staff of the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District is committed to providing the best education for all students. It is recognized that the occupational future of each student, as well as the economy of this region and country, rests on how successfully the students are taught the skills and attitudes needed to be productive members of society.

### *Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District Educational Philosophy*

The Board of Education believes that the school, as an educational institution of our social system, has been organized to promote the aims and objectives of our democratic society. The Board believes that each person should be accepted into the educational program as he/she is, and that he/she should be provided with a stimulating environment and opportunities for learning experiences and a wide range of acceptable standards to take these differences into account.

(<http://CFAUSD.chipfalls.k12.wi.us/depts/dw/StrategicPlanning/Background.htm>)

By knowing this information, and providing it in this section of the paper, it will allow the researcher to make specific recommendations that fit the needs of the district in chapter five of this paper. This information also provides the reader with a better understanding of the CFAUSD.

### *Statement of the Problem*

The purpose of this study is to review resources that support the strategic planning process taking place in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District, to identify barriers of the planning process to date and make recommendations to overcome identified barriers, and offer strategies to implement the changes that will be recommended through the planning process.

### *Purpose of the Study*

After completing this study, research will be provided that supports the strategic planning process in education through the literature review. Recommendations to support change will also be offered, which may include other business concepts that can be utilized in an educational environment to ease staff resistance. The objectives of this study are to: (1) Understand why the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD) decided to complete strategic planning in the district; (2) Determine the timeline and outcomes that the district has for the strategic planning process; (3) Identify resources to assist the CFAUSD in completing the strategic planning process; (4) Provide suggested methods for coping with cultural change during strategic planning to ease employee resistance.

### *Assumptions of the Study*

The assumptions of this study are:

1. The Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District will not abandon the strategic planning process.
2. All participants will act ethically and provide honest data during the study.
3. The researcher will analyze data collected during this case study.
4. Resources to support strategic planning and implementing change will be reliable and valid.

### *Definition of Terms*

For the purpose of this case study on strategic planning in education, the following terms are defined.

*Cook Model:* The application of holistic strategy which includes five basic principles: thinking, planning, action, organization, and school planning.

(<http://www.colonialcambridge.com/service.cfm#plan>)

*Mission:* “Your fundamental purpose in life. Why you exist” (Fogg, 1999, p. 5).

*Vision:* “Where you want to be in the future-what kind of business that you want to become” (Fogg, 1999, p. 5).

*Strategic Planning:* “The process by which the guiding members of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future” (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993, p. 3).

*Stakeholder:* “Anyone who cares, or should care, about the organization-anyone who has a “stake” in the success of its mission” (Allison & Kaye, 1997, p. 30).

*Needs Assessment:* “Needs assessments enable you to identify and measure gaps between what is and what ought to be, from which program goals and objectives can be identified. Needs assessments ultimately address questions about the future (What should be done?)” (<http://www2.edc.org/NTP/needsassessment.htm>).

### *Limitations of the Study*

The limitations of this case study are:

1. All members of this case study volunteered to serve as part of the district’s strategic planning process and bias toward certain steps in the process may have occurred.

2. The data collected during the interview process of this case study are influenced by the perceptions of the people being interviewed and may not always be factual.
3. The sampling process used to determine interviewees for this case study was influenced by accessibility and time constraints.
4. Bias may have occurred based on the researcher's participation in the strategic planning process where verbal and non-verbal communication was received.

### *Methodology*

Chapter Two, the *Review of Literature*, will provide the reader with an understanding of strategic planning and why it is important to an educational environment, thus providing the reader with a factual background in order to gauge this case study.

Chapter Three, *Methodology*, looks at why the CFAUSD decided to complete strategic planning with a review of the timeline and a current summary of the strategic planning process described. The process the researcher used to collect data for this case study will be discussed with an emphasis on the subject selection and description, research design, and the data collection procedures. Limitations of the methodology will also be discussed.

Chapter Four, *Results*, reviews the analysis of data and identifies barriers during the strategic planning process.

Chapter Five, *Discussion*, will again identify limitations, provide conclusions, and discuss recommendations based on the results of the case study. All recommendations made in this chapter will be specific to the results of the survey that was completed during the case study and be supported by the literature review in chapter two of this paper.

*Permission to Conduct Study*

Due to the sensitive nature and privacy that is experienced in education the researcher obtained permission to conduct this study from the Superintendent before choosing this topic. The e-mail request asking for permission to complete this study, along with the approval of the request, can be found in Appendices A and B.



## Chapter II: Literature Review

### *Introduction*

The review of literature is intended to provide the reader with an understanding of strategic planning and why it is important to an educational environment, thus providing the reader with a factual background in order to gauge this case study.

### *What is Strategic Planning and Why is it Important?*

Strategic planning is “the process by which the guiding members of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future” (Goodstein et al., 1993, p. 3). Strategic planning “assumes that an organization must be responsive to an environment which is dynamic and hard to predict” (Allison & Kaye, 1997).

There are many models available to assist in the strategic planning process. Goodstein et al. (1993) provide a model of strategic planning based on existing models but differing in content, emphasis, and process. (Appendix C) The model involves nine phases that includes seven sequential steps and a step that has two components. There are also two continuous processes occurring during the nine phases. To provide a better understanding of the strategic planning process the researcher will discuss the phases of the model in detail.

The first phase of the Goodstein et al. (1993) model is Planning to Plan. In this step the organization needs to make certain “that there is organizational commitment to the process” (p. 10). Without this commitment strategic planning will not work.

The second phase is a Values Scan. Goodstein et al. (1993) state that this allows for the examination of the members of a planning team, the values of the organization, the philosophy of operations, the culture, and stakeholder values.

The third phase is the Mission Formulation. Goodstein et al. (1993) found the following:

In formulating its mission, an organization must answer four primary questions:

1. *What* function(s) does the organization perform? 2. For *whom* does the organization perform this function? 3. *How* does the organization go about filling the function? 4. *Why* does this organization exist? (p. 17-18)

The fourth phase is Strategic Business Modeling. This involves the initial attempt to detail the process by which the organization will accomplish its mission (Goodstein et al., 1993).

The fifth and sixth phases occur at the same time, but are two different aspects. They are the Performance Audit and Gap Analysis. Goodstein et al. (1993) state that the Performance Audit allows for a clear understanding of the organization's current performance after envisioning the organization's future. The Gap Analysis happens after the Performance Audit has been completed and "identifies gaps between the current performance of the organization and the desired performance required for the successful realization of its strategic business model" (p. 27).

The seventh phase is Integrating Action Teams. Goodstein et al. (1993) state that once the gaps are revealed two issues need to be addressed. The first is that the master business plan must be created and the second is that detailed operational plans need to be developed.

The eighth phase is Contingency Planning. Goodstein et al. (1993) state that Contingency Planning involves the following:

1. Identifying the most important internal and external threats to and opportunities for the organization, especially those involving other than the most-likely scenarios.
2. Developing trigger points to initiate action steps for each contingency.
3. Agreeing on which action steps will be taken for each of these trigger points. (p. 32)

The ninth and final phase is Implementation. Goodstein et al. (1993) state that this phase involves the initiation of action plans that have been designed at the functional level and are integrated at the top.

Also occurring simultaneously during the nine phases listed above are Environmental Monitoring and Application Considerations. Goodstein et al. (1993) found that four environments need to be monitored during the strategic planning process: the macro environment, the industry environment, the competitive environment, and the internal environment. Application Considerations provide for continuous integration and checking of each of the nine phases.

According to the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District's web site, strategic planning answers four critical questions about an organization:

1. *Why does the organization exist?*

This can be answered in the unearthing of organizational values and mission and in the unity of a mission statement, which defines the purpose, and function of the organization.

*2. What should be the major work of the organization?*

This is answered in the development of strategic goals, which are based in the critical issues and needs facing the organization.

*3. How will the work of the organization be completed?*

Strategies and tactics will be developed, with specific details of implementation written in an action-planning format.

*4. How will the stakeholders and the organization as a whole know it is making progress or achieving success?*

The accountability piece is the discipline of quarterly reports and yearly updates, as well as the development of benchmarks and indications of success.

By answering these questions a school district should see improved academic performance, district governance, and an enhanced culture of learning and positive behaviors. (<http://CFAUSD.chipfalls.k12.wi.us/depts/dw/StrategicPlanning/whatis.htm>)

Throughout the literature review it has been stated that it is also important to understand what strategic planning is not. Bryson (2004) states that strategic planning is not a substitute for strategic thinking and acting, it is not a substitute for leadership, and it is not synonymous with creating an organizational strategy. Goodstein et al. (1993) also state that strategic planning is not forecasting (which involves exploring future business trends), it is not simply applying popular business techniques to an organization, it does not deal with future decisions, and strategic planning does not eliminate risk. The above authors agree that strategic planning is a commitment to the improvement of an organization through informed decision making. Cook (2001) states that strategic

planning is not a model, a process, an academic exercise, a prescription, an edict, a political manipulation, a budget, or a substitute for leaders.

Strategic planning for an educational setting is important for many reasons.

Peterson (1989) found the following:

Many benefits of planning are patently obvious. An organization simply cannot know what it is doing and what it intends to do unless it periodically establishes and monitors its goals. Strategic planning enables people to influence the future.

The very act of planning implies that schools are more than passive pawns in the hands of socioeconomic forces. (Section 1, para. 1)

With many changes in demographics expected including the possibility of a teacher shortage, the entrance of many bi-lingual students, and more students from single-parent families it is particularly important for schools to participate in strategic planning.

According to Bryson (2004) other benefits of strategic planning include the promotion of strategic thought and action, improved decision making, enhanced organizational responsiveness and improved performance, and direct benefits to an organization's people.

#### *How to Select Members of a Strategic Planning Committee*

Once an organization has committed to the strategic planning process it must select people for the committee. (Cook, 1988, as cited in Peterson, 1989) "...asserts that the planning team should consist of one-third to one-half administrators, with its remaining members drawn from a broad section of the school community" (Section 4, para 4).

Goodstein et al. (1993) state that once commitment is secured from the CEO or other top official of an organization, then the planning team should be identified. They also recommend that the team not exceed ten to twelve permanent members. The members of the planning committee will have various responsibilities including "...facilitative, research, and support functions, especially providing follow-through on the assignments made during the course of planning" (p. 103).

Cook (2001) states that the planning team is the most important factor in the process. The team should have four characteristics including being both strategic and operational in composition, representative of every component of the school community, manageable in size, and devised of members who have the school district's best interests at heart.

Allison and Kaye (1997) recommended that a diverse group be part of the strategic planning committee including internal stakeholders (executive director, board of directors, and staff) and external stakeholders (including clients-past, present, and potential, previous staff and board members, funders-past, existing and potential, community leaders, competitors, potential collaborators, and parallel agencies). Responsibilities of the planning committee include deciding which stakeholders to involve and in what way they should be involved, coordinating and making assignments to the staff or board, providing communication throughout the organization, and prioritizing and evaluating information that is pertinent to the planning process (Allison & Kaye, 1997). It is agreed that a diverse group should be utilized to serve on the strategic planning committee and that the members of the group will be committed to the process, acting in the best interest of the organization and its stakeholders.

*Why a Needs Assessment is Helpful to the Strategic Planning Process*

When preparing to plan it is important to conduct a needs assessment to determine the gaps that exist between what currently is, and what ought to be. Kaufman (2003) found the following:

If your organization has already conducted a valid Needs Assessment (identifying gaps in results at the three levels of results) you may have data enough to go ahead. Recall, however, that most commonly so-called Needs Assessments will only have identified desired Processes and resources, not specific current and required results. This data, when available, is the evidence for making a decision to think and plan strategically. When not available already, then we must collect it in order to make rational decisions. Additionally, if the data is based only on gut feeling and intuition (that is, soft data), then this is insufficient to justify stepping into a strategic planning process (p. 86).

There are several ways to conduct a needs assessment including direct observation, questionnaires, consultation with persons in key positions, and/or with specific knowledge, review of relevant literature, interviews, focus groups, tests, records and report studies, and work samples (Rouda & Kusy, 1995, Section 2, para 2).

Fogg (1994) also states that it is not only important to conduct an internal assessment, but an external assessment as well. The internal assessment should produce four to five strengths and four to five barriers to success. These items typically address organizational culture and employee concerns which will be critical during implementation of the strategic plan. By conducting an external assessment four to five opportunities and threats should be identified after a market analysis has been done. This

type of assessment allows organizations to be more competitive in their market. Future success of the strategic planning process is dependent upon the completion of a needs assessment. After strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs) have been identified, priority issues affecting the fundamental ways a business operates and performance is affected can be addressed.

### *The Importance of Data-Driven Dialogue*

Throughout the review of literature, the researcher has identified several processes for implementing strategic planning within an organization. Alexander and Serfass (1999) recommend that four criteria be examined when selecting a planning tool. These criteria are simplicity, functionality, time-testedness, and interconnectivity. However, as this case study focuses on the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD), this researcher deems it important to understand the methods chosen by them. The CFAUSD chose a process called Data Driven Dialogue and this section will provide an understanding of what it is.

To begin the Data-Driven Dialogue process, the CFAUSD contracted the author of *Data-Driven Dialogue: A Facilitator's Guide to Collaborative Inquiry*, to facilitate a two-day workshop in June, 2005 with members of the various strategic planning teams. During this workshop participants learned the collaborative inquiry process. This method includes information on group processes that allow people to become more effective group members, that data collected can be qualitative and quantitative, and that after data is collected a theory needs to be developed.

(<http://CFAUSD.chipfalls.k12.wi.us/depts/dw/StrategicPlanning/Groundwork.htm>)



According to Wellman & Lipton (2003):

Collaborative school cultures infused with purposeful, data-driven inquiry operate with the assumption that teachers are generators of knowledge about their practice. Meetings become a forum for testing new ideas and exploring research findings in the context of that school. When educators systematically inquire into school or classroom-based issues and concerns, develop research designs, collect and analyze data from multiple sources and establish and implement plans for change, they plant the seeds of their own professional development. Teachers harvest these seeds in the successes of their students. (p. x)

The purpose of Data-Driven Dialogue is to engage educational practitioners in data driven topics that are typically difficult to discuss. Given this background information regarding Data Driven Dialogue and skills that result from the training, the CFAUSD chose this tool as the most effective way to enable members of the strategic planning committee to complete the objectives at hand.

#### *Why Managing Change is Crucial to the Success of Strategic Planning*

According to Fogg (1994) organizations embark on change for six different reasons. The reasons are typically financial disaster, competitive threats, visionary leadership, pressure from below, recognition of poor performance, and threatened markets. However, no matter what the reason behind the change, unsuccessful management of the change process and poor leadership will lead to employee resistance and discomfort.

Kriegel and Brandt (1996) state “You’ve got to prepare the soil if you expect change to take root” (p. 157). By creating a Change-Ready environment employee

resistance will be minimized and new ideas will be allowed to flourish. In a Change-Ready environment two important characteristics are typically present: the first is trust and the second is caring. Kriegel and Brandt (1996) state “Trust emerges from relationships characterized by honesty, integrity, and reliability...Caring comes from treating individuals with respect and empathy, and acknowledging their efforts and contributions” (p. 159). Without these two characteristics in place the managers and leaders of an organization are setting themselves up for failure before they get started.

Haines (1995) states that it is important for leaders to anticipate two common problems when managing change. The first problem that typically arises is that change is not nurtured, encouraged, or rewarded. The second problem is that change should not be forgotten in the midst of the day-to-day challenges that an organization experiences.

Fogg (1994) lists several planning blockages that members of a strategic planning process should also be aware of. These include lack of CEO commitment, lack of time and resources, changing corporate direction and priorities, stalled teams, reluctant or incompetent team members, lack of lower-level execution, lack of lower-level leadership and competence, poor coordination between functions, incompetent incumbents, unsuccessful plan, general organization malaise and cultural inertia, temporary crisis, competitive threats, and failure of a major program. It is suggested that the use of a facilitator, once or twice a year during the first several years of planning, can effectively intervene when any of these blockages occur.

Once a safe environment is created for employees that are about to undergo change, and leaders are anticipating and willing to respond to problems, Kotter and Cohen (2002) state that there are eight steps for successful large-scale change. These

steps are to increase urgency, build the guiding team, get the vision right, communicate for buy-in, empower action, create short-term wins, do not let up, and make change stick. After reviewing the information outlined in chapter one of this paper, the researcher feels that the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD) has completed the first seven steps of the eight listed by Kotter and Cohen and at two years into their strategic planning process the district is working to make change stick. To assist the CFAUSD in making change stick, the following research offers suggestions.

Cook (2001) states that “Strategic planning is not an event; it is a way of life for any successful organization. That is why periodic updates of the strategic plan are vital not only to the plan but to the organization itself” (p. 98). As the CFAUSD continues with the planning process key people involved will need to provide updates to continue employee enthusiasm for the process and keep resistance at a minimum. Kriegel and Brandt (1996) also state that resistance to change is individualized and system-wide solutions are rarely successful. The CFAUSD must continue to seek out new approaches to dealing with resistance as different aspects of the strategic plan are implemented. To assist in finding ways to deal with resistance, Fogg (1994) states that it will be easier for an organization experiencing change to take the following eight-pronged approach: initially communicate, train, conduct team building, prepare and distribute planning materials, remove barriers and provide resources, identify early tangible results, establish a tolerant climate, and be persuasively persistent. Kotter and Cohen (2002) also recommend that leaders follow the See-Feel-Change method. In this method leaders help people see problems and solutions, evoke emotions that support change, and by combining the first two steps, emotionally charged ideas will change behavior and

decrease resistance. Continually revisiting these suggestions will lead to success while managing change.

### *Summary*

Based on the review of literature, the importance of strategic planning in an educational environment has been established, as well as how to select members for the strategic planning committee. Further information was provided to establish the importance of both internal and external needs assessments, as well as several ways to conduct those assessments. An introduction to Data-Driven Dialogue was made and the rationale for why the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District chose this planning tool was also provided. Finally, effective ways to manage change and handle employee resistance were examined.

### Chapter III: Methodology

For the purpose of this study it is the researcher's intent to review resources that support the strategic planning process taking place in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD), to identify barriers of the planning process to date and make recommendations to overcome identified barriers, and offer strategies to implement the changes that will be recommended through the planning process. In chapter two the first goal of this paper was completed and several resources were reviewed to lend credibility to the strategic planning process in the CFAUSD. In this chapter a look at why the CFAUSD decided to complete strategic planning will be examined, a summary of the strategic planning process to date will be described, and a review of the timeline and outcomes that the district has established for the process will be noted. The process the researcher used to collect data for this case study will also be discussed with an emphasis on the subject selection and description, research design, and the data collection procedures.

#### *Why Strategic Planning? / Accomplishments of the Strategic Process to Date*

To better assist in determining which methodology would be best in evaluating the strategic planning process that the CFAUSD is undergoing, the researcher deemed an interview with the Superintendent necessary. The goals of the interview were to determine the motivation behind starting this process, become informed on the financial commitment and the committee member selection, and evaluate how the process has been received to date.

An interview was conducted with the Superintendent on November 1, 2006 to better understand the motivating factors to begin the strategic planning process. The

interview was informal and five open-ended questions were asked. The Superintendent had the option of not answering any of the questions where information should be kept confidential. The complete questions and responses can be found in Appendix D. A summary of the responses is given in the remainder of this section.

After speaking with the Superintendent it was concluded that the strategic planning process was necessary for several reasons. The researcher began by asking the Superintendent why it was necessary for the district to embark on strategic planning. It is the Superintendent's belief that in order for an organization to make continuous improvement it needs to be done so in an organized way. Strategic planning provides the framework for that organization. The district was showing signs of a lack of leadership which was evident through each building having its own mission statement and a lack of accountability to the schools' constituents. With these issues present the Superintendent felt that the strategic planning process would be beneficial to the district and initiated the process.

The next question that the researcher asked was in respect to the expected time commitment that the process would take. The Superintendent suggested that the preliminary planning would take six months and then there would be two one-year cycles of planning before the culture of strategic planning would take root. The Superintendent also felt that it was important to note that until there is a significant opportunity that can be addressed through the strategic planning process, the district will not truly know how effective the completed planning has been.

The third question that the researcher asked was related to the financial commitment that the district had to make to conduct the strategic planning process. The

Superintendent stated that there would be a total cost of \$25,000 paid to conduct a School Perceptions Survey to assess the major issues in the district, the facilitator fees, and the workshop/planning sessions that committee members are required to attend. There will be additional costs for staff time and resources that will be utilized during the strategic planning process. Although the financial commitment may be viewed as large to some people, the return on investment is estimated to be larger.

The fourth question that the researcher asked the Superintendent was how original committee members were selected. By asking Board members and administrators for recommendations, the Superintendent then determined that several groups needed to be represented on the original committee. These groups included community members representing businesses, service organizations, and senior citizens, parents, students, support staff, teachers, and administrators. Again, having this diversity among committee members would allow for the original strategic planning committee to be more effective.

The final question that the researcher asked the Superintendent was how well the strategic planning process has been received to date. The Superintendent felt that the process has been well received and that people were ready for direction and change within the district. The Superintendent is also very pleased with the level of involvement from district staff. There have been measurable outcomes at various sites throughout the district which is also an indicator of success.

Understanding the motivating factors to begin the strategic planning process provides value to the timeline and progression of the plan. Considering these factors will also assist in the development of an evaluation tool when the district is ready to conduct one. As the ultimate goal of the strategic planning process is to provide a learning

community that will benefit the children, it is easy to understand the value of the strategic planning process.

After receiving this information from the Superintendent, a look at the initial timeline (Appendix E) that was established when this process began in September, 2004 was completed. The timeline provides detailed information about the tasks that needed to be completed by October, 2006 when this study was being conducted, as well as the phases of the process in the first three years of planning. After reviewing the timeline it can be concluded that the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD) is on track with their original goals, but even two years into the process it can also be noted that the district is still in the “Beginning of Implementation of the Strategic Plan” phase as indicated on the timeline. More detailed information about the specific meetings that took place between September, 2004 and the time of this study concluding (December, 2006) can be found in Appendices F - K. These appendices include meeting minutes and other information to assist in planning evaluation and making recommendations to the process in chapter five of this paper.

After this discussion between the researcher and the Superintendent had been completed, as well as a review of the timeline and supporting minutes from meetings had been evaluated, the researcher decided to conduct a survey to evaluate the strategic planning process in the CFAUSD to date. A survey would allow the researcher to receive the most input regarding the strategic planning process.

#### *Subject Selection and Description*

The population of this study consisted of 36 members from the original District Strategic Planning Committee. In December, 2004 there were 35 members on the



committee, however since that time one additional person had joined. The 36 members of the committee represent a diverse background including district administration, faculty members, support staff, students, school board members, community members, and parents. Each individual that serves on the District Strategic Planning Committee was invited by the Superintendent to become part of the group. As this group of people was part of the driving force behind the implementation of the strategic planning process taking place in the CFAUSD, it was deemed that this group was purposeful for the case study and a sample group was selected.

The sample group was extracted from the population after an introduction of the study was given at a District Strategic Planning Committee update. Of the original 36 members there were 23 members present at the update. The researcher's intent of the study was provided in detail to the committee members and all 23 members of the committee were invited to participate. A sample group was formed from the 23 members based on volunteerism after an introduction to the study was given. Sample group (n=17) volunteered to participate in an anonymous survey to evaluate the progress of the strategic planning process to date. This selection of the sample group was done by committee members completing the "Consent Form to Agree to Participate as a Research Subject" (Appendix L).

In summary, the selection of the sample group was completed in three phases: (a) an introduction to the case study and survey to assess progress to date, (b) a detailed methodology of the case study and survey were presented to potential participants, and (c) participants' voluntary consent to participate forming sample group (n=17).

### *Instrumentation*

Prior to deciding whom to select to participate in the case study of the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD), there was much consideration placed on whether to complete personal interviews or to conduct a survey gathering the information necessary to make informed recommendations about the strategic planning process taking place in the CFAUSD. It was decided that in order to conduct the most complete study, a survey of the original District Strategic Planning Committee members would reach the most people in the time that was available to conduct the study. The remainder of this section will outline how this tool was created and implemented.

To begin the process of conducting surveys there was e-mail communication between the researcher and the Superintendent to seek approval of this process (Appendices M and N). This communication is different than the original communication granted by the Superintendent allowing the study to be conducted in that it informs the Superintendent that the researcher is attempting to solidify a date that a survey can be presented to committee members.

The main tool used to gather data for the purpose of this study was a survey created by the researcher. Originally it was the intention of the researcher to complete a short ten question, open-ended survey. Prior to the sample group (n=17) being decided, the researcher realized the most effective way to complete the study was to rewrite the survey so it included both open and closed-ended questions. It is stated through GuideStar Research Communications that surveys should be kept simple, user-friendly, and as brief as possible. (<http://www.guidestarco.com/Increasing-survey-response-rates.htm>) With this in mind, the researcher redesigned the original survey from ten open-

ended questions to eight multiple choice questions with six of the eight multiple choice questions offering room for further responses. There were two additional questions that were open-ended so members from the sample group (n=17) could provide feedback that was produced without any influence from possible responses the researcher had provided in the multiple choice questions.

The survey (Appendix O) covered a wide range of topics including why it was necessary for the district to complete the strategic planning process and evaluation of the outside facilitator. There was an emphasis on the committee members and why they wanted to participate in the process, how other experiences they may have had with strategic planning is impacting this process, and what their future time commitment is to the process. Also evaluated through the survey were ways to measure success of the strategic planning process and how to identify barriers that prohibit success from occurring. Committee members were asked for their recommendations to make this process successful and how to continue to achieve goals. All of the questions that were created for the survey were developed after the literature review was completed in chapter two of this paper. The questions were developed to ultimately enhance the strategic planning process and to assist in making recommendations to improve the process. Again, the recommendations will be given in chapter five of this paper. A summary of responses to the questions asked in the survey will be provided in chapter four of this paper.

#### *Data Collection Procedures*

The process of collecting data from the survey that was conducted will be outlined in this section. Prior to the District Strategic Planning Committee update, the

researcher sent out an e-mail informing committee members that information was going to be presented to them at the District Strategic Planning Committee update meeting asking each member to please consider participating in a case study and survey evaluating the strategic planning process. A copy of the consent form (Appendix L) and the survey (Appendix O) were attached to the e-mail so that the committee members were informed to the content of the survey prior to formally being asked to participate.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the surveys were distributed at a District Strategic Planning Committee update. During this committee update the Superintendent introduced the researcher. At that time, a packet containing the letter of introduction (Appendix P), the consent form (Appendix L), the survey (Appendix O), and postage paid envelope to return the survey, were distributed to 23 of the 36 committee members. A label on the packet read “Strategic Planning Questionnaire-Please Return to Aimee Drivas by October 31, 2006” was placed on the front of each packet to remind participants of the date that survey needed to be returned by. The researcher then went through the information in each packet, outlining each document in detail. The researcher concluded with asking the sample group (n=17) to return the completed surveys in the postage paid envelope that was provided by October 31, 2006. The floor was opened for questions regarding the process, consent form, and survey. There were no immediate questions from the committee members. The researcher ended the presentation by thanking the committee members for taking the time to consider participating in the survey and for their involvement in the strategic planning process.

Consent was given by 17 of the 36 members forming the sample group (n=17). Sample group (n=17) members returned the completed surveys to the researcher by

October 31, 2006 either by mail, interoffice mail, or e-mail. There was no need for a follow-up letter requesting that the sample group (n=17) return information to the researcher as all members did so in a timely manner. As the potential number of people to be surveyed was 36 and the final sample group (n=17) consisted of 17 members, the response rate from those asked to complete the survey was 47.22%. Of the sample group (n=17) members that completed the consent form to participate in the study, 100% returned the survey by the requested due date.

#### *Data Analysis*

Once the surveys were returned the researcher began compiling the information in a spreadsheet database to analyze the response rate for each of the questions. Detailed information regarding the responses to each of the questions can be found in chapter four of this paper. The response rates were tallied and recorded so that the information could be made into graphs to identify the prominent issues that are impacting the strategic planning process in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD). These graphs will be presented in chapter four of this paper.

The researcher then identified common themes from the responses to the survey and the interview questions. Graphs that detail the survey responses begin to identify strengths and weaknesses of the strategic planning process. Emerging themes were identified that supported the research questions in chapter one of this paper: (1) Understand why the CFAUSD decided to complete strategic planning in the district. (2) Determine the timeline and outcomes that the district has for the strategic planning process. (3) Identify resources to assist the CFAUSD in completing the strategic planning process. (4) Provide suggested methods for coping with cultural change during strategic

planning to ease employee resistance. These common themes, and the identification of potential strengths and weaknesses of this strategic planning process, will be used to make recommendations in chapter five of this paper.

### *Limitations*

One of the limitations recognized during the survey process was the absence of demographic information. Demographic information that included the number of years that the sample group (n=17) members had been involved in education may have influenced their responses to the strategic planning process in the CFAUSD. Age may have also played into the responses as those members that have more experience with strategic planning could have a different view on the process than someone who has little experience with the planning process.

Another limitation to the study was the lack of attendance by some of the original District Strategic Planning Committee members. Had more of the members been at the update meeting, it is possible that more surveys could have been distributed. Since it was the researcher's intent to ensure anonymity, the researcher did not take attendance of who was at the update meeting. Having already obtained a 47.22% response rate through the update meeting and e-mail request to complete the survey, and wanting to avoid duplicate distribution of the survey, the researcher decided to not mail surveys to committee members in the hope of obtaining a higher response rate. It is possible that potential members of the sample group (n=17) may have felt as though they could become attached to their responses and this could have created a reluctance to participate.

Another limitation that was realized was that some of the original District Strategic Planning Committee members were also serving as building committee

members that were attempting to establish the goals that the original committee had created. Since some of the original committee members had a dual interest in the planning process, it is possible that their responses are skewed based on the successes or failures that they are experiencing at the building levels.

A final possible limitation to the survey is that the researcher also serves on a building committee involved in the strategic planning process and there is the potential for the phrasing of the survey to be influenced by the perceptions and experiences of the researcher.

### *Summary*

This chapter explained the methodology behind the subject selection and description, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and limitations of the methodology. Through the methodology, strengths and weaknesses began to emerge in the strategic planning process and possible recommendations for continued success of the process are beginning to materialize. Chapter four of this paper will explain the compilation of these results in detail. A summary of why the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District decided to participate in the strategic planning process and the accomplishments to date were also identified at the beginning of this chapter.

## Chapter IV: Results

In this chapter an examination of the results found during the compilation of data will be conducted. Data was collected from sample group (n=17) through a single interview and a ten question survey. The purpose of this study is to review resources that support the strategic planning process taking place in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD), to identify barriers of the planning process to date and make recommendations to overcome identified barriers, and offer strategies to implement the changes that will be recommended through the planning process. It is the researcher's intent to identify existing and potential barriers to the strategic planning process through the examination of the data received from the interview and the survey which were explained in chapter three of this paper. The identification of barriers, and the consideration of the data collected, will assist in making recommendations to the strategic planning process which can be found in chapter five of this paper.

### *Item Analysis*

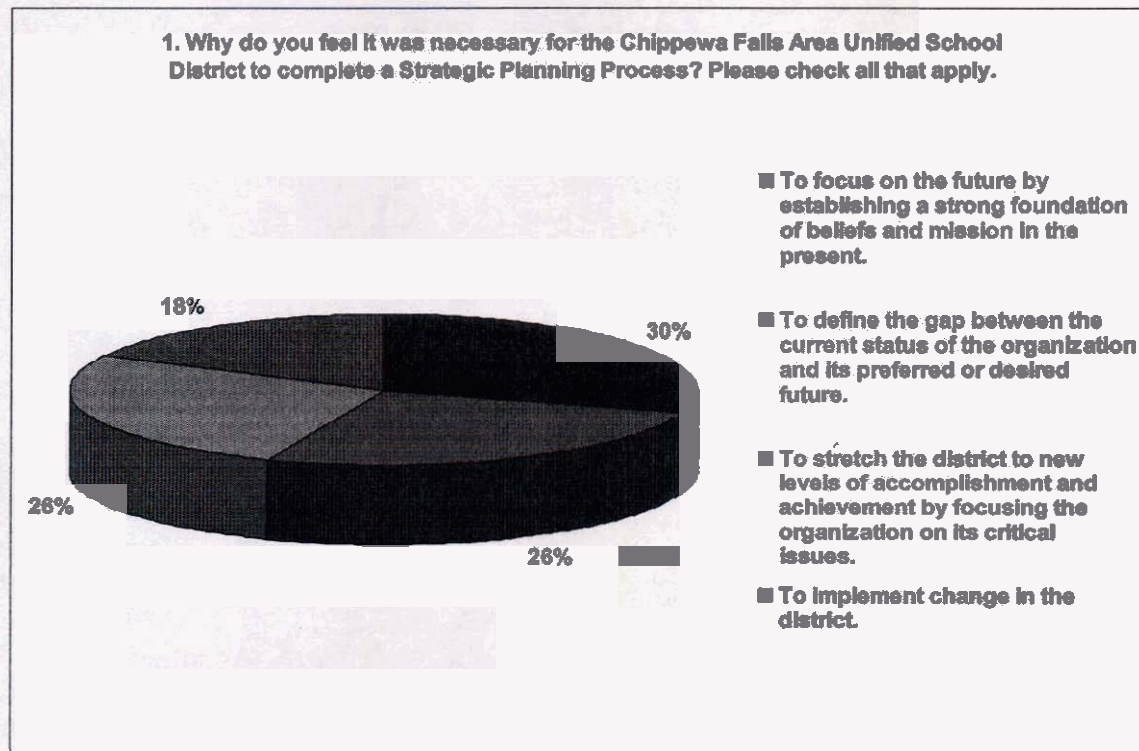
The results of the survey that was administered to the sample group (n=17) are revealed in this section. Each question will be listed and examined in detail.

Question one asked committee members why they felt that it was important for the CFAUSD to complete the strategic planning process. The majority of the respondents felt that the main reason to complete this process was to focus on the future by establishing a strong foundation of beliefs and mission. There were four possible responses listed to this question. The response rate for the potential answers to the question was very close. Refer to Graph 1 for a breakdown of the responses. It can be concluded from the response rates that all of the suggested reasons for completing



strategic planning in the CFAUSD were important to the respondents since each response had a similar value. It is also interesting to note that only 18% of the committee members are interested in implementing change within the CFAUSD. Most of the committee members are clearly more interested in creating and defining goals for the district, rather than the actual process of creating change in the CFAUSD.

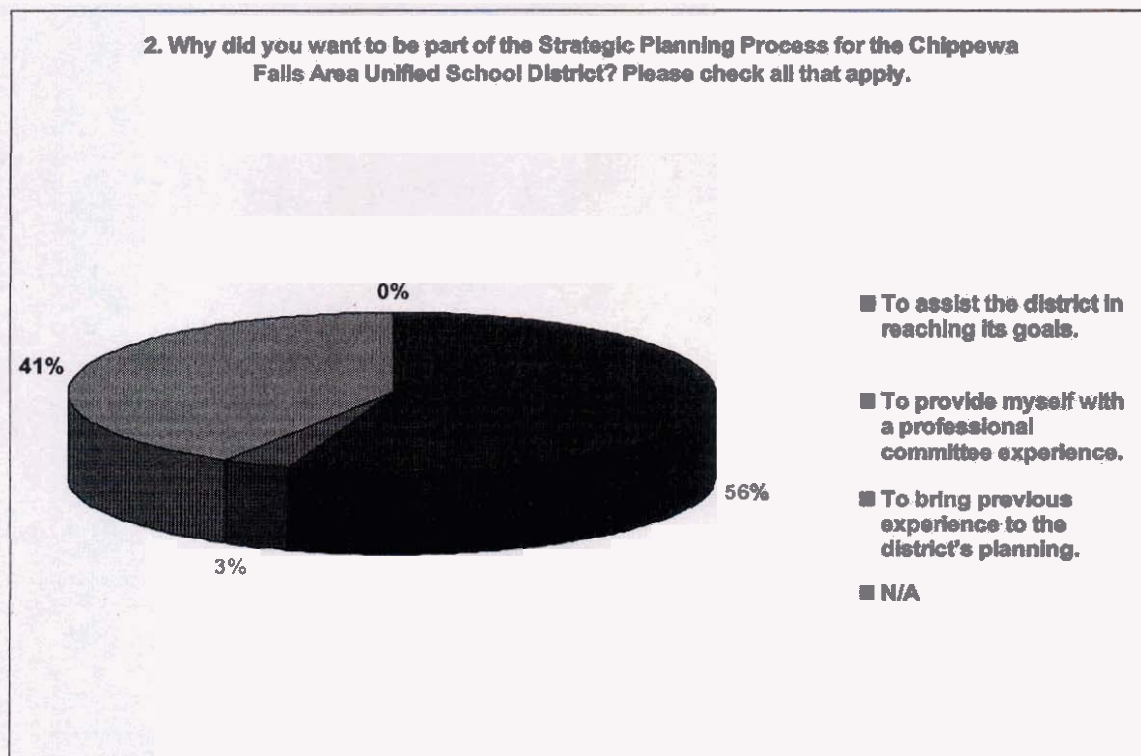
Graph 1: Reasons to Complete the Strategic Planning Process



There was no room available for additional comments from respondents for this question.

Question two asked respondents why they wanted to be part of the strategic planning process. The overwhelming reason that people became involved with the planning process was to assist in the district reaching its goals. Two additional reasons were listed on the survey. Refer to Graph 2 for a breakdown of response rates. The researcher asked this question to ensure that committee members had the best interests of the district in mind when they became part of the process and were not attempting to only satisfy personal motives.

Graph 2: Reasons for Joining the Strategic Planning Committee

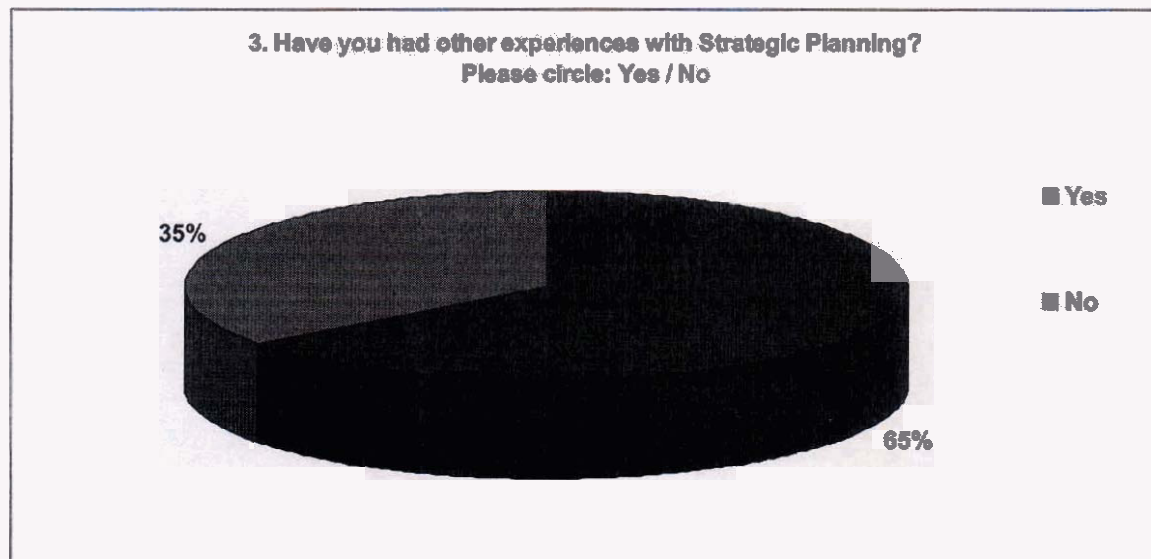


Question two left room for committee member comments related to this question.

Complete responses can be found in Appendix Q. Many committee members indicated that there is a sense of pride that is shared from being part of the strategic planning process in the CFAUSD.

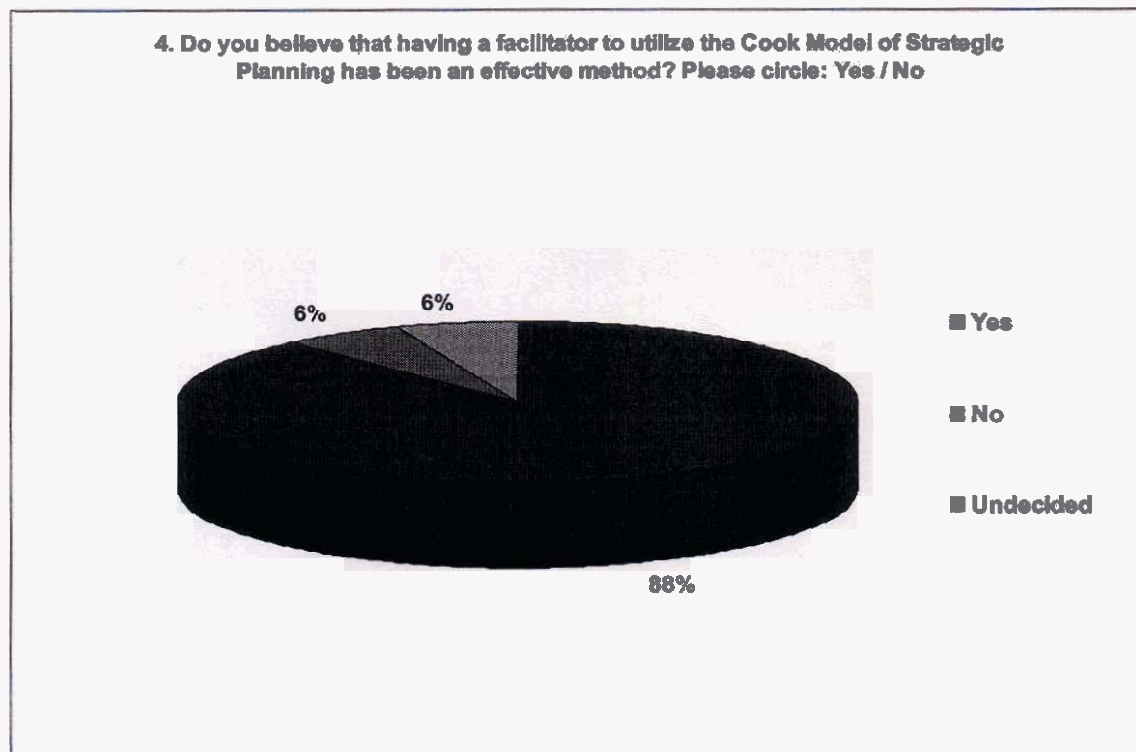
Question three asked committee members if they have had previous experience with strategic planning, and if they had, do they believe that the process the CFAUSD is using is effective. The results of this question yielded that the majority of the members did have prior experience, while others had none. Refer to Graph 3 for details. The question also asked why or why not the planning had been effective in their opinion. Complete statements can be found in Appendix Q; however, it can be concluded from the statements that many of the committee members feel that the process has been effective to date, but there is also room for improvement. It should be noted that even with room for improvement, many committee members felt a positive impact within the district. The fact that there are so many stakeholders involved in this process, and that the strategic planning process has lost none of its impact in the eyes of the committee members surveyed, shows that there is a continued commitment to this process.

Graph 3: Number of Committee Members with Previous Planning Experience



Question four asked committee members if they believed that using a facilitator to assist with the process and following the Cook Model of Strategic Planning has been effective. Almost all of the committee members replied that they felt having a facilitator and using the Cook Model have been effective. Refer to Graph 4 for details.

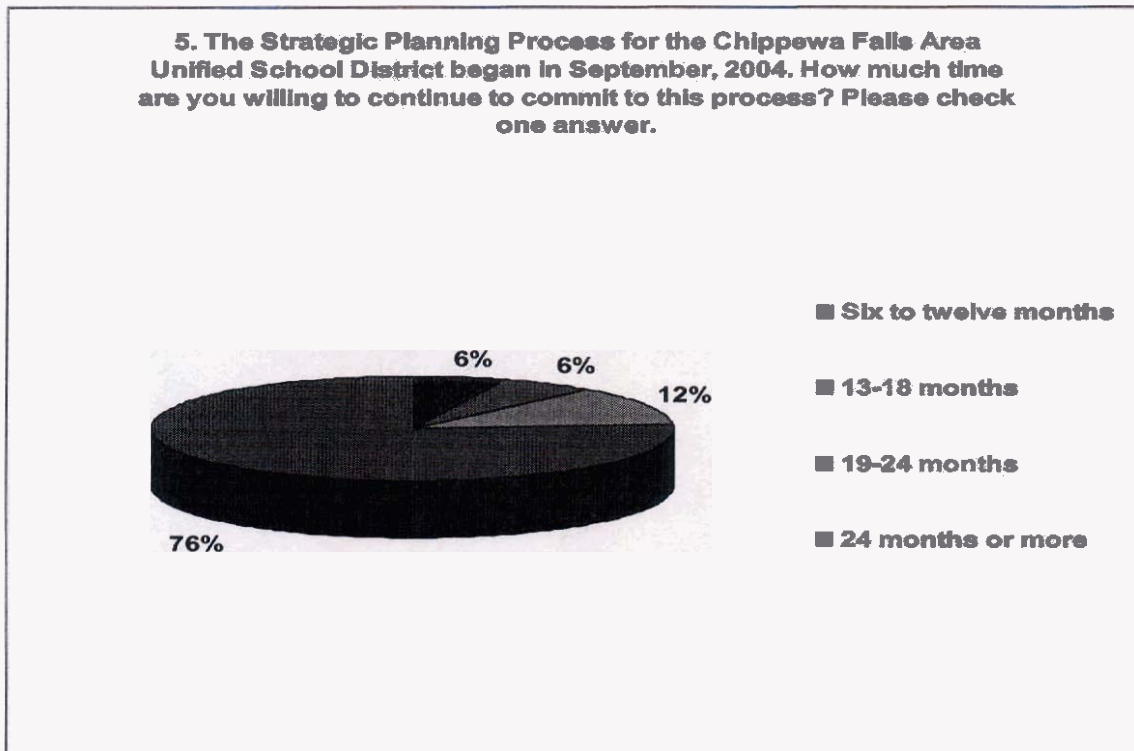
Graph 4: Consultant and Cook Model Effectiveness



Question four also asked the committee members for comments on why or why not they believed that the facilitator and the Cook Model were effective. Nearly all of the committee members did respond that having an outside facilitator was important, and that the chosen facilitator has been effective in their approach to the strategic planning process. There were suggestions made that indicate that there is room for improvement; such as the facilitator having spent too much time on one goal or topic. Overall, the value of having a facilitator and a model to follow outweigh any of the negative issues that were mentioned. See Appendix Q for a list of all statements.

Question five asked committee members what their continued time commitment to the strategic planning process will be. There were four options to the question, each at a six month interval. The majority of the committee members indicated that they plan to stay involved with the process for 24 months or more. Graph 5 indicates the specifics of the responses.

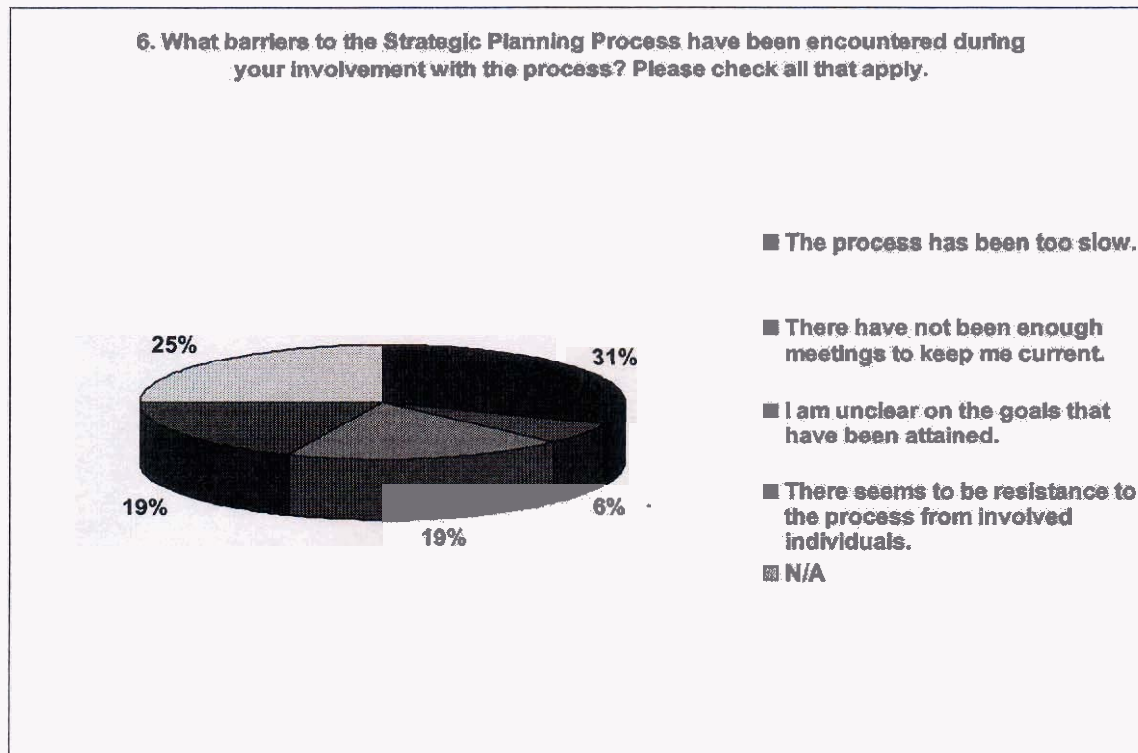
Graph 5: Continued Member Time Commitment



The researcher did not leave the option of a zero to six month interval of commitment to the committee members and there were no responses that indicated that the researcher should have provided this option. However, if this survey was redone the researcher would add that option for committee members who may be feeling that the two year commitment they have already given is all they can serve.

Question six asked committee members to identify barriers to the planning process. There were five potential barriers listed and it was indicated that the main barriers to the strategic planning process are the pace of the process to date and the amount of time that the process requires. Graph 6 has the statistical breakdown of the responses.

Graph 6: Barriers to the Strategic Planning Process



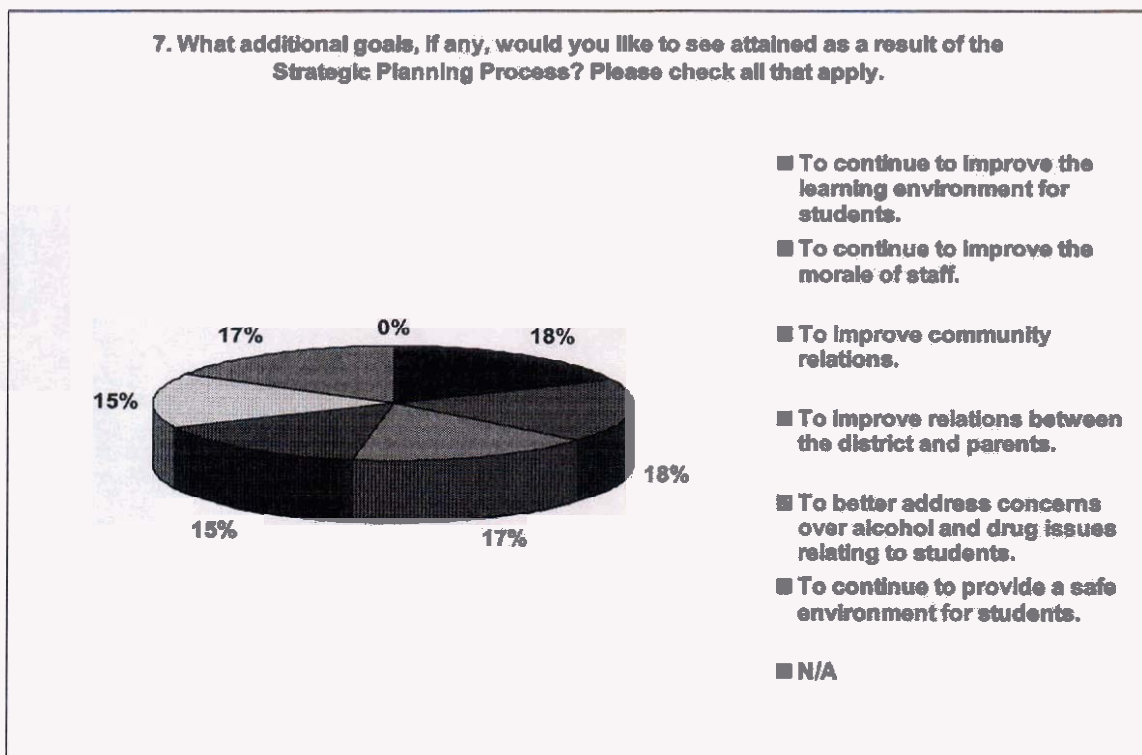
It is interesting to note that 25% of the committee members did not think that there were any barriers to the process to date. With 75% of committee members identifying barriers this supports the researcher's objectives to identify resources to assist the CFAUSD in completing the strategic planning process, and provide suggested methods for coping with cultural change during strategic planning to ease employee resistance. It should be



noted that through the written responses given to this question (Appendix Q) another barrier that was identified, but not listed as a multiple choice response, was money.

Question seven asked committee members if there are any additional goals that they would like to see attained as a result of this process. There was an overwhelming response by committee members indicating that the planning process could utilize the potential goals listed in response to this question. Many of the responses received equal weight in importance, with members showing that all of the additional goals were valuable. Graph 7 indicates the importance of each additional goal.

Graph 7: Additional Goals



It should be noted after reviewing Graph 7 that the 0% goes to the N/A category as no committee member felt the need to establish additional goals through the strategic planning process. Written responses to this question can be found in Appendix Q. The

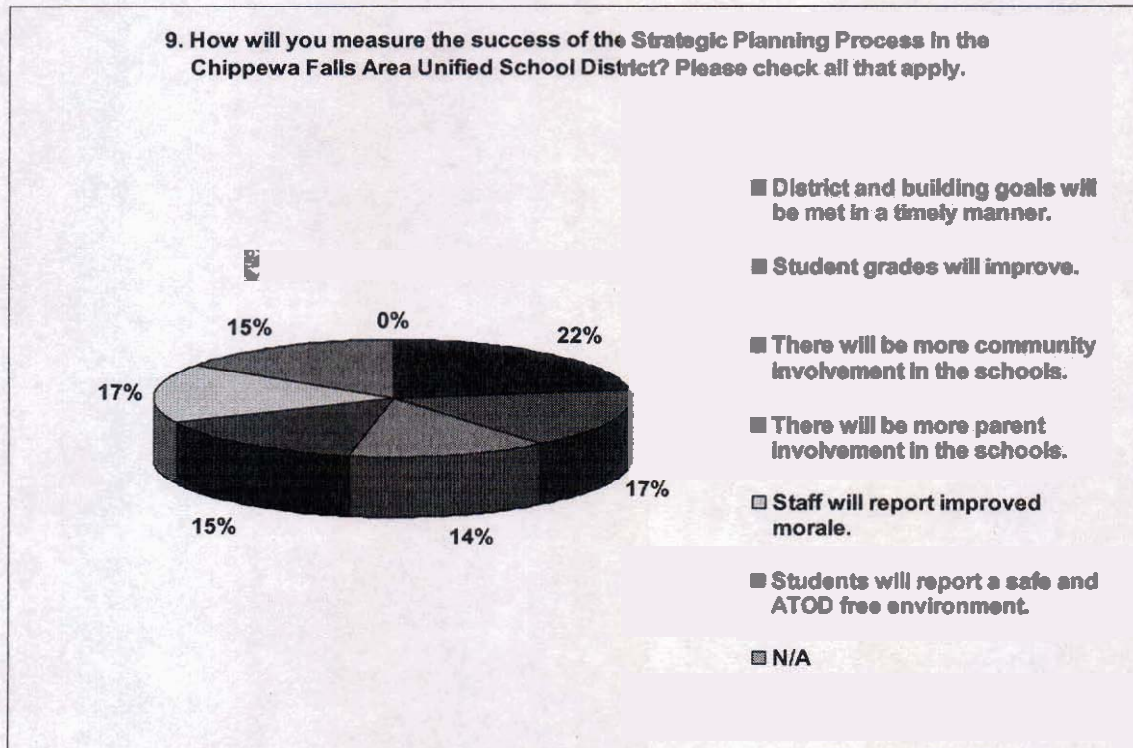
written responses also support the importance of the goals listed above, as well as the need to address a growing enrollment.

Question eight was an open-ended question that asked for recommendations to implement change during the strategic planning process. The written responses to this question (found in Appendix Q) covered a wide range of ideas. There truly does not seem to be one common theme that emerged from the responses. However, the aspect of allowing enough time to complete the process and implement change, and the commitment to the cost of the process were mentioned more than once. The responses covered a variety of ideas that focused on stakeholders, curriculum, flexibility, and persistence. Continued communication between stakeholders and the community was also viewed as important. Results indicate that a need exists to nurture staff morale during this time of change for the CFAUSD. The researcher believes that all of these suggestions will be useful as recommendations for implementing change. The committee members' suggestions for implementing change are supported by the literature review in chapter two that deals with cultural change.



Question nine asked committee members how they measure the success of the strategic planning process taking place in the CFAUSD. The most popular response by committee members indicated that success can be measured by district and building goals being met in a timely manner. Graph 8 indicates the breakdown of the responses.

**Graph 8: Ways to Measure the Success of Strategic Planning**



There are also written responses to question nine that can be found in Appendix Q. These responses suggest that there are additional ways to measure success of the strategic planning process that are not listed as answers to this question. There is no common theme that emerged from the written responses and each response could be a valuable measurement of success in the CFAUSD. It should be noted that the 0% indicates that all committee members felt that there had to be some measure of success related to the strategic planning process.

The final question in the survey is an open-ended question that asks committee members for additional comments regarding the strategic planning process. Many committee members' comments indicated that they were appreciative of the survey being conducted as an assessment of where the CFAUSD is in the process. Another common theme that emerged from the responses to this question was the importance of the strategic planning process and the continued commitment that needed to be made to the process. Appendix Q has a list of complete responses.

The data that was collected from completing this survey will be used by the researcher to make conclusions about, and recommendations to, the strategic planning process that is taking place in the CFAUSD in chapter five of this paper. The effects of strategic planning on the CFAUSD remain unclear at the conclusion of this survey as this is an ongoing process still in the "Beginning of Implementation of the Strategic Plan" phase as outlined in the CFAUSD Timeline (Appendix E). The intention of this survey is to serve as an early tool of evaluation to assist in making recommendations to the continued strategic planning efforts in the CFAUSD.

## Chapter V: Discussion

The purpose of this study is to review resources that support the strategic planning process taking place in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD), to identify barriers of the planning process to date and make recommendations to overcome identified barriers, and offer strategies to implement the changes that will be recommended through the planning process. In chapter one of this paper, a comprehensive introduction to the CFAUSD was completed. Chapter two of this paper provided literature to support the strategic planning process in education. Chapter three dealt with the methodology the researcher used to gather data to assess the progress of strategic planning in the CFAUSD to date, while chapter four analyzed the results of the data gathered.

This chapter will utilize the results from chapter four to make recommendations that continue to support the strategic planning process in the CFAUSD and discuss potential solutions to identified barriers outlined in the previous chapter. The potential solutions were formulated after the review of literature was completed and feedback from the survey was gathered by the researcher. It is important to begin the discussion of this case study by reviewing the limitations of this research project before making any conclusions or recommendations. The following sections will list the limitations of the study, discuss conclusions that the researcher has made upon completing the study, and make recommendations which provide continued support to the strategic planning process. These recommendations will eventually allow, and support, the implementation of change in the CFAUSD.

### *Limitations*

To reiterate, the limitations that were discussed in chapter one of this paper are:

1. All members of this case study volunteered to serve as part of the district's strategic planning process. Bias toward certain steps in the process may have occurred.
2. The data collected during the interview process are influenced by the perceptions of the people being interviewed and may not always be factual.
3. The sampling process used to determine interviewees for this case study was influenced by accessibility and time constraints.
4. Bias may have occurred based on the researcher's participation in the strategic planning process where verbal and non-verbal communication was received.

### *Conclusions*

Before making conclusions about this study it is important to review the objectives of the study. To be most effective in doing this, the researcher will now evaluate each goal and provide a summary conclusion.

The first objective of this case study was to understand why the CFAUSD decided to complete the strategic planning process. It can be concluded upon finishing this study that strategic planning was done for several important reasons. It was imperative that the new Superintendent provide the staff members with a sense of direction and hold them more accountable to the Chippewa Falls community. By providing staff members with a common sense of direction and goals, it is easier for staff members to become united and reach the goals to which they aspire. This unity will eventually lead to a better sense of community both within the buildings of the CFAUSD, and within the community it

serves. It was also important to embark on strategic planning so that the CFAUSD is better at utilizing the scarce resources that they have, mainly finances and time. Considering that many school districts are in a budget crisis, and every school is responsible for providing a valuable education to children, it is important to become more organized and have a framework for each building's finances. The strategic planning process created the avenue to begin redefining the framework that is necessary for the CFAUSD to remain fiscally responsible. Also, the strategic planning process created an opportunity for committee members to meet and redefine the direction that the district needed to take. These conclusions regarding the importance of strategic planning in the CFAUSD are supported by the literature review completed in chapter two of this paper.

The second objective of this study was to determine the district timeline for the strategic planning process. After discussing this question with the Superintendent, and reviewing the minutes from one of the initial District Strategic Planning Committee meetings, it can be concluded that the CFAUSD has committed to at least three years of strategic planning. At the end of the three years the district will assess the progress that has been made and determine continued time commitment to the process. However, without specifically stating so, it can be concluded that the strategic planning process has a long term commitment from the district and the people involved.

The third objective of this study was to identify resources to assist the CFAUSD in completing the strategic planning process. In chapter two of this paper several resources were identified that lend credibility to the process and support the objectives. Upon completing this study it can be concluded that a ratio exists between resources and outcomes. For instance, people who have been involved in a previous strategic planning

process bring knowledge that increases the likelihood of success. In the next section of this chapter recommendations will be made that continue to support the strategic planning process in the CFAUSD.

The final objective of this study was to provide methods for coping with cultural change during strategic planning to ease employee resistance. Chapter two of this paper discussed why managing change is crucial to the success of strategic planning. Ways to identify staff reluctance to change and how to handle these situations were evaluated. Some methods for dealing with change and possible resistance to change were also discussed. It can be concluded from this study that with each new initiative that staff members must assume, support for change will be critical to the success of the given initiative.

Conclusions of this study reveal the importance of undertaking strategic planning in the CFAUSD. A greater sense of ownership for the goals of the district has been created during the process, from both staff and community members. Total effect on the organization cannot be clearly identified since the CFAUSD is still in the “Beginning of Implementation of the Strategic Plan” phase. As the district will be conducting the “First Annual Update” in the fall of 2007 a clearer impact of the strategic planning process can be determined at that time. However, with the amount of information received at the time this study was completed, recommendations to continue and possibly improve success in the CFAUSD will be given in the next section of this paper.

### *Recommendations*

Using the information that was obtained when the researcher conducted the survey to determine the strengths and weaknesses of strategic planning in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District (CFAUSD), recommendations for continued success to the planning process will be made in this section.

The first recommendation is to continue to involve people that are committed to implementing change within the CFAUSD. Since many of the committee members' responses indicated that they were interested in establishing goals for the strategic planning process, but not actually implementing those goals, it is important to involve people that are regarded as leaders. These people will initiate the changes that are recommended during the strategic planning process and provide support to staff members that are reluctant or showing resistance to change.

The second recommendation that the researcher has is to continue to create a sense of pride and inclusion for everyone involved in the strategic planning process. Both committee members and staff are being asked to undergo a considerable amount of change as a result of the process. Having staff members, support staff, and students involved in strategic planning committees at various levels in the district will create a sense of community. This sense of community will result in pride that can be felt by the people interacting with these members and lead to a positive impact at the building level. Community members and parents who are involved in the process will spread the sense of pride that they embody throughout the Chippewa Falls community. A positive impression of the strategic planning process will result.

A third recommendation is to continue to seek out new members who have had experience with strategic planning to serve on the various committees in the district. When this process started, 65% of the original District Strategic Planning Committee members had prior experience with strategic planning. In reviewing the improvements that have been made to date, the researcher believes that the experience that those committee members lent to the process assisted in the positive outcomes that have been gained. By having prior experiences with strategic planning, committee members were able to see potential barriers at the beginning of the process. In addition, these people could direct the district toward appropriate goals. Since the district is in the second year of the planning process new committee members may not be as knowledgeable about the goals that have been reached or the direction in which the district would like to progress. By finding new committee members with planning experience to replace the people that have previously served, these people may better understand how strategic planning works and move purposely forward. These people may also be less likely to create turnover within the committee that they are serving. New committee members need time to familiarize themselves with the planning process, but people with previous experience in strategic planning are likely to need less training and be able to focus on the process quicker than people without prior experience.

The fourth recommendation that the researcher has is to start planning now for the evaluation of the strategic planning process and the current facilitator of the process. With the "First Annual Update" taking place in the fall of 2007 a comprehensive evaluation of the process should take place. The CFAUSD will be three years into the process at that time, and since the researcher's survey only evaluated the opinions of the



original District Strategic Planning committee, it is critical to gain feedback from all the committees that have been formed in the district to truly assess the progress that is being made. It may also be valuable to survey other stakeholders such as staff, students, parents, and community members to determine their satisfaction with the planning process. Another component of the comprehensive evaluation should be an assessment of the facilitator since his time is a continued expense to the district. A recommendation that was made by an original committee member was that the facilitator was doing an excellent job, but that other people may be able to do it as effectively. Considering the cost-benefit of having an outside facilitator it is necessary to justify the continued expense. One can speculate that the facilitator needs to stay involved in the strategic planning process, as typically, credibility is obtained by having an outside consultant. By completing this comprehensive evaluation as recommended the CFAUSD can ascertain a clearer measure of progress.

A fifth recommendation of this researcher is that a time limit be set for committee members at all levels. It was recommended earlier that new members with prior strategic planning experience be added as turnover occurs, and with this recommendation it was also realized that a certain amount of time and training would need to be invested into new committee members. When new members join committees within the CFAUSD it is suggested that a time limit be set to ensure that burn-out does not occur. With the extra time commitment that is involved on committees, as well as preparation and responsibility, consideration of a two or three year position is desirable. This term-limit would allow more people to become involved in the strategic planning process. It also

supports the second recommendation to create a sense of inclusion for the changes that are occurring in the district.

Another recommendation of this researcher is to start immediately addressing the barriers that were noted by the original District Strategic Planning Committee members. These barriers include turnover, lack of participation from some members, the time commitment that is necessary for the process, funding issues, and ways to deal with the cultural change. Recommendations for dealing with turnover have already been suggested in creating a greater sense of inclusion for all stakeholders involved in the process and finding new members with prior experience. In addressing lack of participation from members, the recommendation of creating a greater sense of ownership and implementing a recognition system for committee members, and other stakeholders, may be beneficial. It has also been suggested that a time limit for committee members be set thus alleviating some of the pressures that committee members feel to stay involved, or as one member said, "committed out". Holding meetings on a needs basis is another way to add value to the time that members commit to the process. To address funding concerns, it is recommended that after a comprehensive evaluation is completed in the fall of 2007 consideration of funding is made at that time. Finally, ways to support cultural change have been outlined in chapter two of this paper. Although other barriers exist this researcher believes that an emphasis on these issues will lead to success during the strategic planning process in the CFAUSD.

Since another barrier that was identified was the strategic planning process being too slow, with the result being committee members uncertain of the goals that exist and that are being attained, it is recommended by this researcher that the original goals of the

strategic planning process be frequently reviewed allowing members to feel a sense of accomplishment. Not only should the original goals be visited frequently, but any new goals that are developed should also be clear and evaluated for progress.

The final recommendation that this researcher has to offer is that the CFAUSD not only begin creating a comprehensive evaluation to assess progress in the fall of 2007, but that the district also continues to develop other evaluation tools to measure success. Question nine of the survey this researcher conducted asked how successes of the strategic planning process could be measured. Answers indicated that district and building goals met in a timely manner are the best measurement of success, thus emphasizing the need to review the strategic planning and district goals frequently. However, other indicators of success include the improvement of student grades and staff morale, more parent involvement, a reduced presence of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, and more community involvement. All of these items are a sign of success, but difficult to measure in a tangible method. The CFAUSD needs to work on developing evaluation tools that measure these subjective successes which often times have the biggest rewards.

In summary, the value of strategic planning in the CFAUSD has been established. A timeline for completing the process, resources to support the process, and ways to handle cultural change have been identified. Recommendations to support change have been identified. By capitalizing on the skills of people for the strategic planning process that have a genuine interest in the goals of the district, and who may bring prior planning experience with them, the CFAUSD has aligned itself for success. Many of the committee members are also committed to long term planning which will allow for more

accountability during the process. With the additional use of an outside facilitator even more credibility is lent to the strategic planning process. By receiving early feedback on the barriers that have been encountered, and allowing the researcher to provide recommendations to assist in overcoming the barriers that the original District Strategic Planning Committee members have identified, the CFAUSD has an opportunity to keep the direction of the strategic planning process moving forward with a positive impact on its constituents. From the identification of barriers, current goals may be reached and additional goals may be created. Also, the positive suggestions obtained from the survey regarding cultivating change have the potential to ease anxiety that some people experience during strategic planning. Finally, there will be future opportunities to measure the successes of the strategic planning process. A celebration of each of those successes will keep the momentum of this process alive.

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## Appendix A: Letter Requesting Permission to Survey Committee

June 29, 2006

Mr. Michael Schoch, Superintendent  
Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District  
1130 Miles Street  
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

Dear Mr. Schoch,

I hope that you are finding time to enjoy the beautiful weather so far this summer, it's been gorgeous! I have enrolled in my final class at Stout and I am completing the research component of my thesis. I am writing to you to seek your opinion and possible approval of my thesis topic.

I am obtaining a Master's in Training and Development and I would like to use CFAUSD as a case study for Strategic Planning in Education as my topic. I would write five chapters that are broken down as follows:

1. Overview of CFAUSD
2. Research pertinent to the Strategic Planning Process
3. A history of what we have done in CFAUSD
3. A focus on where we are currently at in the process
4. Possible recommendations about where to go in the future

It is my hope to complete my paper by May 2007. If you do not see any conflicts of interest, and I would of course keep anything confidential just that, I would like your permission to go ahead with this project. Thank you for taking the time to consider this and I look forward to your suggestions and comments regarding this idea.

Sincerely,

Aimee Drivas  
Business Education Teacher  
Chippewa Falls Middle School  
750 Tropicana Boulevard  
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729  
715-726-2400 x2422  
drivasae@chipfalls.k12.wi.us



## Appendix B: E-mail Granting Project Permission

**From:** Michael Schoch  
**Sent:** Thu 6/29/2006 3:08 PM  
**To:** Aimee Drivas  
**Subject:** RE: Approval of Thesis Idea for Aimee Drivas

Aimee,

I do not have any problems with the choice of topic. I do not know what requirements you have for your paper so any advice I give you would be based on my personal experience writing a thesis. I say this because your choice of chapters does not follow the general protocol that I am familiar with eg., a research paper based on statistical analysis of a thesis topic. Typically in that approach the chapters are roughly:

1. Thesis statement
2. Review of the literature
3. Defining the study
4. Results of the study
5. Conclusions related to thesis statement

Your choice of topic does not include a thesis statement so I can not tell what expectations your program has. Your requirements may be different so don't feel that you need to follow my example. You should however be sure what they are, in which case you would need to speak to your advisor. I would be happy to give you advice, time permitting. Good luck with your project.

Mike Schoch

## Appendix C: The Applied Strategic Planning Model

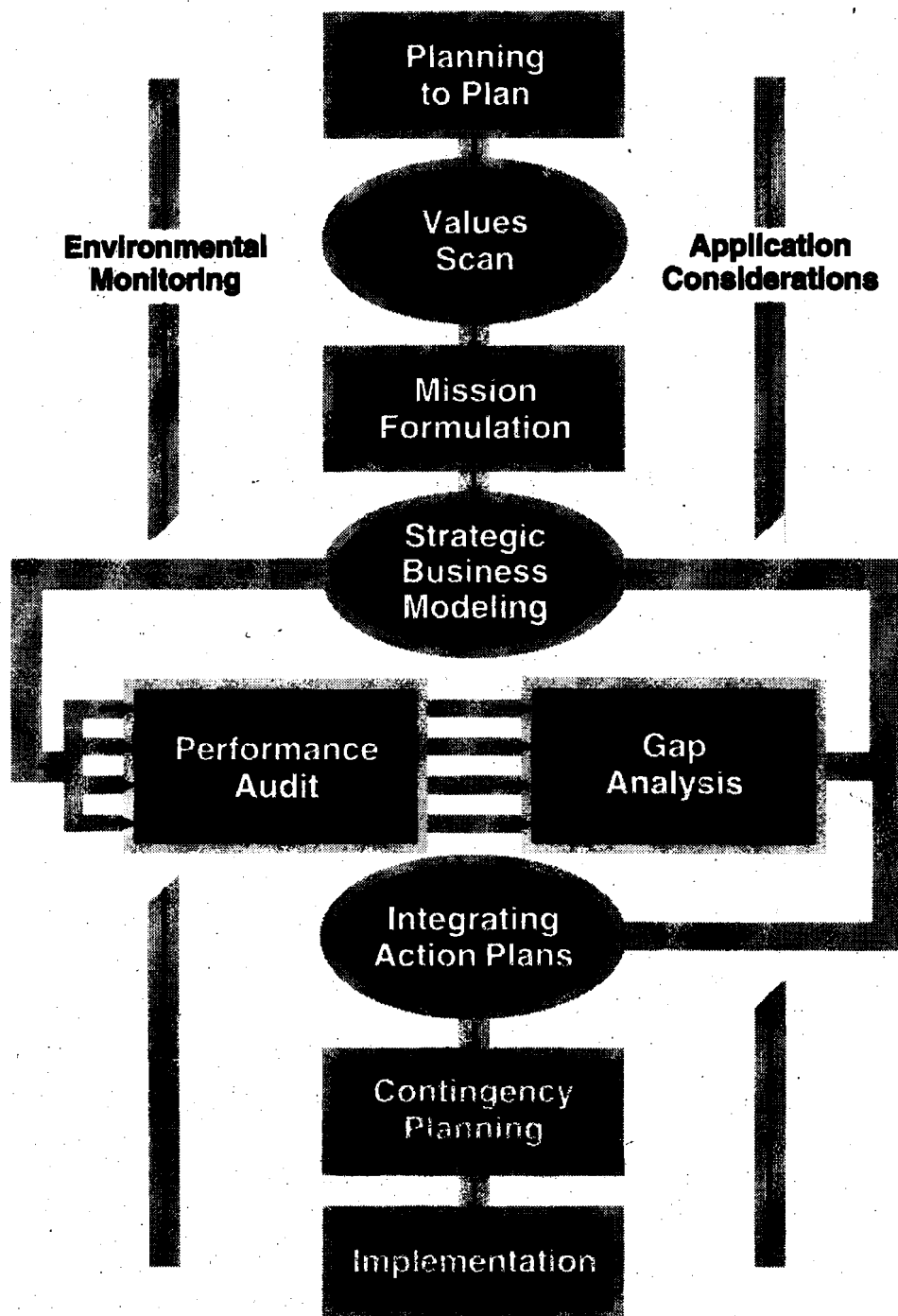


Figure 1-1. The Applied Strategic Planning Model

## Appendix D: Interview Questions &amp; Responses from Mr. Schoch, Superintendent

## Interview Questions for Mr. Michael Schoch

1. Why did you feel it was necessary to embark on the strategic planning process for the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District?

It is my belief that the only way for a district to make strides in the area of continuous improvement is to do so in an organized way. When I arrived in the district I found that there were many great things that were happening for kids but not all of our children were experiencing those benefits. Some schools or even departments were very proactive others were not. I also sensed some concern about where the district was headed and no one could tell me where that was. The evidence of that was as simple as a tour of the district's buildings, each had its own mission statement. These things together with the knowledge that schools in general were going to need to be more accountable to their constituents and that we needed to use scarce resources more efficiently caused me to conclude that this district was ready for the strategic planning process.

2. How long did you expect the process to take?

I anticipated that the preliminary planning phase would take about six months after Board approval and that the first cycle of planning would take about one year. It will take about two full cycles before the culture of strategic planning can take root in the district. Each cycle will last one year. It is my belief that the planning process will not be successful until there is a significant threat or opportunity that is addressed through strategic planning. Until that time we will not be truly tested nor will the planning process.

3. Is there a major financial commitment that the district had to make to complete the process?

There is a fairly large financial commitment on the part of the district. I would say that for the School Perceptions Survey, and the facilitator of the process the cost was about \$25,000 over a two-year period. In addition there were workshops and planning sessions where staff members participated in action planning sessions that had a financial cost. We will continue to have financial costs related to district staff time and resources. This is not a cheap process, however I believe that the investment will pay huge dividends in the future.

4. How did you determine who to ask to be on the original strategic planning committee?

Not knowing a lot of staff or community members caused me to seek input about planning team membership from the Board, and administrators. We looked at groups that had been formed in the past in order to make sure we had a representative sampling of our schools and community. From our schools we included teachers, support staff members and students. Community members represented business, service groups, and senior citizens. We felt that it was very important that the community see the product of our work as representative of the community not just me.

5. How do you feel the process has been received to date?

I am very pleased with how the process has been received. I have the sense that many people were looking for something like this that could give our district a direction for the future. I am extremely pleased by the level of involvement on the part of our district staff as well as some of the outcomes of the planning done by the various sites. My goal all along however was to get this process to the point that our culture changed. That is to say that the Chippewa Falls School District would function as learning community for the benefit of our children, and that there would be systemic change as the result of our planning. I'm not sure that we are at that point yet but we have made some huge strides so far and I'm optimistic about our future.

### Appendix E: Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District Planning Timeline

September, 2004:	Board and Administrator Orientation Session (Facilitator, Board, Administration)
September, 2004:	Formal Board Decision to Engage in Strategic Planning (Board)
September/October, 2004:	Announcement and Invitation to the community Regarding Strategic Planning Intent and Involvement, Selection of Planning Team (Superintendent's Office)
Oct., 2004 – Dec., 2004:	Preparation of Data Base, Preparation for School Perception Survey and Preparation for First Planning Session (Superintendent and Administration, Board Committee if desired)
December 7, 2004	Preliminary Planning Team Meeting (Facilitator/Team about 2.5 hrs. – evening – Board Pres.)
February 10-12, 2005:	First Planning Session for Strategic Planning Team (3 days) (Facilitator/Team) February 10, 11 and 12
March, 2005:	Begin communicating the Draft of the Plan (Administration)
April, 2005:	Selection and Training of Action Team Chairs (Half day of training, with kick-off of action team planning) (Facilitator, Chairs, Action teams)
April-October, 2005:	Action Team Planning/Resource Time for Strategic Managers (Action Team Leaders and Team Members)
October 5, 2005:	Second Planning Session (Planning Team with Facilitator)
October 20, 2005:	Board Action on the Full Strategic Plan (Board)
Nov. 2005 – June, 2006:	Beginning of Implementation of the Strategic Plan (Superintendent and Strategy Managers)
Fall 2007:	First Annual Update (Facilitator and Team)

Appendix F: First Planning Session of the CFAUSD Minutes

**First Planning Session of the Strategic Planning Committee  
February 10, 11, and 12, 2005**

**Chippewa Valley Technical College Chippewa Campus**

A thirty-five-member committee representative of community and school stakeholders was organized by invitation. An experienced strategic planning consultant and superintendent facilitated the three-day event. The work in the three days was designed to develop the first phase of the total document. The actual results of the three days, arrived at by consensus, are a list of district Beliefs, a Vision Statement, a Mission Statement, Strategic Goals, and Strategies. These follow in detail.

Members of the Strategic Planning Committee include nine administrators, five parents, seven community members, three students, six teachers, three support staff, and three board members.

**Belief Statement – core values and organizational convictions that are confirmed in writing**

*Because students are our most valuable resource:*

- *We believe students come first in the CFAUSD*
- *We believe that our schools and community are responsible to teach students to value education and life-long learning.*
- *We believe our schools develop a desire for deep thinking, continuous growth, and life-long learning.*
- *We believe our schools provide a positive environment where mutual respect and individual responsibility are learned and practiced.*
- *We believe our schools provide a safe and secure environment.*
- *We believe every member of our community has value in the education of our students.*
- *We believe that all students, regardless of their diverse learning abilities, can learn and achieve to their maximum potential.*
- *We believe our schools provide a high-quality and comprehensive education for all students.*
- *We believe education is a partnership among students, staff, families, and the community.*

**Vision Statement – brief, but uncompromising statement of the School District's future intent**

*Educational Excellence for a Changing Tomorrow.*

**Mission Statement – purpose and function clearly outlined for the District**

*The Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District, in partnership with the community, is committed to excellence; empowering and challenging all students to learn while preparing them for an ever-changing global society.*

**Student Goals – student measurable objectives to be achieved over multiple years**

*All students will demonstrate respect and appreciate diversity through their participation in school and community groups and by their positive interactions with peers, staff, families and community.*

*All students will read and achieve at their grade level or maximum potential as measured by various assessments in all content areas.*

*All students will understand the benefits of and practice a healthy lifestyle by making responsible decisions and choices.*

**Strategies – statements that the organization will use resources to achieve and that accomplish the beliefs, vision, mission and goals**

**1. Educational Trends – Staff Development**

*We will identify instructional approaches, garner the necessary resources, support and provide staff development and make all adjustments necessary to implement new approaches consistent with our strategic plan.*

**2. Respect and Tolerance for Others**

*We will provide for the development of character traits that will address and reinforce respect for the individual and an appreciation for diversity through staff development, character education and equitable recognition of all student organizations.*

**3. Lifestyle**

*We will evaluate, develop, and implement necessary changes in our curriculum and programs to address issues related to the adoption of a healthy lifestyle.*

**4. Communication**

*We will use all available means to provide effective two-way communication between the schools and our internal and external partners.*

**5. Financial**

*We will assess the educational system to seek and prioritize resources so that we can meet the needs of all students.*

**6. Recognition**

*We will continually identify our strengths, acknowledge all who are responsible for excellence, and empower the district to coordinate a comprehensive marketing and recognition plan.*

## Appendix G: Action Planning - Second Phase

### **Action Planning – Second Phase March, 2005 – May, 2005**

Action Plans have been developed in each of the identified strategies. These are the detailed descriptions of the actions required to achieve the specific results necessary for the implementation of the strategies. In the action plan implementation, the strategies become operational. Action plans, however, are only plans. Developing them does not constitute actual implementation. Implementation will occur after the final plan is approved by the Board of Education.

Action teams were organized following the February planning phase. Action planning team co-chairs were selected to facilitate the five-step action planning process. The action team co-chairs were:

- |                                     |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • One teacher and one administrator | Communication         |
| • One teacher and one administrator | Educational Trends    |
| • Two administrators                | Finance Strategy      |
| • One teacher and one administrator | Lifestyles            |
| • One teacher and one administrator | Respect and Tolerance |
| • One teacher and one administrator | Value and Recognition |

The five-step action planning process involves:

1. Fully understanding the intent of the strategy – why it was chosen and developed.
2. Researching and gathering as much information on the strategy – local, regional, state, national data, information, literature. The attempt is to locate “best practices” of implementing the strategy.
3. Brainstorming the alternatives and options available following the research and gathering phase. Determine the major 2-3 focuses of the strategy.
4. Complete the writing of the focuses into objectives, with each part or objective having steps for completion.
5. Completion of a cost/benefit analysis is the plan. Written balance costs – tangible and intangible with real benefits?

To see the objectives for each action planning team, please click team name above.

The action planning teams, which included members of the original committee plus additional volunteers, met between March, 2005 and May, 2005. The proposed action plans were presented to the original committee in October, 2005. Following discussion, the committee recommended changes to the document. They also approved having site teams address specific long range plans for their respective buildings using the format represented in the district action plans.



## Appendix H: Phase Three Minutes

**PHASE THREE  
SECOND PLANNING SESSIONS**

**CHIPPEWA FALLS AREA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005**

- 8:00 Welcome Back and quick reintroductions  
Where we've been and where we are going  
Purpose of 2<sup>nd</sup> Planning Session  
Ground Rules
- 8:20 Presentation of Action Plans  
25 Maximum Minutes per plan, which includes presentation and follow-up questions:  
8:20 Educational Trends  
8:45 Respect and Tolerance  
9:10 Lifestyles  
9:35 Communication  
10:00 Break  
10:10 Financial  
10:35 Recognition
- 11:00 Begin Analysis of Presented Plans (with guidelines and directions for groups)
- Noon - Lunch
- 12:40 Complete Analysis
- 1:00 Group share time (Groups share their analysis with another group ... 15 minutes  
Each small group reports out recommendations... A. Ready for Implementation, B. Recommended with changes, C. Cannot recommend – Not meeting intent of strategy
- Appox. 2:45 What are the next steps in the process? By Superintendent and facilitator
- 3:30 Discussion and Confirmation of entire plan. This is the last opportunity prior to Board action for the group to recommend changes to beliefs, mission, vision, student goals, and strategies.
- Appox. 4:00 – 4:15 Adjourn 2<sup>nd</sup> Planning Session

## Appendix I: Phase Four Minutes

**Phase Four – Present Strategic Plan for Board Approval**

CHIPPEWA FALLS AREA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
 Board of Education Regular Meeting  
**AGENDA**  
**October 20, 2005**  
 Administration Building  
 7:00 p.m.

1. Meeting called to order by President and announcement of executive session according to Section 19.85 (1)(c) of the State Statutes for the purpose of discussing personnel (*approve the hiring of new employees and update on employee request for increased compensation*) and State Statutes 19.85 (1) of the State Statutes regarding negotiations (CFFT contract). The meeting will reconvene to open session.
2. Roll Call:
3. Approval of agenda
4. Pledge of Allegiance
5. Hearing of the Delegation\*\*
6. Approval of minutes from previous meetings – (buff):
  - a. Approval of minutes from September 15, 2005 regular meeting.
7. Financial action items – (green):
  - a. Approval of claims (vouchers # 54714 to 54948) and handwritten checks (# 797233 to 797640) electronic wire transfers (#651-654, 656-667) inclusive and financial reports
8. Announcements, Communications and Committee Reports – (peach):
 

Appreciation/Recognition

  - a. School Board Committee Reports
    - 1) WASB Regional Meeting
    - 2) Negotiations Committee Report
      - a. Administrators Negotiations
      - b. Upcoming Calendar Negotiations
  - c. Superintendent's Report
    - 1) School Board Conventions – National and State
    - 2) National Superintendent's Convention (Feb. 23-27, 2006)
    - 3) Long Range Planning for Buildings
    - 4) Report on PI-34 and Curriculum

9. Old Business: (grey)  
None
  10. New Business (yellow):
    - a. Consideration and approval of Strategic Plan
    - b. Approval of Resolution #05-03 - Resolution authorizing temporary borrowing in the amount not to exceed \$4,900,000.
    - c. Approval of first reading of policy:
      - 1) GCCA – Evaluation of Non-Certified Staff
  11. Resignations and Retirements:
    - a. Resignation of a support staff person from Instructional Asst. position eff. 10/7/05
  12. Hearing of the Delegation\*\*
  13. Adjourn to executive session
  14. Reconvene to open session with request for appropriate action
  15. Adjournment
- \* Enclosures
- \*\* Members of the delegation who wish to present their viewpoint to the Board must sign up prior to or during the meeting and be recognized at the appropriate time by the Board President.

**We will attempt to limit discussion on all items to ten minutes.**

Appendix J: CFAUSD Committee Members and Responsibilities

**Site Level Planning and Implementation of  
New Strategies - Final Phase  
February, 2005**

**Implementation of the New Strategic Plan**

The implementation of action plans will be assigned to administrative staff who will be given responsibility as strategy managers, and site level teams. The accountability of progress will be monitored and evaluated by the District's Preferred Futures Team, the Superintendent and the Board of Education.

**Strategy Managers will:**

- Become district leaders in the implementation of the strategic plan.
- Be responsible to carry out the action steps as prioritized in the action planning.
- Facilitate work with existing district committees to complete tasks and responsibilities.
- Provide regular communication with District's Preferred Future Team that would include plans and occasional updates.
- Work closely with the Superintendent and Business Manager to budget for planning work.
- Provide input of progress and victories in Annual District Updates.
- Maintain an accurate summary of the strategies, history, progress victories, changes, implementation and results of planning.

**District Preferred Futures Team will:**

- Include Action Planning co-chairs as key members because they were involved with the creation of the Action Plan.
- Screen site level plans to insure they are consistent with district strategic plan.
- Become district leaders in the promotion of the concept of strategic planning and the approved Strategic Plan.
- Clarify for site level teams the meaning and intent of action plans.
- Present Annual District Updates to the Board of Education at prescribed times during the year.
- Recognize our victories with celebrations.

**Site Teams will:**

- Assist in the development of strategic plans for their respective buildings based on the district action plans.
- Facilitate a two-way communication system between the site planning team and other staff members at each building.
- Make connections with other staff members in order to encourage and promote ongoing communications.

**Site Level and Function Committees**Middle School

13 People: three administrators, two parents, one support staff, and seven staff members

Halmstad Elementary

12 People: one administrator, two support staff, and nine staff members

Hillcrest Elementary

10 People: one administrator, one support staff, one parent, and seven staff members

Stillson Elementary

12 People: one administrator, one support staff, and ten staff members

Parkview Elementary

11 People: one administrator, one support staff, and nine staff members

District Computer Committee

15 People: one administrator, one support staff, one student, one community member, and eleven staff members

Senior High School

17 People: four administrators, one support staff, and twelve staff members

Jim Falls

10 People: one administrator, two support staff, one parent, and six staff members

Southview Elementary

9 People: one administrator, one parent, one support staff, and six staff members

C & I Department

16 People: five administrators, one support staff, and ten staff members

Special Education/Pupil Services

14 People: one administrator, two support staff, one parent, and ten staff members

Chippewa Valley High School

12 People: one administrator, three support staff, and eight staff members

## Appendix K: Periodic and Annual Updates Information

### **Periodic and Annual Updates**

At least once yearly, but possibly more often given rapid changes, the District Preferred Futures Team will meet as a whole to review overall strategic plan progress and impact. Also at update times, data will be analyzed to determine if there are new critical issues confronting the district that require goal and strategy changes, new goals and strategies, abandonment of work or new prioritization.

In addition, updates may be used for the committee's analysis of district staff compliance with beliefs and mission.

The District Preferred Futures Team will establish a term and tenure format for members at the first update.

The first update of the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District Strategic Plan will likely be held in late January/early February, 2007. Annual updates thereafter should be held early enough for potential impacts on the developing budget.

## Appendix L: Consent Form to Agree to Participate as a Research Subject

Project Title: *Strategic Planning in Education: A Case Study of the Chippewa Falls, WI Area Unified School District*

Aimee Drivas of Training and Development at the University of Wisconsin-Stout is conducting a research project titled, *Strategic Planning in Education: A Case Study of the Chippewa Falls, WI Area Unified School District*. Participation in this study is appreciated.

It is not anticipated that this study will present medical or social risk. The information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and any reports of the findings of this research will not contain any name or other identifying information.

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. If at any time participation in this research is not desired, subject may stop participating without coercion or prejudice; just inform the researcher. By returning this questionnaire, informed consent is given as a participating volunteer in this study.

Once the study is completed analysis of the findings will be available.

Note: Questions about the research study should be addressed to the researcher, Aimee Drivas at 715-839-8171, or Joseph Benkowski, Program Director, M.S. Training and Development and Research Advisor at 715-232-5266 or 715-232-1311. Questions about the rights of research subjects can be addressed to Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, and UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, Harvey Hall, Menomonie, WI 54751, phone 715-232-1126.

### Consent Form

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and participation may be discontinued at any time without prejudice.

It is understood that the purpose of this study is to investigate the problem, *Strategic Planning in Education: A Case Study of the Chippewa Falls, WI Area Unified School District*.

It is also further understood that in order for this research to be effective and valuable certain personnel identifiers need to be collected. The strictest confidentiality will be maintained throughout this study, and only the researcher will have access to the confidential information. It is understood that at the conclusion of this study all records that identify individual participants will be destroyed. No human or legal rights have been waived by agreeing to this participation.

Signing below verifies that subject is 18 years of age or older, in good mental and physical condition, and agrees to and understands the conditions listed above.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



Appendix M: Letter Requesting Permission to Begin Surveying Committee

October 9, 2006

Mr. Michael Schoch, Superintendent  
Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District  
1130 Miles Street  
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

Dear Mr. Schoch,

As I have mentioned to you in previous conversations I am obtaining a Master's in Training and Development and I would like to use the CFAUSD as a case study for my thesis. The title of my paper is: *Strategic Planning in Education: A Case Study of the Chippewa Falls, WI Area Unified School District*. I have made much progress on this research project since I last contacted you on June 29, 2006. I would like you to grant me permission to survey any of the original 35 District Strategic Planning committee members, if they are willing to participate, regarding their thoughts on the process. I have attached a copy of the Letter of Introduction, Consent Form, and Interview Questions for your review.

If you feel that this would be appropriate I was hoping to request this information from the committee members at the meeting we are having on Thursday, October 12, 2006 at CVTC. After our middle school presentation I would request five minutes to present the survey and instructions to the committee members. Thank you for taking the time to consider this and I look forward to your suggestions and comments regarding this idea.

Sincerely,

Aimee Drivas  
Business Education Teacher  
Chippewa Falls Middle School  
750 Tropicana Boulevard  
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729  
715-726-2400 x2422  
drivasae@chipfalls.k12.wi.us

Appendix N: E-mail Granting Permission to Begin Surveying Committee

**From:** Michael Schoch  
**Sent:** Mon 10/9/2006 8:11 AM  
**To:** Aimee Drivas  
**Subject:** RE: Aimee Drivas Request to Survey Planning Committee Members

Aimee,

Everything looks great. I have just one comment and one question. If you want to survey the entire group you may need to prepare to mail it to those who can't be at the meeting Thursday. So far we have about 20 people who have indicated they would be able to attend and they are mostly school people. I'm not sure if personally delivering the survey to some and mailing it to others will effect your project. Is it possible that I could get a copy of your finished survey so that I may see the results? This looks interesting and a very timely research project. Good luck with it Aimee.

Mike Schoch

## Appendix O: Survey Questions

### Strategic Planning Evaluation Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses will be used as part of a case study evaluating Strategic Planning in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District. Your feedback is appreciated. Please return to Aimee Drivas in the postage paid envelope or email to [drivasae@chipfalls.k12.wi.us](mailto:drivasae@chipfalls.k12.wi.us) when completed. Thank you!

1. Why do you feel it was necessary for the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District to complete a Strategic Planning Process? Please check all that apply.

To focus on the future by establishing a strong foundation of beliefs and mission in the present.

To define the gap between the current status of the organization and its preferred or desired future.

To stretch the district to new levels of accomplishment and achievement by focusing the organization on its critical issues.

To implement change in the district.

2. Why did you want to be part of the Strategic Planning Process for the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District? Please check all that apply.

To assist the district in reaching its goals.

To provide myself with a professional committee experience.

To bring previous experience to the district's planning.

N/A

Other:

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3. Have you had other experiences with Strategic Planning? Please circle: Yes / No
- a. If so, do you believe that the Strategic Planning Process of the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District has been effective to date and why/why not?
4. Do you believe that having a facilitator to utilize the Cook Model of Strategic Planning has been an effective method? Please circle: Yes / No
- a. Why or why not?
5. The Strategic Planning Process for the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District began in September, 2004. How much time are you willing to continue to commit to this process? Please check one answer.

Six to twelve months

13-18 months

19-24 months

24 months or more

6. What barriers to the Strategic Planning Process have been encountered during your involvement with the process? Please check all that apply.

The process has been too slow.  
 There have not been enough meetings to keep me current.  
 I am unclear on the goals that have been attained.  
 There seems to be resistance to the process from involved individuals.  
 N/A

Other:

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7. What additional goals, if any, would you like to see attained as a result of the Strategic Planning Process? Please check all that apply.

To continue to improve the learning environment for students.  
 To continue to improve the morale of staff.  
 To improve community relations.  
 To improve relations between the district and parents.  
 To better address concerns over alcohol and drug issues relating to students.  
 To continue to provide a safe environment for students.  
 N/A

Other:

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8. What recommendations, if any, do you have for implementing change during the Strategic Planning Process?

9. How will you measure the success of the Strategic Planning Process in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District? Please check all that apply.

District and building goals will be met in a timely manner.  
 Student grades will improve.  
 There will be more community involvement in the schools.  
 There will be more parent involvement in the schools.  
 Staff will report improved morale.  
 Students will report a safe and ATOD free environment.  
 N/A

Other:

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10. Are there any additional comments that you would like to make regarding the Strategic Planning Process in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District?

## Appendix P: Letter of Introduction to Survey

October 23, 2006

Original Members of the Strategic Planning Committee  
Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District  
1130 Miles Street  
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

Dear Committee Members,

As part of my thesis requirement to complete my Master's of Science in Training and Development at UW-Stout, I have been conducting a case study of the Strategic Planning Process for the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District since June 2006. With the permission of Mr. Michael Schoch, I am asking you to complete the attached questionnaire evaluating the progress of the Strategic Planning Process.

More detailed information about this process is outlined in the attached consent form. If you are willing to assist in the completion of this case study please sign the attached consent form and then complete the attached questionnaire. The answers can either be handwritten or typed. The information gathered from each form will be used, in part, to measure the effectiveness of the Strategic Planning Process to date. All information gathered from this questionnaire will remain confidential.

Your assistance in this project is greatly appreciated. Should you choose to participate please return your completed questionnaire to me by **October 31, 2006**. The completed form can either be emailed to the address below or mailed to me at the Chippewa Falls Middle School in the postage paid envelope provided. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me using the information listed below.

Sincerely,

Aimee Drivas  
Business Education Teacher  
Chippewa Falls Middle School  
750 Tropicana Boulevard  
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729  
715-726-2400 x2422  
drivasae@chipfalls.k12.wi.us

## Appendix Q: Written Responses to Strategic Planning Questionnaire

### Written Responses to Strategic Planning Questionnaire

1. Why do you feel it was necessary for the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District to complete a Strategic Planning Process? Please check all that apply.

*There were no written responses to this question.*

2. Why did you want to be part of the Strategic Planning Process for the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District? Please check all that apply.

*I value education to the highest degree and given the opportunity to explore our district at level interested me.*

*It was an honor to be asked to assist.*

*Important to have input to a plan that I must share in the implementation.*

*To honor a request (to participate) of the Superintendent.*

3. Have you had other experiences with Strategic Planning? Please circle: Yes / No  
a. If so, do you believe that the Strategic Planning Process of the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District has been effective to date and why/why not?

*Yes, it involved a broad cross section of the community & opened lines of communication.*

*Yes, it will be critical to be sure the plan is followed & monitored.*

*Effective, yes, but could be better if we prepared activities for change, with due dates for completion and person responsible.*

*The district needs collaboration. The only way to accomplish this effectively is to align via the strategic plan.*

*Yes, our effort has been effective. We are well on our way to make systematic changes that will increase student achievement.*

*It has been very effective because it helps everyone see who we are and what we are all about. It provides a focus.*

*I believe that our work has been effective in at least two ways. One, there have been tangible accomplishments that have improved aspects of our district programs. More importantly for me initially is that our staff has taken ownership in the continuous improvement concept supported by strategic planning. It is beginning to change our culture.*

*I believe that it is too early to make this assessment.*

*Yes, am impressed with how much has been accomplished at each site already*

*Yes, I think it is effective due to the number and diverse participants, time allowed for the planning, and the commitment from Board members, admin., staff, and students.*

*I believe that it has been effective. Each school in the district has set up a site team of interested staff. They have chosen strategies to work on and are starting to put their plans into action. I am enjoying watching schools plan more so that we are prepared instead of reacting.*

4. Do you believe that having a facilitator to utilize the Cook Model of Strategic Planning has been an effective method? Please circle: Yes / No  
 b. Why or why not?

*Often when someone within an organization attempts to present new ideas others do not buy into the program. Also, the facilitator is well trained-knows pitfalls, etc. which makes the process more effective for our district.*

*It is a proven process & has already impacted the focus of the school district.*

*Others could have done this as effectively.*

*The facilitator is a good organizer, but too much time coming up with goal statements.*

*It allows flexibility and plenty of opportunity for dialogue & feedback.*

*We needed an outside, unbiased facilitator to assist with the effort. This person is doing a wonderful job!*

*A consultant was needed to allow the Superintendent to be a part of the process.*

*The facilitator's motivating-discussed the program and made us aware of struggles so we weren't frustrated.*

*It is systematic so it seems there isn't time spent "reinventing the wheel" in terms of how to go through this process.*

*Previous experiences. Prevent us from spinning our wheels.*

*I have facilitated the planning process in other districts that I have worked in and it has not been as effective as having an outside facilitator who has nothing to gain regarding the creation of direction of the plan. This facilitator also does a great job. Their personality lends itself to a collaborative climate where productive work is done.*

*It is important to bring someone in from outside so that they are not encumbered by previous or existing conditions in the district. It is also important to have someone with experience with the process to be the one doing the guiding.*

*For some reason an outside "expert" has more credibility.*

*I believe that it is critical to have someone from the outside facilitate the process. The facilitator did a good job bringing a lot of information and ideas into a central focus that we could develop our plan from.*

*The facilitator kept us focused.*

*The facilitator has been a knowledgeable and effective facilitator-speaks from experience.*



5. The Strategic Planning Process for the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District began in September, 2004. How much time are you willing to continue to commit to this process? Please check one answer.

*This needs to go on (with changes as needs change) forever.*

6. What barriers to the Strategic Planning Process have been encountered during your involvement with the process? Please check all that apply.

*Academically I know change takes time especially when a lot of people are involved. Emotionally I get frustrated as things seem to move too slow.*

*Loss of original members participation at recent meetings.*

*You must have activities with completion dates & person responsible.*

*Time & \$ Resources.*

*Time to get to all the meetings.*

*We already had a professional learning community in place. We transitioned this effort and folded it into our plan.*

*I don't see and have not experienced any barriers.*

*More from uninvolved individuals who feel they are committed out.*

*We lost some people along the way.*

*Allowing shareholders enough time to pursue the goals of the plan.*

*None.*

*I haven't experienced any barriers.*

*None.*

7. What additional goals, if any, would you like to see attained as a result of the Strategic Planning Process? Please check all that apply.

*All of the above are goals of our Strategic Planning process and should continue to be worked on.*

*More focus on faculty needs for what appears to be a growing enrollment.*

8. What recommendations, if any, do you have for implementing change during the Strategic Planning Process?

*Any change in the process or current goals, beliefs & mission should be made through the main group originally organized or similar representation.*

*More community member involvement is needed.*

*Baby steps, careful planning.*

*Must be included in our budget process. Here is what we need-here is what it costs. Must tie expenditures to strategic planning goals.*

*Common curriculum & assessment at all grade levels.*

*Have a good cross-section of stakeholders involved.*

*Keep it alive. Do not let this experience and outcome become a dust collector.*

*Be persistent if the change is something you feel strong about.*

*Keep the focus of our staff development times to allow staff to work on the plan.*

*Maybe involve more people on a regular basis ie. hold executive forums solely for the purpose of articulating process and celebrating success. Forums could be both for staff and the community.*

*None.*

*Allow an environment to be flexible for planning time in buildings; focus the budget process more on Strategic Planning; Communicate to the public what's happening in our schools related to the planning.*

*Continue to communicate progress toward achievement and strive to keep all staff informed and part of the process.*

*Recognizing the positive steps toward the goals. Administrators-Keep leading and encouraging work toward goals.*

9. How will you measure the success of the Strategic Planning Process in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District? Please check all that apply.

*We need to insure alignment of building goals with strategic planning goals. The committee needs involvement.*

*People will speak about the plan and benchmark future discussions based on the plan.*

*Many areas of success achieved by students, some intangible may be grades, test scores, more participation, less discipline or less major problems, etc.*

*We will become a professional learning community and subsequently our students will learn how to become life long collaborative learners.*

*Faculty needs are not met as they arise-not after 2-5 years of packing kids into our current building.*

10. Are there any additional comments that you would like to make regarding the Strategic Planning Process in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District?

*I would like to see the process continue through the years since it does seem to provide organized change. I also think the leadership of committees & groups needs to be shakers & movers & people with positive attitudes towards students & their needs.*

*While I might seem a critic, I am very supportive of strategic planning. Without it we have nothing, but we have left room for improvement.*

*It is a good old-fashioned process.*

*Thank you for taking the time to do this survey!*

*Recruit new committee members to keep the process moving forward.*

*The process teaches patience but it is great to see all the changes organized & communicated. I think there have always been work on whatever the focus is in education but now it's with a common purpose & organized.*

*Thanks for doing this!*

*This has been a positive experience for the district. It will allow us to focus our attention on a set of goals that will remain in place for more than one year. In the past, I have felt that we have been given a new direction to follow each year, which has lead to a series of short term efforts to address long term, systematic, issues.*

*I just hope the process continues and becomes an accepted and valued activity.*