

# Creating Strategic Planning Teams

More often than not, when kicking off a strategic planning endeavor, everyone wants to be involved. Education Elements works with dedicated staff in committed communities with courageous ideas of how to best prepare our students for the future. Since we know how critical it is to accurately represent the needs and values of your community while also ensuring you have a lean decision-making body, we provide guidance for how to involve all who are invested in the outcome of your plan.

At Education Elements, we believe that [Planning for Change Not Perfection](#) should be the driving mantra of strategic planning. It is crucial to evaluate the people you need to engage in order to have a richly representative plan that responds to the fundamental needs of your community.

**WHO** you engage and **HOW** you engage people says more about your values than your plan ever will.

To develop a responsive plan, we recommend incorporating all stakeholders into a feedback loop. This feedback loop serves to generate ideas, present proposals and catalyze change. Teams engaged with this loop are also encouraged to collaborate actively and dynamically.

Another way to understand this loop and the people within it is to see them as 'layers.' Below, we offer potential names for teams; we recommend leaders adapt these titles as they see fit.

## PROJECT TEAM

### Alternate Names:

Project Leads, Logistics Team

### Purpose

Drive completion of work. This team synthesizes and edits the process and plan throughout. These individuals are part of the Steering Team and have additional responsibilities between steering team meetings.

### Considerations

- No more than 4 people (including organizational leader).
- Have significant time and resources to dedicate to strategic planning process.
- Highly organized and detail-oriented.
- High comfort facilitating large groups.

## PLANNING TEAM(S)

### Alternate Names:

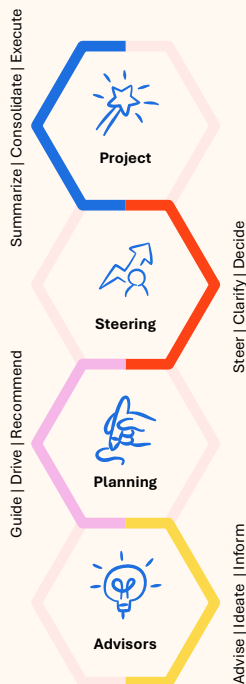
Design Teams, Working Groups, Specialist Teams, Department Councils

### Purpose

This leadership group will play an important role in engaging stakeholders, communicating the strategic plan, giving and receiving feedback. Individuals in this group might be divided into teams based on topics, priorities or interests to engage the community and reach more stakeholders. This group will guide and drive strategic planning and make the first line of decisions that will be validated by the steering team.

### Considerations

- No more than 25-30 people.
- This team will be crucial to creating and recommending priorities or initiatives within the plan.



## STEERING TEAM

### Alternate Names:

Core Team, District Council

### Purpose

Decision-making body made up of representatives of your district. It is inclusive of different backgrounds, roles, and tenures. This team's role is to synthesize and deliver the action items outlined in your strategic plan. Throughout the creation of this plan, this team will be tasked with oversight of the process to ensure it aligns with the needs of various stakeholders.

### Considerations

- No more than 15 people.
- This team should represent multiple stakeholders: parents, community leaders, school leaders, district staff, teachers.
- Consider inviting a board member to join your team.

## ADVISORS

### Alternate Names:

Consultative Teams, Focus Groups

### Purpose

This group of people will serve in a consultative capacity. They will help inform the strategic planning process in order for the planning and steering teams to make representative decisions. This group is more dynamic than the other teams; a district might bring different individuals into the process as needed. The time commitment would be less than the other groups.

### Considerations

- Number of participants will vary.
- This group will provide context, perspective, feedback and ideas.

## A note on taking a stance for equity, inclusion, and justice:

We believe that the first step to building a plan that uplifts all students is to understand that at their cores, most systems have been designed to uplift some, not all. Our school districts are not an exception to this truth and it is incumbent upon those who work in our districts to change this reality. Grounding ourselves in this understanding allows us to build plans that dismantle long-standing beliefs about what some students can achieve versus others, and prevent more students growing up in schools that uphold unjust and inequitable practices.

In identifying your stakeholders we strongly encourage including individuals that reflect various lived experiences in the district. Outside of these teams, we recommend that leaders actively, consistently, and meaningfully incorporate underrepresented voices throughout the strategic planning process and not just during early stakeholder engagement activities. Such efforts will ideally provide such voices with clearer feedback-giving and decision-making opportunities and will avoid a single individual speaking on behalf of an entire stakeholder group. As a result, you might identify other stakeholder groups with whom you want to engage.