

# MICHIGAN CITY AREA SCHOOLS

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**



Michigan City  
Area Schools



## MISSION

We are a diverse community of families, students, and staff who take pride in our schools, contribute positively to society, and prepare students for lifelong success.



## VISION

Michigan City Area Schools:  
High expectations. Supported students.  
Innovative paths to success.

## VALUES AND BELIEF STATEMENTS



### TRUST

We believe in promoting a culture of integrity so that all members of our community experience deep trust and partnership with the district.



### DIVERSITY

We believe in celebrating diversity and empowering all members of our community.



### GROWTH

We believe in continuously growing, learning, and improving, so that all of our students experience academic and personal success.



### PRIDE

We believe in cultivating pride in our schools.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

## **DEAR MEMBERS OF THE MICHIGAN CITY AREA SCHOOLS COMMUNITY,**

I am delighted to present to you our new strategic plan! This summary document is the culmination of a comprehensive and collaborative planning process. We believe this plan is a roadmap that will guide our district over the next five years, toward continued excellence and success.



Throughout this journey, we have embraced our mission as a diverse school community committed to preparing our students for lifelong success. This is at the core of every decision and initiative we undertake.

Our vision, “Michigan City Area Schools: High expectations. Supported students. Innovative paths to success,” reflects our unwavering commitment to creating an educational environment that fosters academic excellence, nurtures individual growth, and empowers students to explore varying paths to achieve their goals.

Furthermore, our values of trust, diversity, growth, and pride have guided us throughout the strategic planning process. We believe in building strong relationships grounded in trust, celebrating our rich diversity, fostering growth and continuous improvement, and taking pride in the achievements of our entire school community.

To develop this strategic plan, we engaged students, staff, parents, and community members. We invited feedback through a community survey and conducted focus groups, constituent design sessions, and a town hall to gather a wide range of perspectives and insights. Through these collaborative efforts, we have created a plan that is rooted in the priorities and needs you identified.

This strategic plan is a living document, one that will require ongoing reflection and refinement. Each pillar and initiative we have summarized here will be brought to life through research, action planning, and implementation. We are committed to assessing our progress each quarter and making necessary adjustments to ensure we stay aligned with our mission, vision, and values.

As we embark on this journey together, I want to express my sincere appreciation to each and every one of you for your dedication, support, and engagement in shaping the future of the Michigan City Area Schools. Your contributions are invaluable, and I firmly believe that by working hand in hand, we will continue to provide an exceptional education that prepares our students for a lifetime of success.

## **WE ARE ONE CITY, ONE PACK!**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Eason-Watkins". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Barbara Eason-Watkins, Ed.D.  
Superintendent, Michigan City Area Schools



# OUR PROCESS

## BY THE NUMBERS

We heard from  
**2,901**

constituents through  
a community survey.

**101**

students, teachers, staff,  
administrators, family members,  
community members, board  
members, and business leaders  
participated in focus groups

We hosted

**13**

Focus Groups.



Over **50**

participants attended  
our Town Hall.

We hosted

**4**

constituent-focused  
design sessions to  
gather ideas for  
initiatives to include  
in the strategic plan.



## WHAT ABOUT THE SPECIFICS?

**We are excited about our Strategic Plan!** This document is a summary of our vision and priorities.

**Our next step:** Pulling together Implementation Teams that will begin digging in to form the specific actions that bring these initiatives to life.

Would you like to be a part of this work? Visit [educateMC.net/strategicplanning](https://educateMC.net/strategicplanning).



# PILLAR 1:

## CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

We will work to ensure that Michigan Area City Schools is a community that all members appreciate, celebrate, and are proud to be a part of.



### IMPACT STATEMENT

We will know we are successful if we have high participation and engagement from the many members of our diverse community, parents and students enthusiastically recommend MCAS to others, and all students feel a sense of belonging and safety at school.



### KEY INITIATIVES

- ★ We will enhance support for all sports and extracurriculars across the district (PreK-12).
- ★ We will update, beautify, or add facilities, keeping a focus on safety.
- ★ We will strengthen the overall culture for district staff, celebrating diversity.



# PILLAR 2:

## STUDENT VOICE AND OPPORTUNITIES

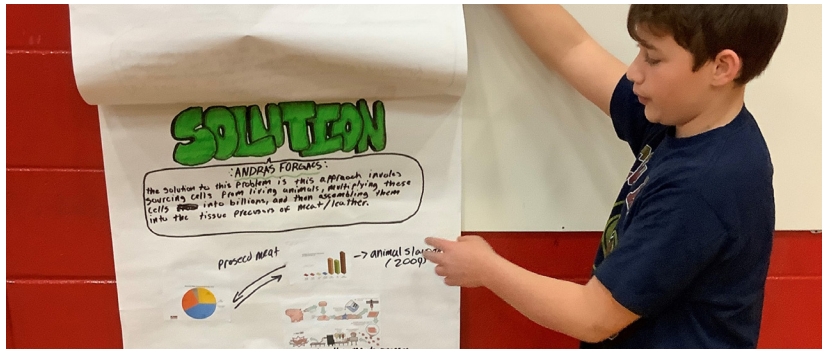
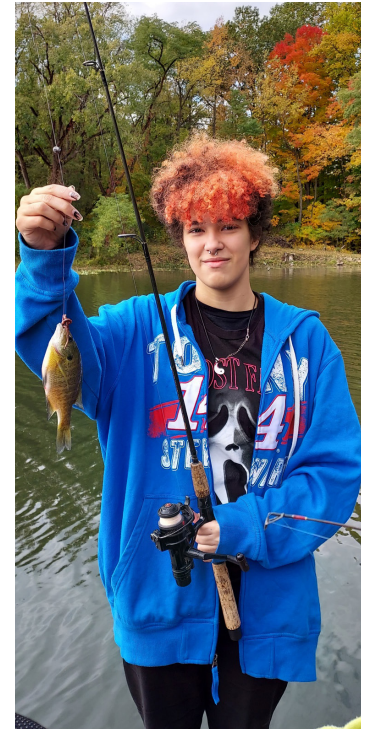
We will ensure that students' voices and choices are reflected in decisions made throughout the district by committing to getting their feedback and involvement on a consistent basis.

### IMPACT STATEMENT

We will know we are successful if students feel a sense of belonging, see their ideas and feedback reflected in district and school decisions, and speak positively and confidently about their school experiences.

### KEY INITIATIVES

- ★ We will provide professional development for staff on incorporating student voice.
- ★ We will create more academic and extracurricular opportunities for students.
- ★ We will seek student input and involvement in decisions that impact them.





## PILLAR 3: MEETING THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE LEARNERS

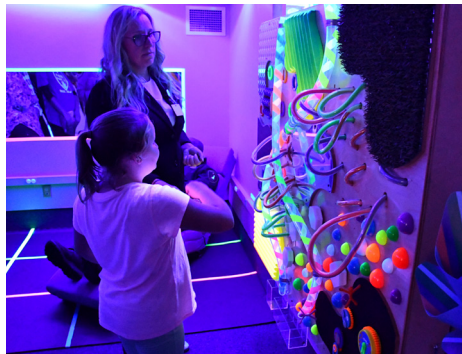
We will provide all students with the tools, resources, and support they need to experience success in school, meet their goals, and reach their full potential.

### IMPACT STATEMENT

We will know we are successful if we have high expectations for all students; if our environments support diverse learners; if we provide innovative enrichment and support opportunities to meet student needs; if students, staff, and families know how to access resources and supports; and if we acknowledge and celebrate our diverse learners.

### KEY INITIATIVES

- ★ We will provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate mastery.
- ★ We will implement an integrated, tiered system of supports for students.
- ★ We will diversify electives to give students more choice in course selections and postsecondary options.





## PILLAR 4:

### CLEAR AND CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION

We will ensure that information is easily accessible and that all members of our community feel that their voices matter.

#### IMPACT STATEMENT

We will know we are successful if communication is clear, consistent, and accessible, and if all constituents feel comfortable participating in opportunities where feedback is encouraged.

#### KEY INITIATIVES

- ★ We will create a welcoming culture that encourages feedback and reflection.
- ★ We will develop a network of ambassadors who will share accurate and positive information about our schools.
- ★ We will implement two-way communication platforms that allow us to reach all constituents and provide them with opportunities for engagement.





# PILLAR 5:

## EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD

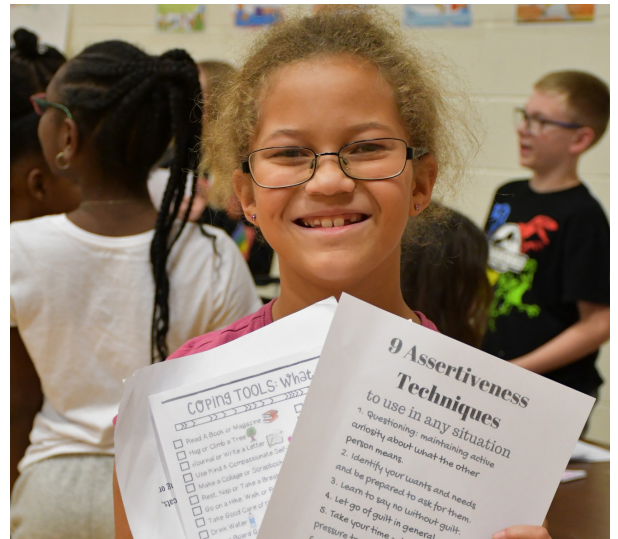
We will provide students with equitable resources that will support their emotional and mental health needs, including increased social-emotional learning (SEL) resources.

### IMPACT STATEMENT

We will know we are successful if students have meaningful relationships with school staff and their classmates; if students are aware of available resources and how to access them; and if students are able to communicate their feelings and needs to ensure they get the assistance they need.

### KEY INITIATIVES

- ★ We will implement a tool (such as an app) to serve as a mental health/learning environment screener and connect students with resources.
- ★ We will provide all students with a forum to build relationships with one another, discuss their academic and emotional needs, and cultivate habits of character.
- ★ We will form a circle of care made up of teachers, counselors, social workers, success coaches, staff, and parents to support students from enrollment through graduation, using SEL and trauma-informed care techniques.





## COMMITMENT TO COMMUNICATION

At Michigan City Area Schools, we are dedicated to open and transparent communication as we work toward achieving our strategic goals. As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we pledge to engage in quarterly reflection to assess our progress and identify areas for refinement.

We believe that involving our community in the implementation of our strategic plan is essential for its success. Therefore, we are committed to actively seeking input from our constituents, including students, parents, staff, and community members, throughout the process. We value your perspectives and insights, as they contribute to the overall effectiveness and relevance of our initiatives.

We also recognize the importance of feedback in shaping our practices and improving our services. We encourage you to share your thoughts, suggestions, and concerns with us.





## A SPECIAL THANK YOU

*to the Michigan City Area Schools Strategic Planning Steering Team!*

- Amber Russell, Parent and Community Member
- Ashley Sparks, MCHS Student
- Barbara Eason-Watkins, Superintendent
- Betsy Kohn, Director of Communications
- Cathy Bildhauser, Director of Curriculum
- Chase McMillon, MCHS Student
- Dee Wilusz, Bus Driver, Michigan City Classified Association
- Jason Hopper, Principal
- Jeff Bartlett, Parent and Community Member
- Jenilee Haynes-Peterson, School Board Member
- Kevin McGuire, Chief Financial Officer
- Lee Ann Killingbeck, Parent and Community Member
- Mandy Chastain, Teacher, Michigan City Education Association
- Matt Weber, Community Member
- Michelle Mallott, Instructional Assistant, Michigan City Educational Support Professionals
- Stacy Attar, Director of Special Education
- Wendel McCollum, Associate Superintendent



*We appreciate your participation in our journey toward excellence,  
and we look forward to working collaboratively with you to  
ensure the success of Michigan City Area Schools.*



## Michigan City Area Schools

You can provide feedback by emailing us at  
**[communications@mcas.k12.in.us](mailto:communications@mcas.k12.in.us)**

For more information and updates, visit  
**[educateMC.net/strategicplanning](http://educateMC.net/strategicplanning)**

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Elements

*Photo: Timeless Aerial Photography*